



THE PENNANT JANUARY 08



Happy New Year

With the festive season finally over and all the decorations taken down in the clubhouse, the gloom of the New Year is only broken by the prospect of the sailing season soon being upon us again! First launches in April!

The club calendar is very full at this time of the year. Keep your eyes and ears open for meetings and events, most dates will be given within this issue of the Pennant, but of particular importance are the Moorings Meeting and the Annual General Meeting.

This is probably the last time I will be asked to write a note for the Pennant as my tenure as commodore comes to an end at the AGM. So this is the last opportunity to thank some of the people who really run the club.

Glenys and friends for all the breakfasts and catering. Glenys is currently recuperating after major leg surgery and isn't expected to be fully mobile again for some time....wishing her a full recovery soon.

The launch team who do so many hours every year...Jim Warrington, Dave Lynn, Elwyn Blease, Jim Davies and others.

Mike Cox who has done so much cleaning. He could do with some help!

Christine Looker who this year single handedly refurbished the ladies loos, Brian Morgan for running the bar efficiently, never running out of beer and finally the committee for giving up their time freely to run the club, performing their own roles as secretary, treasurer etc..

I have enjoyed the last three years, which have given me an insight into how important active membership of the club is. We want to be a friendly club, involving new and old members in both the sailing and social aspects of what we do. To this end we provide a varied calendar of racing, cruising and social events, all of which are published in the yearbook and advertised. No one should feel an outsider in this club, if you do,

come along to any event and make a point of talking to club officers who are generally available on Tuesday night club meetings.

New members should look out for upcoming New Members Night when active club members will be explaining some of the activities and offering guidance to sailing in the Channel. A good time to come along and put yourself forward as potential crew for racing or just as a sailing partner.

Elsewhere in this issue, it will be explained that the work hour book is withdrawn and calculated at the end of January. There are a couple of planned work parties before the end of February, and if anyone needs hours and promises to do them before the year end I will look at those requests favourably. We do however need organisers for relaying patio and lighting installation. VOLUNTEERS for this greatly appreciated.

Chris Roberts

ALL AT SEA

Saturday 9th February

7:30pm

An interactive talk where volunteers can take an active role in the presentation before tucking into the sandwiches.

The Recovery of Solfohn

Solfohn was a Westerly 33 (unusually for Westerly there was no model name) named after the Nordic village where her first owners had honeymooned. Rhian and I had bought her in the summer of 2006 thinking she would be an excellent family boat. We were away on a short break in Portsmouth when the call came - Solfohn had sank on her mooring sometime on Monday 13th August 2007. Initially disbelief – don't be silly someone has made a mistake – but no, the person on the other end of the phone was looking at the top of the mast which was just showing above the water. No idea why she had sank and unfortunately until LW no-one could go and look at her to find out.

Time to make preparations to return home – fortunately it was the last day of our break but Rhian, Henry and I had travelled by train and had to wait a couple of hours for the next one back to Newport. Another call on the journey home – club members had been down to see Solfohn and found that her port keel was missing leaving several large holes (fist size plus) in her bottom – a bit more than the 2" bungs that I kept on board! I informed my insurance company (Bay Marine Insurance) who immediately started to contact companies who could recover Solfohn.

I returned too late on that Tuesday for LW so didn't get onboard her until the following day – by this time she had rolled off her starboard side to a port list so burying the damaged area in the mud.

Power Station Access

Most members have noticed that the Power Station has replaced the swipe card entry system with a key fob. If you still have a swipe card, these can be exchanged for a fob at the security gate during normal office hours.

In the future, in preparation for the construction of the new power station, further changes are planned to the security system and hence our access. Although negotiations are still ongoing the expectation is that the power station will install another security gate at the boundary of our site. Club members will then have to swipe in at the main gate and then swipe out again to enter the sailing club compound. This will enable the Power Station to know more accurately who is on their site at any time.

I was accompanied by divers from Sealand Divers, the first company to express an interest in taking the recovery on – also the last as over the next few days every other company that we could find declined to tender.

