



## January 2012 newsletter

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### Commodore's Blog

Gordon Scott completed three years as Commodore recently. He gave a lot of time and energy to the Club. He steered the Club smoothly through waters that occasionally became choppy and left the Club in good shape. The developments he oversaw have provided some good building blocks for future development. We owe him a substantial debt of gratitude. We still have access to his experience as he has become the President.

The Annual general meeting saw a number of changes in the General Committee. John Smalley and Mike Meloy stepped down but I am pleased to say both are still contributing their considerable experience and expertise to the running of the Club, John as Principal Race Officer and Mike helping the Bosun. John Bone stepped down as the Membership Secretary and Claire Jefferis has taken on the role. Dave Hopkins finally left the role of Duties Secretary in which he has, very efficiently, organised the duties for the Club for ages. With 550 or so members to organise this is no mean task. Rather like those insurance companies stories about the causes of accidents (the tree moved across the road) I expect he has heard some original excuses. Hilary Ross has stepped into his shoes. Thank you all. George Simpkins moved from House and Grounds to become Vice President. Hamid Kouidri from Millfield School became the Groups representative. New faces often bring new ideas so watch out for changes. Visitors day and the Top Club competition were combined

### What's on

18 February	Topper South West winter regatta
25/26 February	Asymmetric open
28/29 April	Phantom and Solution Inland Championships
12/13 May	Flying Fifteen, Fireball and Scorpion open





to try and stem falling interest, particularly in the latter. A report elsewhere on the website gives the detail but a good day was had as 59 crews including 18 visitors competed. Local sailors Ian Cadwallader and Ralph Singleton won the two races. The Top Club was competed for amongst the visitors and was won by Portishead. The next event on the calendar was the Annual Prize giving. Unfortunately, attendance was a

bit thin and the Sailing Committee are looking at future options. If you have a view let Simon Chapman or Nick Fisher know.

The Bristol Brew went well.

If you didn't venture out for the Winter Series of races you missed a treat: there have been some wonderful sailing days without the excesses or lack of winds we have seen earlier.

The Club is in the throes of purchasing a new Dory-style boat to replace the Mary B. It will be rather more Multi-purpose to meet the increasing demands of the motor support boats. The increasing cost of fuel makes it all the more important to drive the RIBs as slowly as possible.

Gordon Scott has a group looking into rescue boat function. It's role has been expanded to look at the whole process of rescue from recognition of a problem, communication, execution and completion of the process. It is too soon to say what will change but change is certain.

Of some concern is the amount of water in the lake: it is only half full. Looking at some rainfall figures for 2011 March, April, May, September, October and November had well below average amounts, while June July and August had more than usual. The latter doesn't help much as most of it evaporates or goes up plant stems and tree trunks. That which doesn't goes on gardens via hoses, just to go up plant stems. The dire weather of the last few days has at least made Little Denny a bit smaller. We need the poor people who live in the Mendips to experience some pretty heavy rainfall to get the lake full for next year especially as the Asymmetric Open has been brought forward to February: check the Calendar on the website for the date change.

At this time a seat in front of the fire with something mellow in a glass leads to reflections on the year past and wondering what the new one has in store.

Probably the most exciting change is in the field of training at the Club. From cancelled RYA courses to loss of training status for powerboats we now have a large number of Dinghy Instructors committed to training at the Club, restored powerboat training status and an enthusiastic new RYA Principal, Mark Fordham. His plans for next year are very exciting. In addition, the junior trainers and co-ordinators are equally energetic. Reuben Woodbridge is acting as a Feva co-ordinator so, hopefully the two Club Fevas may spark the development of a new fleet. It really is a case of "watch this space".

Next year Thursday evening sailing will be put on a formal basis after the success of this year and the Instructors will provide some tuition organised by Andy Harris.

The "hours of opening" are being reviewed for the weekends.

One problem is the shortage of spaces in the boat park, particularly for the burgeoning Flying Fifteen fleet. At the same time there are many boats that never seem to touch the water and remain "parked". There is an argument that says this situation is fine because the non-sailing boats subsidise the sailors. True, but followed to its conclusion there is one boat left sailing.

Next year it would be nice to see every boat on the water at some time. What would be a terri-

ble circumstance is the exclusion of keen sailors for lack of boat park space. If you have a solution, let me know.

