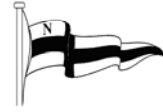


NEWPORT USKMOUTH SAILING CLUB



THE PENNANT SPRING 2009



Commodore's Address

This being my first Pennant I would like to say thank you for electing me as Commodore for the forthcoming year, it is an honour and I will endeavour to fulfil the duties as Commodore to the best of my ability.

The first thing that I would like to reflect upon is the ethos of our club. I believe that this is slowly being overlooked, forgotten, or in the worst case ignored.

We are a self-help club. This is to ensure that our fees remain minimal, and our facilities continue to improve. The main thing about self-help is that it is we, the members who receive the benefits, and it is we the members who do the work required to keep the club functioning.

If we require improvements to our facilities then it is we the members who should put in the work to improve it. Why then do we hear so many voices asking for this to be done or that to be done? What we need is voices saying, "Can I help with that?"

We have many events planned throughout the year but we do not have a social secretary so most of the responsibility for events this year is with myself, I do try my best but unfortunately I am unable to please everyone, if anyone has any suggestions or would like to volunteer to organise an event please come forward with your ideas. I have tried different ideas over the last couple of years, one of them being the pantomime, the first year was great, we had over 100 people attend and made a profit, many comments were made about how enjoyable the evening had been and people were asking if we could have another pantomime the following year. Due to the success of the evening I re-booked it, only for it to be a complete failure, we had 26 people turn up to watch the panto and the club made a major loss.

Unfortunately many people have criticised me for having the pantomime for the second year but it is very difficult to know what interest there will be for each event and I can only judge on members feedback and sadly, I note that the main critics are

the people who do not attend the events to support the club. (Maybe they would like to organise an event in the future) I will not be booking a pantomime for this year.

Carol, Eirlys and Kristina are busy organising our annual Laying up Supper which this year is to be a special gala event.

In recent months the club has received several invitations from other clubs to attend their events, Richard and I attended Weston Bay Yacht Club annual dinner and dance at the Batch Country Hotel and it was a lovely evening, we are now attending Cardiff Yacht Club on Friday 17th April and will no doubt enjoy that evening.

Whilst at Weston Bay Yacht Club we were chatting and one of the things that came out in conversation was an incident that occurred last year, an experienced sailor died because his life jacket did not inflate when he was knocked into the water. After the event several members of the club checked their life jackets and found that their gas bottles were not done up properly so as soon as I returned home on the Sunday I immediately checked my own and my sons life jacket, both of them bought last year and hardly used. Mine was done up, but not tightly which concerned me but when I checked Lewis's jacket his bottle was almost completely undone so can I ask that no matter how old or new your life jackets you please check them thoroughly and ensure the safety of yourself and your crew.

Well here we are, summer is fast approaching and hopefully we will have a good one so that we can all enjoy a bit more sailing that we did last year.

Kay Donovan

Nemo's Blog

First report of the season and I'm glad to say that as usual, NUSC members continue to give good sport to idle onlookers. In all of Nemo's blogs, names will be changed to protect the guilty parties.

First up, an excellent example of the territorial antics of Blenniidea Glutinous was given by Brian Adams and Ralph McTell during a recent foray into the outer reaches of B Trot. Such was their display, a passing belly boarder closed in on the pair, although it is not known if the pictures he took are suitable for publication.

Later that month, the first recorded total immersion of 2009 took place adjacent to the slip. It appears that Benny the Ball and Jimmy Riddle misjudged their final approach and rather than subjecting themselves to the indignity of an aborted landing with the possibility of brickbats from the Tea Club, decided to bale out. Both achieved a creditable 5.6 for Technical Ability and an exemplary 5.9 for Artistic Impression. The Seagull outboard and prescription specs were successfully recovered on the following low tide; however their dignity was last seen passing number five and heading towards the open sea.

Open sea is where Dickie Mint hopes his miscalculation has ended up. Following aborted attempts by lesser mortals to free a measly twig from Mooring B2, Dickie succeeded in losing the twig, four barrels and four one ton sand bags. If anyone finds these items around their moorings, it is recommended that they try to get them off themselves. Given Dickie's track record, he would probably pull up all four anchors and lines on his next attempt.

All for now folks, I'm sure that we'll have plenty of more bloggable incidents for the next Pennant – after all we've the launches to experience!

Nemo

Skippers Tip by Cap'n Ma'am

Has the thought of "stern to" mooring put you off the idea of chartering a yacht in the Med for your holidays? I used to lie abed worrying about it (not really), but I just couldn't envisage the procedure until I tried. The secret to the reversing manoeuvre is to stand at the wheel on the opposite side (i.e. with your back facing the bow) looking in the direction that you want to go, rather than craning your neck over your shoulder. Well - it works for me, why not have a 'go' the next time you have to reverse.

From the Galley

What's the *fastest* meal that you can rustle up for your crew – not a Mars Bar – something wholesome!

