

PotterShi

The Royal Lymington Yacht Club in 2020

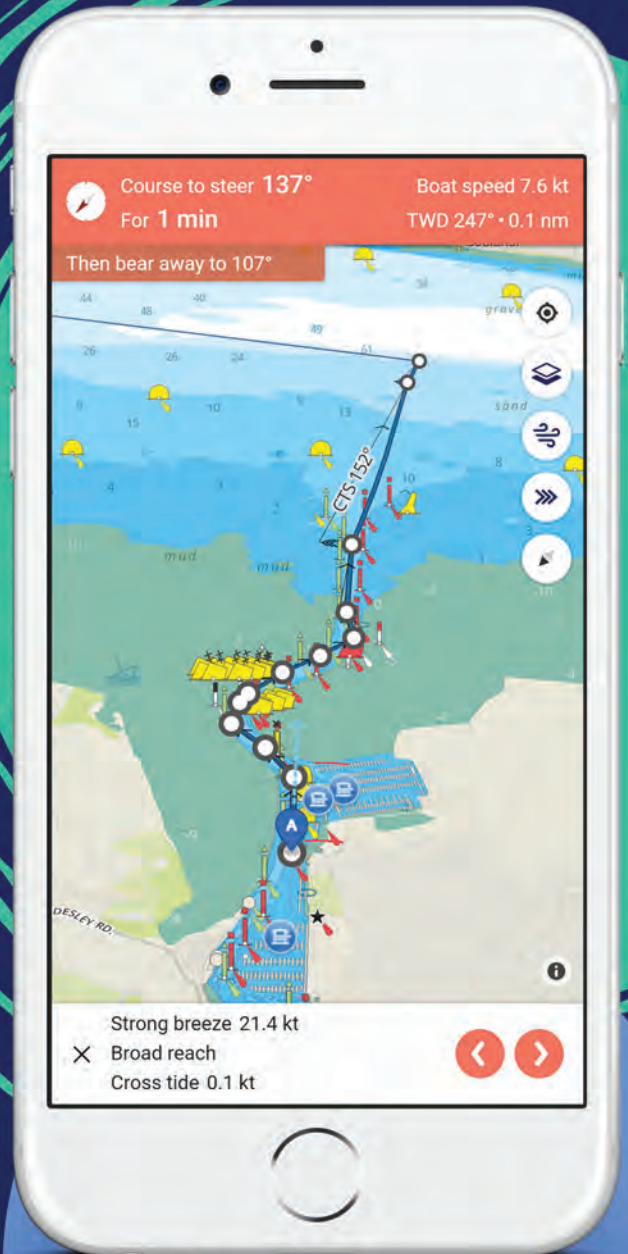




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YOUR POTTERSHIP MAGAZINE



Well, having been very doubtful as to whether I would have had enough material to fill a magazine this year I am delighted to say that I have – and here it is.

What a very challenging year we have had, but our Club rose to that challenge admirably. The Help Group were fantastic, and all the volunteer Members I think rather enjoyed themselves acting as staff.

The Juniors have again been bursting with enthusiasm and success which is really lovely to see.

The front cover photo is of some of our little Shipmates Group which is I felt very appropriate – looking to the future.

Having read in the papers about orcas attacking yachts off the south west coast of Spain, it was very interesting to read Peter Bell's account of people they met who had been attacked. Not just a single incident it seems, but luckily Peter and Mary got up to Portugal safely.

The RLymYC Centenary falls in 2022 and our centenary committee are busy making all sorts of exciting plans which you will be informed about in due course.

I have just embarked on compiling a Centenary Book (hardback) to commemorate the event, and would be most interested to hear from anyone who could supply me with any untold history or snippets from the past.

As ever, sincere thanks to my loyal, supportive proof readers.

Wishing you all a happy and especially healthy New Year.

JUDY RUFFELL - EDITOR

E and OE. Editors decision is final.

Why "PotterShip" Magazine?

People often ask me this... the publication is named after a magnificent trophy which is raced for once a year by Members of the Club helping their own boats. It was presented to the Club by one of its founding Members, Cyril Potter.



PotterShip is the magazine of the Royal Lyminster Yacht Club

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Front Cover Picture:

Shipmates: Looking to the Future



From The Commodore



Twelve months ago most of us hadn't heard of Covid or Zoom and a pandemic was something that was only written about in science fiction literature. Sadly, that was all to change early in 2020.

During March when matters in the UK really came to a head my wife

Jenny and I were stranded on a small cruise ship just off the Falkland Islands waiting to be airlifted back to the UK. At that time the governments were changing the rules daily and I really have to express my sincere thanks to our Vice Commodore John Tudor and my fellow Flag Officers for reacting to these changes so efficiently to ensure that the Club, its Members and staff were protected. A vote of thanks is also owed to our Health & Safety Committee, consisting of Stephen Crates, Andrew Richards and Roger Wilson, who advised General Committee on how we could safely re-open, when allowed.

After the Lymington River opened again the first who were able to take advantage of it were the cruising side of the Club and, in the fine weather that we had in the late spring, harbours and anchorages nearby became very popular for lunchtime stopovers. Those Members who were able to form a family bubble to get out on their boats, albeit just for a day trip, were in a very fortunate position.

Whilst some Members were very keen to get out on the water and participate in racing again, others were more cautious and some took the view that the season had been so disrupted that there was no point in launching their boats this year. As the Club did not feel that they could organise meaningful racing on Monday or Thursday evenings, when the river was re-opened, some Members organised their own 'navigational exercises'. Eventually in late summer, as there was further relaxation of the rules, we were able to organise some official racing. Because of this it has not been possible to award any of our usual racing awards that are normally presented at the Annual Dinner.

With considerable support from parents, the Junior Division were able to get back onto the water and start training again. Fortunately it was possible to run the Junior Regatta in August and, as many similar events at nearby clubs were cancelled, this was very well supported. To encourage this enthusiasm a new Club Member, Mrs Inger Fish, kindly donated a sum of money to enable the Club to recruit a Senior Coach for the Juniors. We are very fortunate to have been able to attract Hugh Styles to this position as he has previously been awarded the British Sailing Team's Coach of the Year in 2019. In addition it has been great to see a burgeoning Youth section, aged 18 to 25, competing at various Youth events during the summer. John Whyte should

be congratulated for being the driving force behind this. Sadly it was not possible to run Wednesday Junior Sailing at all this year but preparations for next year are already well under way for their start in April 2021.

Whilst on the water activity has been severely affected, the social side of the Club has continued as best it can, albeit mainly in a virtual world. Considerable efforts were made by members of the Social Sub-Committee to run alternative events to keep Members occupied whilst locked down. However, our usual annual events including Trafalgar Night and the Annual Dinner all had to be cancelled.

As our Catering operations have been an area of the Club's activities that we have struggled with over a number of years, the decision was taken in the summer to consider outsourcing this instead of running it in-house. Two teams under Michael Derrick were set up to consider the alternatives. After careful consideration and a thorough tender process they came up with the proposal that the Club's Catering should be outsourced to Mosimann's of London, as they were experienced in providing similar services to other private members clubs. It is just so unfortunate that their excellent service has been severely disrupted by Covid, although many Members were able to enjoy their wonderful Gala Dinners. At Christmas the Mosimann's team were able to prepare meals for 72 local residents who were on their own at Christmas. In previous years these meals have been provided through St Thomas's Church but this year that was not a practical proposition so Mosimann's stepped in to help out.

A trophy that is usually presented at the Annual Dinner is the Commodore's Cup which I am delighted to announce has been awarded this year to Michael Derrick. Michael has not only made a considerable contribution heading up the Catering Working Party this year but in previous years was responsible for sourcing We're Here and, more recently, leading the Pontoon Replacement Working Party. This is an award that is very richly deserved.

I think that 2020 will really stand out in the annals of the Club as the year when our Members showed their willingness to help others, both as volunteers within the Club but also in the wider community, whether producing much needed PPE or assisting those who were affected by the virus in their day to day lives. This shows what a Club is really about. Thank you.

As this is my final Pottership before retirement I would just like to thank everyone who has supported me and the Club over the last three years and wish everyone a very healthy 2021 when hopefully life, and the Club, can start getting back to normal.

ROGER GARLICK

Cruising Awards

Editor's Note. As the Prize Giving Dinner is held in February, prizewinners have to be included in the PotterShip the following year. Presentations were made by Kitty Van Hagen.



The Quains Cup
Awarded for a log of a significant cruise under sail went to Jeremy Vines.



Seamanship Trophy
Awarded for a feat of seamanship and navigation to Donald Begg.



The Cadiz Cup
Presented for a log of a significant and demanding cruise under sail. Awarded to Peter and Mary Bell.



Fen Dawn Cup
Awarded for a log of a significant motor cruise to Tim Harford.



Senior Brownlow Cup
Awarded for the best narrative of a cruise to Jeremy Moss.



Channel Trophy
Awarded for the most consistent support of cruising meets through the year to George Trevelyan. He calls it the 'turning up cup'!



Photographic Competition
John Stork won the Photographic Competition and his winning photo was the cover of PotterShip 2019.



XII Bar Blues Trophy
Awarded to encourage the use of modern technologies in the production of blogs awarded to Nick Ryley.

CLUB AWARDS

There were no Club awards this year other than The Commodore's Cup which was awarded to Michael Derrick for his considerable contribution heading up the Catering Working Party and for his efforts leading the Pontoon Replacement Working Party.

This is an award that is very richly deserved.



Cruising Notes

In a year when children have been excluded from school for months on end, when students have found themselves trapped in their halls of residence, and around 1% of the nation's population are counted as excess deaths from a novel virus, it may seem frivolous to focus on whether we've had a good year's cruising. But in the worst of times storytelling flourishes – and on reflection we all have stories to tell.

2020 started poorly on the water, with two popular day cruises cancelled through bad weather – as the last sail of 2019 had been too. So, no trips up Newtown Creek for lunch at the New Inn, and no marching along the Yar to feast at the Red Lion in Freshwater, all Alison Towler and Tony Hughes' efforts wasted.

However, life ashore carried on as usual, so we were able to attend a most enjoyable Cruising Dinner on 29 February, skilfully timed so that it didn't conflict with half-term ski parties. Although the virus was now big news, retiring Captain Sue Sutherland persuaded 95 people to attend, to celebrate past successes and future plans. They were handsomely entertained by Kitty Van Hagen as Guest of Honour and speaker.

Now the virus swept in to blow all our hopes away. Nigel Lang was offering a day cruise to East Cowes on Thursday 26 March, and your new Captain was planning to launch *Late Again* on Wednesday 25 to take part with a clean bottom: but the first lockdown was announced on 23 March, and all marinas and harbours (including Lymington) were closed by 25 March. Even if you could launch and sneak out of the River by night, no marina or river or harbour would admit you, so, as the Prime Minister put it, Stay at Home was the new rule, and the new way of life. *Late Again* stayed on the hard for another six weeks.

We all know the logic too well; if you can't gather and can't sail there's no point in promoting cruising meets. Our plans fell over like dinghies

in a squall: East Cowes cancelled, no meeting with new Members next day, no Fitting Out Party the following weekend, no day cruise to Southampton Town Quay at the end of April, no weekend meet on the May Bank Holiday at Bembridge, no Charter Cruise in Venice the following week, no cross-channel trip to Cherbourg and Alderney for the Spring Bank Holiday – all cancelled.

But WAIT! As May was filling its sails, the word was that easing was in the offing for water sports. And so it was: on 11 May river users got messages from the Lymington Harbour Master that our dear river was going to open from 13 May, the day that 'unlimited outdoor activity will be permitted in England'.

Nigel Lang may or may not have been first out of the traps, but he posted a picture of himself on *Salty* in mid-Solent on 14 May, and on 20 May the Commodore joined a group of six boats from RLymYC to sail to Totland Bay for an anchor-meet – within hailing distance if not touching!



The pioneers in Totland Bay

Julia and I flew the burgee for the first time anchored at Hurst on the same day and were joined for socially distanced drinks by the winners of the Fen Dawn Cup (See Cruising Awards).

There was now a lot of activity on the river, so the Club rushed all of its 18 dinghies onto the water. Crewing was restricted initially to members of the same household – and then that restriction was lifted, and a version of the Rule of Six came into force.



Ann and Tim with trophy, Linkenkeng and David all in full flow at the end of the dinner.



Aloni, Steve and Sue Harridge and family in Osborne Bay.



Deserted anchorage in the Argolic.

So, when Sue Sutherland proposed a day cruise to Osborne Bay in a NE breeze for 9 June, 15 boats turned up, even if one distinguished sailor opined beforehand that the breeze would make the bay untenable: it didn't, and he joined us – although our dinghy did stay on the stern throughout lunch in the bay. (Much too much wind to row around the anchorage chatting, which had been the plan). It was excellent sailing both ways: close port tack outbound, and a broad reach back: a useful Nor'easter.

The season was now picking up pace, with skippers gaining confidence to test the waters further from home. The WhatsApp group was buzzing with tales of increasingly distant travellers about the time the home fleet reached Osborne: the Darley boat *Distant Dream* headed west to Falmouth, the Scillies and the Hebrides on 5 July. Peter Lowe reached Dartmouth on 10 July and the Scilly Isles on 21 July; the Vines were following him in *Pickle* a few days behind, and *Fastest Man Green* reached the Scillies just ahead on *Pickle 2*, on 9 August. John Macnamara was denied access to St Peter Port in *The Otter* on Covid grounds on 21 July and single-handed onward to Treguier instead. He probably sailed as far south as any other Member this summer, turning for home after he had reached the Bellon River SE of Concarneau. On his way home he sprinted from Lezardrieux to Swanage to beat the quarantine imposed on visitors from

France at 0400 on 15 August. Many others cruised west and south, and the Sutherlands enjoyed the privilege of reaching *Martlet of Arun* at La Roche-Bernard by car, to enjoy six great weeks of cruising South Brittany, with no need to sail her home.

According to Clive Sparrow there was good reason we were hearing nothing from RLYM boats kept in the Med: most skippers were defeated by the combination of cancelled flights and locked-down harbours, and stayed home. But not Peter and Mary Bell, who continued their famous voyage in *Dofesaba II*, heading gently west and north via Gibraltar and Cadiz, and reaching Lagos in S Portugal before they laid her up and headed home.

For the Sparrows it went like this:

'Due to the Covid Pandemic we thought that keeping our boat in the Mediterranean would mean no chance of sailing until 2021. However, by Mid-August our cruising area had one of the lowest infection rates and we plucked up the courage to go. Heathrow Terminal 5 was almost deserted and the BA flight less than half full. We had no return flight booked, half expecting to just check on the boat then head home. Instead we launched but kept away from the islands and cruised the mainland coast of the Argolic Gulf. The Greeks were extremely pleased to see us, not surprising as most large hotels and many cafes were closed. We enjoyed almost deserted seas, bays and even town quays for five weeks.'

The Sparrows were lucky. One month into their trip the Med Hurricane ('Medicane') came through to the south of their cruising area: so they were able to contrast the empty anchorage in the Argolic Gulf, with the chaos caused a few miles away by the Medicane.



The Home Fleet made entertainment for themselves in or around the Solent. The Captain led a pop-up day cruise to Studland Bay on 1 July: the weather blew hard both ways, and only three boats made the journey, but none would have missed the experience.

