



Weir Quay Sailing Club

AFFILIATED CLUB MEMBER OF THE ROYAL YACHTING ASSOCIATION
www.weirquaysailingclub.co.uk

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2010

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REQUEST FROM QHM PLYMOUTH

Mike Benson reports:

At a recent Port of Plymouth Marine Liaison Committee meeting the Queen's Harbour Master requested that all vessels travelling through the port area should tune their VHF radios to channel 14, the designated channel for large ships operating in the area, so that small boat skippers will be aware when large ships are moving about. Channel 13 has been designated for ferries and passenger transports operating around the port.

COMMODORE'S NOTES

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Changing rooms and toilets

I am very pleased to announce that we are to have access to the changing rooms, showers, toilets and boat washdown facility included in our next year's annual licence. This will make a great difference to the range of club activities we can run at the waterside, as well as being a boon to families and individual members who want to look forward to whole afternoons and evenings down at the quay just enjoying their boats. I hope that the availability of these facilities may help to

stimulate a revival in club dinghy racing, and encourage camping and sailing weekends.

Both the sailing and gig clubs are to have licensed access to the changing rooms. Otherwise we will continue with the existing arrangements whereby we use the outer dinghy park and the gig club the inner yard, but we will also be permitted to take our dinghies into the inner yard to wash them. Each club will continue to have independent licences and will be paying equal rents for them.

Spread the word, especially to anyone you think may be questioning whether to join or renew this coming year. The answer is yes indeed.

Reviewing our Strategy for the next couple of years with the members

We are now entering an interim coping period which will eventually lead to a different future for the club. That future is to be determined by the membership. Therefore it is essential that the officers of the club consult with the members frequently so that your views are fully appreciated and direct the steps taken. We held a consultation forum last October to good effect and it is time to hold another.

Before the forum it would be extremely helpful if members could send in questions, queries and comments on any issues but particularly those that you consider should be addressed at the forum.

As before there will be short presentations followed by open questions and discussion. At this point it is anticipated there will need to be presentations on

1) Financial planning for the interim period to cover

- exposure to legal costs not yet settled
- the projected costs of the provisions for the interim period
- transparent funding streams for the different sailing and maintenance activities.

2) The further progress of the development group in securing a future shore base.

3) The restructuring of the club into a form that fully protects its mooring fundus lease from any possible future take-over threats.

4) The proposals for a Weir Quay Watersports Hub Club, of which WQSC can be an independent member, including funding.

5) Promoting sailing and a range of club activities and facilities, dinghy sailing in particular.

That last item should really be at the top of our list. It is a long time since the committee has been able to put it there. It is time to rectify this. Our future as a community sailing club will be all the better for it.

Do please send in your comments and questions to Pat Lean our secretary or Ian Kilpatrick our webmaster. The email addresses are on the website.

Here's to a fine summer with plenty of sailing and social activity.

Mick

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

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Fees – reflecting the increased expenditure for the use of the outer dinghy park, toilets, shower and changing facilities in the old barn and additional costs related to outboard motor servicing and the toast rack rebuild, annual subscriptions and storage fees for dinghies and tenders have been increased for this coming season. As regrettable as this is, none the less the new rates are still set at an attractive level. Mooring fees have also increased this year following the periodic review and RPI increases

As ever, payments are due by 31st March 2010 and payment by then will secure club membership for the season. If you have not paid by 30th April the committee will assume you do not intend renewing your membership. So long as payment is received by 31st March your name will be entered into the £50 prize draw with the winner being announced in May.

Membership subscription form – please be sure to complete all aspects of the form, updating your information as necessary so that the club data base records as far as possible accurate information. Note that the form requires signing in two places.

Outer dingy park – last season Chris Miller worked wonders with allocation of slots and very nearly managed to accommodate everyone who wanted to park a dinghy or tender. At the end of the season one or two new members' applications had to be turned down as the park was then full. This year we will have the toast rack so there will be more places and we hope to meet demand.

This season anyone who renews membership by 31st March will have a parking slot allocated to them. However, so as to maximize on available space it would be very helpful if members could let either Chris or myself know as early as possible if it is not intended to renew a request for a parking slot this season. Also, there are one or two boats in the park which are probably not seaworthy, which have not been used for some seasons and which are occupying valuable

spaces. If these could be removed before the season starts this would be much appreciated.

