



SLIPPER SAILINGS Autumn 2012

Commodore's Corner

With the improvement in weather at the end of the season, it is easy to forget how bad the summer was at times with many sailing events cancelled due to the conditions. Having said that, looking back through my notes I realised we have had some excellent events this year as usual.

The Topper training day and open went ahead in May led by Jane Birch-Tomlinson & Paul Motherselle with 5 races taking place on Sunday and no recalls or black flags despite the tide potentially pushing them over the line. Next year we would like to encourage more club Topper sailors to take part and with Dave Cockerel available both days it's one not to be missed. Unfortunately soon after that Oppie Camp had to be cancelled due to a water-logged road and field. Organisers Sean Curtis & Dave Valentine managed to re-arrange for September 22nd/23rd and despite fears of it being cold it was enjoyed by all and we had one of the warmest days I can remember, sitting on East Head having our picnic. Many thanks to Sean who has led for five years and will stand down this year. The Cruiser fleet were also suffering from the conditions and the weekend after the Folly had to be cancelled.

The joint Junior Regatta organised by ESC went well with some good racing on the tide and a huge amount of fun on the Mill Pond for younger juniors organised by Chris Gorton. Then came the Summer Ball with a Going for Gold Theme; well what can I say, led by Sarah Thorsby but with a huge amount of help from the social team and so many members to set up, run and take down again. Fortunately we couldn't see who was in those Gold costumes but it is well known that a certain RS300 sailor was desperate to try one on! Clare Coussens again led the on water fun day this year with the RYA Sail for Gold day. I am not sure if it was raining or not due to extra points being given to anyone soaking the Commodore ! This event led us into the Olympics and set us all up for the fantastic event it was, with club member Rod Carr leading on organising the Sailing Field of Play.

Fed Week was particularly enjoyable this year due to the number of Slipper members attending, both racing and providing patrol cover with three boats in attendance excellently organised by Helen Hodges. The wind and courses were perfect all week and with many Slipper boats doing well we managed to win the club trophy, to my delight.

September has again been the best month for weather. The Cruisers kindly invited the Youths to take part in a very successful Youth Cruise to the Folly (yes they were dancing on the table again!) with many Youths taking part and getting a insight into big boat sailing.

The Regatta weekend went well with only a small bit of rain on Sunday morning. Hugh Kennedy organised the Cruisers on Saturday with lighter winds and strong tides causing a few retirements but all returning in time for the very busy supper in the evening. On Sunday the Dinghy Regatta took place, organised by Mark Riddington (without a Gold suit!) with some excellent racing in all fleets followed by undoubtedly the best tea in the harbour with many cakes provided by sailing and non-sailing members, I thank you all again. It was a great well organised weekend and a credit to all involved.

The Cruisers were again out in force, able to retain the Yoke from ESC with some competitive racers taking part from both clubs. Unfortunately the season is now coming to an end and by the time you read this the cruiser lift-out will be behind us. The dinghies still have the Hare & Hounds inter-club series to come, with some great racing expected from a lengthened start line to accommodate the possible 50 odd starters.

I am not sure if it's of interest but my summer adventure was a hilarious trip to the Le Mans Classic in a Austin Seven trials car along with 3 others. I now realise why they invited a mechanic!



Mike Lillywhite
Commodore ESSC

Extracts from a letter to Mike Clarke from Carol Milton "down under":

Early January 2012

We had a quiet day on the 25th but I insisted that I had to check out the British perception that all Aussies celebrate Christmas having a Barbie on the beach. As it happens, the only people that did were a family group of Asians who had stopped us en route to ask if there was a beach close by, we told them to follow us and they were delighted with what they found - 10 km of the cleanest beach ever. They then asked us to join them for a drink and a bite to eat, but we were still full up from our late brunch, so declined and carried on walking. So, Barbies on the beach are a bit of a myth.

We went through immense frustration trying to deal with the ANZ Bank to register myself over here so that I could access the accounts I had opened prior to leaving England. The palaver - no, I don't have a driving licence here/an entry stamp in my Australian passport/Medicare card etc. as identification proof. I pointed out that the London office had

only sent me the letter with the account numbers on it and stated that I had to take my passport to any branch within 6 weeks of arrival. Eventually after we nearly stopped being pleasant, we returned with bank cards from English accounts and credit cards etc. and finally I was allowed to give them a sample of my signature which would prove that I am permitted access to my own dosh. It all makes me so mad and the scary thing is that there is a whole lot more bureaucracy to be dealt with in the New Year!

Life has been jam packed with things to do - from attempting to deal with bureaucracy (each one wants a card from another organisation to verify your identification and as a consequence it is like looking for a pin in a haystack for the opening one) which is driving us crackers, to melting gently and unable to move for the heat, to watching and listening to Robert and the Melbourne Ska Orchestra play at a festival down the coast with about 2000 in the audience on the 28th to performing in Yarra Park as the headline act at Melbourne's official events for New Year's Eve - this one for families with the fireworks going off at 9.30pm. It was wonderful at both events to see how the fun in the music (think of the band Madness) reaches out to the audience and everyone tries to dance in what little space is available with a sea of faces and arm waving, people on shoulders - and that wasn't just the children!

I shall be glad when the form filling is over and done with, but then we have to get a valuation on the house and start the buying of my half of it, then a quote for insulating what was built as simply a large holiday home into one that deals with the heat better and doesn't require the aircon to be constantly on. We intend to look into solar panels on the roof as ours is very suitable for it and although they are less than they were, there are grants for this. Meanwhile, we are beginning to think about how we will rearrange what's here and make more space for my things - thank goodness Robert is open to such changes and even talks about, "When we get your new kitchen ..."