Gerry and Carolyn McCafferty made a more acceptable offer of a weekend cruise 9 - 11 July to Island Harbour, at the top of the Medina River. The wind was still up, but the fleet of eight boats persevered under jib alone, and that evening enjoyed what was, for most, their first meal out since 23 March, at the Breeze in the harbour.





Barbecue in Marquee



RLymYC yachts moored at Bucklers Hard

An excellent walk into Newport next morning was the prelude to another bumpy but exhilarating sail home.

Nigel Lang made the next offer: to blow life into the cancelled Bembridge meet from May - a two night extravaganza in the revamped Duver Marina 24 - 26 July: the harbour was keen, and much improved: much more dredging, no more rafting, new finger berths, shower and toilet block revamped. 10 sail and one powerboat attended. The winds were kinder than a fortnight before, and the sailing fleet goosewinged most of the way out. The lay-off day rained and drizzled, drizzled and rained, but cleared in time for the evening barbecues.

Another heavy-weather sail home next day: some very happy cruisers nonetheless.

Before we wind up with the last cruises of the season, it's important to mention the contribution the Winter Lecture series continues to make to the Club's social life. In January and February the previous season's lectures continued through to early March, with talks from James Taylor (postcards) Graham Giddens (Birds of the Reedbeds), David Ridout (Cruising under Power) and a stunning presentation from the RLymYC Junior racers - an event which explained and justified the huge effort the Club now puts into competitive junior sailing, with great results. Ryan Willigers followed with a detailed

description of the environmental work the Harbour Commissioners do - and more talks followed on schedule.

But come the lockdown, the Club was keen to keep in contact with its Members in as many ways as possible, so the Cruising Division commissioned Steve Law to arrange a series of Lockdown Lectures; he conjured up an impromptu series of ten Zoom lectures, starting a fortnight after lockdown began, and running into the middle of June, when, as we've seen, sailing was getting under way again. Six of these came from Club Members, four from outsiders: my favourite was Peter Bruce's brilliant presentation on Heavy Weather Sailing, but you don't have to take my word for it, as all can be seen again, and can be found under the Winter Lecture tab on the Cruising website. Steve's contribution continues to this day, and by Christmas he will have curated, in this exceptional year, 20 lectures, all of which have had strong attendances, in a variety of formats, and most recently supported by Mossiman's Catering. It has been an extraordinary performance, very ably supported by Neil Eccles and others.

To return to our cruising, Tony Hughes arranged a delightful weekend for 15 boats on the new visitors' pontoons at Bucklers' Hard in the first weekend of September. The weather stayed fair for the sail out and the two evenings' entertainment (all socially distanced self-help catering). The wind got up

to challenge anyone who left the sail back too late, but no harm and plenty of excitement.

Tony also arranged a day cruise to East Cowes for 20 October. This time the weather did its best to disrupt events, and it was cancelled. But four boats chose to make the trip regardless, on two different days. They lunched well at the Lifeboat, with plenty of seating available.

Peter Cobb tried again with a trip to Gins Farm on 19 November. This time there was no serious problem with the weather, but the very tight restrictions of the second Lockdown killed the event, as the Gins Farm clubhouse was unable to welcome us, and crewing was very heavily restricted by the 1+1 rule. Another cancellation.

Finally, we cruised to Yarmouth on 12 December, where our status as a Tier 2 region meant that the Tier 1 Isle of Wight could not receive us socially, and there could be no events to celebrate the work of the RNLI: but we could tie up in the harbour and self-cater. 10 boats sailed in brilliant sunshine, and we celebrated the presence of two Members' boats over 50ft for the first time in recent memory - Donald Begg's world-girdling Lydia, and Katie Ould's Bella of London. Participants donated a handsome sum for the RNLI, a part of which became a liquid gift to the crews of the Lymington and Yarmouth lifeboats. Satisfaction all around!

GEORGE TREVELYAN - CRUISING CAPTAIN



The Adventures of Dofesaba II

2020 THE VIRUS YEAR

PETER BELL

We escaped from the UK in mid-July knowing there was a possibility we would be quarantined on our way back – but it had to be done anyway. I took a week preparing the boat and we set sail on the 28th July for the West.

Tuesday 28th July 2020

We spend a terrible night. Mary is too hot and I have compressed my disks by trying to carry too much in one suitcase back from the supermarket, such that a “touch of the old problem” rears its ugly head. I get a bit of sciatica that affects the nerves as if I have been kicked in the left buttock – by Norman Hunter (those too young to know this archetypal left back for Leeds and England need to go look it up on that t’internet thang). Anyway, it is annoyingly uncomfortable, particularly when trying to sleep. I completely failed to do that and dozed til dawn. At 08:30 hrs I jumped up and made some tea, then went off to get boat ready.

A small diversion on decision making within marriage and on a boat

On a boat the Skipper’s word is final – this is encapsulated in Tradition. Note I said Skipper not Captain – A Captain’s word and decision is backed up by Maritime Law. So if the Captain says “pull that line” and the crew doesn’t and we sink and cause loss of life, it is not the Captain’s fault. Unfortunately a Skipper is not in such a controlled position.

Tuesday 28th July 2020

It would be lovely if I said to my crew “Tomorrow we are leaving at 0700 hours – you must be ready”. and we left at 0700 hrs and everyone was ready. Bearing in mind I have checked the weather sorted the route, phoned ahead for a berth etc. – done lots of skippery things.

What actually happens is:

“Oh no that is way too early I cannot be ready by then”

“Well you may have to be – tide, weather, waiting for no man or woman etc.”

“Oh no can we make it 10:00?– I am sure I will be ready by then and I will feel so much better”

Well as you can imagine – not everything works the way a Skipper wants, so we compromise on 09:45 – this we call marriage.

We did leave exactly at 09:45 and off we trolled into a hazy Spanish morning. It was already 25 deg. and the haze promised more. I put up my improvised bimini to get as much shade as possible, opened up the front of the spray hood to get as much through draught as possible and set the controls for the heart of the sun – or even ‘towards Marbella’.

It was at that moment I realised the autopilot was showing ‘no pilot, no pilot’ – a little cryptic I thought – This is what we call an “Oh Dear” moment – cos if we could not run on auto then someone has to steer – obviously; and I had lots



of stuff to do and Mary is not very confident steering. I had a quick look around – then asked Mary to steer while I went downstairs to check.

“Why don't you steer which you're better at, and I will go and cycle all the electronics as I am ok with doing that”

So you see how the Skipper's word is treated as LAW on our boat. However she made a very good point which I had to concede while I meekly took the helm. Down she went – then 2 secs later.

“Would it help if I turn the autopilot switch to 'ON'”

“Well darling, it certainly won't do any harm” says I and lo – there be a working autopilot. Now, before we get into the blame game – it was oi that dunnit – er... I freely admit I didn't turn on the Autopilot. I have no idea why – I just did not turn it on. When my lovely wife did – all worked wonderfully and the tide of trepidation building in my breast was removed.

We trundled for the next four hours. I was interested in what affect the massive amount of work I had done on the underneath of the hull was having. So time for a little investigation. I knew that last year at exactly 2000 rpm we got 5.9 to 6.0 kts log speed. So I reset the throttle to EXACTLY 2000 rpm and looked at the log. 6.0, 6.1, then touching 6.2 only to hover between 6.1 & 6.2 for the next 10 mins.

So I had spent 1400 Euros for a maximum 0.2 kts extra speed. Well - that was worth it.



The Cleanest shiniest hull & prop you ever did see

A small diversion on statistics

Stats are there to prove any point you wish to make. They do not really have to exist or to be quoted verbatim, as long as you say them loudly enough. To be fair I have been a little disingenuous in the previous paragraph. Comparing a completely cleaned boat with the way I left it last year. Because – last year the boat had been used daily and there had been very little chance for much weed or barnacles to build up so while the hull was not clean, it certainly wasn't that dirty either. During September 2019 to July 2020 (almost 9 months) the boat had been sitting in sea water. I assumed there was weed and barnacle build up on the hull, and if I had not cleaned it, all that rubbish would have surely reduced my progress through the water.

Leaving Marbella we soon arrived at Estepona. We had been trying to get to Estepona to see some friends we last

saw in 2007/8 at a Seismic conference. Unfortunately as it was so long ago neither of us could remember which one it was. We spent two lovely evenings with them, one as guests in their distinctive apartment block, which we had noticed as we crept along the coast.



A rare sight at Sea

We left Estepona in 2kts winds, which increased to 5kts directly behind us – I sighed and left the sails furled, as even a 5kts wind is not enough to propel us through the water. When you think about it, if you are standing still with all sails out then 5kts will propel us to about 2.5kts, but once you get to 2.5kts the relative wind drops to 2.5kts and that isn't enough for more than 1.0kts. So a delicate balance of around 2.0kts can be achieved if you are lucky. With the weight we carry (>14 tons) this becomes more like 1.7kts. The skipper decides it is hardly worth it when the iron topsail does 6.2kts with a clean hull. As we trundle along, the sea mist comes down and so on goes the Radar. We can hear the local fog horns booming out across the sea. The Radar shows many echoes – far more than seems normal. We keep a sharp look out. To the starboard quarter is a disturbance on the sea surface, is it a bit of wind? – should I put the sails out? Er... no! it is a pod of porpoises about 60-100 strong sliding through the water leisurely, yet purposefully (well they would, wouldn't they) they did not deviate their path in any way just went a bit deeper when our boat got in their way. Well that was nice we said when 15 mins later another pod went by. Were they dolphins as the locals liked to insist. Well they were only 1.0m long and that is pretty small for a Dolphin but about right for a harbour porpoise. And no, they weren't all juveniles.

On we went nervously checking up front when out of the murk several mighty ships appeared. The mist lifted and we found ourselves in a ship park. Tankers, cargo vessels and 3 mighty Stena drill ships – which normally charge about a million dollars a day just to exist. I tried to imagine all the money being wasted but I gave up when I got to “the trillions”.

We drive around the Southern tip of Gibraltar and view from the sea the southernmost mosque in Western Europe, it is just behind the lighthouse. About as close to Morocco as one can get.



Gibraltar Lighthouse and Mosque

We have booked a berth in the Ocean Village Marina. According to our pilot book this is the southern of the two marinas within the Ocean Village/Marina Bay marina complex so I head down there.

"There is a large buoy in the water dead ahead Peter" says the first mate, this is followed by some insistent whistling from the shore, beeping noise from the depth gauge and a rapidly descending depth readout."

"Full reverse thrusters Mr Sulu" shouts the skipper ramming the throttle into full reverse. At that moment a helpful voice comes on the Radio."

"You should have the runway on your port side – come down that channel."

"Ah!" says I; "over there" and we proceed more safely than before to our berth, thanking the Gods as ever.

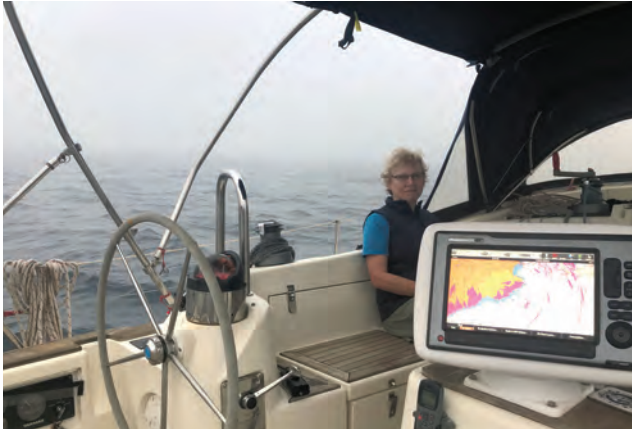
It turns out that Ocean Village and Marina Bay merged into one company the year AFTER our pilot book was published and due to extensive renovations the Ocean Village part was no longer for visiting yachts – however just to confuse everyone – they renamed the whole caboodle "Ocean Village Marina" (even though our berth was in the Marina Bay bit).

So we are in Gibraltar – 80m away is the runway where Easy Jet and BA run 4 planes a day between them. Not so bad you think to yourself, but it is also an RAF base so Tornados, Hurricanes and Belfasts also land and take off – and they do not have any reason to keep the noise down.



Over the next 5 days, we do the sights and delights of "Gib". To whit - tunnels, apes, statues, plaques, red post boxes, Brit style police officers traffic on the correct side of the road (and this just after we had got used to the opposite having been in Spain). Jews leaving the Synagogue on a Saturday afternoon, Muslims in Mosque robes on a Friday evening (we didn't see the Christians at all, as they were all socially distancing) but there were Catholic, Anglican, Baptist and Scottish Presbyterian churches available.

Then on the Monday it was off to Barbate. To get the tides right (yes tides) we had to leave at 06:30hrs in the morning, so it was up early and away. The dawn had not broken yet – so nav lights and Radar on. It was quite eerie passing very large ships extremely well illuminated that were at anchor in the bay. As it became 07:00hrs the light started to appear in the sky as we left Algeciras bay hugging the coast as we had been instructed to do by the pilot book.



Leaving Algeciras bay as safely as possible

The wind started to pick up a bit so the sails went out and the engine went off as the dawn rushed in. We were sailing in a healthy breeze almost dead downwind. As we approached Tarifa point the easterly wind became funnelled (as it does in this area and to be fair, I had been warned) so some discreet 'just a tiny bit too late' reefing was needed.

With 75% main and 80% jib we carried on with 8.0kts over ground and 1.5kts of tide under perfect control. It is at this point that my first mate interjects with

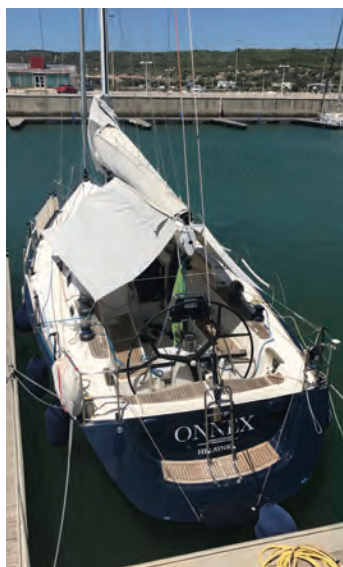
"I told you you should have reefed earlier"

Considering her Master's Ticket is at the Competent Crew level she has an inherent ability to know when the wind will pick up. Either that or it is just 'worry'.

We were very disappointed with Barbate; it is a soulless remnant of the grandiose plans the local folk had for a smashing sailing hub for the area, that was stymied by the crash of 2008. The marina was mostly empty but very well sheltered – however the town was a good healthy walk away. By the time I visited the town the wind was blowing a steady >30kts and sand was blowing everywhere. The beach looked marvellous with golden sand and a lovely promenade with shops and restos everywhere which I suppose was what encouraged the local Mayor to invest in the marina. Not an indication of Britishness in sight, in fact very few people spoke English leaving me to stumble happily in my broken Spanish. It seems the British landed in Gibraltar and only went east to the Costa del Sol and ignored the western part.

It was in Barbate we met the delivery crew of the Finnish boat *Onnex*.