Website – the committee intends to continue using the website this season, particularly the members’ pages, to communicate information relating to the club, events and future developments. Do make a point of having a regular look at the website for updates etc on the club activities. Anyone who has not yet obtained access to the members’ pages should contact Ian Kilpatrick, our webmaster (ian.kilpatrick@talktalk.net).

Robin

SECRETARY

Pat Lean
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As Secretary, initially co-opted and then formally elected at the last AGM, my reign has been like a series of ‘luge’ rushes (as visibly personified in the Winter Olympics)! The events of the past 18 months have been documented elsewhere, and it has fallen to me to try to keep up with the typing at frenetic speeds. The Committee meetings have been stressful, but my previous experience as P.A. to the Managing Director of Northern Feather Works, Bow, and latterly as prop forward for the Cruising Officer, coping both as psychologist and aide-de-camp, had been a great nursery slope.

However, I feel a breath of Spring air gusting in and, whilst a holiday would be suitable, there are a few more months worth of work to get the committee fully organised and into line before our summer recess. In view of the number of telephone calls hogging my private line I am hearted to hear how much the members are taking in and following the she-nanigans.

I look forward to seeing old and older faces reappearing with the better weather, both down at Anthony’s Nursery and out on the water again. There are more important and more interesting things to get up to off dry land.

Happy fitting out to all

Pat

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

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The 2010 New Year’s Day party was a huge success thanks to the generosity of Elizabeth and Malcolm Collingridge who allowed us to invade the top room of their house. It was so well attended that I had to ration the jacket potatoes, but there was plenty of chilli and mulled wine, and Elizabeth’s famous carrot cake.

Our 2010 speaker evenings started in January with Pat Lean (cruising in Denmark and Sweden), followed in February by Peter Marshall (Poseidon and the Aegean) and will be rounded off by Tony Jenks on March 5 (astronavigation), all held at Bere Ferrers SC.

Please don’t forget our Spring Social on Friday March 26th. We are having a Barn Dance at Bere Alston Parish Hall - details to follow.

Joyce

BOSUN

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It’s time to put pen to paper for this Spring newsletter with the usual flurry of activity that it brings. Last season was a little demanding for one or two members of the club, namely, John King and Steve Kirby, not forgetting many more for their work in constructing the outboard steel box (which is like fort knox to enter) and the dinghy box which resembles the ‘Jolly Green Giant’s’ coffin.

With regards to the rest of the outer dinghy park (ODP) there were several small jobs to keep the area up and running during the summer along with the usual litter picks and tidy ups. It ran well.

I would like to place my head above the parapet and ask if there are any observations, constructive or otherwise, please feel free to email or phone me and I/we will try and respond. My telephone number and email is above.

This season we are erecting the old toast

rack in time for all your tenders. We will also be felting the 'Jolly Green Giant's' coffin.

the good news is that the shallow waiting list is down to zero.

Last but not least, it would be great to see as many members as possible at the forthcoming working parties for the usual tidy up of the Outer Dinghy Park etc. The first will be on Saturday 27th February with the second on the Saturday 20th March, both starting at 10.00am. I will be sending an email reminder closer to the time.

Nick

CRUISING NEWS

Dudley Lean, Cruising Officer
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It has certainly not been appropriate weather for working on our boats. I have been replacing our forestay and then rebuilding the roller reefing; it was fraught, sheet ice on the deck, crawling around on hands and knees, but the sun was shining and too good a chance to miss.

Despite the weather the maintenance of the moorings has started and to date, Saturday 13th February, some 19 moorings have been serviced and David is well on the way to complete by the end of February/beginning of March. If you don't have or read emails give him a call so that he can achieve his target.

We have also started to address the problem of swinging room. We intend moving the northern and southern end moorings a little north and south respectively, plus swapping positions, with owners' permissions of course, and, if it is still necessary, moving the odd one or two in the middle of the deep line. Those of you affected are or will be fully consulted before the event.

The cost of the moorings will increase this year, above the usual RPI adjustment, due to the periodic market review by the Duchy. This is reflected in this year's membership renewal forms.

The waiting lists for the deep and middle lines of mooring are still oversubscribed but

We have had two very good visits already this year, Falmouth Coastguard and the Longroom, more of that elsewhere, just to remind you that this year's programme is already under way.