We have decided to celebrate the arrival of the Olympic Games on these shores by running a series of events at the Club next year. There will be some "Olympic" racing and one day when we would like as many people as possible to come to the Club and put their boat on the water. There may be a Club Open Day to allow anyone to sample sailing. Watch the calendar and the website for details.

The Sailing Committee is putting next year's calendar together and it looks very interesting.

Our caterers, Stoneground have decided to leave the Club after a very successful time. There are negotiations taking place to continue the service in the same vein, at least for the time being.

Make 2012 your year for more sailing.

May I wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy new Year.

Mike Thompson: ff 3899

## 2012/13 Sailing Programme

The sailing committee is in the final phase of putting together the club's sailing program for 2012/13 and it promises to be a fun year for everyone.

The club will continue to be open for sailing on Wednesdays, Thursdays and most weekends as well as Bank Holidays and we will be delighted to see as many members as possible out on the lake.

For the beginners to sailing there will continue to be some RYA courses, and we will extend last year's very popular beginners instruction evenings to run on Thursdays between 24 May and 12 July. On some of these evenings we will also run 'start racing' events so those of you who have learned to master your vessels can try your skills against others. Some of the club's expert racers will also be on hand to help to guide you.



For the youngsters, the Junior Fun Sundays will run from April to September and we will change the racing format so that in the Spring and Summer racing series, what was the Topper start becomes a junior start, with all juniors welcome in a wider variety of boats. In particular we hope that the juniors from the fun Sundays will stay on to test their skills in the afternoon races. There will also be a number of Feva training dates dotted throughout the season for Junior's wishing to graduate to a two hander.

There are two major UK events upcoming this year – the Jubilee and Olympics. We have a lot of work to do to settle our plans for these events, but we hope to run a special Jubilee race series on 3 June and a fun family event on the Saturday, or Monday.

For the Olympics, the RYA has organised a Nationwide 'Push the Boat out' day and for Chew, this will coincide with our family regatta day on 21 July – please make a note of the date and we will try to put together some special events to attract as many of you as possible onto the water and into the club for the afternoon/evening. On 22 July, we will hold a club 'Olympic regatta' for the racers amongst you.

For the racers, the Sunday racing program continues and the Wednesday evening series will kick off with a practice race on 11 April. We have a number of major open meetings in the planning:

25/26 Feb: Asymmetric open incorporating the Musto Skiff and 29er winter Championships and RS 800 GUL Grand Prix.

18 Feb: Topper SW Winter regatta

28/29 April: Phantom and Solution Inland Championships

12/13 May: Flying Fifteen, Fireball and Scorpion open

16 June: Laser/Solo open

18/19 August: RS400 open

29/30 Sept: RYA zone championships

7 October: Topper open

13/14 Oct: RS 200 open and Visitors day

As noted above, we still have some work to do to confirm all of the above but it looks as though it will be a busy year for the club. Because of our reputation for running a great club on a wonderful piece of water we have been asked to host ever more open events for other sailors and it is great to know that Chew enjoys



such a strong reputation. So we hope that you will enjoy sailing at the club in the coming year. If you have any feedback on any matters related to sailing at the club, please let me, or any other members of the sailing committee know.

Happy Sailing

Simon Chapman - Vice Commodore  
simonchapman10@aol.com

## RS200 SW Ugly Tour at CVLSC

5<sup>th</sup> round of the 2ndhanddinghies.com RS200 SW Ugly Tour at Chew Valley LSC – home team win from high calibre fleet.

The 5<sup>th</sup> round of the 2<sup>nd</sup>handdinghies.com RS200 SW Ugly Tour at Chew Valley was blessed by late summer sunshine that had crews reaching for the sun cream more than many had during August! Unfortunately wind wise the view from the club in the morning was not so good with

a feeble north easterly just moving the flags with the forecast saying it would be southerly all day; not a promising start for the race team!! The words we will postpone and wait had only just been uttered by PRO John Smalley at the briefing when 4-6 knots came in from the east and we were all rushing to get changed. A high quality fleet of 26 boats from 10 clubs took to water for what turned out to be better racing than we probably had a right to expect; the depth of the fleet was shown by Eddie Whitehead finishing one place worse overall than his fine 13<sup>th</sup> overall at the 157 boat RS200 Nationals! (But Eddie thought the beer was excellent at Chew!)