The boat was a cruiser-racer set up for racing and the owner wanted it brought back from Spain to Helsinki. The crew of four comprised a Skipper, male in his



50's, two Deckies M & F in their late 20's and a 25 year old Maid called True. They had loaded the boat up with 28 days provisions for four people in Gibraltar and were going to do the trip in one hit. As they left Gibraltar and hit Tarifa Point the >30kts winds hit them and shredded their Code zero. After they had recovered from that, a pod of Orcas started circling the boat singing and blowing bubbles under water. The next thing they knew there was a crash and the Starboard gunwhale was underwater, then another crash and over half the rudder had been bitten off... They knew this because as the boat righted itself a large piece of laminated foam could be seen floating away followed by another small bit. Both parts with teeth marks in them. Feeling a bit shaken the Skipper insisted they put on their life jackets when, the boat was banged about and then turned in a 180° circle (Bearing in mind the sails were still out, albeit reefed). For another 20 mins the orcas continued to circle, banging the hull and pushing them in different directions. During this phase the Skipper put out a Mayday call and ensured all crew were wearing their life jackets, and gets the engine on. Sails are put away and they try to steer towards shelter, but they could not keep a course. The Skipper tries to steer with the sails but it was very erratic. Eventually a Lifeboat arrives and they take a tow. It is moments like this when you give great thanks and a contribution to the RNLI. The Lifeboatmen struggled to get a tow on board but eventually they did, in doing so they smashed the pulpit, then towed them into Barbate.

We met the crew after they had been in port for a week. During this period 4 other boats had come in damaged by the Orcas. True reported many white faced crew entering the port. All the others left the next day for repairs in Gibraltar. Unfortunately *Onnex* could not, as the skipper was not happy taking the boat out again. Barbate does not have a big enough lifting device to get the boat out of the water for a visual inspection. It would have to be taken to Gibraltar or Cadiz, both a days journey away. His insurance would not accept the damage unless there was proof, which he could not get and he refused to skipper the boat without a support vessel, as he deemed it too dangerous to proceed. An impasse. Solved by the owner deciding to cancel the contract and coming down to Barbate to take it to Gibraltar himself.

This meant that the skipper and his three crew were free to leave. Thinking what a nice skipper I could be, I offered them a lift to Cadiz where they could get transport to their next jobs or next ports. Only True accepted and so the next day at 10:00 *Dofesaba II* took off for Cadiz with a crew of three. The weather was calm and the wind hovering over 8kts such that the skipper says:

"Well why don't we try the 'Bag of Fear?'"

We rarely get this out, as it is a lot safer when there are three on board because if it goes pear shaped you need a couple of strong folk to manhandle or womanhandle the

enormous sail into the forepeak. But True was with us and she was a big strong lassie (and young). So why not.

The wind was still under 10kts and under main and jib we were averaging 4.0-4.5kts the wind was coming from 120-140° off the port quarter. In came the jib and out furled the Genneker. In with the starboard sheet and we were humming along 5.0-5.5kts all very stable and almost perfect.

So perfect that there was time to note the Point Trafalgar Lighthouse as we passed it, which is a major landmark on the coast. Whereupon my latest crew addition asked:

“Why did they name this part of Spain after a square in London.”

I explained that 200 years before, this area had been full of fighting square rigged ships, smoke, noise and that men's blood would have coloured the sea red. I explained how Nelson had split the line and defeated the French and Spanish fleets and thereby saved the nation from invasion by Bonaparte, and stopped us all being French, and that it had all happened just about there (pointing wildly over the port side). Hence Nelson's column in Trafalgar Square. “Oh” was all she said.

We stayed like that for nearly two hours until the wind rose to 16kts which is my cutoff speed for a very large sail. Nervously I wound the sail in and within 5 mins I had wound it tight into a multi coloured rope, all except one tiny little floppy bit towards the top half of the sail. That didn't matter now, I could sort it out later. Out with the jib, one reef in the main and off we went. The wind maxed out at 18 kts and unfortunately this persuaded that aforementioned tiny bit of sail to flap annoyingly.

I am told I should have left well alone, but you cannot expect a skipper to try to stop his sails from flogging. Going to the port side I gently tugged on the port sheet, when Whooomp! With a mighty shrill out came half the Genneker.

“Hands to action stations” yelled the skipper (he still doesn't know why, we were not under U-Boat attack) as he tried desperately to wind in the sail. Little did he know but the furling line had been shaken off the furling drum so all his heaving and grunting was useless. Sending True to the front and Mary helping with the furling line and the Port sheet the skipper started the engine and turned the boat into the wind so that when he released the halyard the sail would fall onto the deck and so be under control.

“Mary to the forepeak prepare to receive sail.”

Gradually the sail came towards the mast and the mad flapping which had been constant since the above paragraph started, soon abated. The Skipper puts the steering on autopilot and goes to help True on the foredeck. But the wind is too strong.

“True - downstairs help Mary pull the sail in.”

This happens but still it won't come down. Skipper believes it to be well and truly stuck as he can see True gritting her teeth and heaving like a good'un.

He runs to the mast and winds the halyard in and lo - summat comes unstuck and we can get the sail down. It is bundled down into the forepeak and the lid closed. All three of us meet in the cockpit heaving and sweating. The skipper says:

“Well done crew – phew! that was not so much fun”

He turns to the autopilot and resumes course, engine off, then jib out and on we go.

It all took 20 mins. True says later that she is sailing around the planet getting miles and experiences to help her get her commercial Skippers licence, and that we have helped her by giving her breadth of experience in what CAN happen when using a Gennaker – and she will know what to do next time herself.

I felt so pleased.

We arrive in Cadiz. We have chosen Puerto America, a marina right at the end of the Cadiz peninsular about as far from Cadiz old town as you can get without getting your feet wet. We berth and look out on a massive industrial city port with no saving grace features visible at all. Further investigation shows once again that during the noughties, over investment in the infrastructure had occurred and now what should be boulevards thriving with kiosks and shops, nightclubs and bars is but an empty wasteland. The Club Nautico is the only watering hole this side of a 25 minute walk into the city, and fortunately it was only 5 minutes from our berth. As the skipper I make an executive decision to repair to said Club Nautico and buy the well deserving crew a pint. And so it came to pass.



Mary and True AFTER we had the sail under control



ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER ADVENTURE

A DOMESTIC CRUISE FROM SCILLIES TO SCOTLAND

BILL DARLEY

Distant Dream (the Dream) is a Dufour 36 Classic, a comfortable but relatively good upwind boat for a cruiser – though as gentlemen we prefer not to. My brother, Richard, and I have sailed her 20,000 miles in the last 7 years. Not as far as one Vendee Globe, but clocking an average of nearly 3,000 miles a year seems a reasonable record for a couple of amateurs.

When we bought her in 2013 she had been pretty much unused – the log showed just 400 miles. Our aim was that in January each year we would plan a trip to “abroad” to give her and us some nautical exercise. We both enjoy a little blue water sailing, but our wives prefer the coastal life, preferably “somewhere warm”, so as with everything in life, planning a successful annual compromise was key to happy marriages and a happy partnership.

Planning in Covid times

Southern Brittany, the south west coast of Ireland and Galicia on the north western corner of Spain have all been excellent destinations. So

much did we enjoy the latter in 2018 that 2020 was intended to be a return to the delights of Galicia. However, as Covid-19 developed it became clear in early March that a more domestic plan might be needed which avoided the use of planes and might be less risky from a quarantine point of view. So we started planning for a trip that is roughly the same distance as Spain – about 500 miles - and settled on the Hebrides as being potentially more reliably accessible this Covid year but also famous for its brilliant cruising scenery, miles of protected cruising waters, excellent seafood and, of course, whisky.

The Mrs Darleys decided that Scotland definitely did not come



under the definition of “somewhere warm”, so a fortnight for each family was planned in the Scillies on the way round the corner and alternative crew sought for each of our fortnights in Scotland. I would sail *the Dream* north and brother Richard would bring her back down.

The Scillies 2020

In the event, Boris gave us the green light on July 4 and Richard sailed off for the West Country the next day on 5th July with a friend for a reasonably rapid trip down to Falmouth where my wife and I stepped aboard on the 8th and they took our car home. Whilst this was Plan B and we had lost 5 days of our Scilly cruise, we

were forecast to get a settled high pressure over the south west, so conditions should be perfect for the Isles. The NW F4 stuck long enough to give us a fast passage straight down to the Scillies - with the obligatory dolphin escort who seemed pleased to see us. The wind was scheduled to depart to give us a quiet 3 days with hardly any wind until we needed to get back for the handover back to Richard. A perfect 3-day window for this destination where distances are small and good weather is vital.

Apart from the seals, the Scilly Isles were still deserted when we arrived on the 10th, almost a week after lockdown lifted. It seemed we had beaten the yachting rush by a few days and all our planning felt worthwhile just to have the place to ourselves in mid-July. We were cautious as to how we would be welcomed by the Islanders as we seemed to be almost the first tourists to arrive and the Scillies had had no instances of Covid-19. However, the staff at the Tresco Abbey Gardens were delighted to see us and to show off the gardens that had bloomed with no-one to see them. The prime summer anchorages on St Martins and St Marys were blissfully quiet and the pubs extremely welcoming so long as we stayed outside – a significant contrast to when brother Richard arrived a week later when much of the yachting fraternity from the south west seemed to have finally made it down.

However, the water was still cold and with no land mass to heat up the Atlantic air, whilst Lymington was basking in 28 degrees, although we had sunshine and no wind, palms and beautiful beaches, it was still only 17 degrees down here. It didn't quite match up to the low 30's we'd had in Galicia – or even the high 20s of Lymington. Discussion ensued about what the wife's cruising destination rules actually meant about "somewhere warm". My Mrs Darley agreed that perhaps she would try Scotland in August after all (only for a week mind), provided that there was a warm dry croft available at the top of the pontoon in case the warm of a Scottish August also meant wet and/or midgy.

The return trip to Newlyn was equally swift with a SW F4 to bring us back to the mainland. Whilst Newlyn was damp when we arrived, the welcome from the harbourmaster on the VHF was enthusiastic and he took our lines and plugged us in and pointed us in the direction of the best pub in which to take a dram (outside of course) in the rain. Berthing in a well laid out active fishing port was a real pleasure, so we stayed an extra day and enjoyed the abundant fresh fish.

A pleasant sail back across Mount Bay, an easy rounding of the Lizard and a BBQ lunch cooked off the back of the boat on a mooring off Durgan in the beautiful Helford River topped off a great mini-cruise before we returned to Falmouth

for the boat/car swap with Richard the next day. He was unfortunately to find the Scillies swarming with yachties for his fortnight, so a good anchorage gained was one retained for him, but at least the weather warmed up considerably so that they could enjoy the beautiful beaches and long walks ashore.



Northbound to the Scots

Two weeks later, on 31 July, I was down in Falmouth again with my friend Tim Gaskin with a much less clear plan for the delivery up to Scotland, although the forecast looked generally favourable. Whilst a 30 mile shake-down sail to Newlyn seemed a sensibly gentle start as we were only 2 crew for the 500 mile sail, we felt that a 36 hour 150 mile run to cross to south east Ireland and then day sailing was probably the best option for at least the next step and then we could find our way from there based on the forecasts. As usual for our passages, Tim had cooked and frozen 3 delicious evening meals for us and with 4 frozen 2-litre milk cartons, the fridge would look after itself without any power requirement from the electrics for a few days. The Sainsbury's hypermarket just outside the gates of Falmouth Premier Marina provided the remaining



vittals for the week we had allowed to get to Scotland.

Having been escorted all the way across Mount Bay to Newlyn by dolphins again, we set off from Newlyn the next morning at a civilised 0900hrs motoring into the SW 10knots, but at 1030hrs we rounded Gwennap Head, unfurled our sails and took off towards Ireland on a beam reach. The Atlantic welcomed us with a fog bank, so at 7 knots over the ground, it was a rapid and somewhat murky departure from England with visibility of only a mile, so at that pace we were glad of our deck-mounted chart plotter and AIS, though we appeared to have the sea to ourselves.

The fog cleared by teatime giving us spectacular sunny ocean sailing for a few hours until dusk at 10pm and then a glorious night sail in SW 15kts. At 4am, just after moonset, dolphins joined us again in an area of bright phosphorescence. Their sparkling phosphorescent jet trails around and under *the Dream* in the dark, with a clear starry sky above remains one of the highlights of the trip, though repeated attempts to capture the beauty of it in video on an iPhone sadly proved fruitless – or perhaps added to the ephemeral magic of the 45 minutes that they danced with us.

Next day, the noon day log revealed we had sailed 156 miles in 24 hours which was a good run for our 36-footer and had already put us north of our planned destinations of Wexford or Rosslare, so we

recalculated and realised that the current pace could see us in Dublin within our 36 hour target and before sundown.

Arriving in Dublin Bay at 9pm we found that Covid restrictions meant that yachts arriving from England were not allowed to land. We had suspected that might be the case but the advice had been to turn up and see what the response was as the situation was rapidly changing. The Irish, practical and friendly as ever however, offered us a swinging mooring at Dun Laoghaire for the night provided we stayed aboard, left by 7am and removed all flags identifying us as English whilst on the mooring!

The next day gave us a relaxing 11kts spinnaker reach for the 56 mile sail past the Mountains of Morne and up to the beautiful Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland where we picked up a berth and a Guinness in Portaferry. The beauty of the Lough, and the forecast of no wind for the next day, reeled us into the Lough for a lay day of exploring this substantial expanse of inland salt water which is much the same size as the Solent. The Quoile Yacht Club was sadly closed, but we were welcomed from a suitable distance anyway.

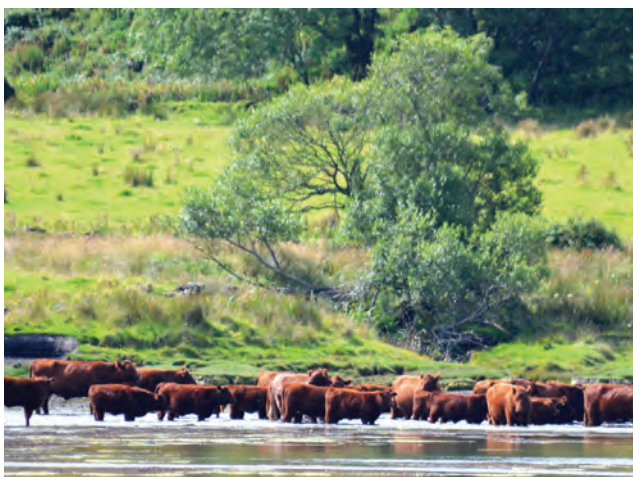
Tuesday saw a southerly F6 with rain showers forecast for the 76 mile run up to Scotland's Campbeltown on the Mull of Kintyre. Though the midday shipping forecast gave us some concern with an upgrade to gale warning in the southern



Irish Sea, we felt the sea rise and consequently enjoyed some surfing past the Mull of Galloway, but the stronger winds thankfully never reached us. The showers were optimistic – we had a moist time of it and consequently only saw the famous Mull of Kintyre once we were within 2 miles of it as we made the turn into Campbeltown halfway up the Mull. But it was a fast passage of only 11 hours.

