

# The R N V R Yacht Club

## NEWS UPDATE

December 2009

### By the Commodore

The end of the year is fast approaching and it is time to reflect on the Club's activities over the past twelve months and to give a "Heads-Up" on what is planned for the next twelve months. I can confidently report that your Club is in a healthy state with membership numbers holding steady, participation in Club activities are as spirited and lively as hitherto and the finances reassuringly sound. The winter months saw one of the most ambitious training programmes the Club has ever organised which resulted in club members and friends partaking in a wide range of training courses. The winter months also saw our Northern Dinner at the impressive Royal Naval HQ in Liverpool. The spring sunshine greeted us as usual at our Fitting-Out lunch held for the first time at the delightful Royal Naval Club and Royal Albert Yacht Club in Old Portsmouth. This set the scene for our waterborne event at Island Harbour which, whilst in the grip of receivership still came up with fine weather, a fascinating tour of the Classic Boat Museum at Newport and a sumptuous barbeque laid on at the last minute by Alison Child.

Club sailing week-ends were held in the Solent, the Humber and the East Coast giving boat owners and non-boat owners alike the chance to put into practice the training they had received earlier in the year. We also joined up with the Royal London Yacht Club in an exclusive tour and special dinner at the RN Submarine Museum at Fort Blockhouse Gosport. The Summer Cruise to the Cote d'Alabatre was as usual, the centre-piece of our sailing activities with excellent gourmet dinners in Fécamp and Dieppe combined with cultural experiences at the Benedictine Monastery, the Newfoundland Museum in Fécamp and the Canadian Memorial Museum in Dieppe. Our planned visit to St Valéry-en-Caux had to be abandoned because of the customary storm we always seem to

pick up on our Summer Cruises but the extra days were put to good use in both Fécamp and Dieppe.

Following on from the Summer Cruise, several club boats continued up to Boulogne to be met by a Parade of Sail on entering harbour – part of the very lively Maritime Festival that was taking place around the waterfront. After a jolly two days, the flotilla headed for the comforts of the Royal Temple Yacht Club and welcoming harbour of Ramsgate. In glorious sunshine the gaggle rounded North Foreland and navigated the Kentish Flats (rather shallow in places!) to finally berth 10 miles up the Medway at Chatham and spend a couple of days taking in the maritime heritage of the area. On a crystal clear (early) morning the 4 remaining club boats took the tide up Father Thames berthing in St Katherine Dock for a week of fun and frolics in the Nation's capital. A full article about this adventure will appear in the next Newsletter.

The autumn months saw a well attended Lymington Meet and the sailing season ended on a ghoulish note with a fun filled Halloween /Laying-up party at Hornet Sailing Club. Our Annual Dinner at the RAF Club was a most enjoyable and friendly affair graced by the presence of Admiral the Lord Boyce who spoke about his roles as the Lord Warden and Admiral of the Cinque Ports and Chairmanship of the RNLI.

Our programme for next year sees us breaking new ground with the first South Western Dinner for some years at the Berry Head Hotel in Brixham followed by a visit to the nearby MRSC. The Fitting-Out Luncheon will be at the Royal Southern Yacht Club Hamble and our Spring Meet will be at Littlehampton with a trip up the river Arun but not in rubber-ducks! The Summer Cruise will be to Yarmouth, Poole and Weymouth, ending up at the Olympic sailing venue Portland where we will join with the

RNSA 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary cruise participating in a week-end of social and sailing events. Later in the summer, we intend to resurrect the Commodore's Cup for the fastest Cross-Channel passage ending at Cherbourg or St Vaast.

The New Year will also see changes in the way we promulgate our events with the internet becoming the principal method but conventional mailings will still be used for the Newsletter, News Update and AGM or other formal material. Those without internet access will still receive their Club notices by mail in the usual way.

At the AGM Colin Harvey will stand down as Membership Secretary after many years devoted service to the club. Sue Walker will be taking over this role with the aid of the new club data base she has been developing whilst Martin Alexander will expand his role as Webmaster to encompass all communications. David Monks will become the Data Protection Officer whilst Nic Block will become the keeper of the club rules. Ian Ward has already assumed the role of Slops Bosun.

On the people side, we have said farewell to three of our past Commodores. Alan Ure, David Beaton and Sidney Ward all "Crossed the Bar" earlier in the year. Their contribution to the Club over many years has been very significant and for this we owe them a big debt of gratitude. We have also started a membership survey contacting those members who we have not been seen at club events in recent times. This is ongoing but early indications are that the Newsletter and E-bulletins are much appreciated and that there is a call for more informal get-togethers in the parts of the country more distant from the Home Counties and the Solent. To some extent this is already happening particularly on the East Coast but if there are groups elsewhere, it only needs one or two from that area to step up to

the plate and initiate such an event which the club will support. The move to have a South West Dinner this coming year rather than a Northern Dinner is to ring the changes and spread our events around the country but we will be back up North!