Race 1 and left paid very nicely up the first beat; Ben Ainsworth/Rachel Williamson worked the shallow off Little Denny more than most and had a good lead which was never seriously challenged. Behind places changed often with Matt Mee/Emma Norris pulling through to second with Tony/Zach Freer riding the new breeze on the right on the second beat to claim third. With a re-jigged course with the wind now SSE race 2 started in a patchy 6-9

knots and it was a hold your nerve race as new breeze kept on filling in unevenly. The right paid on the first beat and John Teague/Louise Fisher led which they held to the finish. The Freer's won their tussle with Pete Vincent/Charlotte Cotter to claim second; Maria Stanley/Sam Maxfield just getting water on Ben McGrane/Roz Allen right at the death to finish fourth would later prove important.

Race 3 and now the wind had reached south but a little lighter. Chews Nick/Henry Martindale led but McGrane/Allen slipped through to win the race from the Martindale's with Nick Cherry/Charlotte Lawrence third. The wind now became very soft as the back makers tried to finish and then switched off altogether. After a short wait and with the fleet hedging their bets by being closer to the club house than start line the final race was abandoned.

This left father and son Tony/Zach Freer winners by a point over from Ben McGrane/Roz Allen. To round off a very good day for the Chew's 200 fleet the Martindale's won the silver division with Parkstone's Peter Loretto/Jack Dachu winning the bronze division. Many thanks to Chew for being such good friendly hosts and to the race team for doing a good job to fit in 3 decent races.

There is one event left on the 2ndhanddinghies.com SW Ugly Tour at Starcross YC on Nov 5<sup>th</sup>. John Teague/Louise Fisher have blatantly cheated by winning the Tour already with an event to spare (note to self, change rules next year so you have to count last event) with Pete Vincent/collection of small noisy crews pretty secure in second. Richard/Paru Edwards were the big gainers jumping into third overall. BUT it is going down to the wire in the divisions. Chew's Dave and Jeannie "still looking 30" Oakey in the lead in the silver but club mates the Martindale's and Parkstone's Peter Eyre/Nina Norden could catch them with a good finish. Meanwhile Chews (must be something in the water over there) David Sweet and his harem lead the bronze but could easily be caught by Parkstone's Chris Bower and crews. So play nicely at Starcross; not too much match racing!!

Pete Vincent

## Visitors Day 2011

The annual Visitors day and Top Club Trophy event was held at Chew Valley Lake sailing Club on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

Fifty nine crews including 18 visitors from as far away as Frensham Pond and Leigh and Low-ton sailing Clubs arrived to a still lake but the wind filled to give some good light weather racing in the morning. A "fast" and "slow" handicap race was held for RNLI pennants. The wind backed just after the start and those able to make an early port tack got to the windward mark first. Race Officer Bill Chard set a triangular course with a close and a broad reach. Malcolm Davies and Ian Cadwallader sailing together for the first time in a Flying Fifteen (they had sailed to World Championship glory previously in a Fireball) always looked to be doing well and they took first place followed by two visitors from Portishead, Mike Pickering and Mike Priddle in an Osprey and Colin and Derek Jarvis in a Fireball. They were followed by a bunch of Phantoms who used the event as one of their circuit races. One local fifteen spoiled their complete domination of the next few places.

In the afternoon there was a pursuit race for the Chew Rose Bowl. The wind freshened giving occasional gusts strong enough for some exciting planing. And still the sun shone. Toe straps were needed in Flying Fifteens and when theirs parted Frank and Steve Jones fell gracefully into the water. The increased breeze allowed the faster skiffs to come to the fore and the race was won by Ralph Singleton and Megan Fileman in their RS800 ahead of Tim Johnson in an RS 700 with Malcolm Davies and Ian Cadwallader, finding their new legs, third in the fifteen.

The Top Club trophy was awarded to the visiting club who produced the best results with three boats in a team. Portishead Sailing Club did just that, taking the Trophy from last year's winners, Bristol Corinthian Sailing Club.

A good day's sailing was had by all with a pleasant social occasion among the local club sailors.



## Flying Fifteens Forever

For those of you who are bored looking at other people's holiday photo's, look away now, because my name is Max and I wanna tell you a holiday story.