Cruising the Clyde

Having arrived in Scotland with some time in hand, the pilot advised we enjoyed the Clyde cruising grounds before pushing on north. As many will know, the Firth of Clyde, the Kyles of Bute, Arran and Loch Fynne all provide miles of spectacular scenery, protected waters and weeks' worth of quiet anchorages. We made a brief foray up to the Burnt Islands in the Kyles of Bute for a night and an excellent lunch in the Colintraive Hotel before a short sail over to



Tarbert – an extraordinarily pretty little fishing port.

We were by now somewhat short of fuel and didn't wish to run low as there is none at the southern end of the Crinan Canal which would be a whole day of motoring. We were booked into a passage through the Canal on the Sunday and I had foolishly not appreciated that diesel is not easily come by in these more remote areas of Scotland and had not anticipated that, with Tarbert being a fishing village, the fuel dock closed at 4pm on a Friday afternoon and didn't open again until 7am Monday morning. We had arrived at 5pm. A call to the substantial marina nearby at Portavadie revealed that they had run out of diesel that morning with all the Clyde sailors returning to their boats with lockdown having just lifted, and they didn't know when the next delivery would be but they were unlikely to get any over the weekend. A kind harbour master, a pliable fuel attendant and a couple of bottles of beer fortunately had us refuelled late that evening, but it was a sober reminder that diesel in Scotland is not always easy to find. We had a similar recurrence in Oban where the marina will only sell diesel to residents, which meant my brother had to motor the 25 miles to Tobermory to refill.

The Crinan Canal

The Crinan Canal was a great experience. We arrived as requested at 8am on the little waiting pontoon at Ardrishaig on a lovely still sunny

Sunday morning. One racing sailor we had met had suggested that we certainly shouldn't attempt the canal with only the two of us without hiring a man and a boy to help handle the boat and the lock gates. A subsequent conversation over a whisky with another owner in Tarbert suggested we should be fine with just two of us so long as we were confident with our boat handling. Well fendered and with decks cleared for working, we entered the sea lock with just one other yacht. The canal staff gave Tim and one of their crew a thorough briefing on how to handle the lock gates and sluices as, unlike the much larger Caledonian, all 13 internal locks on Crinan are manual and are worked by the boats passing through and then we were off. The volunteer staff will open the bridges for you and the sea locks are manned, but otherwise it is DIY and all the more charming for it. The mistake we made was to do it in a single day. If we do it again in such fine weather, I would plan to spend 2 or 3 days as it is a fascinating part of the country and there is a great deal of history to see within walking distance of the canal. One lock-side cottage owner even came outside with her harp to play us through her lock. The licence allows you 4 days to do the 9 miles !

We worked our way steadily through the locks without stopping and arrived at Crinan at 4pm after 7 hours of careful steering. The tide was fair to sail up to Craobh (pronounced Croove) Haven so we returned to

salt water relieved to have a little more steerage room and happily exhausted after working our way through the locks. Craobh turned out to be a jewel of a marina. Cottages in this area of Scotland proved to be as rare as hen's teeth after the re-opening of Scotland after 15 July, but we managed to snag a cancellation for a week's rental of one of the little cottages beside the marina for my wife to come up to join me for some day sailing from Aug 16th-23rd.

The gentle run up to Oban just tipped the log over the 500-mile mark from Falmouth.

Solo round Mull in 5 days; Iona and Ulva

Having dropped Tim off in Oban to take the train south to Glasgow on one of the great journeys of the UK, I set off for a solo 5-day circumnavigation of Mull whilst awaiting my wife's arrival in Craobh. Another lazy high pressure had eliminated the Atlantic swell so, with the help of the Antares chart system developed by the Clyde Cruising Club which my brother had found for us, I was fortunate enough to be able to explore the lovely wild anchorages on the south western peninsular of Mull. First night was the beautiful and wild Traigh Gheal which revealed masses of white sand at low tide. Only seals and seabirds for company.

The next day, after a little exploring, we made our way up to Iona to pay a visit to the famous abbey at Iona. This is indeed a "thin" place where the physical and the spiritual feel very





Craigraig Bay

close together. Although the building is owned by Historic Scotland and was still closed as a result of Covid, it took me 3 hours to tear myself away from the place. I very much hope I can get back there again when it's open.

A steady beat across to the spectacular Craigraig Bay 8 miles north-east on Ulva revealed a couple of other yachts in the bay, but as it is in 3 sections and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile across, I could still find a secluded pool for *Distant Dream* and I to spend the night. This bay is definitely not for those with only Navionics or paper charts as one needs the detail that Antares gives to dodge the seals' favourite low tide resting places. But anchoring a few cables off a hunter's cottage, I settled down in swimming pool calm water for a BBQ and a peaceful night. Perfect place for a piece of barbequed salmon!

The next day a walk up the hill above the bay revealed fabulous views of Mull's hills. The day was warm so the clothing was foolishly light. I should have known better than to walk through shoulder high Scottish bracken in shorts. I spent the following evening picking out dozens of ticks that had dropped off the bracken and found their way to my warmest parts. Long trousers prevailed for the remainder of the cruise when walking ashore!

A motor out to the Treshnish Islands in another flat calm saw the wind strengthening as I went and ultimately a stop sadly became non-viable so we set short sails for the colourful town of Tobermory. Sadly the church where a friend of mine's



Craigraig Bay

grandfather had been the priest for 40 years was closed due to Covid, but the pubs were open, finally there was real ale available and people for conversation for the first time in 4 days. Tobermory proved hospitable and Mull's southwestern anchorages had been peaceful.

Another still morning saw us motoring south east down the Sound of Mull for another yet peaceful isolated anchorage in spectacular scenery, this time in Lock Spelve where the mussels come from, before returning to Craobh Haven to meet my wife and daughter.

Day sailing with my wife and daughter from Craobh Haven

After a check-up in Lochgilphead Hospital where a few more ticks were removed from the harder parts to reach when solo, we spent the following week doing some of the many sights from our perfectly positioned base at Craobh. There is endless cruising in sheltered waters here, though the tides need watching to avoid any embarrassments as they famously run strongly in half a dozen places nearby. Only 8 miles away we were able to make carefully timed visits to the infamous whirlpools of the Corryvreckan and the Little Corryvreckan whilst the wind, swell and tide were all in gentle mood and certainly did not disappoint: a large male stag watched carefully from the skyline high above us to ensure our safe passage. On the return down the east side of Staffa, we sighted a golden eagle soaring on the updrafts, before diving back down and calling as he went, apparently simply for the joy of it as he seemed

not to be hunting – or maybe his prey escaped him.

A similar distance north is Clachan Bridge, the so-called Bridge over the Atlantic, famous with photographers for being a semi-circle thus forming pleasing reflections as it spans the water between the Scottish mainland and Seil and then gives access to Luing by ferry. We learned later that there are otters in the Puilladobhrain Anchorage on the north side of the bridge. And there's a fine pub just over the bridge on Seil where we had a great meal. What's not to like ?!

The weather was warm enough that cattle came into the sea to join us to cool off whilst we lunched in Ardinamir Bay, though we didn't care to swim.

On the one wet, windy day that week, we took the car up to Glencoe and paid a visit to the Atlantic end of the Caledonian Canal – a very much more industrial scale business than the more homely Crinan.

After a week in our little cottage, we sailed the boat up to a quiet Oban for my brother to pick up for his fortnight in the Outer Hebrides and then his return trip back down south. Both trips were similarly enjoyable and without mishaps and the Dream was back on her mooring in Lymington (briefly) by mid-September. If we are still confined to the UK next Summer we might well return to the North as it provided excellent cruising grounds, no midges unless you left the saltwater behind and surprisingly excellent weather.

RIBAX Foray June 2020

We did a ten-boat raid in 2018 but, with less numbers this year, it felt more like a foray. It was up the Alre River in Southampton. The plan had been to go round the Isle of Wight but the smallest boat, Blackbird, an Orkney 24, was concerned about the Easterly blowing and so the fall-back plan was chosen.



Some of you may not have heard of the River Alre but it is the medieval name for the River Itchen. The Alre, or sometimes Arle, comes from "Alor", an Old English word for Alder Tree. Nowadays the Alre is viewed as the headwaters of the Itchen. You can now put two and two together and know where the town name Alresford comes from! In the 8th century, "the ford near the alder tree".

So, on the 25th June, the easterly blew 2 Axopars and the Orkney 24 smartly up Southampton Water to our first stop by Netley Hospital, on the east bank of Southampton Water. We rafted up to learn more about the hospital. The Royal Victoria Hospital (or Netley Hospital) was built after the Crimean war when Queen Victoria was shocked to hear of the appalling medical conditions experienced by the soldiers. Construction started in 1856 and the design caused some controversy, chiefly from Florence Nightingale. The hospital design had

all the corridors on the side facing Southampton Water and the wards at the back looking over a courtyard. This meant the ventilation was poor and smells did not dissipate.

Often visited by Queen Victoria, the hospital was extensively used during the Boer War as well as the First World War. There is a local term that was bought over from India during the Raj. Soldiers who went mad due to the heat were sent to Deolali Camp near Bombay and then transported to Netley. They were described as "Doolally"!

The corridors were so wide that, during the second world war, the Yanks drove a jeep from one end to the other, ¼ of a mile inside. The hospital fell into disuse and due to the high cost of maintenance it was demolished in 1966. The chapel and tower were left as fine landmarks in the Royal Victoria Country Park. Netley Sailing Club and the Weston Sailing Club both sail dinghies along

this stretch with Hythe Sailing Club facing them.

Pushing on, our flotilla branched east into the River Itchen passing Ocean Village Marina. 40 years ago, this was the dock where the Townsend Thoresen ferries, running from Le Havre, berthed. Later on, Portsmouth pitched for the cross-channel business and Southampton lost out. The author knows about this as in 1978, he picked up his French wife-to-be 40 times in that year!

The stone for construction of Winchester Cathedral, which started in 1079, came up the river, some of it from the quarries around Binstead on the Isle of Wight. The river was improved and a part made into a canal in the late 17th century to facilitate bigger barges reaching Winchester from Southampton Docks and vice-versa. It was called the Itchen Navigation. It ceased to operate in the mid-19th century and the upper reaches are largely



abandoned today, apart from offering world-class fly-fishing.

Our little armada cowed under the Itchen Bridge towering 92 ft above us. Sadly, the police frequently have to recover “jumpers” from the river or talk them off the parapet. The bridge spans 870 yards (800 m), is 92 feet (28 m) at its highest point and weighs 62,000 tons. It was built to replace the former chain ferry, known as the Floating Bridge, that crossed the river at this point. Before this, the famous Itchen Ferries, sailing between Woolston and St Mary’s, were lovely little boats and a few still exist. Woolston was not well developed when the Floating Bridge started in 1836 but the ferry hastened its rise as a dormitory area for Southampton. Until the early 18th century, Mansbridge (5 miles from the mouth of the Itchen) was the lowest crossing point of the river.

“The Woolston Ferry” is a 1977 folk song, by Gutta Percha and The Balladeers. It includes the lyrics:

***If you are ever up in Sholing
and you want to go to town,***

***Don’t go via Bitterne, that’s
the long way round,***

***Take a trip across the ferry,
take a trip across the sea***

***and if you’re pedestrian
you can go for free.***

***Oh, the Woolston ferry, it
doesn’t travel very fast,***

***It was never built for comfort,
it was built to last.***

Beyond the Itchen Bridge, it becomes industrial on both banks with a variety of industries to suit every requirement and fetish: Bridge Rubber and Plastics, Itchen Towage, Sea Scouts, Cement, Griffon Hoverwork, Atomic Motion Systems, Shamrock Marina, Tarmac, Spitfire Garage, Oil Spill Response, Livewire Tyres, Wise Catering and Intense Tattoos to name but a few. There is also Southampton F C- St Marys Stadium and Coalporters Rowing Club.

This might sound a bit grim, but there was plenty to look at as we then passed Shamrock Quay, which was previously the site of Camper & Nicholson’s Northam Yard. The yard opened in 1912 and built boats for WW1, then between wars J Class were built there, and then in WWII boats for the services again. The yard closed in 1979, the last boat to be worked on being a refit of Shamrock V, the J Class, in 1975.

Our little foray was playing “follow my leader”, but more like standing by to chuck out the anchors if the lead boat hit something!

We had three more bridges to navigate and were now approaching Northam Bridge, half way between Woolston and Mansbridge. In 1876 a wealthy man bought land on the east bank of the river (now called Bitterne) and realised that a bridge linking this land to Southampton would pay dividends. It then became apparent that a link on to Portsmouth would be even more advantageous. He then raised money from Portsmouth

businessmen to build not only Northam but also Bursledon Bridge.

The proposal to improve transport between the two important port cities was keenly supported by the Admiralty, especially since this was the time of the Napoleonic Wars. Consequently, when the Northam Bridge Company sought an Act of Parliament to build a bridge, the Act was passed quickly.

The new roads and bridges were built in 1799, and were originally operated as toll roads. The first Northam Bridge was of wooden construction. The Northam Bridge Company put successful effort into opposing the construction of a swing Bridge at Woolston in 1834, but were unable to stop the start of the ferry at Woolston, (which became known as the Floating Bridge) in 1885. The Northam Bridge company responded to the opening of the Floating Bridge by reducing their tolls by three quarters. This put the Floating Bridge out of business but only for a while. The wooden Northam Bridge was replaced in 1889 by an iron Bridge at a cost of £9,000.

The bridge remained a toll bridge until 1929 when the ownership was transferred from the private sector to the Southampton Corporation. On 18th March 1941, the bridge was damaged during an air raid. The iron bridge was replaced in 1954 with a third bridge, which was the first major prestressed concrete road bridge to be built in the UK.



The bridge seemed low but we had good height to get underneath, though we were approaching at the first high tide. On the left-hand bank, there used to be a boatyard called Belsize Boatyard run by the three Smith brothers. They went scavenging around the south coast boatyards doing up the wrecks they bought and selling them on. The brother I remember was called "Squeaker" and as he always turned up in the latest Jaguar, we assumed they were squeaking along OK. This stretch of river between the Northam and the next bridge, Cobden Railway Bridge, is a place of lost boats: on the right, a burnt out 60 ft powerboat that caught fire in East Cowes in 2013, the blaze taking 10 hours to bring under control; further on, house boats as well as the shed that used to house the Rampart Boatyard which was opened in the 1920s by George Desty. The business ran very successfully through to the 1980s, building high quality motorboats that are still sought after. Their most famous client was Douglas Fairbanks Jr who bought a boat for his girlfriend of the time! A number of Rampart boats were at the evacuation of Dunkirk.

Cobden Railway Bridge was our next bridge, carrying the Southampton

– Portsmouth railway line, and opened in 1866. The viaduct diverted traffic from other crossings, with the Woolston Floating Bridge seeing a significant fall in income at the time.

Moving on from the rusty railway bridge, the next stretch was lined on the right by houseboats of all descriptions and on the left was the Dyer Brothers Boatyard. Opened in 1856 and still owned by the same family, the yard had to move to its present site when the Cobden Railway Bridge was built. Back in the day, a Sunday was not complete without a row out for the family in a Dyer skiff. Father in a suit and bowler hat, sweating as he rowed into the wind whilst his good lady took shelter from the sun under a large parasol! Was it a row or a row?