Later on, as well as the usual trips, we have a couple of new destinations; one a week cruise in company east of Start Point and the other a visit to the River Avon under the guidance of Mike Tucker. I must admit, whilst walking in that area the other week it looked very good inside, a strong possibility of a pub, and an entertaining ride in.

It is with regret that I have resigned my position as Cruising Officer. Not because of getting my ear bent on a regular basis, but because my opinions appear not to reflect those of the majority of you. Whilst I applaud, support and advocate the continuance of the sailing club and all that means regarding our and the local community involvement, I am at odds with both the committee and the cruiser members sub-committee regarding interim actions. I hope you will see a temporary replacement shown in this year's programme, however I would wish to continue helping in the way forward by remaining in the sub-committee, a non-official volunteer group.

One of the major changes coming very soon is the reorganisation of the club. In keeping with current views, and with what a lot of other Clubs have done including CYC, the WQSC will become incorporated, i.e. become a limited company. To reduce costs and complexity, and in accordance with your wishes last year, the divisions of the Club as they exist today – mooring holders and dinghy sailors - will be formalised. The mooring element will continue with the name "Weir Quay Sailing Club" (i.e. the non-limited entity) and be legally responsible for the administration of the moorings and all that implies. It would therefore be of great benefit, in my opinion, if the mooring holders started to organise their own management team consisting of trustees, officers and committee members in advance of this organisational change so that the change-over will be

seamless. Perhaps a meeting can be arranged in the near future.

I wish you a fair wind for the coming season and look forward to seeing many of you on the water supporting the Club events.

Dudley

DINGHY NEWS

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Last year was a period of uncertainty and thanks must go to all members of the Club who supported the dinghy activities with special recognition of those who are not regularly involved in dinghy activities but nevertheless turned up at programmed events to provide support. This year there is a distinct change in the number and type of programmed dinghy activities. The racing series last year was so poorly supported, that continuing an extensive programme of races cannot be justified. This year, there are three distinct events that will provide the opportunity to race and encounter other challenges on the water. Please make entries into your calendar for the 5 June and the 4 September which will comprise a day of races and fun on the water with prizes awarded on the day – to all effects, a mini sailing regatta. The Tamar Bridge race on the 11 July is the prestigious race event for the year and the event is being opened up to small cruisers.

For the few dinghy members who do wish to participate in some more serious racing, Car-green Yacht Club does have an extensive racing programme that is open to members of WQSC.

A visit from the Scouts and Sea Scouts is planned for the 9th May where full support from dinghy members is requested. A couple of camping weekends, the regatta and the 'Away Day' to Plymouth Sound will provide a programme full of variation and adventure.

So, despite the number of dinghy events in the programme being reduced from previous years, this year the programme provides a

different and more ranging diet to provide opportunities and challenges for sailors of all levels of experience and ability to enjoy their time at Weir Quay.

On the training front, the number of Club boats available increased last year due to generous donations from Ian Brooks and Mick Johnson and through the efforts of Robin Musgrave and Chris George. With four qualified Dinghy Instructors and several other Club Members progressing towards this qualification there is adequate coverage during the Friday evening training sessions to give each student individual attention. Some welcome the attention, some don't! Friday evening numbers are expanding with ages ranging from 10 years to 'mature' adults, all of whom are learning and enjoying 'educational sessions' in and out of the dinghies. The Friday evenings are fun to attend and fun to run with the positive spirit of the Club in abundance, fostering the development of some keen and competent sailors.

It is sincerely hoped that all dinghy sailors will be seen on the water during the course of the summer either at a programmed event or during a Friday evening where all sailors of all ages and all capabilities are welcome.

Happy planing

Steve

WQSC visit to Falmouth Coastguard Station, 22 November 2009

Sunday dawned greyish/black and thrashing with rain, just right for a one and a half hour jaunt down to Falmouth. Just 5 minutes outside Tavistock, however, and the sun blossomed, so all was right with the world. The trip down was easy going, speaking as a passenger, and very comfortable in Nick's people-carrier, which says it all coming from one who regularly condemns the brutes, and the company was good entertainment value. There were just the five of us, but that was lucky as any more, and the visit could have gone on well into the lunch spot: we had more than enough questions and comments to occupy our hosts.

We started with a film show of their territory,

how it was split, where and what type the receivers were and their transformation from Channel 16 to DMCSS messaging and EPIRB responses. It was clear that whilst many boats were now equipped with DMCSS, many, including the commercial skippers, still call up on Channel 16, and many did not know how to use the direct call facilities. It was reassuring that they will still be listening and responding on 16 for the foreseeable future.

