

NEWPORT USKMOUTH SAILING CLUB



THE PENNANT AUTUMN 2009



Commodore's Address

Who stole our sunshine?? Sadly this has not turned out to be the glorious summer that we were promised but nevertheless there has been plenty of sailing taking place. It is nice to see people taking part in the racing, the cruising and going off on holiday.

On the weekend of Sat 12th and Sun 13th September we held our annual regatta, it was a great weekend and we had several visiting boats from around the channel. Thank you to all who raced and all who attended the evening entertainment, without your support the weekend would not have been such a success. My biggest thanks go to everyone who helped with the preparation of the food and the cleaning of the club for this event. A lot of work goes into making these events run smoothly and it would be nice to see a few more people helping out.

Trafalgar night is coming up – Saturday 17th October! We have live entertainment, food and excellent company, please come along and enjoy your club. You are welcome to bring along family and friends as your guests..... the more the merrier!

Unfortunately this year we have had several people who have moorings but have experienced a few problems with them and have been given loan moorings as temporary measures this is unavoidable at times and we have always tried to help in this situation but sadly this year we have had a couple of people going onto the loan moorings and not repairing their own, therefore stopping others launching and stopping us bringing new members with boats into the club please be fair and take your fellow members into consideration. If this situation is not rectified immediately it has been decided that there will be no short term loan moorings next year. If you have a problem with your mooring you will have to take your boat out until your mooring is repaired.

Preparation for our annual laying up supper is well

under way, with this year being a special event, celebrating 25 years. Carol, Eirlys and Kristina are working very hard to make it a special evening and I am sure it will be a night to remember.

If anyone is in need of work hours please see myself, Alan Jones or Andrew Crichton, we have several jobs that need doing and if work hours are not done there will be a charge per hour

We now have a blogging page for the use of everyone, if you would like help getting started with this just get in touch with me and I will help you out. Wi-Fi is also up and running in the club, to access the Internet you will just need to bring along your own laptop and start surfing.

We will be holding a first aid course in the very near future, if you would like a place on this course please contact myself or Julia Oliva ASAP as places are limited

Do you know of someone who has done something outstanding this season? Are your crew worthy of a special trophy? If you feel that someone is worthy of a nomination please get your letters/emails in to me ASAP. For a list of trophies to be awarded take a look in your club handbook at last years winners.

Finally a big thank you to everyone who works so hard around the club, there are several people who put a lot of hours into the club, far and beyond what is expected, and without these people the club would not run as efficiently as it does.

Kay Donovan

P.S Just a small reminder that tea and coffee making facilities are available to all members but please remember to leave your 20p in the dish so that we can replenish stocks.

Nemo's Blog

Fortunately, 2009's disasters have, so far, been amusing as opposed to tragic. The last piece by your correspondent gave indications for the future and some of those turned out to be quite accurate.

Benny the Ball continues to impress with his quest to make The 2009 Gong his own. The antics of The Three Amigos boarding Thistle is worth the membership fee in itself and despite numerous engine problems, the vessel is often seen gracing and grazing the slip and playing Trot Slalom down river of the pontoon. Benny's renewed efforts in the mud culminated in a further near death experience. The impression of Gandhi in a pair of muddied underpants could have frightened horses, had there been any in the vicinity!

One eyed Al, in an attempt to impress a new member, volunteered to help in the last launch of the season. (I know we don't launch after May, but the weather at the end of August was very much like that in May.) Slipping ungracefully he made contact with the cabin bulkhead occasioning a cut nose, mouse above the eye and a fair shiner.

Not to be outdone, BB's better looking brother took a boom in the chops during the delivery trip of his new boat. The damage this time was a reasonable nose bleed and a couple of lovely shiners.

The launch is always worth a giggle. Not many crashes and bangs this year but The Current Gongmeister and Filofax made a complete horlicks of picking up the mooring. In an attempt to show the viewing gallery how not to do things, they went around again and repeated the felony, dropping the boathook on both occasions. Full details may be viewed on the picture section of NUSC website.

Not substantiated at present but rumour has it that a former Commodore had a VERY close encounter with a starboard hand buoy somewhere in the Channel. I think that he'll find that his previous habit of making soft contact with mud is preferable to sideswiping 3 tons of cold steel, especially in his new boat. Later on in the season it is understood that not content with sinking his tender, he even contrived to loose the wretched thing!