Early February 2012

We are about to embark on a very hectic few weeks - we heard on Thursday that the container ship carrying my things over had arrived in Melbourne on the 26th January and would probably get through customs in a couple of weeks.

Help, where can we put everything, we need to get the ceiling insulated; we have loads of furniture to get rid of and a number of things requiring a handyman and a painter/decorator. After a mad panic I managed to find a local company who will start the insulation work in the middle of next week, an electrician came today with regard to disconnecting the ceiling lights before the ceiling can be done. A handyman came yesterday to see what needs doing and will start work this Thursday, and a carpet cleaner came this morning to deal with the two downstairs bedrooms.

04.04.2012

As I sit writing this, we are having 10 panels installed for a 2kw solar system. We too can be greens. We hoped all along that we'd have enough dosh left over after buying out his ex, insulating the roof by putting in very thick fibre stuff and a proper ceiling, having the interior woodwork and ceilings painted, buying my car, etc., etc., to then get the dream of no more electricity bills sorted out. We've done all of it now, in just over 3 months. Robert is getting thoroughly fed up with having jobs to do each day. As he says, he's the only one who can keep the large garden under control - not a typical 'garden' as we would know it, except in the front. And he won't let me do all that much generally if it requires any lifting etc. or getting up a ladder or on a pair of steps. All he wants to do after all this, when we finally finish finding places to put all my stuff (we are nearly finished with Pickford's cardboard box unpacking), then he'll feel free to get on with his 'proper' life - that of being a musician who has time to practise every day! I am also waiting to hear what Pickfords intend to do regarding bits of damage to some of my things, apart from two glasses and a china coffee set that got broken.

The next major musical event is a weekend at the Apollo Bay music festival on the weekend of Robert's birthday - 22nd. It's not long since we flew over to Adelaide to stay with old friends of his whilst he performed with the Melbourne Ska Orchestra at the WOMADelaide festival - photos from this (some 16 in number) have been put on the MSO website as being defined from the WOMADelaide gig, but as yet they haven't got round to crediting me with them - must remind the woman who deals with all that!

Now, 12th May 2012

As you can see, I have been most remiss in not sending this sooner, or even adding to it for quite a while - there seems to be so little time and too much to do. Actually the truth is that I am a hopeless letter writer and journal keeper and it doesn't come naturally to sit down and dedicate time to writing more than a quick email now and then - plus, if I were to attempt to write this by hand, it would be illegible since I so rarely write anything more than the odd shopping list! Since I last wrote we have had 10 solar panels put on the roof and despite it now being deep autumn and quite wet or overcast recently, we are managing to generate some energy most days to feed back to the grid - even with our relatively modest installation we should be able to eradicate all electricity bills and even add a bit to the gas bill fund. We have recently had quite a lot of our various paintings and prints framed and spent many an hour walking around trying to decide what should be hung where - thank goodness we seemed to have similar opinions of what worked, where - it could have been difficult as we both hold quite strong views on such matters.

May 26th

I have planted out leeks, broccoli and silver beet (similar to spinach) and hope to add other veg to that list, next Spring. There is plenty of space for all manner of things as the house is on a large plot, but at the back we have at least six

different gum trees , an almond, and three or four others that I haven't a clue about. All the trees ensure that there is a wonderful array of bird life, from Galahs to cockatiels, Mudlarks, blackbirds, magpies, to the most wonderful flutelike songs emanating from the appropriately named Butcher birds which are carnivores and can eat mice, and even other birds I have been told. However, I can live with that thought when I consider their amazing songs – each bird has a different selection so that one can tell which individual is performing.

I am hopeless in writing a journal as you suggested I should do before I left, this is the very best I can do so I hope it isn't too boring. I do recall you saying I might jot down oddities that I came across: a major irritation to me is when I say thank you in a shop; the reply is invariably, "No worries!" I feel so tempted to retort: "I wasn't worried; in fact I wasn't even concerned." There are also a number of words that I am still getting used to – all get said by newscasters as much as people one meets. **Rort**: a word usually used with regard to **Pollies** (politicians) particularly in the case of alleged fraud – at the moment there's an ex-union boss who has been accused of using the union credit cards to hire prostitutes, who is now an MP. Recently I was asked, "Who do you **barrack** for?" I was then quietly informed that they wanted to know which Aussie Rules football team I supported. I was tempted to **spruik** Arsenal or the Welsh Rugby team – that is, to brag about them or launch into a diatribe on the merits of soccer versus Aussie Rules. There is another phrase which puzzled me – when asking where someone lived I was told that they were based out in **woop-woop** meaning a small town in the back of beyond. I also managed to really puzzle someone when they offered me a sweet and I replied, thanks but I was trying to avoid sweets at the moment, evidently the word is **lolly or lollies** – whereas I think of a lolly as perhaps being an ice lolly – no, that is an **ice pole**. I am sure there more to discover, but these are the ones that really stick in my craw!

I am still in discussion with Pickfords after they finally decided that the one quote they got from a furniture restoration company was too much and that they would offer me a few hundred for the damage to my two retro Ercol daybeds – both in immaculate condition when they left King Street, and an admittedly slightly scratched mahogany library style bookcase that my grandfather had commissioned in 1953!