It is from the Falmouth base that many rescues across the world, into Alaska, the Red Sea and Australian waters, are received and co-ordinated. EPIRB signals are picked up by satellites and relayed to Falmouth, giving a choice of 2 possible co-ordinates: one the true location and the other a reciprocal on the mirror side of the orbit. By telephoning the contact no. registered with the EPIRB, the Coastguard usually ascertains which of these would be the most likely position and then launches the rescue programme. They firstly telephone the nearest rescue centre (contact numbers of foreign coastal agencies are stored on their computer) and, if they are unable to help, put out a call on DMCSS to all vessels of any size in the locality. If no response is received they then identify the nearest vessels from the details that come up from the AIS (Automatic Identification System) data from the ships in that area, contact them direct and ask for help. The preferred method is to pass the details on to a local agency, but this is not always possible. As was recounted, in one instance the agency in the Indian Ocean said there was nobody there who could help, it was the weekend, they did not have the resources, and put the phone down! In another situation, the local agency reacted too slowly and Falmouth took over the co-ordination.

It was Falmouth who recently picked up the transmitted emergency from the British Yacht off Madagascar when the couple were hijacked by pirates. They then passed the rescue on to the local station.

We inspected the computer systems, mainly unchanged since their installation some years ago, and which have caused very few problems since: something to be amazed at.

This provides a variety of tools to link in with other agencies all across the world and to search for all shipping with DMCSS sets. It is quite amazing the dexterity and technical ability the Coastguards have managed to take on, all of whom had maritime backgrounds. They still use paper charts, with acrylic overlays to work on the movement and location of rescues.

The views through the window were, of course, idyllic and it was remarkable that, at that time, there were about 20 oil tankers anchored between their station and the Helford: you could see the \$s racking up even during the time we were there. Some of them were rolling magnificently.

We wrenched ourselves away for a spot of lunch and then, just as the super sunshine broke into a massive downpour, we left for home and another dingy evening in Devon.

It was a great day out and an entertaining visit. If there is interest for another visit, we'll get one organised. Send your interest or requirements in, then look out on the website for sign-up dates.

Pat Lean

**WQSC visit to Longroom, Plymouth
12 Feb 2010**

WQSC arranged 2 visits in 2010 to the Longroom, the traffic direction centre for Plymouth Harbour, which co-ordinates all vessel movements entering and within the breakwater. This is under the auspices of the Queen's Harbour Master, an arm of the Royal Navy, but has authority over all vessels.

This second group visit was timed to coincide with major weekly activity associated with the return to harbour of naval vessels engaged in training at sea.

The flotilla had departed on Monday for exercise beyond the Eddystone Light. Names and types of most vessels passed over my head, except for Ark Royal that stayed outside the breakwater to transfer crews before heading off again. First to return was a big

grey one who was to pick up a buoy mid breakwater. A tug was despatched to meet her, and through the binoculars I finally found out how they picked up and attached themselves to one of the round flat buoys: 2 crew from the tug leapt onto the buoy, the anchors from the Fleet Auxiliary Tanker were removed (I missed that part) and the 2 anchor chains lowered. The buoy then had to be turned to align the standing shackle with the chain link. This took almost an hour to shackle both chains. The weather was calm, cold, but neither a heaving sea nor horizontal rain was experienced: almost perfect conditions, but it still took an hour. Just imagine the fun job it would have been in testing weather.

During this time, more ships were entering and either heading up to berths escorted by tugs, heading out again or anchoring. Merchant ships were stood by outside the harbour whilst the navy came back in, private dive boats were reporting in on their activities and completion of pre-notified dives, fishing boats were hovering and skittering, and movement requests were coming in over the radio from private boats within the harbour.

Any merchant boat has to prearrange an arrival at their berth and be allocated a slot for entering the harbour. Together with naval movements, these are all entered on a spread sheet which is updated following any movements. There are radar aerials around the coastline and cameras at several spots. On the many screens we could monitor the ships at anchor in Cawsand Bay and outside the breakwater.

Amazingly, all private and merchant vessels responded very professionally over the radio and all communications were clear and concise. In comparison to the radio transmissions often broadcast in coastal waters where we can be forced to listen in on private chats on channel 16, this was impressive and heartening.