I reckon I can make brilliant cheese and ham omelettes with a salad and crusty rolls in 5 minutes for 4 crew! (*and* with minimum mess in the galley) Can you beat it? Let's have your ideas for recipes to feed your shipmates.

NUSC Committee Members 2009

Commodore	Kay Donovan	01633 321014
Vice Commodore	Alan Jones	01291 671216
Rear Commodore	Andrew Crichton	
Mooring Officer	Richard Withers	01633 272101
Secretary	Lloyd Davies	
Treasurer	Robert Lynbeck	01633 676274
Cruiser Captain	Barry Welch	01453 763574
Sailing Secretary	Chris Roberts	01495 763426
Training Officer	Julia Oliva	01291 650753
Membership Sec	Andrew Preece	01633 892215
House & Estates	Keith Bradfield	01495 201494
Bar Manager	Bryan Morgan	01633 450209
Bosun	Dave Lynn	
General Members		
	Dirk Doorduyn	01633 484746
	Ros Evans	01633 660383
	Rhys Jones	07977 910845

Questionnaire

Enclosed with the Pennant you will of noticed that you have a questionnaire to complete. The committee would appreciate it if you could spend some time and complete the questionnaire.

I will publish a summary of the results sometime in June and place it in the club for you to view.

The return details for the questionnaire are included on the questionnaire.

Andrew Crichton

Mooring Matters

We have now had a couple of launches and there are quite a few boats on the water. If you are one of the people who have launched your boat could you please make sure that you tidy around your cradle etc. On walking around the compound I notice that there is a lot of rubbish i.e. broken zip ties, nails, screws.

Please remember to keep checking your moorings for damage or wear, it is your responsibility to make sure they are in safe condition.

Richard Withers

Definitions:**-BOAT-**

Break Out Another Thousand

-BOOM-

Called boom for the sound that's made when hitting the heads of crew, while tacking

-SAILING-

The fine art of moving slowly at great expense.

Launched, but back on ground sooner than expected! One man's experience of going aground in the Bristol Channel.

On Saturday 18th April, the day of the main launch, I decided to go for a short sail in Panache, my little 22' Leisure bilge keel yacht, just to give my boat a quick shakedown after her long winter break on terra firma.

I wanted to make sure that the main sail was running up smoothly and I wanted to install its reefing mechanism and also make sure the genoa was operating correctly. Added to which I thought it would be a good idea to run my engine for a bit in order to put some charge back into the battery. As I had not intended going sailing as such, I did not have my handheld radio or any provisions on board.

So, on an unexpectedly bright, calm and sunny afternoon, with near perfect weather conditions, I set off for a short sail down the Usk estuary and out into the open Bristol Channel. The wind picked up beautifully and after sailing with both main and genoa fully unfurled, I decided to pull in the genoa and take down the main in order to set about threading the reefing ropes through the main sail and down onto the clips on the boom.

The time was 1445 hrs, just an hour and a quarter after high water. I was positioned a good quarter to half a mile off the shore, directly opposite the old West Usk lighthouse. I had been concentrating so much on trying to remember how to rethread my reefing ropes correctly, that I had not noticed that I'd drifted slightly towards the shore, helped on by a good Easterly breeze.

When I next looked up to check my position I realised that I was getting a bit close to the shore, but I was still confident there was plenty of water around. But then I heard a faint scraping sound coming from my hull. Having no depth meter on board (or rather one that has never worked), means that going aground is always a concern and I realised I had to act quickly or there would be a real risk of this actually happening.

I quickly got my 9.9 HP outboard engine going, and then, in my panic to get away from the ever shallowing waters, instead of putting my engine into reverse and going aft, I turned the throttle the wrong way. This immediately thrust the boat forwards with great gusto and vigour, and the next thing I heard was the awful crunching and scraping of my bilge keels digging themselves into the mud, sand and stones of the shore. Realising my mistake, I put the engine into reverse, but it was too late! I tried for another thirty or so seconds, but having run aground there was no way I could get off the sandbank.

It takes a couple of minutes after this happens for things to sink in. First you get a rush of adrenaline mixed with real fear of damaging your boat. This is followed by a massive feeling of embarrassment, with thoughts about what people, like my wife, will make of this completely unnecessary hiccup. Then there comes a feeling of calm as you accept the position you find yourself in and start to do the calculations and work out how best to handle things!

Given that it was only an hour and a quarter after high water and I was already aground, it was unlikely that Panache would refloat much before 75 minutes ahead of the next High Water, (which was at 0251 hrs), giving a refloat estimate of 0136 hrs on Sunday morning! Oh dear, and I told my wife I would be back in Bath at tea time, as I had promised to take her out!

I watched as the people in the four yachts I had met earlier from Cardiff Yacht Club sailed gently passed me and decided not to wave in-case they thought I was signalling that I needed help. It would have been useful to have had a VHF radio, but because I had not intended to go sailing, properly, I had not brought it with me.