The National Liberal Land Company purchased the land that is now Bitterne Park (north of Bitterne) in 1882, and began developing it for residential purposes. An iron bridge was constructed across the Itchen to St Denys on the west bank, thus improving access and vastly increasing the value of Bitterne Park.

The bridge was named Cobden Bridge after Richard Cobden, a prominent Liberal politician. It was

opened with the promise to be "free to the public for ever". This was in clear competition to Northam Bridge further south, which at that time was a toll bridge. Apparently, back in the day, a week was not complete without a fight on the bridge between gangs from St Denys and Bitterne Park. The police were called for one fight that involved 400 men!

Suddenly, our foray found itself in much different surroundings, with the leafy Riverside Park on the right, and on the left gardens sweeping down to the river with their own boat docks, the boats being limited by the bridge height.

St Denys Boat Club is close by with the punch line "The club that comes with boats". The club was founded in 1889 as St Denys Amateur Rowing Club, when St Denys was a village standing in the fields alongside the tidal Itchen. The local worthies, especially those of the church, decided that the local young men would benefit from the exercise and teamwork that rowing could offer and a deal was done with Dyer's Boatyard for the use of boats and premises. Membership was initially restricted to the tything of Portswood and Bitterne.

Within another ¼ of a mile, our team was surrounded by reeds and trees

without a building in sight. It was like dropping into the film "African Queen". Navigating tight turns, watching the depth sounder, the engines tilted up and leaving a faint brown stain in the water behind, we found ourselves in the Woodmill pond alongside Southampton University Boat Club. At the far end of the pond, a metal grill across a narrow opening showed the end of navigable waters. This was deemed a very suitable place to raft up and toast our navigation. It hardly seemed, from the surroundings that we were close to a city, except for the occasional plane flying into Southampton Airport just under a mile away.

It seems hardly worth the effort going up the river but "Scratchin' the Itchen" takes you through an amazing mixture of sights and sites so I think our foray team would recommend the allure of the "Alor".

NICK RYLEY



Powerboats Ahoy

You will see in the 2021 Club calendar a number of event dates, throughout the year, for powerboats.

Peter Cobb, Robin Taunt, Roger Wilson, Chris Sutherland and myself have formed a Powerboat Group under the aegis of the Cruising Committee. The idea is to cater for the higher speeds, longer range, daily range, and diversity of powerboats. This follows on from the RIBAX events of 2019 and 2020.

There are 4 groups to try and cater for different types of boats though these are fluid:

Group 1

RIBAX RIBS and Axopars

Group 2

Semi displacement PDGs Any length but cruising in the 8kts range

Group 3

Powerboats/PDG with cruising in excess of 15 knots

Group 4

Fast Powerboats Larger powerboats, cruising in excess of 20kts

Whereas a trip to Cowes and back can be a day sail, a fast powerboat can have lunch in Alderney! We hope to cover from Chichester to Weymouth and further at different times.

Please look out for the calendar and we hope to see you on some of the trips in the summer. Weather is always an unknown but maybe an exploration of the Jurassic coast or a night at Chichester taking in a play at the theatre. Make sure your oil is topped up and props clean for 2021.

NICK RYLEY



Folkboat Report 2020

JOHN WHYTE - FLEET CAPTAIN

Well what can one say about 2020? What appeared in April/March to be a very gloomy outlook did in fact turn into an enjoyable, if limited season. With an increasing amount of activity once the Government and RYA guidelines became established, and enabled the various racing organisations and clubs to decide as far as possible what they could and could not do.

The first breakthrough came courtesy of Nigel Campling and Gill Thomas on *Fritha* whose sterling efforts resulted in a small number of boats hitting the water on Thursday evenings for a self-organized trip around the cans, on the strict understanding that the Guidelines were to be adhered to and that the Club were in no way to be involved, nor of course would they be.

The Guidelines continued to be updated and fine tuned as the Covid situation became clearer, and by the latter half of the season normal racing was back on the menu albeit with various limitations. I do not need to go into it here save to say that the distancing rules applied with the resulting decision to “white Sail.” This, of course, meant no spinnakers and to achieve a level playing field and avoid any arguments over what is or is not a “household” all boats in races hosted by the Royal Lymington were limited to two crew with outboard engines permitted to remain on the transom whilst racing. Surprisingly this worked well, in fact better than some thought

The first and main event on the calendar, “Folkboat Week” was a great success both socially and on the water, with some 30 entries in the Nordic class. It was a bold decision by the Royal Solent Yacht Club to go ahead but it had to be made reasonably well in advance (mainly due to the



logistics involved) and so on the basis of nothing ventured nothing gained they issued the usual paperwork and pulled it off!

The racing itself was very varied due as usual to the day to day fickleness of the wind but nine races were successfully completed and by general agreement the two sail limitation did not detract from the week’s enjoyment, the resulting metalware going to *Madelaine*, *Svane* and *Jen* in that order with *The Otter* and *Mistral* sharing 4th place.

Next followed the Nationals with a similar format which worked equally well. These were held under the nomenclature “Folkboat West Solent Group Regatta”



due to the fact that in this format they could not qualify as “Nationals.”

This event, although only attracting an entry of fourteen boats, proved to be a great success, racing under the able guidance of PRO (my namesake) John Whyte.

Both days saw a moderate WSW breeze and some lively downwind legs providing a testing experience in the art of using the Nordic spec. whisker pole!

A reminder here to those who obviously did not, (or if they did misinterpreted them), always read the sailing instructions and double check the course, crew and skipper - he often gets it wrong – I know from personal experience!

Informal drinks followed each day’s racing on the yacht club balcony with a bottle of wine and coaster to the winner of each race. There were no overall prizes but the final pecking order was *So!* (Simon Osgood), *Njord* (Patrick Farrell) and *Mistral* (Claire Sowry)

Saturday and Wednesday Racing continued into October but was somewhat fragmented and the last race took place on Saturday the 17th. The late Summer and Autumn points series were won respectively by *Fritha* and *Mistral*.

Who knows what next year will bring? At the moment we are proceeding

on the basis of a full programme commencing with the Spring Series in April, subject to the caveat that Covid may still be with us. At the time of writing the National Committee's recommendation is that the Covid restrictions should be assumed to continue for all racing and therefore there will be a crew limit of 2, no spinnakers and engines permitted to remain on the stern. This is not, however, a blanket decision and will be reviewed as when and how the Covid situation evolves. Indeed, by the time this report goes to print a mass vaccination programme is likely to be well underway and a return to normal sailing a strong possibility.

In the meantime planning for the Sessan Cup to be held in September 2022 is proceeding apace and progress on this will be reported from time to time. A preliminary but informative introduction to this event prepared by Chris Baldwin can be found on the UK Folkboat Association website. As it is a white sail event, sailing next year will focus

on this format (as indeed dictated for us at present by Covid) but certainly not to the detriment of our traditional UK format with spinnakers. This will probably mean that if the Covid restrictions are lifted white sail will in all probability be limited to Wednesdays and the Nationals.

With the Sessan Cup in mind, which will be held in Christchurch Bay, it is proposed that next year's Nationals be held there also providing an excellent opportunity to re-familiarise ourselves with racing in clear air and open waters.

In conclusion, on behalf of the fleet and from me personally we offer a big thank you to Malcom and John for their unstinting efforts in enabling us to get going formally again in early August. It is not always understood how much work goes on behind the scenes to enable us to go out and enjoy (most of the time) ourselves on the water. These sentiments also of course apply to such support as the Club and staff were able to provide in these difficult times.



XOD Report 2020 PHIL BREWER

As with other sailing events, the 2020 XOD season was severely restricted by Covid-19 with many in our division not launching their boats. For those that did take to the water a few practice races preceded the main event which was Lymington XOD week in mid-September, with two races each day sailed over 5 days.

There was an impressive 19 boat entry including one visiting family, the fleet split roughly 50:50 into boats sailing 3-up and those 2-up. The racing was tight throughout with seven different race winners and a real mix in consistency. Nick Froud, helming *Venus*, eventually just shading James Markby's *Expeditious* for the overall title, and Jon Morrow's *Annex* finishing ahead of Phil and Jo Brewer in *Zest* for the 2-up trophy.

Special thanks must go to Principle Race Officer Malcolm McKeag who worked hard to provide racing throughout the shortened season but particularly during XOD Week, when the wind provided a constant challenge appearing in variable strength from all possible angles! It was also great to see so many Members getting involved working with the race team – we all enjoyed listening to the radio banter!

We are also grateful to Gillian and the hospitality team who enabled us to enjoy some socially distanced refreshment on the balcony in the September sunshine.

The Autumn Series was reduced by adverse weather with 50% of Saturdays and Wednesdays being sailed, but there were enough races to reveal that Rory Paton in *XI* as a clear winner, scoring a bullet in four out of six races.

We look forward to the safe return of the whole division next season.



Foiling The Channel

After a month of planning all was set for the six WASZP sailors on Friday 14th August to undertake the Foil for Life Challenge by Lemer Pax. Pierre Leboucher, Mael Garnier & Corentin Horeau from France alongside Hattie Rogers, Edward Higson & William Heathcote from the UK were set for the 108 nautical mile foiling marathon from Lymington to Le Havre, raising money for the National Health Service (NHS) and Assistance Publique Hôpitaux de Paris (APHP).

On the eve of the challenge, a potentially devastating announcement was made by the UK Government that all citizens entering the UK from France after 4am on Saturday 15th August would need to quarantine for 14 days - the challenge had become a race against time as well as one of endurance. At 5.30am on Friday, following a rapid change of logistics, the united and determined team made the final decision to go ahead and launched from the Royal Lymington Yacht Club slipway.

John Burnie, founder of the RORC Caribbean 600, saw the fleet off from the Lymington Starting Platform at 7.45am, sending messages in both English and French to the sailors. Thankfully no-one was over the line on such a long voyage - with a strong ebb tide pushing the everyone towards the Needles it would have taken a while to get back! Around fifteen boats saw them off in the Solent, with some even accompanying the WASZPs to ten miles south of the Needles. Shortly afterwards a Royal Navy T45 Destroyer also followed the team briefly!



Passing the Needles on the foil was one of the moments which will live long with the sailors. These are an iconic landmark in so many sailing challenges and James Tomlinson took some superb photos which capture the moment beautifully.

With the wind decreasing, the decision was made around half-way across the Channel to re-route to Port du Becquet, just to the East of Cherbourg. Alternative points of landfall had always been factored in so that the challenge could still be completed over a shorter distance if necessary.

On the face of it, the voyage could have been a dull ten-hour reach on one tack, but one of the beauties of sailing is that it's very rarely like that. A school of dolphins joined the WASZPs around 20 miles out from Cherbourg and an exhausted tiny bird landed on support boat driver Simon Rogers' head. The bird then fluttered between the RIBs and WASZPs, resting for long periods of time, then flying ashore once at dock.





The only breakage on a WASZP was a tiller extension universal joint failure, but Duncan Hepplewhite of SailingFast quickly swapped out a spare inside of 20 minutes. Duncan and French WASZP importer Manu Guedon struck up an instant friendship.

At 10.30pm CET the exhausted sailors made landfall in France. The Foil for Life Challenge by Lemer Pax was completed against all the odds.

As founder of the challenge Hattie Rogers said, "There was banter, laughter and camaraderie all the way! We knew it was going to be a long slog, but this rapidly became a sail that we'll remember for the rest of our lives. The French have already invited us to their WASZP Nationals in November and we reciprocated the invite for the UK Nationals. We were planning our 2021 challenge before we'd made landfall in France - we can't wait to 'send it' again!"

Throughout the day hundreds of followers watched the YB Tracking at <http://yb.tl/foilforlife> and inquired for updates on Twitter via @FoilForLife. The French and British sailors were ecstatic to share this challenge in support of such worth causes in a time of such great uncertainty.

Over 40 volunteers have given their time, effort and resources to back the challenge. The team are immensely





grateful to each and every one of these people without whom the Foil for Life simply wouldn't have been possible.

The support of Lemer Pax ensures that every single Euro and Pound will go to the organisations. Donations can be made via the www.foilforlife.com/ website, where you can find more information about the team of sailors. The team are stoked that almost £5,000 has been raised so far for the NHS, with a similar amount pledged to the AHP, and thank each and every one of the supporters for their time, effort and donations.

The team are immensely grateful to Lemer Pax for their title sponsorship of the challenge. A worldwide leader in innovation in the radiation protection sector, Lemer Pax creates, designs, and engineers efficient radiation protection solutions for healthcare, research, industry, and nuclear applications. With over 50 years of innovation, Lemer Pax exports all over the world, eco-aware and cutting edge of technology radiation protection products. The company strives for excellence to protect the most important thing: Life!

MARK JARDINE

FOIL FOR LIFE by **LEMER PAX**
CHALLENGE PROTECTING LIFE

Foil for Life Challenge by Lemer Pax supporters

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Editors Note:
Very many thanks to James Tomlinson for allowing us to use his fantastic photos.



Match Racing World Championship

Team GAC Pindar claimed a silver medal at an eventful Match Racing World Championship in Bermuda last month. The event was held during the Bermuda Gold Cup from 25-30 October 2020. Skipper, Ian Williams talks us through proceedings and shares some of his thoughts on our supposedly contactless sport.

"I would like to start by thanking and congratulating the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club and the Government of Bermuda for their extraordinary efforts in making this event happen in the current circumstances. Sport at an international level involving participants from multiple countries and continents has been incredibly difficult to achieve since the start of the pandemic, and it appears to me that Bermuda, with its strong but friendly testing protocols, is almost the only place in the World that could make an event like this happen during these unprecedented times.

I also want to congratulate Taylor Canfield and his Stars and Stripes team for winning Taylor's second Match Racing World Championship. It is a tough Championship to win once, but very few have been able to come back and win multiple titles.

There has been a lot of focus on one incident in the final where the boats collided, resulting in a further collision with a media boat; both boats and the media boat were damaged. I will address that below, but on reflection I do not believe that incident was the defining factor in the final. The reality is Team GAC Pindar led around mark one in all of the other three races and we were only able to convert that into one win. The main passing opportunity on the race course was the first run and twice Taylor and his team were able to



establish the smallest of overlaps into the favoured left bottom gate mark. They were certainly sharper than us on those runs and in particular their positioning was better than ours. Maybe having five people on board was an advantage for them (we were sailing with four as the rules stipulate an overall crew weight) or maybe their three close races with Phil Robertson in similar conditions that morning gave them that extra sharpness. Maybe they would have also beaten us without those factors. What is for sure is that we will learn from it and aim to come back stronger next year.

Back home, analysing the final, I counted six unforced errors that we made (including those two positioning errors). Under ordinary circumstances we would only expect to make one or two in a high pressure final. I think much of that can simply be put down to a lack of match sharpness having not match raced since July 2020. Having said that, there is no excuse as all teams' preparations have been very limited over the last few months and certainly the opposition made mistakes as well; ours turned out to be more costly.

Regarding the collision in the pre-start of race two, I do not have the words to accurately describe it here but many readers will have seen the the video. In short, we were approaching an obstruction on port and Taylor was approaching on starboard. At some point he became overlapped inside us and we were required to give him room if able. The first thing to consider is who should the penalty fall on in the race. This was a very dynamic situation with fine judgement calls affecting a rather nuanced situation in the rules. The rights and wrongs of it flip depending on whether he was allowed to turn into us or not. Crucially the umpires agreed with him that he was allowed to do so and whilst I am not entirely convinced, I can certainly see how they could interpret it that way.