Blind Week and Bobo

Once again the Blind Week Bug seems to have gripped Slipper Cruisers with eighteen Slipper members and eight Slipper skippered boats taking part.

The Royal Cornwall Yacht Club was again the host having never missed their alternate turn in the last thirty-six years!

It was to be a tale of woe for Borborygmae.

I had itchy feet and a dream that soon became a plan.. The idea was to take Bobo after Blind Week, from Falmouth, on a leisurely mostly day-sailing cruise down the coast of Biscay, transiting France, Spain and Portugal, ending up in Gibraltar. Then to leave the boat in Gibraltar, Easy Jetting occasionally to enjoy some winter sun and cruising; then bringing her back in the Spring before the Portuguese trades set in next Summer. I discovered a new marina in Spain, a stone's throw from Gibraltar that had very reasonable winter storage charges for 2012/2013

Bobo had already crossed the Atlantic in 2005 and 2007, so she was fairly well sorted with long distance cruising gear, though there were quite a few improvements and alterations that I wanted to make. The Single Side Band radio aerial tuner had to be relocated, and I wanted the new state of the art Raymarine E7 touch screen plotter at the helming position - something that I had never had before as my only plotting system ran on an old laptop that I kept at the chart table. Instant navigation was a luxury that I had never had; go below, turn on the computer, wait for Windows to fire up, wait for the programme to open, wait for the GPS to find me etc. etc. How I envied others with their screens, and the E7 was very fast and had a touch screen! The other big alteration (not yet sure about improvement) was ditching hanked-on sails for roller furling to make life easier in my old age, a big step if you start from scratch!

Two of my Atlantic crossing mates, Jennie Vaughan and Geoff McNicol had agreed to come too. (I can't call them crew as individually and collectively they have saved me from dire decisions by wise advice; and are just as capable as I am). Both were going home after Blind Week, Jennie joining me after a few days and Geoff joining us in France.

The weather this summer was indeed, pants. We trundled down to Falmouth in fog, mist and little fair wind. At least we had the need for a good plotter, entering Falmouth without seeing the shoreline!

I have included a photo of Jennie "checking that cooling water is coming out of the exhaust pipe!" Who said pizza?

The twenty-seven boats on Blind Week split into five fleets, each with a lead boat. Our fleet cruised up to Plymouth and back for the week. It rained, it blew and we had a small amount of sunshine, but there was much laughter and camaraderie.

In the River Yealm Bobo started to make a disturbing noise when the prop turned. I am always wary as I have a folding propellor, and cutlass bearings are also a source of problems. My son kindly volunteered to dive down and have a look. The visibility was zero as the river is muddy and shallow with a strong tidal stream, but everything seemed fine to the touch. I made the expensive decision for the boat to be lifted in nearby Plymouth so we transferred our blind crew to another boat in case of a complete failure (it was blowing a 7), made sure the sails and anchor were ready for instant deployment and set off. On arrival at Mayflower marina we were lifted immediately and as soon as the stern gear was visible the source of the noise was apparent. The idiot who had fitted the sacrificial anode to the prop shaft had not tightened it securely, and it was flapping up to the top of the shaft and tapping against the hull! Easily fixed by that same idiot!



No other incident is worthy of reporting; especially not my falling overboard from a Bavaria whilst moored up in Fowey. Oh well, a first time for



Iain and Sue, our blind crew helming

everything I suppose. I can only blame the skipper for being over generous with the gin..... But in the back of my mind a little voice was saying “getting older you know”

So Blind Week ended safe and sound in Falmouth. I had a few jobs to do before the Gib trip and was looking forward to pottering about and visiting my 93 year old Aunt in Truro.

And then I get the news from Jennie that her sister has been rushed into the QA, critically ill. And then my cough (it has plagued me for some time and is thought to be connected with asbestos dust from my time as an apprentice in the motor trade, not helped in the least by being an ex-smoker) started to get far worse. I took the decision to sail home for the time being as there were so many balls in the air.

At home the cough became worse and I started to feel unwell. Pneumonia was diagnosed on top of my lung problems, and now the pneumonia has passed I am left with a chronic cough and I am extremely breathless. Still smiling though and the medics have a firm hold on me.

So Gibraltar was cancelled. We shall see what the future brings...



The inevitable pontoon party!



If anyone would like to know about Blind Sailing, please go to www.visailing.co.uk

Vlad the Impaled (A Tale of Various Mis-Adventures in the West Country)

At the start of the season, as is normal, Vlad the Impala's summer program was full of exciting and challenging events. And, as is also normal, many of these events were canned either because of a lack of crew or because of the weather. But, from an early stage, the Impala Nationals to be held in Plymouth in mid July had attracted a lot of interest. Very quickly, this event became the potential highlight of my season.

I had left myself 2 weekends in the calendar to deliver Vlad from Emsworth to Plymouth – Surely this would be fine in late June and early July? The week before departure, Vlad had been entered in The Folly Race round the Isle of Wight and the crew had assembled, reached down Chi Harbour and poked our noses out towards West Pole. Fixation also came out to play but the race was canned due to F6/7 headwinds. The rest of that week was spent watching the forecast (poor) like a hawk and worrying about leaving for the West Country. Plan A was quickly discarded in favour of Plan B and it was probably Plan G that was finally kicked into life on the last Saturday in June.

