

The R N V R Yacht Club

NEWS UPDATE

July 2012

By the Commodore

Earlier this year, two words were on everyone's lips: "Jubilee" and "Olympics". Now, unfortunately, "jet stream" is all too often under discussion. It has put summer on hold, affected people's lives in many parts of the country and impacted our programme of events. Nevertheless, the indomitable Club spirit has prevailed, as confirmed by the photographs and reports of events on the Club's website, albeit showing participants invariably in their foul weather gear! Oh for the halcyon conditions again that we enjoyed on the Caribbean Cruise.

By and large our programme of events afloat this year has drawn commendable support. 54 members and guests sat down in the clubhouse of the RAF Yacht Club for the Fitting-Out Party in mid-April, when we raised our glasses to congratulate the RAF YC on their 80th anniversary this year. Three weeks later, 19 boats gathered in Yarmouth Harbour for the May Bank Holiday Meet. After a wet and cold sail on the Saturday, we were all glad of the tot of rum provided by Peter Costalas and Bernie Steed, following the traditions of the Tot Club based in Antigua and Barbuda, and much fun was had during the pontoon party and rotating dinner that followed. The following night, 74 members and guests sat down to dinner in the splendid renovated and extended Clubhouse of the Royal Solent Yacht Club – a remarkable attendance for such an event. There then followed the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant in early June, when more than 250 members and guests gathered at Aqua Brasserie, Vauxhall. Certainly, I cannot think of another function in the Club's history when so many have participated. The very wet weather that day did not deter the public, who flocked to the river in hordes. But the lack of warmth and sunshine was more than made up by the atmosphere at the Brasserie and, despite the crowd, the more intrepid of us there were able to

observe the pageant from various vantage points. It was so disappointing that the Club's entry, Martin Alexander's *Spirit of Avalon*, was unable to start. Martin and Shân deserved better luck after they had put in so much time and effort in the preparations. My thanks go to them and to all the other Club members who supported their efforts. Our Club events for the celebrations that extended weekend finished up on a high note on the Monday with an excellent informal dinner at the River Lounge restaurant, St Katharine's Yacht Haven, following an enjoyable guided tour at the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, and a visit to the fascinating Royal River exhibition at the National Maritime Museum.

Regrettably, the abysmally poor weather has continued for both Club sailing weekends, in the Solent and on the River Blackwater, for both of which we have joined forces with RNSA, giving us the opportunity to make new friends and renew acquaintances.

Whilst writing about RNSA, earlier this year the Committee decided to offer honorary membership during his/her term of office to each of its Commodores and I am delighted to report that the current Commodore, Rear Admiral Simon Lister OBE, has accepted the Club's invitation to be an honorary member. Members will recall that Admiral Lister was a guest at last year's Annual Dinner and presented the Club's trophies and awards to their recipients. On another front, good news has reached us as *Egret* is now fit for sea again with a new rudder, enabling Patrick and Amanda Marshall to reach the British Virgin Islands - nearly 3 months late for their intended rendezvous with the Club's Caribbean Cruise fleet! We wish them well on their forthcoming voyages. Any member wishing to follow their adventures can do so on <http://sailblogs.com/member/egret>. Common sense has now prevailed with the Government having publicly confirmed in its 2012 Budget Statement

(21 March) that it has no intention to make it unlawful for red diesel bought for boats in the UK to be used outside UK territorial waters. The focal point for the issue has now shifted to the European Commission and Brussels, with the RYA lobbying the Belgian Government, which has so far resisted the more tolerant British and Dutch approach.

The Committee is still actively exploring the possibility of acquiring another Club yacht. Our thinking in this regard has to some extent been recently encouraged by the knowledge that UK yacht charter rates remain surprisingly high, but we will not proceed unless we are satisfied that we have a sound business model which confirms that a Club yacht will be financially viable.

Looking ahead, we must all pray hard for summer to reach us, so that we can enjoy to the full the Summer Rally where I look forward to meeting many of you. and the rest of our sailing events before the nights draw in.

Finally, our Admiral, HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO, will have his 70th birthday on 4th July. On behalf of the Club, I have written to Prince Michael to send him our congratulations and best wishes on his special day.

Congratulations to Frank Hogan and Doug Smith (another ex Eaglet Officer) on their successful crossing of the Atlantic from Antigua to Horta in Doug's 46 ft ketch "Moya". They experienced a range of weather from no wind to far too much, twas ever thus! We look forward to a fuller Report of Proceedings from Frank for the Newsletter. Well done to Doug and crew.

My best wishes to you all for the remainder of the sailing season, and let's have no need for any more mention of the jet stream!

Tim Ware

Commander K Duncan RD RNR

It is with great sadness that the passing of Keith Duncan who died recently after a long battle with cancer is reported. He was 51 and a serving RNR Officer.

Keith was a professional mariner who qualified with P+O prior to coming ashore and joining Mersey Division RNR as a Sub Lieutenant in the late 1970's. His professional skills were immediately apparent in the way he performed at sea on the Ton Class and later River Class minesweepers and the P2000s which he frequently commanded with skill and flair.

In civilian life he chartered ships for the world wide transport of scrap metal. This gave him a unique insight into Ship Chartering which the Navy put to good use in the Iraq and Afghan wars. He became in effect, the Navy's most experienced, and many would say effective, charterer when it came to taking up ships from trade.