The more important point which is pertinent to the sport going forward though is the liability, both in terms of points deductions and loss of damage deposit, for the damage caused by the collision. I feel strongly that Taylor's obligation in this instance was to go straight or, if his judgment was different to mine and he thought we were



not crossing ahead, to turn away from the collision and appeal to the umpires. In penalising us for the damage element of the collision, the umpires ruled that the obligation was entirely on us to avoid the collision. This is not the first time I have been in a hearing about damage and almost always they go against the boat that was penalised in the incident. My view is that in a sport where we are sailing borrowed boats, the incentives inherent in this rule need to be more targeted towards preventing collisions, rather than simply amplifying the call made by the umpires on the water. In this

instance, the call went Taylor's way, and by ensuring there was a collision with damage he gained a points advantage in addition to the penalty awarded during the race.

Of course Team GAC Pindar were disappointed to come away from Bermuda without that elusive seventh World Title, particularly after coming so close. But against the global backdrop of health, social, and economic woes, we do feel extremely fortunate just to have been able to attend a competitive Match Racing World Championship, as well as three M32 European Series events this year

(in which we won two and finished 2nd in the other). Like many event logistics businesses, our operations team in Southampton have also felt the effect of the event downturn acutely; yet the diversity within our organisation and the encouraging recent news regarding potential COVID-19 vaccines allows us, and our industry, a more positive outlook for 2021. We are hopeful that after what will likely be a slow start to the year we can get back to doing what we love on a more regular, and normalised, basis."

IAN WILLIAMS
SKIPPER, TEAM GAC PINDAR



Junior Sailing Round-Up 2020

It goes without saying that 2020 has been challenging, but at year end the Junior Fleets are probably stronger than ever they have been. Long may it last, but undoubtedly fleet numbers have been boosted because travel has been very limited and most events elsewhere have been cancelled.

Winter training came to an abrupt end in March as the National Covid lockdown commenced. Friday Racing started on time in early May, but it was initially of the virtual variety. This ran for five weeks, but interest waned very quickly when the River opened up in June. At first training was largely in family groups, spearheaded by the Optimists under the guidance of Fleet Captain Richard Breeze, who wrote our Covid protocols. Advice was always at hand from Joff McGill, the RYA's Sailability Manager, and also our 420 Fleet Captain. Joff actually wrote much of the RYA's Covid guidance.

When the Club opened up and the RIBs were made available there was an avalanche of activity, and since then over 100 training sessions have taken place. Of particular note has been the spectacular rise of the 29er Fleet under the Fleet Captain Phil Lightbody. It was based on four families whose 13/14 year olds had suddenly put on a growth spurt that put them beyond the Fevas. Their enthusiasm was infectious and now the Fleet has grown to eleven boats.

Friday Racing proper began in July with Steve Green again in charge, and with sponsorship from Dunford

Construction Ltd. turnout was the best ever. In July we debated whether a Junior Regatta could even take place in August. With WJS sadly inactive it would take a very different form from previous years. We did go ahead under the direction of Shireen Crowe and with the enthusiastic support of the Flag Officers, the multitude of volunteers old and new and all the competitors, it was voted a great success. There were over 80 boats in five classes.

Amazingly we have two sailors (out of five) who have been shortlisted for the YJ Young Sailor of the Year. Santi Sesto-Cosby had great success in his Optimist this Summer at both Lake Garda and the Optimist Europeans in Slovenia. Tim Hire has achieved 5th position in the European rankings while still a Junior in his Aero.

After three years in charge, Max & Jeremy Vines handed over as Captains of Juniors to Sarah and Andrew Richards at the end of September. This coincided with the appointment of Hugh Styles, the first ever Junior Head Coach, a new position created thanks to a generous 3 year donation by a Club Member.

Looking forward into 2021 and beyond, Youth and Junior Sailing has an important part to play at the heart of the Club where it is vital to build on the success of the past through providing first class race coaching facilitated by the Head Coach, Fleet Captains and the Fleet Lead Coaches.

It is also essential that we involve children who enjoy the water but don't want to race all the time. We are therefore looking into a program of sailing skills and enjoyment for Members' children, building closer links with the training team and Shipmates, leading through to qualifications and participation in the Junior Regatta. A joint camping weekend to Newtown Creek in the summer is also on the cards, so 2021 should be a successful and exciting year for all.

These activities would not be possible without the support of a huge number of volunteers, parents, coaches, the Club office and the Boatmen - thank you to everyone involved.

MAX, JEREMY, SARAH AND ANDREW



RLymYC Head Coach Report

As the saying goes 'time flies when you're having fun' and it seems like only yesterday I was starting the new head coach role, back in October. It has been a busy and rewarding period meeting and hearing from a wide variety of stakeholders; getting to know the fleet captains, the coaches, the RLymYC staff and trying to get time on the water with the sailors.

We have been blessed with some good autumn weather and thus there has been plenty of on the water activity; the Oppies only stopping their mid-week sailing sessions when the clocks fell back. The enthusiasm shown by coaches and sailors alike has been inspiring and I am keen to help channel this into some solid learning over the winter months.

I have been impressed with the amount of weekly activity and all credit to the drive of all involved in helping the sailors get the best out of their time on the water.

The impact of Covid-19 has been felt by all and has meant that fleets have had to be flexible and innovative, running virtual fitness and rig setup sessions to maintain engagement and development for the sailors.

Virtual presentations from field experts such as Miles Seddon of Opposite Tack, have seen impressive uptake. Miles ran a meteorology lecture for the junior and youth fleets, with 70 sailors tuning in. We have developed a series of talks for the rest of lockdown and beyond, with additional fitness sessions too. Keep



up to date with plans through the Club weekly newsletter and stay safe.

HUGH STYLES.

Radial Report JACOB ANDERSEN 16 YEARS

As the whole country went into lockdown in mid-March, the summer didn't look that great, with all sailing events and training cancelled indefinitely.

None of us knew what was ahead and although initially it was great to have so much downtime, the lack of leisure activities meant time began to drag. Despite the enforced sailing break it was great to stay connected with the Laser fleet thanks to Nik Froud's (Laser Sailing Captain) amazing efforts with quizzes. Nothing quite lived up to excitement of actually being out on the water.

By around June, there seemed to be some hope of us getting back out onto the water again. As lockdown started to ease and we were given the all clear by the RYA, we were finally able to get back afloat. With help from Nik to organise things, we headed out into the Solent. Our first sail was in perfect conditions - 15kts and good sunshine. It was fantastic to be back in my boat after such a long wait. We made it all the way to the Needles and back before the sun set and had a great time.



Over the rest of the summer we made the most of lockdown, taking every opportunity to get extra time sailing. It made me realise how much I enjoy being on the water and appreciate those days when they happen. Sailing provided a great distraction from all that was happening in the world. It was great to have the Club's support through lockdown to make the most of it!



Shipmates, for the youngest Members of the Club, enjoyed some great events at the end of the summer despite the curtailed season.

The first weekend of September saw a Scow potter through the marshes from the river to Tanners Lane beach. We had 12 boats and 20 Shipmates taking part and it was a great chance to explore different sailing spots close to the river. The boats were tied to our support boats while we had a picnic ashore before heading back in a brisk breeze with plenty of tacking on the way home. Luckily the ice cream hut was open to reward everyone's hard work on their return.

A sunny evening was spent on the inflatables at the Sea Water Baths, the kids loved having the place to themselves to try and reach the ends of the obstacle courses.

'After School Sailing' was trialled in September and October with a view to doing more next season. First session was in a strong breeze, sailing up through Crooked Lake to

Oxey Buoy was a proper beat but the support boat was on hand with Smarties tubes for the children to try and grab on the way past. For the second session we meandered to Lymington Quay, tying up on the visitors mooring pontoon before buying large ice creams and gently drifting back to the Club. The final event was completing a River Quiz where the children had a map and questions to answer as they sailed around the river off the Club. These included speed limits, post names and (unsurprisingly) rescuing Smarties tubes off a pontoon in the river. Fortunately, the Shipmates got to them before the Seagulls!

We have lots of fantastic ideas for 2021 and look forward to building on the events of this year. For further information on Shipmates please contact Maria in the Club Office.

ROUND THE ISLAND IN FEVAS NICOLA WEST

With many choosing to stay at home this summer, two local families decided that it would be the perfect opportunity for fabulous adventure.

George Overton with his brother Harry West and Dirk and Johnny Rogers had a vision of sailing non-stop around the Isle of Wight, a distance of more than 50 nautical miles, in their RS Feva dinghies.

After much planning, the date was set for Sunday 9th August, weather permitting. Monitoring the forecast during the week leading up to the 9th was nerve racking with the wind changing from too strong to too little, but luckily on the day before it all seemed to have settled on near perfect conditions.

The alarms were set for an early start, waking at 4.00am for a 5.00am launch, then heading down Lymington River and through the river gate at 5.25am in the pre-sunrise light. The journey to The Needles proved idyllic with a beautiful pink sunrise as both boats threaded through The Needles.

The trip from The Needles of St Catherine's Point was exhilarating with some fantastic winds allowing them to round the point at only 8.24am, then pushing them on around to Ventnor by 9.07am. Unfortunately, as the warmth of the sun came through the wind eased and the stretch passing Bembridge, Ryde and on to Cowes slowed with the sailors having to make best use of the tides when they could.

As they rounded the headland to Cowes the sea breeze kicked in and the four boys in their two RS Fevas started on the long and final stretch back home to Lymington crossing the river line at 5.59pm.



RLymYC 420's

Lymington sailors in the 420s had such high hopes for 2020. An exciting season of racing and training, with a 50th Anniversary World Championships in Brittany to look forward. The friendships, the fun, the sun...

Little did we know that a cold and damp Rutland in March 2020 would be the last event of the season. But do you know what, there has still been plenty of time on the water, friendships have endured and a love of sailing has not been dimmed by Coronavirus.

As lockdown restrictions started to ease in May, an informal training group emerged and spent as many Saturdays on the water as they could. When formal activity picked up again, the sailors made the most of it without ever



quite knowing what was coming next. Junior Race Week saw a number of boats compete, including a team from the Scaramouche Sailing Trust. Formal training, both at the Club and with the Class Association, started to build towards a number of events that promised to end the season on a high. The weather and a second lockdown had other ideas of course.

Not the year anyone expected, but a group of young sailors, developing their skills and their passion all the time no matter what life throws at them.

Many thanks to all the parents and coaches (particularly Kirsty Urwin) who have committed to the fleet. Roll on 2021...

JOFF MCGILL - FLEET CAPTAIN



Wednesday Junior Sailing Report

Unfortunately, due to the COVID restrictions imposed on us, we were unable to run any WJS this year. However, we did manage to use some of the boats for a scaled down, but successful, Junior Regatta in August. The Shipmates also made use of some of the Scows during the summer for adventures on the river.

In November, we heard the very sad news that Dr Jonathan Rogers, who founded WJS in 1984, had passed away. He was an inspirational force in setting up WJS, with like-minded individuals, to enable local children to experience life on the water. His enthusiasm, and love of the water extended to the WJS sailors and founded their enjoyment of sailing for life. Jonathan's fundamental ethos for having fun on the water is still being maintained today.

We are optimistic about running WJS in 2021 and cannot wait to see all the young sailors and volunteers back on the water again.

If you would like to join our friendly and enthusiastic team, please do get in contact – I would love to hear from you.

ALI HUSBAND



RLymYC Junior Race Week

Held from 17th to 21st August Junior Race Week was the first formal event to be run by the Club after months of Covid lockdown. Led by Event Safety Officer/ PRO Joff McGill organisation afloat and ashore followed HMG advice, RYA guidelines and the operating procedures laid down by the Club's own H&S Committee.

In contrast to previous years the 2020 regatta was performed a 'no frills' event: parties, BBQ and prize giving were all set aside along with the traditional bacon butties and tuck shop while on the water the usual split into Gold, Silver and Bronze fleets was re-arranged to accommodate the fact that this year our Wednesday Junior Sailors could not be included – not least because this year there was no Wednesday Junior Sailing. Nonetheless most of our regular volunteers and local sailing families were able to come out in force to help, pleased to get the sailors on the water: 84 boats and 110 sailors ranging in age from 8 to over 40 years old, all told. It was a family affair with siblings and bubbles racing together and parents sailing a Scow or Feva with a young family member. It was a huge achievement, lots of hard work behind the scenes and lots of fun over the week.

The largest fleets were Oppies, Teras and Fevas plus a respectable number of 420s, Aeros and 29ers. To enable more Scows to compete the rules were amended to allow an adult to sail with a same-household child while Aeros and 29ers made a welcome addition to the Gold fleet entry for the first time.

Joff did a first-class job running the regatta with calm efficiency and in deference to those Covid-19 guidelines. Sailing Manager Vicky Lean put in long days and many extra hours, never losing faith in the team mantra "If we can (safely) we will!"

Sailors arrived changed and ready to sail, the current rules around the use of the Club were strictly adhered to and as always the whole event was backed-up and supported by the



race teams, safety officers, mark layers and tally ladies without whom we could not run this regatta.

The race and safety teams reviewed conditions daily. The daily volunteer and competitor safety briefings were held outside and socially distanced. An unfailingly cheerful Meriel McCarthy from LTSC was our Dinghy Park Marshall with a team of super-efficient mums. With regimental precision dinghies in groups of six were sent down the slipway by Sebastian Chamberlain and Chris Knox. The sailors being towed out had been expertly trained in 'tow procedure' (thank you Nicola West) so it was a case of launch and push to the 'floater ribs'. And Race Officers Malcolm McKeag (Gold), John Whyte (Silver) and Peter Scholfield (SCOW) with their excellent race teams delivered lots of short races within a "Sail-and-Go" four-hour window. Despite losing two days out of the week to un-sailable weather we had three great days of challenging racing.

This year Gold Fleet had the blessing of having a more homogenous

collection of boats than previously so was able to coalesce into just two fleets: Fast Handicap and Fevas. It made for easier race management and it made for better, much better, racing for the sailors. Many were the finishes with the boats just one or two seconds apart.

There were 20 entries in the Fast Handicap class, 16 in the Fevas while thanks to a chance meeting with Joff McGill we were able to add an extra 420 to the mix - the Scaramouche crew from the Greig City Academy ribbed over from Cowes each day. The Fast Handicaps raced (the clue is in the name) on handicap; and the Fevas boat-for-boat. That said 12 of the 20 in the former were either Lasers or Aero 5s, so evenly matched on the water that they were invariably close together round the track.

Thanks not least to the efforts of class captain Phil Lightbody the show ponies in the Fast Handicap this year were four 29ers: wings, prodders, asymmetric kites and all. And were they fast? Yes they were. When upright. This is a tricky and

demanding little boat, a miniature of the 49er Olympic dinghy and it takes a good three months with the boat just to learn to ride it and keep the sails out of the water. Most of the sailors were new to the beast and with three days of close-to or beyond the limit breeze, sometimes gusting to 18- and even 20 kts, Gold Fleet Safety – five dedicated RIBs plus three ‘Runners’ – were kept pretty busy. In this class Malcolm ran what’s called Average Lap Racing: start together, go round the track as many times as you can and the race is stopped after 20 (or so) minutes. Elapsed time divided by number of laps sailed gives the final corrected time. And on the final race of the final day he saw his private goal achieved: the lead 29er went round three times to everyone else’s two. Well done Sam Webb and Nick Evans.