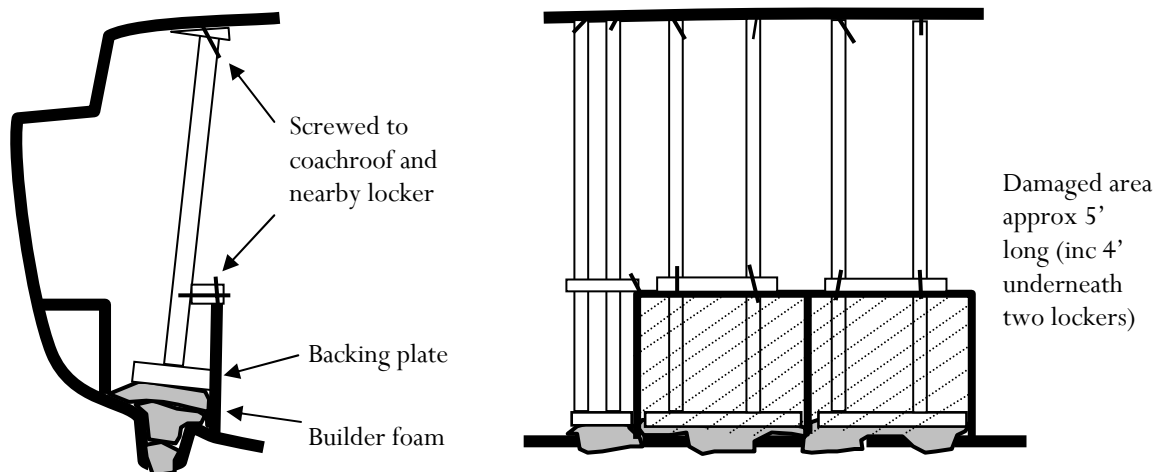
After much planning and discussions a date was set for Thursday 23rd August to raise her. Unfortunately this would involve a full diving operation using lifting bags as she didn't uncover at a neaps LW. I had also found out that I was responsible for recovering Solfohn, not the insurance company – they would just pay reasonable salvage costs. Fortunately my policy was through Bay Marine Insurance who guided me through the insurance side of things, at each stage making sure that the underwriters would consider costs 'reasonable'.

Of course my policy stated something along the lines of having to make all reasonable efforts to salvage her as soon as possible causing as little damage as possible etc - which meant that although by the time we actually got around to doing anything I was confident that she was a write off, I still had to wrap her in very expensive cotton wool as the insurance wouldn't write her off until they had inspected her - and that wouldn't happen until she was ashore. Still it was a nice sunny day to sit on the tug and monitor progress.

The first day of diving almost lifted her – at the last moment the rope holding two of the lifting bags chaffed through – come back on Saturday. Saturday was more successful in that we lifted her off the bottom and towed her further up the bank – effectively onto 'B' trot. Throughout the diving, progress was painfully slow. Zero visibility underwater with a strong tide (even at neaps) meant the divers took 10+ hours to fit strops and lifting bags that could have been fitted to a boat ashore in 10 minutes. Also we didn't use enough lift – 9 tons of lift on a 6½ ton boat is not enough when you add in mud and everything else inside her. In hindsight we should have put a good 15 – 20 tons of lift (4x 5ton bags) to be sure and get her floating near the surface rather than just off the bottom.

Now that she was on 'B' trot she would dry out for 3 hours either side of LW. Unfortunately it seems that someone had broken into her – not that they

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could take much but by leaving everything open lots of gear, floorboards and cushions floated away. I decided to approach other companies to see if they would tender to finish the recovery to and if they would be cheaper than Sealand divers. I didn't get very far. One still wasn't interested, one couldn't do it for some time and another wasn't keen to tender to Bay Marine Insurance (so they could get the nod from the underwriters).

It is worth noting that I had to instruct a company to carry out work and was therefore legally liable to pay them – but normally the underwriter will pay them direct. However to make sure that the underwriters will be happy that large costs are reasonable, it is important to get the underwriters to give the nod before instructing a company. If I hadn't passed the costs by them and they later decided that any of the costs were unreasonable then I would have had to pay them out of my own pocket! Most companies understand this and will happily tender/discuss costs with the underwriter before asking for the formal instruction to start work.

When the last company dropped out, I decided that I would do the job myself. Elwyn and I went down to her on the Sunday (9th Sept) and sized up the job. Elwyn, Jim, Graham and I returned on the Tuesday with appropriate pumps and gear on the club float. With the float secured alongside we used a slurry pump to remove as much mud from the saloon as possible – at the start the mud came to just above the chart table. A pond pump kept water coming in from the river to keep the mud a slurry. Once the river had receded out of reach we pumped the rest of the water out and removed mud by bucket to expose the areas we needed access to.