Once again, the crew assembled and reached down Chi Harbour, to be greeted by exactly the same F6/7 SW'ly's that had scotched racing the week before. But this time, there was no option and Vlad headed west, hunkered down with 2 reefs in the main and the No3 jib. A wet 6 hour beat got us to Yarmouth and the crew were glad to arrive! The afternoon was spent drying out and replacing a batten in the main, blown away during the trip down the Solent. After eating in The Bugle, we all retired to bed quite early, cream cracked after the day's sail.

Sadly, Sunday dawned with exactly the same weather. It was a lovely sunny day but the beat to Weymouth in a F6/7 WSW'ly was hard work. Anvil Point and St Albans Point were rougher than the rest of the trip and everyone was thoroughly wet and exhausted by the time we reached Weymouth, 9 hours after leaving Yarmouth. It was a "character building" sort of day!

There had been talk of using a day's leave on Monday to get across Lyme Bay but all 3 of us had had enough. The 2 crew scarpered that evening, jumping on a train for home while I ate and collapsed into bed at 8pm. I woke up 11 hours later, hoping to spend some quality time with Vlad, drying her out and giving the cushions some fresh air. But it was raining, so all I could do was sponge out the standing water and abandon her in South Cove (having paid a small fortune in mooring fees) and catch the train.

The first thing I did when I got home was buy a new set of offshore oilskins – I had known my old set were not very effective but 2 days of green waves had shown me that they leaked like a sieve! The rest of that week was spent worrying about the onward delivery towards Plymouth, organising a new delivery crew and fretting about the weather. Friday evening arrived and I drove down to Weymouth and abandoned my car in the pouring rain. The 2 crew turned up (on the train from Totnes) and after a safety briefing we retired to a pub for a pie and a pint. The pub was leaking like a sieve, too but it was a lot dryer than Vlad! Anyway, at 11.30pm we departed Weymouth and motored (with biblical quantities of rain falling out of the sky) towards The Bill.

Portland Bill was safely rounded, under motor, at slack high water and a course of WSW set to clear the bottom of Devon. After a celebratory cup of tea I went below – Not to sleep but it did get me out of the rain.

When I had discussed the trip across Lyme Bay with the crew, having reviewed the weather forecast that afternoon, I had stated that it would be "very wet but rather boring" – I wish I had kept my mouth shut! After my hour below, I came up and turned off the engine – We had enough breeze to sail. And the breeze kept building and building and building. Soon after a wet and dreary dawn broke, we had to put the second reef in and I kept thinking that the wind would top out soon. But no, it just kept building and building, together with the seas. I would have loved to have put a third reef in the main and to have changed to a smaller jib but the 3rd reef was not rigged (not enough lines in the boom) and who would have wanted to leave the relative sanctuary of the cockpit to do a bareheaded jib change down to the storm jib?

As the seas built, so our ability to keep our WSW course suffered (the wind was from the south) and we eventually decided that we needed to run for cover. Initially, our new destination was Dartmouth but very quickly we decided that was not enough of a bear away and the dangers of the Mewstone on a lee shore, plus the size of the entrance made Dartmouth a no-go area. So, a large bear away onto a course of NW saw us headed for Brixham. The next 2 hours were the most scary I have experienced for decades! The wind and seas continued to build, we were surfing down waves at excessive speeds (13.5 knots was the maximum seen on the GPS speed over the ground display) and Vlad was carrying far too much sail. But, apart from a few semi broaches when a larger than usual wave caught the stern, Vlad the Impala behaved impeccably. I kept looking at the rig wondering what would happen if anything were to give way but she was as solid as a rock and a very good little ship.

About 2 miles off, the unmistakable outline of Berry Head loomed out of the rain. We were all glad to see it and after another half hour of buttock clenching tension, the calm water in the lee of the head could be seen. Boy, it was a relief to get into shelter and it was a very shaken crew who moored up in Brixham Marina

at about 7.30 on Saturday morning. A couple of days later, I found a Berry Head weather station website that showed that we had been caught in a short but vicious F8/9 gale, with gusts of F10 – This was not foreseen on any forecast that we had read or heard but perhaps the midnight forecast (which I had forgotten to listen to in the stress of rounding the Bill) would have talked of gales? If we had heard it and it had, we would have scuttled back to Weymouth, I am sure. Another cock up was me forgetting my harness line. But I only realised this was still at home when I looked for it in Brixham! – We only had one harness line between 3 of us on that night.....Hmm.

The weather settled down a bit after that but all three of us had had enough. So, once again, all I could do was remove the standing water from Vlad and abandon her, with saturated cushions, in Brixham while the 3 of us retired to Kingsbridge to warm up and lick our psychological wounds.

On the Sunday, I trained back to Weymouth and had a stroke of luck – I changed at Castle Cary where I discovered that the Weymouth line was flooded. But a fellow passenger had overheard my conversation with the station staff and offered me a lift to Dorchester (via a round about route due to all the flooded roads), from where I could catch a south coast train into Weymouth. And my car was parked in a side road, on a hill, rather than the long stay car park I had originally ear marked (£9.50 a day? I'm not paying that!). This was good news because the car park was featured on South Today on the Monday, flooded to a depth of 2 feet!

Once home, I only had 4 days before the Nationals started on the Friday and Vlad was still in Brixham. Thankfully, the Lyme Bay crew were still game (they wanted to finish what they had started, apparently) and my Boss at work allowed me to take the Wednesday and Thursday off at short notice. So, once again, I headed west and after a very short rest in Brixham Marina, aboard a very soggy Vlad, we departed at 3.30am for the final leg. Once again, the weather was very poor (but not dangerous) and another F6/7 beat in heavy rain showers was endured for 9 hours. Our arrival into Plymouth (Yacht Haven Quay up the river Plym) was greeted with a weak cheer.