Another previous Commodore (we seem to have hundreds of them so they always form the backbone of Nemo's Blog) suffered the ignominy of a double dunk while freeing his prop from a mooring line. A waist immersion was followed by an even more impressive armpit immersion. Shame about the lack of spare clothing - chest high waterproofs on a sunny day can chafe a little without adequate undergarments!

Close encounters of the red kind were seen at Gull Island during the Regatta. A boat noted for the odd incident while racing was seen to make a glancing blow while trying to round the mark in diminishing wind conditions on the ebb!

Recovery coming up – many new opportunities for GRP on steel and total immersion incidents – enjoy, shipmates!!!!

Nemo

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of two members.

Jim McCarthy

Jim suffered a heart attack while walking on Cadair Idris in North Wales on September 9th.

Jim became a member of Newport Usk-mouth in 1970 where he and Pat commenced fitting out an Achilles 24 and then later, their beloved Achilles 9M, Aquila. He has been a stalwart of the Club ever since, serving as Commodore and for many years as Treasurer. As important, was his involvement in all aspects of the Club activities. Jim could never walk past a job waiting to be done and put in uncountable hours in the service of the Club. However it was his personal qualities which endeared him to members and visitors, his friendliness to young and old, his cheerful spirit and ready smile.

Jim will be sorely missed by Pat, his family, Club members and friends everywhere.

Ken Robbins

Ken passed away on July 9th. He and Bobby had been members at Uskmouth since 1985. They usually sailed with their son Dave and grandchildren in their boat Free Winds. They were frequent visitors to Ilfracombe where with the boat pulled up high on the beach they enjoyed wonderful family holidays. Always cheerful, Ken and Bobby were loyal members of the Club and enjoyed many social events over the years.

Ken will be missed by his large family, members and friends.

Ivor Preece

Mooring Matters

We have had the first recovery of the year and we have quite a few boats out of the water now. Could everyone please ensure that they try and keep the area around their cradle tidy and safe.

Please check your mooring early enough to give yourself time to do any maintenance needed so that you have a mooring to put your boat on next year as we have a shortage of moorings. Anyone who has a mooring and have not put it in working order will not be given another one until it has been repaired.

Thank you to everyone who helps me with recovery and launching of boats. A lot of work goes into moving boats around and a lot of time is also spent on keeping equipment in good working order and this is all done on a voluntary basis.

Richard Withers

Training.

The Day Skipper course is now full but we do have further training opportunities available:-

Yachtmaster.

This will be run on 6 Sundays starting on Dec 6th (with a break for Christmas). It is a pre-requisite that you have completed the Day Skipper theory course before attending. A minimum of 5 students are required for this course to run.

VHF/DSC Marine SRC

Provisional date is Saturday December 5th.

First Aid.

I would like to run a First Aid for Sailors course shortly. I need 10 students for this course to be viable.

If you are interested in attending any of the above courses please let me know by emailing; training2006@nusc.co.uk

Julia Oliva

Racing 2009 by Chris Roberts

September 20th and all racing for this year has already ended. We learned our lesson about late season races last year when Archie and I both tried to find the Sewer Buoy in the dark on the last evening race of the season in early October! Archie and his crew still maintain they found it, we went too far down channel before returning close inshore convinced that we had passed it unseen and finishing 45 minutes behind Sprack! This year no racing in the dark!!!!

Regatta September 12 and 13

Held in good weather this year the Regatta attracted more entries than usual and the winds held at a reasonable Force 3-4 on both days to make interesting races. On Saturday 20 boats collected at the start line and all finished. Fast fleet sailed courses around Newport Deep and Sewer, clockwise on Saturday and anticlockwise on Sunday. The slow fleet sailing a sausage around the starboard channel buoys on Saturday and a more difficult course on Sunday around the Sewer buoy with a difficult reach to the West Usk buoy requiring several tacks. Only three boats finished the slow fleet course on Sunday. Congratulation to all those who finished the races, particularly the prize winners! Special mention should be made of Andrew Crichton finishing third in the slow fleet on Sunday crewed by able wife and three year old son who received the third prize with great excitement.