Every year, in the first full week of August, Sunday to Saturday, a Sailing Regatta takes place in Falmouth Cornwall.

Seven Sailing Clubs in the region, take it in turns to organize the days Racing.

A three mast ' Tall ' ship moors in the Carrick Roads acting as the start and finish line.

Boats sail to the start line from their various moorings, pontoons, jetty, or dry sail.

When a Class flag is hoisted, a series of other flags will be below, denoting the course that Class will sail.

You then check the Race instructions to see which of the various course's you will be doing that day.

From 11.30 to 13.30 with a short break for lunch, a Class of boat cross's the start line every 5 min's.

One year there were 50 Flying Fifteens on the start line. Although over the years the Racing has become more serious, it still remains very much a holiday.

The Race usually lasts about 2 hours, after which you moor near the Host Club and some-one picks you up to go in for afternoon tea.

Then you sail back to where you park the boat. In my case, this was the ' hard ' in Falmouth.

There are often 10-15 Flying Fifteens on the ' hard ' from various parts of the country, and we usually have a mass launch and recovery with every-one helping to push and pull the boats.

I did my first Falmouth Week in 1989, crewing for Geoff Keeling, one of the founder members of the Class at the Club. You will need to be a long time Club member and be quite old to remember Geoff.

I did my 14th Falmouth Week in 2009. I shared a house with Doug and Gail Pattison, Mike Thompson and my son Jim.

The house was right in Falmouth Harbour, so we were able to walk through Falmouth Town to the boat.



My son was crewing for me because my regular crew Catherine Brockbank was crewing for her father, David. He was bringing his Flying Fifteen down from Windermere.

Unfortunately ( for me ) my son would be on holiday in France the week before, and would not be back in England until late Saturday. This meant he would have to travel down to Cornwall Sunday and we would miss the first Race.

I happened to mention this predicament to David at a social event several months before, and he

came up with a very pleasant solution.

He told me, he had a ' Man ' who trails his boat from Windermere to Falmouth and then back again, after the Regatta, while he flies his private 4 seater plane there and back.

" Why don't we fly up and pick Jim up on Sunday morning? we will be back in time for the race"

he said, "I don't want any payment for fuel, I just enjoy flying, just pay for the landing fees"

So 7am.on Sunday I picked David up from his apartment, and we drove through the country lanes to the air field, and I do mean field !!

There were several planes parked on the grass and a ramshackle control tower.

David did the normal safety checks and in the accepted air waves protocol said, "Control, Control, this is November 741 Charlie Delta requesting permission for take off to Kemble near Gloucester', permission was granted and we took off with a very bumpy ride.

As we approached and entered each differently controlled air space, David would say, for example, " Exeter Control, Exeter Control, this is November 741 Charlie Delta requesting permission to pass on route to Kemble, Gloucester ""

" November 741 Charlie Delta, this is Control, permission granted "

As we flew over Chew Valley Lake, David said it might get tricky now, because Bristol air space is so busy, they might send us around it.

" Bristol Control, Bristol Control, this is November 741 Charlie Delta request permission to proceed on route to Kemble. " " November 741 Charlie Delta. this Bristol Control, permission granted, please keep to 3000 feet " Result !!

We drop down on to Kemble air field, yes another field, pick up my son, did the paper work, paid the fee and took off.

Same as before, asking for and receiving permission to proceed. We often hear banter from other planes, some receiving stern words from Control, if they strayed off course or changed height with out notification.

We landed back in Cornwall at 12.00, things are getting a bit tight, the Race starts at 13.00.

I am driving down the narrow country lanes like I am in a cross country rally. David has his feet on the dash board and his knees' under his chin to stabilize him-self as he tries to ring Catherine.

" Catherine we are running late, launch the two boats "

" Daddy every body has launched, and gone, I am on my own "

" CATHERINE LAUNCH THE BOATS "

We get back to our apartments, do a quick change and are running through Falmouth in our sailing gear.

The boats have been launched and are on the pontoon, how did she do it ?

We jump in , sail away from Falmouth to the distant start line. As we approach the 'Tall' mast ship we see our Class flag has been raised, go for the line, the second we hit the line, the gun goes', brilliant start, unfortunately we have absolutely no idea of the course, but hay ho we are sailing. !!! Thank you David.