The running of a club such as ours requires the energy and enthusiasm of a strong committee and the need for "fresh" talent to refresh that committee from time to time particularly as some of the long standing committee members retire. We are always on the lookout for such members and if you feel you can put something back into the Club by such service please contact me or any of your committee because a volunteer is worth any number of pressed men or women.

It now only remains for me to wish you and your loved ones a very Happy Christmas and an enjoyable New Year. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our club functions ashore and afloat in 2010 and thank you all for your support in this, my first year as your Commodore.

### Winter Training Programme

**"If you think training is expensive, try incompetence"**

#### *Anon*

The proposed training programme for this winter has recently been promulgated as an E-Bulletin and on the Club's website. It will shortly be despatched in hard copy form with the AGM papers.

The courses available to Club members and their guests, in terms of both weekend shore-based and practical sea training modules, are largely repeats of the training opportunities provided last year.

For those who might wish to venture into the Inland Waterways of the Continent members are reminded that they can gain their CEVNI qualification through the Club and may opt for shore-based courses in London or the North-West as an alternative to Gosport (Hornet SC). The courses last about 4 hours and are followed by a multi choice question paper.

Do make full use of these low-cost opportunities provided by your Club in order to update or advance your boating

knowledge, develop your skills and meet other Club members.

Note particularly that the First Aid qualification is valid for three years and if you are not familiar with DSC then perhaps you should be!!

Would you know what to do if you received a top up of watery diesel into your tank? Your engine would very soon make you aware of its unhappiness and refuse duty! Could you drain the water, change and bleed the filters and get going again-do you even carry spare filters.....??

For more information, please contact the Training Officer, Tim Ware (020 7371 7828), or Tom Cunningham for proposed training in the North-West (01606 883697).

### The UKBA (United Kingdom Borders Agency)

As its name implies this organisation has responsibility for patrolling our Coasts and checking the *bona fide* status of (as far as we are concerned) boats and yachts sailing around our coast.

The Yachting Press and in particular the Winter 2009 edition of the RYA Members Magazine, has carried several critical reports of late where UKBA staff have boarded and searched pleasure vessels in what was felt to be an unnecessarily abrupt manner. The approach is by high speed RIB, whose crews are clad from head to toe in black and they may (apparently) board and rummage without so much as a "by your leave!"

Whilst in Poole earlier this month, Customs Vessel *Searcher* was alongside the Town Quay with a large banner amidships stating "UK Border Agency".

She carried a RIB which was crewed by black clad men with motorcycle tyre helmets and visors who would not engage in jocular conversation!

The editor would be pleased to hear from any members who are boarded by the UKBA and who may care to recount their experiences.

### The RNLI College Poole

Members will no doubt be aware that in 2004 the RNLI opened a College in Poole primarily for the purpose of training the Institution's own Lifeboat Crews. As an adjunct to the College, hotel style accommodation was also provided. Your editor had occasion to stay at the College earlier this month and was greatly impressed by what he saw and experienced.

The RNLI Training facilities are extensive and impressive particularly the training pool where RIBs are capsized complete with crews on board in a swell of up to about 1.5 m. Add to that a darkened building, fan generated winds and artificial lightning and the scenario is just about as realistic as one could get. An overhead traveling crane simulates a helicopter winch rescue complete with sound effects!

Tours of the College are conducted free of charge every Friday at 1500 and are open to all. Try one!

The hotel accommodation was no less impressive. Rooms are not in any way "Student Accommodation" but modelled more on the Premier Travel Inn rooms. Each room has a wide wrap round desk (on which charts may be laid), TV, hospitality tray, a full ensuite bathroom and a sea view (*well-Poole Harbour*). Again, this accommodation may be booked by all at very attractive rates.

The bar and dining facilities are arranged over three floors, each overlooking the harbour. The Commodore and his wife joined me for dinner and we were well suited with the bill of fare, the prices and the quality.

The College is a mere 10 minute stroll from the Town Quay so the next time you are in Poole, do not linger in your usual harbour side pub but walk up past the bridge and the Sunseeker factory and avail yourself of what is in offer.

### Admin Notices

I look forward to receiving your "News, Views and Articles" for the Spring 2010 Newsletter. Pictures are worth a thousand words, especially in colour. Contributions can be accepted in virtually any format.

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