I spent Thursday morning, in the pouring rain, trying to dry Vlad out and prepare her for racing the next day. This included getting her lifted out for a "Racing Scrub" to ensure her hull was as smooth as was possible and resulted in my brand new oilies getting covered in grease from the large fork-lift truck used to lift her out – Drat! At 2pm, I ran for shelter into a hotel that I had booked at very short notice, having decided that sleeping aboard would be untenable because of the weather. The rest of the day was spent in a lovely warm and dry hotel room, plugging the local racing marks into 2 GPS's, watching the rain out of the window and the Tour de France on TV.

Now, before the Nationals, I had hoped for a reasonable result. This was based on the fact that lessons learnt during last year's Nationals had been put into action (don't leave your brand new sails in the garage, do clean the bottom and do ensure you have a strong crew of 5 or 6 aboard) and because Vlad had been the first of 4 Impala's in a JOG race back in May. I did not expect to trouble the engravers but a mid fleet result with one or 2 flashes of brilliance would have been very satisfactory.

So the Friday dawned with high expectations but equally poor weather. OK, only a damp F4/5 but still chilly and not the shorts and T-Shirt weather I had dreamed of. Friday's race was a longer "Coastal" race and I hoped that my experience of JOG racing would come in useful. Sadly, the race officer's idea of a coastal race was 4 laps of the breakwater and shortly after the start we discovered that our speed to windward was sadly lacking and we trailed in 10th out of 12 – It would have been 11th but one Impala had to retire with a broken halyard.

On Saturday, 4 short windward / leeward races were scheduled and, once again, our lack of speed on the beat did us no favours. A 9th (our best result of the regatta!) was followed by two 12ths and a 10th. At least the weather had improved slightly with a mixture of rain and sun and slightly lighter winds.

By the start of Sunday, I had, sadly, decided that I was really not enjoying myself. So it was with gritted teeth that I approached another 4 windward / leeward races. Another two 12ths followed in races 6 & 7, leaving just 2 races to endure. Just 2 more races before I could relax! Race 8 was to be 4 laps long but at the first leeward mark, having hardened up and while tidying up our spinnaker, another competitor came careering in from windward, calling water far too late, making no attempt to avoid a collision and T-Boned Vlad on the port side, just in front of the shrouds. A six inch diameter hole about a foot below the rubbing strake was the result. The crunching and ripping noise that Vlad made as she was impaled will stay with me for a long time...

We immediately retired and headed for the marina, remembering to protest while heading home - Not for any form of redress but to help with the insurance claim. Thankfully, my crew were still capable of thinking as I was by now very upset – I had struggled to reach Plymouth through bad, sometimes dangerous, weather. I had spent loads of money on mooring fees, hotel rooms, travel and lift out costs. I had got cold, wet and scared and I had not even enjoyed the event that was to be the culmination of my season! To cap it all, my pride and joy had suffered a horrible injury through no fault of ours.

After tidying up Vlad and saying farewell to some of the crew, a couple of them came with me to the Royal Western YC for the Protest Committee hearing. This was impressive to experience (in an out of body sort of way) and resulted in Vlad being exonerated of any blame. I then attended the Impala Nationals prize

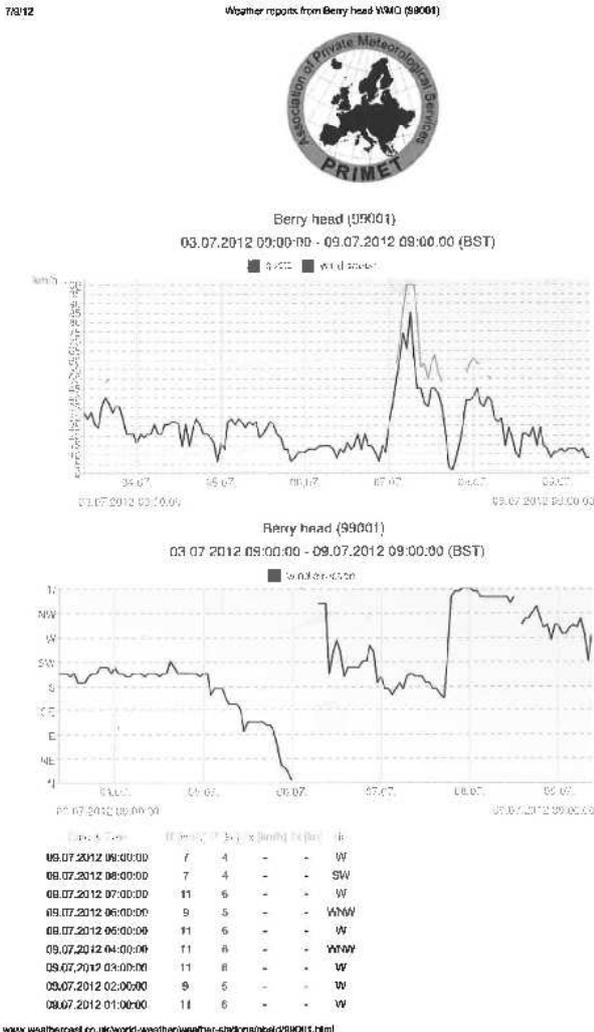
giving where Vlad did receive a prize for the most arduous delivery trip, which was rather ironic, I thought. It was a very sad and dejected owner who drove home from Plymouth that Sunday evening. Inevitably, I succumbed to a summer cold 4 days later, which took a couple of weeks to shrug off.