Max Passmore

F/F 3421





## Solo Report

Another year comes to an end, at least sailing continues, unlike last year where the only activity would have been ice skating. Those of you who have been to the lake recently will have noticed that the level of water has risen quite a lot over the past few weeks, Little Denny having now submerged. This is a welcome relief from the low levels that we have had all year. Although my wife is none too happy with the soggy pasture that her horse is chopping up.

We have had good turnouts recently with the addition of Andy Hewitt in his Winder and the temporary additions of Nigel Appleton and Brian Kitching. Both pushing us hard and giving us some great racing. We have another Solo sailor on the waiting list and possibly two more to join us for the Frostbite series in the new year.

The results for the winter series are on the club website, Chris Goldhawk doing a fantastic job keeping everything updated. If you look closely you will see that there are more Solo qualifiers than any other fleet. This shows the fabulous racing we are having is paying dividends in increasing the fleet size. We are eagerly awaiting the return of Fraser Budd, who has been out of



sailing now for over a year due to problems with his neck. I spoke to Fraser a few weeks ago and he is recovering slowly but does not want to risk that progress by coming back too soon.

Many of you will have noticed the predominance of plastic boats at the lake, it's going to get worse as my new Boon should be ready in about 3 weeks, looking forward to getting it, hope I won't be disappointed. The majority of boats at Chew are Winders which have a great record so it will be interesting to see how my Boon performs, I certainly expect a difference downwind in marginal planning conditions, we'll see soon.

We have our usual number of open meetings at Chew again in 2012 and of course these are manned by the regular racing fraternity, as I have taken over as sailing secretary, one of my duties is to staff these meetings, once the definitive calendar is completed I will update my sheets and pass them to the relevant co-ordinators for each event. I have tried to ensure that nobody does more than one event and hope those scheduled will enjoy being part of the team providing a professional weekend of racing. In addition to the above I am also scheduling the Wednesday evening series duties. These are filled based on the attendance from last year's series. The list for this will be put on the website and posted in the clubhouse.

Finally, there have been quite a few changes in committee positions and I would ask you all to support the people who willingly give up considerable amounts of time to keep the club running to the high standard we all now expect. Six of these are solo sailors, John

Smalley, who as Principal race officer oversees all the racing at Chew, including the open meetings, some of which are high profile & prestigious events. Secondly George who has taken over the Vice Presidents position and continues to run the bar with his usual efficiency, and finally, Alan Coventry has taken on the Bosun's job. Alan is the man who keeps all the rescue boats running and spends a lot of time at the club when there is none else there and he can work in peace and quiet. At this time of the year the committee boat is off the water for its annual overhaul and dry out, so Alan will be a busy man over the next few months. Chris Goldhawk, as mentioned above, doing results. Derian Scott in her dual role as Handicap fleet captain and sometime solo sailor and myself as Fleet Captain and sailing secretary. If you are aware of anyone who has even a passing interest in the solo please let me know so that I can contact them and let them have a trial run in my boat. Meanwhile, all the best for the future and a happy new year.

Nick Fisher

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## Chew sailors in the outside world 2011

In 2011 a number of Chew sailors have competed in events around England, Wales & Scotland and overseas.

On three occasions Chew sailors have won national titles. Ian Clements and Tom Hole won the 303 Class in the Access National Championship. Peter Sherwin repeated his 2009 win in the Laser Grand Masters National Championship. Finally, Ellie Cumpsty won the Topper 4.2 National Championship. Congratulations to all three for outstanding performances.

Internationally - Two crews have done well; Derian and Andy Scott finished 14<sup>th</sup> overall in the Fireball World Championships making Derian first lady. Ian Cadwallader and Dave Sweet finished 17<sup>th</sup> out of almost 100 boats in the Flying Fifteen Pre-World Championships in very trying conditions in Hayling Bay. Other notable successes came in the Topper World Championships held at the National Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire in Ireland with Ellie Cumpsty finishing 23<sup>rd</sup> and Henry Martindale finishing 26<sup>th</sup> in the Gold Fleet.

Nationally – Chew was well represented at the Topper Nationals held at the East Lothian YC in North Berwick. Henry Martindale finished 36<sup>th</sup> in the Gold fleet and Tom Hole in his swansong Topper event was third in the Silver fleet. Other sailors who competed are Ellie Hitchings (who also did the worlds), Ella Cudmore, James Cummins, Jess Harding in the 5.3 fleets and Freya Cumpsty 3<sup>rd</sup> and Olivia Jones 16<sup>th</sup> in the 4.2 Regatta fleet.