Whilst it is not required for yachts to report in to Longroom for permission to enter, they welcome calls from such as us, not only to help us avoid any marine conflicts but also to provide weather information and human con-

tact. Despite the extremely high tech. equipment there are proper people up there 24/7/365(6).

And I would imagine it helps to keep them awake at night.

It was a terrific visit on an eventful evening and one to be repeated.

Pat Lean

Weather for ALL

by Pat Lean

This is the age of communication: thousands of radio channels blasting out banal commentaries with repetitive music tracks, floods of international maritime regulations, safety messages and directives, but the single most vital piece of information you need is often not available. If you have the set-up you can plug into the internet or SSB radio, direct from the boat and get all the gen you need, but without the right tools you are stuck with the VHF, and amazingly, many countries do not transmit a weather service. We have suffered this problem for many years while going down to the Mediterranean and back. Generally information was spectacularly lacking - that is excluding the wonderful mechanical tones of the Italian forecast and the pidgin-English broadcasts in Greece. Many areas are still were not covered by Navtex.

One would think in waters closer to home VHF forecasts would not be a problem, and the last trip to the Baltic was very well covered by the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Society up to the German Bight and then the excellent German broadcasts by Stefan Meinhoff on his private subscription station [he would prefer you to subscribe and repeatedly condemns those who listen for free]. This is transmitted almost hourly throughout the day, possibly the most informative and accurate forecasts anywhere and receivable part way into Denmark. Denmark, however, broadcasting as Limby Radio, only give out strong wind warnings, whilst hourly putting out navigational warnings and traffic lists - exceptionally strange, given the huge number of small boats out sailing all the time. Navigation warnings were broadcast monotonously and repetitively, but no weather.

By contrast, Stockholm Radio covers the whole of Sweden and includes wind forecasts for inland waterways and lakes. You have to listen through a very long list of navigational warnings, missing buoys and non-operational bridges, a real challenge to find where these actually are, with the weather broadcast in English only twice per day.

I would add, though, that all stations will give out a synopsis or area forecast if you call them on their working channels.

Navtex has yet to arrive in the Baltic, and without SSB, life can be a little scary when chancing putting your bow out of shelter. The big bonus, however, of both Denmark and Sweden is good internet access via their libraries, many of which have WiFi. This opens up a wide availability of sites, of varying complexities, but with not always comparable forecasts.

www.dmi.dk the Danish Meteorological Site, gives good area forecasts that are not wholly reliable, with the English part of the site providing more limited access. In Danish, you can pick up a 7 day forecast that does, however, need to be viewed a little sceptically.

www.smhi.se, the Swedish Meteorological Institute gives out limited weather information, with wind in metres/sec.

Some International sites that are a must to consult:-

www.weatheronline.co.uk/Marine: gives wind speed and direction based on various coastal locations: very easy to operate and switch between mph or kph: knots not recognised: 7 day forecasts available.

www.myweather2.com/Marine: lots of information, again for specific coastal towns: forecasts one week ahead.

www.metoffice.gov.uk: is for UK forecast areas only, and tends to be over-cautious with predictions.

www.woeurope.eu/marine/weather: an alternative address for weatheronline (above).

www.passageweather.com: THE most useful site: 8 days forecasts, at 3 hour intervals and very easy to use and read. Quick downloads of individual animated forecasts for wind, rain, wave height and direction, visibility, and surface pressure. This proved extremely accurate for crossing the German Bight and

North Sea, both with the wind and wave directions and with the swell.

www.windfinder.com/forecast: this is primarily a windsurfer site, but if you are going coastal, very accurate. Forecasts relate to a huge number of coastal sites and together with passageweather (above) makes a great basis for planning.

www.metcheck.com: attractively packaged and looks like an idiots guide, giving 2 weeks forecast for UK and 48 hours elsewhere. Looks good, but haven't used this.

www.xcweather.co.uk: quick guide, 5 day forecast with 3-hourly summary. Very easy to use, but again haven't used this in practice.

www.uGrib.us: this has been recommended by several mariners, a downloadable site, free use. Despite registering, I haven't been able to get into this, so can't comment at all.

<http://www.greatweather.co.uk>; Ant Veal's omnibus site with many links to both professional and amateur sources including US military. Access to massive amounts of data.

If there are any other sites you would like to add to this list, let me know and I'll rustle up a page on the club website.

21 Feb 2010

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