The rest of the summer was spent wrestling with insurance companies, repair quotes and my mind – I suffered with many sleepless nights wondering if I still enjoyed sailing and whether yacht ownership was worth all the hassle. To be frank, all those bad memories had rattled me and I completely lost my sailing “bottle”. But Vlad was eventually repaired and in late August I took the train down to Plymouth and got to know Vlad again over the course of a 4 day cruise home along the south coast (I successfully got back in the saddle). Together with a Nationals crew member, we travelled from Plymouth to Dartmouth and enjoyed an evening of Dartmouth Regatta entertainment. The return crossing of Lyme Bay was accomplished in bright sunshine, with a following wind and the relief I felt after rounding Portland Bill was immense. A crew change took place in Weymouth and the last 2 days were an enjoyable potter in the sun with following winds. On September 2nd, after over 2 months away, Vlad returned to her mooring in Chichester harbour. !Phew!

So, what have I learnt this summer?:

- I do not enjoy Olympic style racing – I like races where each leg is long enough for a cup of tea!
- Listen to every forecast you possibly can.
- Take your harness line with you, whatever the weather!
- If the weather seems to be saying “don’t bother, mate” then consider your options, even if it means that you may disappoint some of your crew (after all, it is your toy, Martin).
- Try to steer clear of insurance claims and repair bills at all costs.
- But if a repair is required, I can recommend Simon Panell of A1GRP in Plymouth – The repair he performed on Vlad is amazing and she is now perfect again. Let us hope the weather in 2013 is better than that in 2012. It can’t be any worse, can it?!

Martin Perry (older, wiser and only slightly mentally scarred).



Slipper Youth at the 29er Nationals

The 29er RYA Nationals were held in Restronguet Sailing club in Cornwall with an entry of 64 boats. The Ladies Championship Title went down to the wire and had the scoring computer steaming. With excellent scores in R9 and 10 Ruth Allan (This year's Slipper Youth Captain) and Alice Masterman took the lead from Vikki Payne (Last Year's Slipper Youth Captain) and Steffi Orton. In the final race Vikki and Steffi took of around the course like a scalded cat but Ruth and Alice still needed drop below 15th. But incredibly they came exactly 15th so it was a tie break. So the title was Ruth and Alice's courtesy of a pair of threes winning it over three fours. The over all National Champions were Matt Venables and Will Alloway and the winners of silver fleet were Tess Allan and Rob Morris.

Ruth and Alice



Vikki and Steffi



Folly Fever!

It was that time of the year when Slipper Youth Sailors go on the youth cruise and this year was even better than the last; with a fleet of 12 boats we cruised over to the Folly Inn on the Isle of Wight, and then raced back the next day. Following a relaxing cruise to the Folly we found a reserved place at the Folly and with boats rafting 4-6 spaces across, it was packed. Once we had moored, it was time to go for a dip in the lovely Medina



and to jump off the boats. We had a quick shower, got changed before discovering that the spinnaker halyard was stuck up the top of the mast. This meant that Clair had to be hoisted to the top to unhook it. Naturally a few of us also had to have a few joy rides up the top. A few beers for the adults, then it was off to the Folly for a meal and the highlight of dancing on the tables. Everyone was showing their moves, including Julian. A few lucky girls got to draw on the back of the groom at a stag party! There was little



room to move and once on a table there wasn't much you could do but dance. After a lot of awful dad dancing (especially from the not so honourable Youth Coordinator) it was time to go back to the boat and watch the stars.

We woke early the next morning. Needless to say there were quite a few weary eyed people coming out of the cabins. Everything seemed much better after porridge, bacon and eggs and a mug of tea and so it was time to leave for the race. At the start the competition was on



and for a moment it seemed as though we were in the lead but not for long as the larger boats soon overtook us and were off in the distance. However there was a battle raging between ourselves in Sheba and Paddington. We looked safe heading round the second marker until disaster struck, we sailed into a wind hole and we didn't end up in just one but three! Unfortunately for us, Paddington found the right spot and overtook. After this we decided that fishing was probably more productive and we cruised back to Gosport and home, tired but happy. For the record Melody with Fi and Lottie went onto win the race – Again!! Many thanks to all the cruiser skippers and crew who so kindly gave up their time for such a fantastic weekend.

When asked what the best moment this is what was said:

Rachel- it was wicked and I enjoyed everything.

Emily- it was amazing, the best moment was sailing.

Jess- dancing on top of the tables.

Rowan- jumping in the water with the dog and swimming and well I loved everything.

Austin- coming 2nd in the race.



The youth cruise was a great success and enjoyable for all and is a must have for next year for the youths. Esme Cooper

Training Matters – It certainly does!

Autumn and Winter Training

This autumn sees both a Dinghy Instructor course and a Power Boat Instructor course taking place before Christmas and we wish all ten candidates every success in that. We have a First Aid course in the evening-class format planned for Tuesday evenings starting on 30 Oct (at the time of writing only two places remain) and a Short Range Radio (VHF) course planned for Sunday 25 November. *[Please see below for how to apply for courses.]*

Planning for the early part of 2013 is underway which will include Powerboat courses, First Aid (day format) and, hopefully, Racing Coach and a non-certificated club VHF refresher. As soon as we can confirm details they will be published on the website and alerts for specific courses sent by global email.