Derian and Andy were 13<sup>th</sup> out of 56 in the Fireball nationals. Paul Croote was third in the Cherub National Championship. The Rose family did well, as usual, in the Scorpion National Championship, with John and Andrew finishing 10<sup>th</sup>, 5 places ahead of Peter and Thomas. Nick Fisher was 77<sup>th</sup> in a very hot Solo fleet of almost 100 boats.

The last event in the National Topper Series – the Autumn Regatta had Freya Cumpsty finishing 10<sup>th</sup> and Olivia Jones 13<sup>th</sup> in the 4.2 fleet with Ellie Cumpsty finishing 2<sup>nd</sup>, Ella Cudmore 21<sup>st</sup> and Jess Harding 42<sup>nd</sup> in the Girls 5.3 fleet (Jess only did 1 of the 2 days of racing). James Cummins finished 37<sup>th</sup> in the Boys 5.3 fleet.

Regionally Chew was also well represented in the Topper RYA South West Championships held at Restronguet SC in Cornwall with James Cummins finishing 6<sup>th</sup>, Ella Cudmore 8<sup>th</sup>, Jess Harding 10<sup>th</sup> and Freya Cumpsty 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Again regionally Chew was further well represented on the SW Topper Travellers with this time Henry Martindale finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> overall followed by Ella Cudmore in 13<sup>th</sup>, James Cummins 14<sup>th</sup>, Jess Harding 15<sup>th</sup>, Oliver Martindale 24<sup>th</sup> and Freya Cumpsty 26<sup>th</sup>. In fact Chew had 22 sailors overall do at least some of the events on this West Country circuit.

But it was the RS Classes Championships, no doubt inspired by sailing at the Olympic venue, which drew a number of our sailors to this event.

In the 100 there were 47 competitors: Dave Smart was 11<sup>th</sup>, Simon Bennett 21<sup>st</sup> and Tim Mitchell 29<sup>th</sup>. The Chew competitors in an enormous RS200 fleet of 159 boats were all family crews: Tony and Zac Freer were 75<sup>th</sup>, Sophie and Ralph Singleton 98<sup>th</sup> and Dave and Jeannie Oakey 106<sup>th</sup>. Steve Jones and Anne Dwyer were 41<sup>st</sup> of 85 in the 400s. Family unity again prevailed in the 800 fleet with Matthew and Mike Chapman finishing 12<sup>th</sup> out of 60 and the Singletons (this time Ralph driving) were 15<sup>th</sup>.

Chew also hosted the RS Feva Grand Prix with Reuben & Alice Woodbridge finishing a very respectful 26<sup>th</sup> along with Julian & Lizzie Cooke in 40<sup>th</sup>, Christian & Nick Edmonds in 46<sup>th</sup> and

finally Miriam Woodbridge and Hattie Hole in 74<sup>th</sup>.

One of the major successes at the club has been the strength of our junior & youth sailors. For the 2011 – 2012 training season, this consists of both weekends and week camps away. Chew will have the following selected sailors in these squads –



Topper 4.2 National Squad – Olivia Jones & (hopefully) Freya Cumpsty.

Topper Zone Squad – Freya Cumpsty & James Cummins.

Topper Intermediate National Squad – Jess Harding & Ella Cudmore.

Topper National Squad – Henry Martindale.

Topper National Youth Squad – Ellie Hitchings.

Laser Radial Youth Squad – Ellie Cumpsty (1<sup>st</sup> Junior girl Laser Nationals) & Ed Jones.

Congratulations and good luck to them for the coming season.

There were others who travelled and attended Open Meetings. Well done for raising the Chew flag elsewhere and good luck for next year.



## A message from our new RYA Principal

Hi everyone

Just to introduce myself and update you on RYA training at CVLSC. I have recently taken on the role of RYA Principal and so far so good I believe. We have passed our annual inspection and have been fully reinstated as a power boat training centre.

Rob Mitchell, our training coordinator, did a fantastic job of organising our training last year and this will continue again for 2012. We hope to run two sets of courses and look forward to getting more and more people on the water.