The Fevas, sailing on a slightly shorter inner circuit, had some brilliantly close racing with four different winners of the eleven races sailed, and behind the leaders there was continual place changing, often all the way to the finish line. That said, Dirk Rogers and Cameron Bignold-Kyles early on showed themselves as the boat to beat with three wins in three races on Day One (Monday). The wheels came off a bit on Tuesday but by Thursday they were back on form – four out of four. Even so they won overall by only three points.

The first day of racing for the Silver Fleet (Optimists 13, Teras 24) was challenging for some but courage did not desert these young sailors many of whom were on a steeper learning curve than they might have anticipated. Race Officer John Whyte delivered lots of challenging short races. He kept competitors busy and

happy on Day One with three races in 12-14 kts SW winds. A fourth race was not run due to the fast ebbing tide reducing the depth in Crooked Lake and so making it necessary to get the boats home while John saw that some crews were very tired after a third race. Just the sort of extra perception a race officer for this event needs. Silver Fleet enjoyed great close racing on the last day adding four races to give a 10-race series. Oppie sailor Freya Hutchinson battled it out with Jonny Rogers to take first place while Max Tait won the Tera class.

After the first day of racing just to the East of the Starting Platform, Scow Race officer Peter Schofield set up the committee boat at the entrance to Crooked Lake for the week – the windward leeward course delivered excellent 20-minute races. There were three races a day with ‘Gapper’ sailed by Hughie Pemberton in the lead after two days racing. On the last day after the initial windward leeward races and a race around the island ‘Gapper’ was in the lead. ‘Sapphire’ sailed by Maisie Chamberlain-Hyde, Olivia Impett and Crista Millar was steadily improving and won the next three races. And with a nice touch of elegant showmanship Scho had arranged matters so that the last race of this day finished on the Club line. This gave ‘Sapphire’ the overall win but mention must be made of ‘Praline’ Scow No: 412 who having had a difficult two days came good with a third place in race 5.

John Doerr, our senior International Judge and currently chairman of World Sailing’s Racing Rules committee, had been due to chair the International Jury at the Tokyo Sailing Olympic Games this summer but... So he offered to arbitrate any

protests we might have. And did so with such kindness and a clear explanation of what the rules are all about that he turned around a youngster who was all set to give up sailing after a port/starboard incident (he didn’t know you had to do a three-sixty but he did shout ‘sorry’). Heather Burrell our new ‘bridge’ radio operator did a great job with water/shore communication.

2020 Junior Race Week was a real team effort with thanks due to Lymington Sea Scouts, Keyhaven SC, Berthon Boat Company, Lymington Yacht Haven, Ocean Safety, Lymington Town Sailing Club, the Harbour Commission and our wonderful volunteers.

And of course a big thank you to all the competitors at this year’s Junior Race Week – you were cheerful, respectful of the COVID-19 rules, well behaved and good sports.

All in all Junior Regatta 2020 was an extraordinary week in an extraordinary year, full of so many extraordinary moments and leaving so many extraordinary memories. And of those many the best? Perhaps the last day... breeze 13-15kts, course axis 210° from the river entrance towards Hurst, the sun shining, The Solent a-shimmer, in the distance The Needles and as far as the eye could see youngsters in dinghies having a ball. As Race Officer Malcolm McKeag said: “what’s not to like?”

I do hope the sailors enjoyed this new junior racing format as much as we all did. Here’s to Junior Race Week 2021 run by the Junior Race Committee.

Happy Racing!

SHIREEN CROWE



Youth Aero Fleet 2020

Whilst 2020 may have been a quieter year than most, the Lymington Aero Youths have nevertheless had some great opportunities to get out on the water, often in conditions in which their parents would not have dared to launch!

At the start of the season, we continued with the National Youth Squad Winter Training for as long as possible, and it was great to see so many Lymington sailors in the squad this year, including Abby Hire, Tim Hire, Will Homewood, Natasha Sion, Sasha Tydeman, Kate Wharmby, Tom Wharmby and Iona Willows. The squad training included racing in the Sailjuice winter series (where Tim Hire took a first place in the youth category, fourth overall, and first Aero 7, whilst Abby Hire was fourth junior), and provided much needed high wind training – this was especially useful given the forecasts for the National Championships and youth Nationals (of up to 47kts for the latter!).



Tom Wharmby, hoping it won't get any windier, at the stormy Nationals in Eastbourne



*Tim Hire sailing in the Tiger Trophy at Rutland early in 2020
"can I get my bow as high as his?"*

Luckily for the Aero class, by August, lockdown had been sufficiently eased to allow the national championships to be held in sunny Eastbourne over the Bank holiday weekend. The squad sailors were joined by other Lymington youths, including Euan Etheridge and Ted Ward. Ice creams were licked all round to celebrate a good haul of results for the Lymington clubs. Euan was the highest placed Lymington Aero 5 in 11th place overall, whilst

Abby Hire took the trophy for Junior National Aero 5 Champion (20th overall, just ahead of Will Homewood in 21st and Iona Willows in 22nd) and Tom Wharmby was awarded a hat for coming first Junior Boy (35th overall, beating Kate Wharmby in 38th and Natasha Sion 41st).

Tim Hire took a third overall - first youth - in the Aero 7s, but was really just practicing for what was to come – he won first in the 7s in the



Abby Hire and Tom Wharmby, celebrating First Junior Girl and Boy at the Aero 5 Nationals.



Tim Hire, preparing to start, in a not so sunny Eastbourne!



Tim Hire collecting his First Youth Trophy at the Nationals

RLymYC Aero open in September, and also went on to defend his title, winning the Youth National Aero 7 Championship at the end of October/start of November at Burghfield.

Abby and Tim Hire also added First Aero 5 Lady (10th overall) and First Aero 9 Youth (2nd overall) titles at the Aero Inlands at Draycote in October.

Tim has had a really good year, with his nomination for Yachts and Yachting Youth Sailor of the Year, alongside local Oppie sailor Santi Sesto-Cosby being the icing on the cake.

Tim has steadily come to form in the RS Aero Class. Already at just 18 years old he has an impressive list of achievements, including;

- Steve Nicholson Trophy, Northampton, 1st in 2019
- RS Aero 7 UK Youth Champs - 1st in 2019
- RS Aero 7 UK Nationals - 3rd (& 1st Youth) in both 2019 & 2020

- RS Aero 7 Europeans, Garda - 6th (& 1st Youth) in 2019
- RS Aero 9 UK Nationals - 2nd (& 1st Youth) in 2020
- Seldon SailJuice Winter Series - 4th (& 1st Youth) out of 656 entries in 2020

That is hugely impressive, but more important than race results is that Tim is an all round nice guy and a good sport. As an older & taller youth sailor he can be found helping the rest of the Youth Team launch when we have tough conditions like this year's Bloody Mary and various youth training weekends.

Tim is modest with his accomplishments in victory and generous with his compliments in defeat - a splendid role model for all our younger youth sailors.

At home, we saw 5 Aero entries at this summer's socially distanced Youth Regatta, with Abby winning the Gold Fleet title, with Tom and Kate Wharmby narrowly missing

podium places, but giving the Lasers a challenge nevertheless, coming 4th and 5th respectively. Kate managed to reverse the order, beating Tom, in this summer's RLymYC Friday Night Youth Racing Series taking 4th and 6th position respectively.

However, it wasn't all hard racing for the Aero sailors. Some light relief was had whilst we spent a glorious summer in Lymington. Euan, Kate, Natasha, Tim and Will all helped coach at the Salterns and on the river, developing the local Oppie and Tera sailors in the hope that we have a solid youth Aero team for the future.

Looking forward, with reduced national squad training helping to bring us back to home waters, we will be pursuing a programme of winter training from the Club. This is open to all Club Aero youths, so persuade your parents to lend you their Aero (or get them to buy one extra) and come join us on the water!

NEIL WHARMBY - FLEET CAPTAIN

29er Fleet

2020 saw an early end to Optimist and Feva sailing for many of our current 29er sailors. It was disappointing for many who were hitting their peak in the class and were unable to show their talents on a World or European stage. Many RLymYC sailors made a collective decision to migrate to the next challenge, the 29er.

The average age of the current 29er fleet is 14, very young and very light! Competitive weight in this class is 120kg, most have not reached 100kg...

Early 2020 I took on the role to build a Royal Lymington 29er fleet. Hattie Rogers (Lead Coach) supported by Ross Banham joined me in creating a class leading coaching environment for the young sailors.

Early days consisted of 1-1 sailing with coaches in the boats. This was so good to give the sailors confidence in the 29er, which let's not forget, is a skiff and always has the tendency to lay flat in the water!

We started with 3-4 boats and after lockdown was lifted we quickly built the fleet during the summer, we now have 11-12 boats registered.

We ran 2 blocks of coaching prior to the winter in all conditions gaining more and more confidence. The sailors also formed partnerships, with some crews travelling 3 hours to attend the training.

Hattie and Ross, both very experienced 29er sailors, have really drilled the sailors with technical knowhow and confidence over those summer months. They have so far attended two Grand Prix's in Weymouth, not



yet made it into Gold Fleet, but all pushing the front of Silver fleet. They are just 14 years old and will be in this fleet for a further 4 years, so their time will come! We are very lucky to have such great facilities and sailing area in the Solent, these young sailors will all be masters of their fleet in years to come!

Big thank you to the parents and coaches for their support in creating such a great squad and roll on 2021!

PHIL LIGHTBODY - FLEET CAPTAIN



RS Feva Fleet 2020

Despite our online fun with Virtual Regatta during lockdown, we were really excited when we were allowed back on the water. We were so grateful for all of the Club's efforts to get us sailing again so quickly, even though at the start this meant many of us were forced to sail with a parent!

As the restrictions eased we were allowed to sail again with our usual crew and helm which was much better!

Our Feva fleet has grown considerably over the course of the summer, we are now a strong group of around fourteen boats with many transitioning from the RS Tera and Optimists.

We are very grateful to Jeremy Vines who has stepped up as Fleet Captain and put on weekly training sessions which have been great fun and have prepared us for the competitions which managed to take place.

Our weekly Friday Night Junior Club Racing and of course during the Club's re-named Junior Race Week in August put these skills to the test.

However, it was during the RYA Weymouth and Portland National

Sailing Academy successful Zonal Championship, which was held in September, that we were able to really put our skills to the test.

The Club had a great turn out with six boats representatives. The weather was challenging for the one day event with gusts of 30kts, but we enjoyed the challenge and finally having the opportunity to sail away from home.

Well done to Freddie Fitzsimmons and Henry Patten our highest placed pair.

We look forward to when we can next get back out on the water and are very excited to hear what Hugh Styles has planned for us!

BY 12 YEAR OLDS FREYA ENGLAND AND HARRY WEST.

A few words from the Fleet Captain...

Covid has had some surprising side effects, one being that a number of Oppie and Tera sailors have transitioned to Fevas a year or so early, and suddenly we have a young and enthusiastic group eager to get out on the water whenever they can. Early on, several parents squeezed into the front as crew, and this was very helpful.

We had a great turnout of sixteen for the Junior Race Week, and six went on to the RYA Zone Championship at Portland. As a result four have been invited to join the zone training group.

In October we had the privilege to host a Feva class national event. We had it all planned, but the weather intervened with a gale, and we had to call it off. However, we have been asked to run the same event in October 2021.

We now have a Lead Coach, Will Taylor and a winter plan and look forward to a Covid free 2021.

Lastly, a big thank you to David Bignold who has captained the Fleet for past three years.

JEREMY VINES

Olly's New Plan

My name is Oliver Phillips and like you, this year has not gone to plan. However out of unexpected events, new challenges and experiences emerge.



Plan for 2020:

Continue training in National Tera Pro Squad: continue to train with RLymYC Tera fleet, complete Southern Area Events, National's, Europeans and transition into Laser or Aero?

Unexpected events for 2020:

COVID 19, No racing, initially no sailing, I grow unexpectedly fast, by May I can't reach my tiller in my Tera when hiking... and then whilst on our lockdown hour exercise as a family in Mudeford, we stop to have a distanced chat with a family and unexpectedly I find myself returning home wheeling a Laser I bought for £80.



So, I have a new plan! transition into a Laser...

Well for starters I could fit into the Laser. Unable to train at the RLymYC I joined our local "non - racing" gathering in Mudeford Harbour.

During my first time out, I found the boat far more responsive and acceleration was incomparable to my Tera. I found the Laser challenging to adjust to, the huge amount of main sheet, double the length tiller and how important it was to play the main in order to keep the boat flat.

Luckily, we were coming out of lockdown and I knew Nik Froud was the RLymYC Laser Captain as he had been coaching the Tera fleet.

So, I enrolled onto the Laser training weekends. On arrival it was intimidating to be included with such a high calibre of current Laser sailors and to meet other transitioning sailors from different fleets, such as the Oppie fleet.

The training had definitely stepped up a gear with a more technical briefing and race related drill, after drill, after drill... followed by short

races including the Radial fleet focusing on our drills.

The training weekends continued, the new transitional sailors have come together and it has been interesting to see how different conditions bring out the best in the sailor's skill set.

Jack (another transition sailor) and I, set off for the first Laser event - the Laser UK Team Qualifying Event including the rescheduled RYA Championship at WPNSA.

On arrival it was evident that I was one of the newbies/youngsters. The start lines were very competitive with lots of shouting. Luckily for me the Lymington Laser squad was on the water to help me. They had great tips on how to stand your ground on the start line and not be pushed over. Also just knowing they were out there was reassuring.

So far, I have had a great experience transitioning into the Laser Fleet and I can't wait for the training to start again and continue racing.

OLLY PHILIPS AGED 14

Santi Sesto-Cosby: Chasing Dreams

My dream was to be the best ever British Oppie Sailor at the World Championships. But that was not to be this year. When the Worlds got cancelled after a long wait during lockdown I thought my Oppie days were over. Then there was the suggestion of a new Europeans possibly being organised with all the 'World Teams'.

The restrictions this year meant that the majority of training and events were cancelled. With this, many Oppie sailors of my generation in England moved on to other classes, which left me on my own, which was lonely. I was lucky to be able to train at the Club; I would finish my school work and then cycle down to the Club to go out for a few hours in the afternoon.

The original plan was to spend time in Garda in the build up to the World Championships. My expectations were to compete for a podium position at the Worlds, although my dream from when I was young was to win the World Championships. As I got older I've been thinking more realistically and actually aiming for a podium. After my international performances, this didn't seem off the cards.

And then the Worlds were cancelled.



As the summer approached I was feeling a bit off Oppies as everyone else was so much younger and all my friends were sailing 29ers. There was still no sign of any events happening. Yet moving into another class at this complex time wasn't an easy option either. There was still the hope of a Nationals and the chance to defend my British title...