As the waters all disappeared and the sun slowly dropped down in a lovely red setting sky I was grateful that I had brought my mobile to let my wife know that I would be a little later than planned. I also called Alex Liberson, whose telephone number happened to be plumbed into my mobile's memory. He asked if I needed any assistance, but when I explained the situation he agreed that there was little to do but wait.

As my boat's battery was completely flat, I had no lighting on board and without water could not run my engine. As the hours passed it got cooler and I noticed a significant drop in temperature as a cooler north- easterly breeze started to build up. Fortunately, though, as the weather forecast had originally been for rain, I had brought a warm fleece and waterproof jacket and trousers. Also, I always keep a couple of warm items of clothing of my boat for guests who never seem to realise just how cold sailing can be in through the summer months. These all were put on to keep me warm.

Another great comforter was my little gas stove, and I was able to boil up fresh cups of coffee and tea as I had a full water container on board and some matches. I did not have any food with me, but I had taken advantage of a great English (or should I say Welsh?) breakfast in the clubhouse just before my launch and this kept me going.

To while away the hours, I cleaned the cabin from top to toe, tidied my deck and studied my charts. I did not have anything to read on board, not even a book on Collision Regulations or something like that. Anyway after it got dark it would have been impossible to read, so I tried to get some sleep. The wind suddenly got up and the main sheet started to clank against Panache's metal mast even though I had tightened it as much as possible. I then dropped the topping lift and let the boom lie on the cabin roof and this solved the clanking sound problem. I probably only got half an hour's sleep though, because I was worried about over-sleeping and suddenly re-floating.

After what seemed like a very long time the water returned even more suddenly than it had disappeared. I could not believe it as I watched the water tearing silently across the mud flats on this calm night. It seemed like no time before my engine propeller was covered and as soon as there was enough water to start the engine, I did so, in order to get some charge into the battery, as I was now going to need my navigation lights.

Once there was sufficient water beneath me and I could feel the boat start to gently rock I tried putting the engine into reverse but to no avail. After another 10 minutes or so of trying to get off

the mud, I felt the boat lurch back and suddenly I was free again. I could hardly believe it when I realised that I was moving and I continued to go aft for a good minute or so until I was confident enough to turn the boat around and motor forwards. A quick check of my watch showed that it was only 0105 hrs, so I was afloat half an hour earlier than I had calculated.

Fortunately, with the engine on mid to high throttle it gave sufficient charge to feed my navigation lights and I was very grateful for these, given that large tankers regularly make their way out of Newport up the same piece of water. After that, things all suddenly went right for me. I had no trouble picking up my mooring when I got back to the clubhouse at 1.30am in the morning and the sense of relief when I tied up was great. So it was one very humble, embarrassed and exhausted person who climbed into bed at my home in Bath at 3.15am that Sunday morning.

Lessons Learned

1. Keep a watchful eye on tides and your positions at all times. I only took my eye off the ball for what seemed like a really short time and look where it landed me!
2. Make sure your depth meter works and if you haven't got one then it may be wise to fork out for one.
3. Always carry warm clothing on the boat, it made a huge difference to my comfort when things started to get cold.
4. Charge up your battery before re-launching your boat. If my engine had failed, I would have also had no navigation lights and therefore been more difficult locate at night.
5. Keep some food on board. I found an unopened small chewy biscuit bar when cleaning the cabin and it was great.
6. Always keep something to read on board, it would have been a good opportunity to read up on some sailing skills stuff.

7. Never go out, even for the shortest of sails, without a fully charged radio. Handheld radios are not dependent on the boat's battery or engine being operational, so they're definitely worth taking.
8. Always take a mobile. Fortunately mine was fully charged and so I was able to use it as a torch when it got dark. Mobiles are a good back-up to VHF and thank God I had mine, otherwise my wife would have reported my disappearance to the Coast Guard. Being able to contact Alex was very useful.
9. A torch on board would have been useful too.
10. Always keep plenty of fresh water on your boat for drinking boiling and cleaning. I had just filled my 20 litre container, so I was lucky.

Jonathan Cockburn

'Panache'

Know your engine

Back by popular demand, our very own Phil Greenwood, diesel engineer extraordinaire.

Phil will be running a 1 day RYA Diesel Engine Maintenance Workshop on June 7th or June 21st.

Only 6 places available (only 2 on the 7th).

Please e-mail Julia Oliva at julia.oliva1@btinternet.com to register your interest.

Abandoned Tenders

The annual quest to rid the compound of abandoned tenders and general trash is now underway. The tender graveyard will be emptied now that most boats have been launched. Those with wellie sized holes will be placed directly on the bonfire. Any that are serviceable / salvageable will be taken to the front patio for claiming or disposal.

Alan Jones