Saturday 12th September

Fast Fleet

- 1st Archie English SPRACK
- 2nd Jack Preece AQUILA
- 3rd Mike Lewis WHITE SATIN

Slow Fleet

- 1st Justin Harley MY PRECIOUS 2
- 2nd Wayne Lucas DOUBLET
- 3rd Brian Davies CANTATA

Sunday 13th September

Fast Fleet

- 1st Archie English SPRACK
- 2nd Mike Lewis WHITE SATIN
- 3rd Ian Donovan PANACEA

Slow Fleet

- 1st Justin Harley MY PRECIOUS 2
- 2nd John Parker SAETH WEN
- 3rd Andrew Creighton R'IZON SHINE

The Cruiser Rally held earlier in the year attracted smaller entries, but was still hard fought.

Both the Regatta and Cruiser Rally are great social events with food all day and dancing on the Saturday evening. The races are simple affairs and I would recommend both these weekends as great ways of getting together and meeting other club members. On race days, if you don't fancy taking your own boat out, there are always crewing opportunities. Just come along and join in. Other racing this year has been the weekend Tide races, a series of six races held on the weekend lasting up to two hours typically.

The Knickertwister races, normally held on weekday evening and about one and half hours long. No spinnakers allowed on these races and handicaps are increased for winning boats to give the slower boats a better chance of winning.

We also have had a couple of Day races in September this year, more challenging courses planned to take about 8 hours to complete.

All of these races display the skills of the skipper and are great opportunities to get involved and improve your sailing. Results of all these races are displayed on the notice board adjacent to the race office.

Round the Island Race.

This year a few of the Club members were privileged to sail with Mike Jones Downing on RED EYE in the annual round the island race. A superb spectacular event with about 2000 boats starting according to their class at 10 minute intervals on a 1 mile long start line from the Royal Squadron off Cowes. To reach up the Solent in the middle of the fleet and to round the needles with 15 knots of wind shift and course change is challenging. To get to the end of the Island at Bembridge ledges and find a log jam of boats all stopped and wedged in together as you approach with boats all around you and flying a spinnaker is exciting. To get round it and without incident is a relief. Crossing the 100 yard wide finish line with a failing wind and against tide is satisfying. The whole experience? Unmissable. If you ever get the chance.....

2009 CRUISES

Another season almost over as I write this & I think I can say that this year was like the previous two with regard the weather, F5 – F7 winds with a succession of depressions crossing over the UK through most of the summer months. Only those fortunate enough to be able to get a few hundred miles further south to Brittany managed to escape.

In spite of the best attempts of the weather to stop us we still managed to get on the water most weekends & most of the planned Cruises in Company went ahead although not necessarily to where originally planned!

The first cruise of the season was the trip to Gloucester in company with around 40 other vessels from other clubs in the channel. It is always a good opportunity to renew old acquaintances & make new ones. It's also a good shakedown cruise to check the boat out after the winter lay up & it's not too weather dependant. Provided you have a window on the Friday to get up to Sharpness & another to get back on the Monday it can do what it likes as you are safe in the canal for the rest of the time.

We went to Bristol on the Spring Bank Holiday and as with all cruises you have to be flexible. The forecast for Monday was for fresh winds from the West, so rather than beating home into wind over tide across the sands we left Bristol on Sunday morning & had an excellent sail down channel to Cardiff. A good chance to check out the new boat & the new crew!! The wind did freshen on Monday & we had a good run back to Newport with the wind behind us.

The plan for the Whitson week was to get out to Lundy Island which is one of my favourite

spots in the channel. Two boats made it to the island & after rowing ashore we walked the length of the island to the North light which is something I have been trying to do for a while now. It was good to see the race at the Hen & Chickens safely in the dry from above rather than in it in the wet which is what I did last time I was there!!!

The summer cruise to Scilly was a victim of the weather. After a four day wait in Ilfracombe for the wind to do something other than F5-F7, S to SW we decided to go for plan B or was it C or D. We had a cracking sail, wind on the beam, over to Swansea then headed for Milford Haven calling in at Caldey Island on the way. After a brief trip up the estuary we re-crossed the Bristol Channel to Watermouth Cove calling in at Lundy again for an overnight stop. This crossing was one of the highlights of the trip for the crew as we had a school of dolphins playing around & under the boat.