Yet it was only when a new Italian sailmaker contacted me to invite me to a clinic they were sponsoring in Garda, with three-time World Champion Marco, that I got the mojo again... It was a little scary to go abroad (this was the first week in July, ferries were empty, we were offered free meals and we had to buy masks for the first time) after being locked in for so long - Italy was the first country to open up. My family decided we could all pack in the van and do a road trip together to

Campione, where we were kept in a strict locked bubble. It was so much fun to be sailing again and to see all my friends... In the end we were talked into leaving my boat there (the very first Oppie my elder sister owed) as there was a plan for all the events postponed in the year to happen in Garda, over the month of August.

So Garda 2020 was, in the end, a three week 'mini-campaign', which compacted the three events that had been postponed and training 'informally', with the locals, in between (we were very sad when they banned the table-football because of the Covid restrictions!)

The events had a huge turnout from all over Europe and beyond. Everyone who could make it, Covid allowing, was there and ready to fight hard, as these were the last and may be the only events left of the year.





I went back in August with a Swiss-British family and after some training we did our opening event: The Ora Cup, with nearly 300 boats, which I won, with a mere three points. It was a tough regatta, with good winds and I worked very hard and was consistent. It felt amazing that everything I had worked for during quarantine finally came together.

The Garda Meeting, usually at Easter, has an opening three-race-series called 'The Country Cup', which brings together the top sailors from each country to race close to shore, in front of spectators. The small number of sailors and space makes it a relentless fight the entire time. By the last race it was all down to a battle between Alex, the Italian who was European champion, and the Greek National champion. My Irish friend Rocco Wright, who was 8th in the last World Champs in Antigua, was also up for a medal. We had a long hard fight in which I finished with the victory, taking home the trophy for Britain for the first time ever!

Perhaps this was my farewell to the Oppie... And what a great way and place to finish...

Once back to England it was time to go back to school (and pray that the European Championships were

still going ahead!). After several postponements the Euros were set to be in Slovenia in October half term... As the cases with the virus were rising we were wondering if a team would ever be allowed to go. The Nationals and the Selections in Wales had already been cancelled for the year.

It was a long slog in England not knowing whether to move on and forget about the Oppie or to stay and keep hoping for one last event.

Looking back, I am extremely happy with my decision: I stayed in the class. We soon met up with the Euros team and got straight to training. The nominated coach was Lymington's Ollie Hill.

It was not easy for GBR to send a team, but thanks to the hard work of all the parents, sticking to very strict rules, testing, and a bit of luck on our side, we made it!

The Euros were held in Slovenia's only port and on its 9 mile coast line. The wind was light and the conditions very tricky, where the main component was speed and a touch of luck. Boat speed was the key to success, as well as boat handling, so to even stay with the leaders your tacks and manoeuvres had to be flawless! It was extremely hard to control the fleet from a leading

perspective, with the crazy shifts and random gusts pattern.

After four days of tough racing, the event had an abrupt finish. Slovenia was going into National lockdown.

I was so pleased to have emerged from it all as third European boy, Bronze at the Euros, a British podium for the first time in 20 years. Especially because this year the standard was so high, with all World teams taking part. Overall the British team did pretty well being quite young and not used to light conditions; it was a big success for the team coach, who had still been sailing Oppies when I did my first event in main fleet five years ago in Torbay! This was Ollie's first time taking a team to the Euros, and to add to it all, on my return, I was told I had been nominated for the British Youth Sailor of the Year Award - what an unexpected honour!

This marks the end of an era for me and my family, who have been supporting us (my sister and I) for so many years. All I achieved is thanks to them, as well as the RLymYC, other families from Lymington and from abroad, to all my amazing coaches throughout the years, the Beaulieu Beaufort Foundation, North Sails and Winner Team - thanks all.

SANTI SESTO-COSBY

RLymYC Social Report MARY BELL

This year we had Covid 19 and were waiting on the outcome of what would happen with the First Floor, so 2020 was a most unusual year. There were lots of plans, but not all would come to fruition.

In January rehearsals were going well for the Murder Mystery Play to be performed by Club Members late in March. No mystery about what happened there then, but thanks to our thespians who were ready to perform.

February - Valentine's Night at The Races - that unique blend of romance and horse racing! One couple of love birds shared an intimate table for two together with tables of 4's and 6's and 8's. Any "betting" was with paper money and in light-hearted fashion. Cheers and shouts of encouragement accompanied our chosen horses as they competed on screen. What fond memories now of earlier in the year when this was possible. One table galloped ahead to collect a prize hamper for correctly guessing the most winners. A lovely crowd of people.



The end of March brought - lockdown - so we waved goodbye to Yoga and Pilates, and bridge lessons and the planned photography classes, and daytime activities. Yoga and Pilates moved swiftly online and bravo to the teachers for their rapid learning of new techniques for this media.

Hilary Tudor set up a volunteer group to assist with everything from shopping, taking people to appointments, keeping in contact and helping with technology. Many of the people the volunteers spoke to apologised because they weren't able to help others themselves. What a great attitude, reflected by the many volunteers in all sections of our Club. Looking back 2020 ought to be dubbed the Year of the Volunteer.

Quite a few of the ladies who provide the floral displays were unable to visit the Club this year and they and their flowers were sorely missed. We look forward to their return; as we found out in lockdown, flowers and being outdoors are great mood lifters.

April saw the introduction of Zoom activities, which meant though the Club was closed, the ethos of "friendly and welcoming ashore" was open for business as usual. By now I am sure you are all expert Zoomers, but in those early days meetings opened in a very similar way:

"Can you see me?" "I can't hear you, can you hear me? In a louder voice "CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?" The view of the inside of people's nostrils as they peered closely at the

screen. (Helpful hint - always wear your glasses so this does not happen to you; have a practice first with a friend).

Talking over the top of each other; dogs barking in the room (or is this only in the New Forest?), which distorted the sound of whoever was speaking at the time. Apparently using the microwave affects proceedings and though this does sound like a conspiracy theory I hope someone will let us know if it is true or not. More importantly - we tried - and were very tolerant and helpful with others when they needed advice or had technical issues. Hilary Tudor's team were able to help here. Happy days.

Book Club and Art Club were early activities to go online. It was fascinating to hear so many different opinions in the monthly discussions, almost as if people had read a totally different book. Carolyn Trimming gave Club Members many suggestions for lockdown reading and some of the books chosen for discussion were *The Foundling* by Stacey Halls, *The Muse* by Jesse Burton, *The Summer Isles* by Philip Marsden and *The Wild Silence* by Raynor Winn.

Peter Blick judged the Zoom art club competition. It was mentioned that there would be a competitive element and Peter Blick, RCH, had the difficult task of picking the winning entries from all the Art Work received; a task that took a whole weekend, as the standards were so high." First, second and third place painting are shown opposite.

Jose Nieves posted a picture or scene every week for Art Club and those interested were invited to submit their own impressions.



Photographer Paul French's advice to Photo Club to "think about what you want to show, what do you see, what is different?" obviously resonated with Club Members as there were many photos submitted to the newsletter of the three Wightlink ferries in a row going nowhere.

"After the request from the Club to share thoughts on Lockdown and Covid I found I was able to clarify all the mixed emotions I was feeling and put them into words which really helped me."

"The Happy Hour gave me a definite start time to have my first beer in company."



Tessa van Hasselt



Harvey Wooley



Christina Young

"The Coffee Mornings meant I could still keep in touch with others even though I was shielding."

Katharine and Phil Collett hosted a series of virtual concerts; beautiful singing from soprano Katharine, with costumes to match the different vintage periods and background music organised by Phil. The VE Day concert was particularly stunning. "Watching and listening to Katharine Collett sing at the Virtual Concerts was a light cloud in the early dark days of adjusting to lockdown."



Vince's mini quiz posted in the newsletter was great fun and very helpful to offset any brains dulled by watching too many box sets on television. How lovely to have the first real live one in October and hear the communal sibilant hiss when everyone thought they had whispered the answer (Swedish) to a question. I'm not sure Swedish was the actual answer but it makes the point well.

Maybe you heard about the quiet heroes and heroines of the Club and their friends who responded to requests and sewed bags, scrubs and masks and washing bags for the same, made protective PPE wear, turned corners of their homes into thriving workshops in the extreme heat of Spring/Summer, organised the logistics of getting raw materials to the people making goods and then distributed the finished product to where it was needed, such as hospitals, care homes, schools? Local Company Sanders Sails were heavily involved with this too.

Club Members fundraised for local food banks and delivered the food to where it was needed. Quite humbling to see how a community can come together and make such a positive difference. I haven't mentioned everyone individually (a free future tip for Oscar winners) as I believe the people concerned are far too modest to mind, but it would be terrible to miss someone out.

Which brings us to the other stalwarts of the Club - the charming volunteers who became waiters and waitresses from July to October; some with little or no previous experience and literally kept the Club afloat during furlough, with guidance from Gillian Poole and the staff. "...we were able to put names to faces we have seen around the Club for ever. The camaraderie from Members to us volunteers was charming."

Although not many of the volunteers might relish a job in hospitality any time soon they found it great fun and Club Members were very tolerant of their new staff, with lots of gentle teasing and repartee. It's so pleasing that Mosimann's have built on that bonhomie and continued to meet and greet us as we arrive.

"This is a far cry from my day job but that doesn't seem to matter to anybody; so far."

"I have mastered the Pint of Peroni Wobble without incident and I'd heartily recommend giving up a couple of hours of time to volunteer to any Member."

"Who knew that a soda and lime should be entered on the order pad as exactly that and not as lime and soda? Thank you to one patient Club Member who mixed his half pint



of lime and pint of soda to his own taste at the table in the spare glass provided, without a murmur of complaint."

"I thoroughly enjoyed myself (and was able to speak to some friends/acquaintances who were lunching)."



Farewell thank you lunch with Pauline Crates, who finished her very successful time as Chair of the Social Sub Committee in February 2020 and is now using her skills as Co-ordinator of the Club's Centenary events. Thank you also to Sarah Richards and Pat Ruston who finished their term with the Committee - with Sarah doing a very neat hop to run Junior and Youth Sailing fleets with her husband Andrew. We welcomed Dominique Ryley to advise us on films - a tough job with so few released this year. She made some great recommendations, which we look forward to viewing.



November. "Lockdown again. At the last lockdown I found the online events were a real life-saver; being able to keep in touch with what's going on and meeting with people that I might never have had the opportunity to meet before."

The 2nd of November saw the re-launch of the First Floor with Mosimann's at the helm - short-lived as it turned out - as after three days we saw another lockdown. Farewell to meeting in our social bubbles at the Annual Ladies Lunch with Member Wendy Rees talking about her career in television. The Art Exhibition also had to be delayed and at the time of writing we look forward to these events in the future. On the bright side, Zooming has meant we have had a free peek at artwork owned by Club Members in their own homes as most people sit with a picture behind them!

December brought pleasant thoughts of opening again and Christmas and New Year. We heard that Santa was kept extra busy organising how to get himself safely to all the children this year, so he wasn't able to visit the Club in person. He will love the new tree decorations next year.

Thank you to everyone on the Social Sub Committee for their hard work and input this year, even though not all plans were realised, particularly continuing despite working and even while on holiday. We look ahead eagerly to 2021 and meeting our friends at the Club again and social bubbles once more just meaning Prosecco or Champagne or fizzy water.



THE ROYAL LYMINGTON YACHT CLUB

BULLETIN



Extracts From Bulletin 1950

SAILING:

1950 has turned out to be an outsize season. Never before in the history of the Club have so many Members achieved so much in such a variety of yachts; and never before has the weather been so consistently unkind at weekends.

Eclipsing all other activities, of course, has been our Bear Commodore's jaunt across the Atlantic and his return, sprint in "Gulvain" The Civic Welcome accorded to him and the intrepid youngster who accompanied him was a satisfactory proof of the excellent relations, which now exist between "town and gown."

Passage Races from the Club in the early season have now come to be regarded as established classics; it is intended to continue and enlarge upon the programme, making every possible arrangement for world workers, who can only play at weekends.

The high lights of the past season have been fast, wet passages and stormy anchorages. All races have been well supported and the performances of the smaller craft have been quite admirable. Our longest race to St. Peter Port, in which we encountered every form of weather, tested those who obtained their objective and once again we are very grateful for the admirable hospitality provided by the Guernsey Yacht Club, who timed the race in. The night race round the Island in eight hours was an indication of the type of sailing our tough babies now enjoy. Just short of 400 miles passage racing run by this Club is not bad going.

Cruising. With the improvement in the food situation in this country, the urge to go to France has not been quite so marked this year; nevertheless it has been a rare day when the Yellow Flag has not been seen flying in the river.

Class Racing. A very full programme has been enjoyed. The "X" Class, now firmly established as the premier class in the river, has raced three times

a week locally besides competing in S.C.R.A. events elsewhere. The "X" Class Association has paid this Club the compliment of electing our Skipper to the vacant Captaincy of the entire "X" Class.

The Handicap Class has been greatly strengthened by the addition of a number of four tonners.

Prams, as ever, have provided the hardcore of our small class racing and long may they continue to do so, for they are particularly well suited to local weather conditions. This does not detract at all from the successes achieved by those who prefer the National Classes of dinghy. Certain twin brothers have demonstrated that if you can sail a Firefly at Lympington you can beat the world elsewhere.

CLUB IMPROVEMENTS.

The full programme of repair and reconstruction must necessarily be taken a step at a time. First the Starting Platform had to be saved from collapse. Then the slipway began to disintegrate; in its place a noble pier with a deep water berth at the end for large yachts has been built.

HOUSE MATTERS.

Last summer's catering was, we fear, a case of muddling through and not very successfully at that but now we think we have reached the end of our troubles, in that we have secured the services of a Lady Caterer Housekeeper, who will supervise and control, with the aid of the Secretary, all matters relating to the social amenities of the Club.

Dances are always popular, especially with the young. Bulletin 1950 The Annual Dinner, on the other hand, is an established affair which may perhaps appeal more to those who are long in tooth and purse. As an annual event, however, it doubtless has its well-deserved place in the Club's fixture list.

Lectures and Lecture Suppers continue to provide really first rate fare; they too have come to stay.

With the reform of catering arrangements have come several improvements beyond that of the quality of the food. There is now no closed day at the Club for catering and attractive snack lunches are provided at the Bar, when the dining room is closed to give the Staff a day off.

Bar takings remain satisfactory from both sides of the counter. Our imperturbable Steward continues to preside with his customary good humour.

Holiday Events for the young of all ages include a Fancy Dress Dance on 27th. December—a "Hop" with radiogram and, perhaps, a small Children's Party.

THE RETIRING SECRETARY. (CAPTAIN MOSTYN WILLIAMS)

The spontaneous ovation given to our retiring Secretary at the Club Dinner was real evidence of the affection with which he is regarded and of the regret that his resignation has caused.

He has not spared himself to make this Club what has been described as "the most up and coming Club on the South Coast" Now he has decided that he must take it easy.

We thank him very much for his devoted service and are comforted by the knowledge that he and his wife will be seen about the Club in their new capacities of Honorary Life Members.

THE NEW SECRETARY

(Captain M. H. Eve Leigh)

We welcome our new Secretary and feel very fortunate in having one whom we know to have our interests at heart, and we wish him every success.

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