On Solfohn most of the keel bolts are under glassed in locker bottoms – hence the next job was to cut through these. By early afternoon all of the damaged area was exposed. The damage was a series of holes over approximately 5 feet. To block them up we used builders foam in and around the damaged area immediately squashed down with cushions. Wood backing plates were placed on the cushions and everything forced down by timbers pressing against the coachroof. Wedges hammered in between the timbers and the coachroof forced everything down even further. To make sure that everything stayed in place the timbers and wedges were screwed together and to the coachroof and nearby furniture – this damage control was not going to move!

More mud was bucketed out from the after cabin and then by 5 o'clock we waited for the tide to come in - tired, dirty and possibly not really expecting her to float. As the tide came in it lapped against the port after quarter slowly rising to just above the gunwhale – failure seemed imminent – but then the water stopped rising – instead it dropped slightly to just below the gunwhale – we were starting to float! Water was coming in but the pumps were keeping up. Solfohn started to right herself and was soon floating – admittedly with a freeboard of only about a foot, but she was afloat. What do we do now?

Our success had taken us by surprise – we had nothing organised to get her down to the slip and onto the trolley. All we could do was to allow her to sink again and return the next day. The pumps were stopped and we took the float back to the pontoon. Eventually the river overcame Solfohn and she went down to the bottom again.

Social Functions

Kay Donovan has already arranged a full social programme for next year, so look out for details in future editions of the Pennant, the club handbook, web site and on the club notice boards. During the next few months we have

“All at Sea” interactive talk on Saturday 9th February starting at 7:30pm and the Eve Of Season Supper on Saturday 15th March.

Come along and enjoy your club.

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Wednesday dawned and brought much mud bucketing! I cleared as much mud as I could from her in preparation for floating up again on the evening tide. This time I had a 2” petrol water pump to pump her out – about twice as powerful as the two pumps we used on Tuesday put together. After 6 hours of bucketing mud over the side, often scooping mud out with my hands into the bucket, I had had enough and slid down the bank in my little dinghy to come ashore for a rest. It was 4.30pm and the club was deserted – a quick cup of tea before returning to Solfohn when the tide started to reach her. Again she floated up, this time much higher with less mud and a better pump to keep the water level down.

I was just starting to think that everyone had forgotten about me when Jim appeared in his

Work Hours

The work hour book will be removed from the club at the end of January to allow next years subscription notes to be prepared. If you have not done your hours or recorded your hours now is the time to act. Once the subscription notes and work hour charge have been sent out, you will need to see one of the flag officers if you want the charges changed – **NOT the MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY** who has no means of verifying your claims.

Members are reminded that if they have difficulty completing their work hours for medical reasons, the Commodore is a caring sole and will happily discuss alternative arrangements where appropriate.

dinghy – everyone was getting ready, we would attempt the tow to the trolley on the slip in an hour or so when the tide was approaching slack. Half an hour later the pump stopped! For about 5 minutes (which seemed a lot longer) it refused to start – surely it wasn’t all going to go wrong now. I think the engine had been splashed once too often and the spark plug lead was damp. Dried out the pump got going again – relief (and a nozzle to make sure the pump didn’t splash itself again!)

At approximately 7.30pm the fishing boat ‘Senga’ appeared and approached to take me in tow. With my steering jammed hard to port the towing team did an excellent job of keeping me away from all the other boats especially as we had to cross a line of mooring to approach the slip. We changed from towing on a long line to towing alongside so that Senga could place me onto the trolley. Lines were passed and the trolley team started securing me onto the trolley. Lines were secured onto every cleat, four of the winches, the main mast, the windlass and around the remaining good (stbd) keel. Fairly confident that she was not going to fall over, the trolley was winched up the slip. Finally success, after a month on the bottom, much running around after commercial companies and a huge effort by the club, we had Solfohn ashore.

More mud bucketing and powerwashing made her light enough to crane off and place on the hard on a wooden leg in place of her missing keel. (The keel was recovered later using barrels.) The surveyor from the insurance company finally was able to inspect the damage and fortunately concluded that the insurance should accept my claim. Probably the port keel had dug into the mud while the rest of the vessel was buffeted by waves causing the keel to snap

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Membership News

I would like to welcome 4 new members to the club -John Stokes, Ros Evans, Peter Soper and Kieran Fullwood. John (Laser) and Peter (Wayfarer) have joined the growing number of dinghy sailors at the club, Ros is already settling into the role as the club's photographer and Kieran has bought Solfohn.

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off. Solfohn was written off and the hull sold as salvage a little time later.