Course Applications

The old method of applying for courses by writing on the notice-board presented all sorts of difficulties, not least the difficulty of reading handwriting and corrections, but has emerged into the 21st century. Thanks to the hard work of Richard Scales, course applications are now made through the Slipper website as follows:

- Go to the Training section on the left hand side of the home page and you will find a headline called 'Information on Courses'.
- Press on the 'here' button and that will take you to the authentication pane for the members-only section. At the moment the only function in the members-only section is course applications and there is a common username 'essc' and a common password '20essc12' (these are case-sensitive). That authentication may change at a future date when other functions are added – that will be advised by a more general message, not from the training team.
- Once in the members-only section you will see the courses currently on offer and can press a button for more details.
- If you are interested in applying for a course you can then press the 'enquiry' button, fill in the details requested and submit. That will automatically send a message to the relevant course organiser who will then definitely have your current e-mail address without letters transposed or missing!
- The course organiser will then be in touch to let you know if you have a place.

John Brook

Training Co-ordinator

training@emsworthslipper.org.uk

Collision Regs and crossing the channel - Baldur and Toccata

Despite the fact that Rule 17 of the collision regulations states that the stand on vessel should hold its course and that the motoring vessel should alter course to starboard (rule 18) the fact remains that there are still plenty of cargo vessels who for one reason or another will not alter course to avoid a sailing vessel. And regrettably there are many 'yachties' who change course to play safe and make for the stern of every target. This makes course planning a nightmare for the masters of ships.

On the recent crossing of the channel south of the Isle of Wight two ESSC yachts some 4 cables apart on parallel courses of 180 were stand on vessels to two large cargo vessels. At about 3 miles distance one of the cargo vessels altered course to starboard. This was clearly seen by the stand on yachts and clearly understood by their skippers. This ship later passed clear astern of both of us.

The second cargo vessel held its course and as it drew nearer it was clear to both of the yachts that there was the potential for a collision. In turn both skippers called the cargo vessel on channel 16 and then on channel 13 notifying the officer of the watch of their positions and asking him what his intentions were. A reply was heard that “you will pass down my port side,” both yachts held their courses. However it became clear that the cargo vessel had not made an alteration to starboard and it also appeared to have maintained a steady speed. This was confirmed by the AIS information being recorded by both Baldur and Toccata. The A.I.S. on Toccata indicated a closest point of approach of 6 feet in less than 5 minutes, that is 6 feet to the AIS antenna which was almost certainly located on the bridge of the ship some 300 feet back from its sharp end! Toccata sailing close hauled on starboard bore away to port, thus saving vital seconds which a turn to starboard would have taken, and passed safely down the ship’s starboard side at a distance of some 0.3 nautical miles. If the ship had altered to its starboard it could not have turned into the path of Toccata in the time. Baldur turned to starboard and hove to when one cable away from the cargo vessel and when it had passed then turned back onto the original course passing astern of the Grande Congo. It was clear to both skippers that the officer of the watch had no intention of complying with Rule 18 of the collision regulations.

It is interesting to note that Toccata was broadcasting her position on AIS and also had her Sea-me radar reflector enhancer transmitting. So the ship had no excuse, other than negligence, for not seeing Toccata.

The incident took place in international waters outside the jurisdiction of both the UK Coastguards and the Marine Accident Investigation Board. However Solent CG was monitoring the incident as both the Grande Congo and Toccata were transmitting their positions on AIS as well as the radio transmissions between all three vessels. After passing astern of Grande Congo Baldur spoke again to the Officer of the watch and informed him of the near miss and that the incident would be reported to the CG. This was duly done and followed up by Toccata reinforcing the message.

This incident occurred in good visibility in daylight. Had poor visibility prevailed the near miss could easily have led to a much more serious incident. On return to the UK the MAIB was contacted and a full report submitted with photographs of the AIS plots from both yachts. Solent CG also submitted the detailed AIS plot from their archives.

The following is the reply received from MAIB:

I have reviewed the AIS records for the incident you reported to us. It is possible to see the Grande Congo make a very small alteration of course, but I can quite understand your perspective that the alteration was too little and too late. I have attempted to follow up the underlying reasons for this with Grande Congo's owners, but have not received any answers to date. Regrettably, they are outside our jurisdiction and consequently, our ability to compel them to answer is limited. A number of our recent investigations have raised concerns about the competence of watchkeepers and we will be making recommendations over forthcoming months to target this subject.

I am pleased that you were able to take proper action to avoid a collision in this case and thank you for reporting it to us - it will form part of the growing body of evidence to support greater emphasis on improved watchkeeping standards.

*Principal Inspector of Marine Accidents
Marine Accident Investigation Branch*

Lessons learnt:

The mark one eyeball is probably the most useful navigational aid we have, keep a good lookout and once a target is sighted take regular bearings to check that the bearing between the two boats is not constant.

If in doubt, contacting ships directly be it in the confines of the Dover Strait or the wider Channel, almost always elicits a friendly and professional response. This gives both yacht skipper and ship master peace of mind and confidence as each knows what the other is doing. Notwithstanding this yachts should always be prepared to alter course should the situation demand – far better a 180° turn and an extra 15 minutes on the crossing time than the catastrophic alternative.

Do not let our experience put you off, since this Baldur has sailed a further 800nm this year and all crossings with other vessels have been textbook.