Other news is that we hope to train some power boat instructors and also some more senior instructors. Plans are also in place to apply for grants to increase the boats available for training and youth sailing. Days for Laser and spinnaker training will also be planned.

I look forward to trying to help get as many people on the water in 2012 as we can.

Please contact me if I can help further.

Mark Fordham

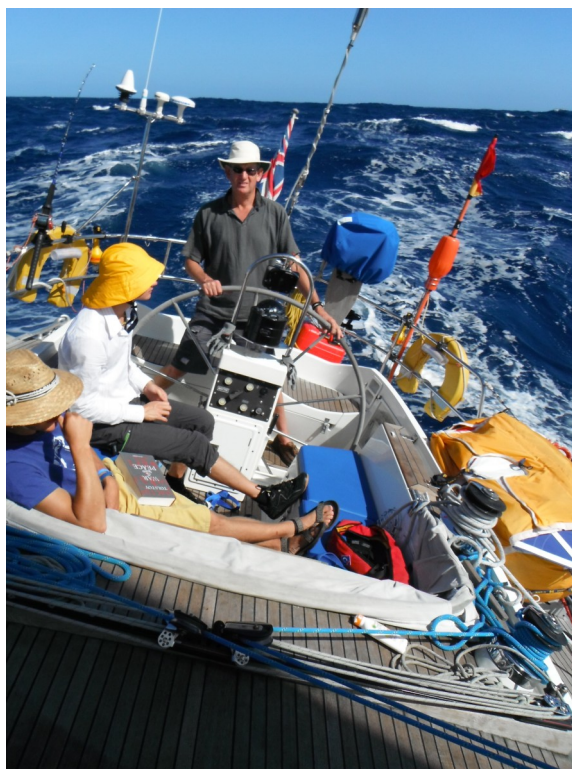
## Sailing across the Atlantic

As some of you will be aware from the Commodore's blog, at the end of last year I joined a yacht to participate in the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers 'The ARC'. The ARC is an annual event which leaves Las Palmas in the Canaries and sails the 2700 miles to St Lucia in the Caribbean. Approximately 220 boats and 1200 people take part and for many it is their first taste of oceanic sailing.

I joined a Swan 46 owned by Nick Eaton, a friend of my neighbour and the 5 other members of our crew were all under 25 having applied for crewing positions through the World Cruising Club web site.

We joined 135 boats in the cruising division (which means you can use an engine if needed, but subject to stiff penalties) as opposed to the full racing division which gives instant disqualification for engine use. In the racing division there were some impressive boats including a Whitbread 80, and some fancy stripped out carbon fibre boats whereas the cruisers ranged enormously in size and style, the smallest being a 32ft Norwegian boat.

We set off at 13.00 on 20 November to fanfares from support vessels, the Spanish navy and many onlookers on the shore. Within



about 5 hours we could only see two other vessels - it is amazing how quickly everybody dispersed across the ocean. We did however have the company of many dolphins for the first few days, the most spectacular of which leapt right out of the water chasing flying fish. The crew were organised into 3 watches of two, and we had 4 hours on and 8 off, although the off watch teams were also responsible for food (we ate full meals of fresh food every day), maintenance and cleaning. We rarely managed to sleep for more than 3 straight hours between watches, and often the mornings were spent catching up on sleep if not on watch. There was a little more spare time in the afternoon for chatting, reading books, writing the ship's blog and a highlight of the day was a sundowner at 18.00 where all the crew were on deck enjoying a drink and often music played by Sam who had just graduated from Oxford with a music degree.

For the first 10 days, we had easterly winds of 15-20 kts which made for superb downwind sailing and with the big spinnaker up for up to 72 hours at a time we had great fun surfing down the 3-4m swell. Once further south and into the tropics, the weather became less settled and we had to contend with frequent squalls as the hot sea ( 83F) led to the formation of localised black clouds where the wind often doubled in strength, turned through 180 deg and the rain pelted down for 30-40 mins before then returning to hot balmy sunshine for a couple of hours. All this made sail setting and helming much more challenging.

Although racing within the cruising division, we had resolved to sail the boat hard, all the more so when another Swan 46 called Arnamentia crewed by retired army people threw down a challenge to us not to beat them. We hand steered the whole way across, and kept the boat moving in the right direction as fast as we could – this was something of a challenge in the squally conditions of the last 6 days and on one afternoon we must have gybed, or dropped and re-hoisted the spinnaker at least a dozen times.