Lessons Learnt

1. Throughout I remained the legal owner of Solfohn and was responsible for organising her recovery. The underwriters only pay the bill provided they think that costs are reasonable.
2. It was important to ensure costs were passed by the underwriters (to get the nod) before instructing companies to start work – I was responsible for paying any costs that the underwriters refused to pay on the grounds that they were unreasonable.
3. Taking out my policy through Bay Marine Insurance helped enormously. They (specifically Mrs Suzanne Newbold) helped find salvage companies, negotiated with them, liaised with the underwriters, guided me through the claim and generally offered moral support.
4. Ensure a company's customer service stretches to telephoning Bay Marine Insurance to communicate costs to the underwriters (as opposed to the insurance surveyor). It makes

life much easier if they talk to each other directly rather than you spending hours acting as a go-between.

5. Some insurance policy will deduct salvage costs from the final payout if the boat is written off. My salvage costs were approx £8000! Fortunately (by luck rather than design) my policy paid the salvage costs plus the full value of Solfohn – the only deduction I had was my excess. Check your policy!

6. The club spirit and camaraderie at NUSC is priceless. The cost of the club's recovery effort including a crane was about £800.

Acknowledgments

Many members helped in all sorts of ways and I thank you all for your efforts. Special thanks has to go to Elwyn Blease, Graham Cox and Jim Warrington for the tiring mucky day putting in the damage control to float her - especially to Jim who also organised so much to make the recovery a success.

Steve Woodley

Subscriptions

The annual subscriptions for club membership are due at the end of February. Details will be sent out with the calling notice for the AGM during early February, and as with previous years, you will be able to make your payment at the AGM.

This year these will again include your personal membership details (address, partners name, email, phone number, boat name, etc) with your renewal note. Please check these details and make any necessary corrections to the renewal note and return it (**even if no changes are required**) with your payment.

If you don't intend renewing your membership during 2008, please let the membership secretary know and return your club keys. They are of no use to you once you have left. The power station keys can be easily deactivated and there is £5 refund for each club, security gate and outboard shed key returned.

AGM 2008

Do you think the committee are a bunch of wasters, can you think of 101 ways to make our club better and are frustrated that nothing happens or do you just want to help the club?

If the answer is yes to any of the above, then now is the time to step forward to take a more active role in the running of the club. The 2008 AGM will take place on Wednesday 20 February at the clubhouse.

For those of you who are new at NUSC or have not attended an AGM before, the AGM is your opportunity to elect the club's officers and general committee members and to propose new rules.

At present we have vacancies for the Vice Commodore, Rear Commodore, Mooring Officer, and for general committee members. However, nominations are not limited to those posts with vacancies, with the exception of the Commodore all other flag officers, club officers and committee posts are open for election each year. So, if you want to help ensure that NUSC continues to be the best club in the channel then put your name forward for election. Alternatively, if you know of another member who you think would do a good job but is too modest to step forward have a word with him or her, buy them a drink and encourage them to sign up. A list of the Committee member posts open for election is shown below.

President, Vice Presidents, Vice Commodore, Rear Commodore, Secretary, Moorings Officer, Cruiser Captain, Treasurer, Training Officer, Membership

Secretary, Houses and Estates, Bosun, Sailing/Dinghy Secretary, Social Secretary, Bar Manager, General Members (3)

All nominations for Officers and Committee members are to be sent to the secretary a minimum of 7 days before the AGM (i.e. Tuesday 12 February).

Another purpose of the AGM is to allow the club to update and change its rules. The majority of proposed rule changes over the years tend to originate from the committee; this does not however have to be the case. Any club member is allowed to propose a rule change. The only requirement is that the proposal is seconded by another member and submitted in writing to the secretary at least 28 days before the AGM. (Tuesday 22nd January).

If you can think of better way of ensuring that the club can continue to support our objectives of promoting boating, seamanship and the sport of sailing – now is your chance to propose some alternative rules.

Other issues. The AGM is large meeting; it is therefore necessary that it is controlled and follows the predefined agenda. The commodore is therefore obliged to be very strict when chairing the meeting. There is no "any other business" at the AGM. We cannot allow members to introduce new items for discussion on the night. Consequently whilst any member is free to address the AGM on any topic of relevance to the club, notification must be given to the secretary of the intention to do so 28 days before.

Mooring Meeting

The annual Mooring Meeting will take place on Wednesday 6th February. If you require a new mooring for the 2007 season, wish to retain your existing mooring or move to a better location it is essential that you attend this meeting.

Comments on this issue, or contributions for future issues of the Pennant can be made in person to the Editor, Andrew Preece, sent by post to the club, or by email to aquila@nusc.co.uk.