Two of the most successful cruises this year, in terms of number of Newport boats attending, were the BBQ on Brean Down & the most recent trip up to Bristol both in glorious sunshine.

I am now starting thinking of the planning the jobs to be done on Seawitch over the winter & where we will be going next year. Watch this space.

Barry Welch

Shipwrecked

There was this male engineer, on a cruise ship in the Caribbean for the first time. It was wonderful, the experience of his life. He was being waited on hand and foot. But, it did not last. A Hurricane came up unexpectedly. The ship went down almost instantly.

The man found himself, he knew not how, swept up on the shore of an island. There was nothing else anywhere to be seen. No person, no supplies, nothing. The man looked around. There were some bananas and coconuts, but that was it. He was desperate, and forlorn, but decided to make the best of it. So for the next four months he ate bananas, drank coconut juice and mostly looked to the sea mightily for a ship to come to his rescue.

One day, as he was lying on the beach stroking his beard and looking for a ship, he spotted movement out of the corner of his eye. Could it be true, was it a ship? No, from around the corner of the island came this rowboat. In it was the most gorgeous woman he had ever seen, or at least seen in 4 months. She was tall, tanned, and her blond hair flowing in the sea breeze gave her an almost ethereal quality. She spotted him also as he was waving and yelling and screaming to get her attention. She rowed her boat towards him.

In disbelief, he asked, "Where did you come from? How did you get here?"

She said, "I rowed from the other side of the island. I landed on this island when my cruise ship sank"

"Amazing," he said, "I didn't know anyone else had survived. How many of you are there? Where, did you get the rowing boat? You must have been really lucky to have a rowing boat wash-up with you?"

"It is only me," she said, "and the rowing boat didn't wash up, nothing else did."

"Well then," said the man, "how did you get the rowing boat?"

"I made the rowing boat out of raw material that I found on the island," replied the woman. "The oars were whittled from Gum tree branches, I wove the bottom from Palm branches, and the sides and stern came from a Eucalyptus tree".

"But, but," asked the man, "what about tools and hardware, how did you do that?"

"Oh, no problem," replied the woman, "on the south side of the island there is a very unusual strata of alluvial rock exposed. I found that if I fired it to a certain temperature in my kiln, it melted into forgeable ductile iron. I used that for tools, and used the tools to make

the hardware. But, enough of that," she said. "Where do you live?"

At last the man was forced to confess that he had been sleeping on the beach.

"Well, let's row over to my place," she said. So they both got into the rowing boat and left for her side of island.

The woman easily rowed them around to a wharf that led to the approach to her place. She tied up the rowing boat with a beautifully woven hemp rope. They walked up a stone walk and around a Palm tree; there stood an exquisite bungalow painted in blue and white.

"It's not much," she said, "but I call it home. Sit down please, would you like to have a drink?"

"No," said the man, "one more coconut juice and I will puke."

"It won't be coconut juice," the woman replied, "I have a still, how about a Pina Colada?" Trying to hide his continued amazement, the man accepted, and they sat down on her couch to talk.

After a while, and they had exchanged their stories, the woman asked, "Tell me, have you always had a beard?"

"No," the man replied, "I was clean shaven all of my life, and even on the cruise ship".

"Well if you would like to shave, there is a man's razor upstairs in the cabinet in the bathroom." So, the man, no longer questioning anything, went upstairs to the bath room. There in the cabinet was a razor made from a bone handle, two shells honed to a hollow ground edge were fastened on to its end inside of a swivel mechanism. The man shaved, showered and went back down stairs.

"You look great," said the woman, "I think I will go up and slip into something more comfortable." So she did.

And, the man continued to sip his Pina Colada. After a short time, the woman returned wearing fig leafs strategically positioned and smelling faintly of gardenia.

"Tell me," she asked, "we have both been out here for a very long time with no companionship. You know what I mean. Have you been lonely; is there anything that you really miss? Something that all men and woman need. Something that it would be really nice to have right now."

"Yes there is," the man replied, as he moved closer to the woman while fixing a winsome gaze upon her. "Tell me ... Do you happen to have an Internet connection?"

If you have any comments, suggestions or articles for further editions of The Pennant, please send them to the Editor, Rhys Jones at nuscpenant@yahoo.co.uk