When we were about 100 miles from St Lucia, the wind suddenly died and we sat becalmed for 6 hours before finally the lure of hot showers and fresh beer became too much and we started the engine and motored the last few hours to the finish – probably just as well as it was three days before the wind returned.

Throughout the passage we had been monitoring Arnamentia's progress and at first they went further south than we did looking for forecast stronger winds, however we opened up a 40 mile lead on them by sailing a straighter course. By the second half of the race, they had closed to within 4 miles of us, and it took lots of sail changes and trimming in the unsettled conditions to keep us in front. Finally it turned out that they had resorted to using the engine before we did when the wind



died and although this meant that they arrived in St Lucia before us, on corrected time, we beat them by 11 minutes - pretty close after 17 days sailing! Overall we came 8<sup>th</sup> out of the 135 boats in the division which was very satisfying.

I must admit that I was fearful about undertaking an ocean voyage before setting off, but having done it, I would thoroughly recommend it. The sailing was fantastic, as was the spirit amongst the crew. Other highlights were the amazing sunsets and sunrises, the clarity of the night sky and the many dolphins, and two pilot whales that came and played with the boat.

Arriving in St Lucia was a great feeling and the ARC team had a party almost every night as more and more boats arrived. Also St Lucia is an interesting island to visit, and having seen it I would love to go back to the Caribbean and charter a boat to sail around the other islands.

Simon Chapman

## All Ashore Who Are Going Ashore

It's that time of the year again when we Wednesday sailors and our partners get together for our annual Christmas lunch; this year held at the club on Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup> of December, but more of that later.

Tradition has it that quite a few of us sail over the Island for a small service and then sing a few carols for those who have left us and have had their ashes scattered on the Island. Was this year going to be an exception as the weather was pretty bloody awful and our RBH was in two minds as to whether we should put any boats on the water?



The initial problem was not that of too much wind, it was more really heavy snow making visibility difficult as well as the associated low temperatures that went with it.

Low and behold the snow stopped the winds seemed to remain constant at about 12 mph and so two Wayfarers and the "Black Pearl" decided to go for it and we made the Island with little difficulty – even if the visibility had closed in again the Island is too big a piece of real estate to miss and an even bigger thing to aim for.

Richard Thomas transported fare paying passengers in one of the RIBs whilst Phil Burnham brought up the rear with another RIB that was also laden down with passengers. However Phil, being very conscious of the water level and the severe criticism he would receive if he grounded the engine, decided to take the shallow route from the clubhouse to the island, he chose to walk across dragging the RIB behind him. (See photo).

In all there were 13 hardy souls who made the trip (for those of you who count these things - the 13<sup>th</sup> is the guy behind the camera – Colin Shepherd).

All went well but then the rain and the wind swept in and the carol sheets, which are photocopies on A4 paper stapled together, got very wet; have you ever tried turning the pages of wet paper with heavy gloves on. In addition the print transferred itself to the rear of the adjacent page and that was why some of us were singing the words in reverse order.

A look over our shoulders towards the lake told us it was time to make a quick exit especially as the strong wind that had suddenly swept in was an onshore westerly.

The Black Pearl was first to be re-launched but with very little free board, as can be seen



from the photo, followed by the two Wayfarers with the two RIBS bringing up the rear. Sailing was now finished for the day and it was shower, change and to the bar for a warming drink; during which time my wife, Mary, acted as "Busk Conductor" leading all of the members in a more civilised Carol Service in the warmth of the clubhouse.

We were honoured to have the company of our Commodore – Mike Thompson – who introduced himself to the assemble crew. He tried to kid

us that Father Christmas came to us in a Wayfarer dinghy; we were not stupid enough to be taken in by that because there are no chimneys on the clubhouse. We all visit Santa at the local Garden Centres.

The meal, three courses and coffee, was prepared by Stoneground and, yet again, they did us proud.

Following the usual speeches and back slapping we all made our way home at around 16.30; yet again another success for the Wednesday sailors.

It just remains for me to say "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year" to those who read this on the Club website and, to those who wait to receive a hard copy – "Happy Easter".

Brian Brooks (Wednesdays are open to all sailors who would wish to join us)





## Officers and Committee Members 2012

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