Peter Forster

FITTING OUT A DORY

By Mike Hackman

Marilyn always complains that the boating magazines I buy are more than 70% adverts and very little substance and I am afraid to have to admit that there is much in what she says. The articles I most enjoy are usually the ones that deal with how to do things and rather in the theme of Practical Boat Owner it has occurred to me that my latest project may be of interest to some.

Like so many of the projects that I had plans to tackle when I retired, the fitting out of the single skin dory hull that had lain under a hedge at the farm for years had been put back but the offer for sale of one of the club rescue boat outboard engines that was to be replaced seemed like sufficient incentive to put the proposed project to the top of the list (particularly as I would not be doing any cruising on my narrow boat this year). Day one was spent swinging a slasher to cut back the brambles and undergrowth that had buried the hull which was upside down and inches thick in dead leaves but cleaned off with a good helping of elbow grease and T-Cut.

Not having any drawings of a Dell Quay Dory I found some pictures on the internet and took some measurements from Stan Buck's old dory. The original Dory was built with a double skin filled with foam to make it "unsinkable" but in Titanic style the foam very often became saturated with water over a period of time making it very heavy and quite sinkable. (The Slipper's dory rescue boat in the 60's suffered such a fate). My plan was to make a buoyancy tank of the whole of the below deck area and that the deck should be above the water line with a fall towards the stern so that it would be self draining. Transferring the contours of the hull to create the floors was a bit of a hit and miss process with strips of polythene and black marker pen to make templates but the floors fitted where they touched and foaming polyurethane glue, epoxy resin and fibreglass webbing made a 100% bond. The floors were cut out of 18mm ply to give it plenty of rigidity. The deck is 12mm marine ply sheathed with an epoxy mat and painted with an epoxy paint (Total Concept Paints in Terminus Road Chichester) sprinkled with fine sand for non slip surface.

In order to create a fixing for a gunwale to give strength to the single skin I had to fit a vertical sheet of ply on the insides . This I cut out of a sheet of 9mm marine ply and to save material (and weight) I devised a way of working in a pattern that produced a mirror image

for each side. (Marilyn asked why I had put upside down flower pots all down the sides?) It's difficult to explain in words but the picture makes it clear. I cut the cover boards for the gunwale out of some planks of Douglas fir I have had in my shed for years. The rubbing strake is teak and the corners have been steamed and laminated. To do this I have made up a simple wooden steam box wrapped in towels and used a wallpaper stripping steamer to generate the steam. An hour's steaming seemed to be sufficient for each strip. I made up a thin steel band with end stops set at the length of the timber strips to be bent with which to bend the strips around the former (see picture of strips being clamped).

In order to obtain a better trim I have created a locker below the foredeck to house the fuel tank, battery, warp and anchor stowage. I had just enough 9mm ply left out of the whole sheet to make the steering console and I turned up the steering wheel boss out of some small left over pieces of the yew tree from which Pat's carvings in the Mill were made. The steering wheel, guard rails and fittings I salvaged from the wreck of a dory I found in a field with young trees growing in it. The bow cleat I had re-chromed at Metal Finishers at Fort Wallington Fareham.

My granddaughter Amie Claire performed the naming ceremony at the launch and all the family enjoyed the maiden voyage – a trip down harbour escorted by Sarah acting as mother ship. All the grandchildren much enjoyed being towed in a tractor tyre inner tube which attracted the attention of the Harbour patrol who seem to enjoy being bullies despite the fact that we were not breaking the speed limit. A boat full of people and towing a tractor tyre was rather a lot to ask of the 20hp motor but I am happy to report that with just two aboard on rescue boat duty she flies!





2012 Cruiser Lift-Out

Once again your club managed to book a fine spell of weather for this autumn's lift-out. Unusually it took place over a Sunday and Monday due to the vagaries of tide which apparently, according to Chris Lunn, our esteemed conductor of proceedings, "waits for no man". A photograph that ably demonstrates his high authority is below. The only hitch was a two hour crane breakdown, but hard work soon caught up with the lost time.

Many thanks to everyone who took part, especially the new members whose response to the request for cake to provide sustenance delighted and amused everyone. In addition, they were delicious - thank you and welcome to this self help club!





Not all of our members are able to accept the concept of a Ladies Race.
Some bridle at the sexism implied.
Some think it patronising.
Some think it unfair as the “woman is only an autohelm”
Others just get on with it and accept disqualification for the good of the club.....



The End!

It's amazing. For each issue of *Slipper Sailings* I think that I haven't got sufficient material to make a reasonable size document, then suddenly it all comes in and I've plenty. Thank you everyone, once again.

So, we've had a wonderful summer of sport. What a shame that the TV coverage of the sailing at Weymouth was so poor. But the TV commentaries for it were even worse, excruciatingly bad. From what I've been told some sailing people turned off the sound altogether! The commentators said that they were trying to make what was happening understandable for non-sailors, yet at times they didn't even seem to understand what was happening in front of their eyes. The non-sailors with whom I discussed this said that it was all totally incomprehensible to them – they gave up watching. Such a shame.

Now that the cruisers are laid up, our view down Chichester Harbour has reverted to what it was before the explosion in leisure sailing, nothing but sky, birds, mud and water, and just the odd craft on the water. Take time to enjoy this view, we are privileged to have it on our doorsteps, yet so often take it for granted. Take a break from doing the antifouling and walk one of the shore paths to enjoy the simple beauty of our harbour.

"Some fish are dangerous. Jellyfish can sting. Electric eels can give you a shock. They live in caves under the sea where I think they have to plug themselves into chargers." (Christopher age 7)

Roger Pratt
Editor