Keith was active in the affairs of the Club, crewing regularly in *Volunteer* on both Rallies and at weekends. Many will also remember him from the Club Caribbean cruises.

He actively supported his local Sea Cadet Units and most years would take a yacht from Jupiter Point and sail with the cadets around the Channel Ports and even the Channel Islands

We shall miss his buoyant and ebullient personality, his "can do" attitude and his great love of the sea and sailing. The Club extends its condolences to Barbara and the children Andrew, Rebecca and Ian.

Tom Cunningham

Captain Hopwood's Telescope.

Earlier this year we were visiting an old friend in America whom we had not seen for many years. I was aware from a conversation many years previously that his father at one time was in the Royal Navy. I did not enquire further at the time.

We arrived at Andrew's house in the evening after a long flight from UK. As I walked in he switched on the light and the first thing that caught my eye was a fully framed and mounted four part set of that wonderful poem "Our Fathers"

written by Captain (Later Admiral) RA Hopwood and illustrated by the famous W L Wylie. I immediately expressed both interest and surprise which evinced the reply "I'm glad you like them, Captain Hopwood is my great Uncle - from my mother's side of the family. In fact I have here his Service record which I obtained from the National Archive in London on line"

During our stay Andrew produced books of poetry and prose written by Captain Hopwood which had been passed down through generations of the family including his telescope engraved:

**Form Prize
Mr R A Hopwood
HMS Britannia
July 1883**

Mr Hopwood, as he was then known, joined *Britannia* in January 1882, passing out in December 1883. His award would (presumably) have been made at the end of the academic year in the July when he would still have been addressed as "Mr", presumably as a cadet

Andrew's father had also been in the Navy but was invalided out after period of foreign service in 1935 and was given but a few months to live. (Also displayed was a collection of formal photographs of some of the many ships in which his father had served, starting with *HMS Bellerophon* in 1915!)

He survived and was recalled to Service (*President* additional) in September 1939 to work for Admiral Ramsay. In June 1940 he took command of a tug in the Thames estuary towing a collection of ships' lifeboats and others to Dunkirk.

His diary records
Dunkirk 1940 30/31 May

Volunteered, while serving in Trade Division, Admiralty, to act in command of one of a small fleet of tugs requisitioned for the evacuation of the British and Free French troops from Dunkirk.

Sailed from the Thames with a number of ships' lifeboats in tow. These were manned by an admirable collection of "City gents" in plain clothes-bowler hats etc.

With other craft - all sorts - sailed again from Ramsgate to Dunkirk - at night - in

loose company. (Our compass all haywire because the tug had only recently been degaussed ie demagnetised as protection against magnetic mines)

Reached Dunkirk beach with many others and sent lifeboats (in shallow water) to collect as many soldiers as possible. Waited awhile for them and brought them back with some difficulty.

Landing at Ramsgate - tugs no longer required: so, having been properly scared by the German aircraft at Dunkirk and the blazing buildings ashore, decided to go over again.

"Took over" a very gallant Air-Sea rescue craft commanded by one extremely brave RNVR Lt. Wynn, a Welshman who did remarkably well.

(In another issue the full text of a letter to his mother dated 3rd June 1940 might be published) Commander Wilson stayed on Admiral Ramsay's staff throughout the war and retired in 1945 in the rank of Captain.

His telescope sits next to that of Captain Hopwood's in a drawer in South Carolina.

Fascinating!

Tom Cunningham

New Members

The Club extends a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined in the last 6 months.

Bill Glossop – List 1 – Lt Cdr RNR

Roger Wilcox – List 1 – Lt RN

Michael Booker – List 1 – Lt (SCC) RNR

Tim Williams – List 1 – Officer Candidate RNR

Christopher Coote – List 1 - Lt Cdr (E) RN

Tom Burroughs – List 2

We are delighted to announce that **Rear Admiral Simon Lister** has accepted our invitation to be an Honorary Member as Commodore of the RNSA

CLUB NOTICE Summer 2012

Hornet Sailing Club

Members are probably already aware that they are entitled, on production of their Club Membership Cards (cover of the Blue Book), to use the facilities of Hornet Sailing Club. (*An excellent watering hole!*) However, it is now necessary to produce photographic evidence of identity (such as driving licence) as well to gain access. This follows a change of administration.

Programme of Events for the remainder of 2012

We are aware that not all members have easy access to information on the web or emails. The programme for the remainder of the Club year is given below in an attempt to rectify this deficiency.

Date	Event	Venue	Organiser
July 21-22	Osborne House Concert (21 st)	Island Harbour	Robert Aitken-Sykes 01725 513802
August 11-12	East Coast-Joint Meet with RNSA	River Blackwater	David Whitby 01268 759245
August 25-27	August Bank Holiday Meet: Channel Dash	Cherbourg or St Vaast	Nigel Collingwood 07966 932890
September 8-9	Club Sailing Weekend	Solent	Richard Snell 01628 520161
October 13-14	Autumn Meet	Royal London YC, Cowes	Mike Morgan 01202 480799
October 28	Laying-Up Lunch Party	Royal Naval Club and Royal Albert Yacht Club	Jonathan Otter 07747 865282
November 9	Annual Dinner	Army & Navy Club	Tim Ware 020 7371 7828 Nic Block 01963 362068
December 10	Christmas Party	The Naval Club London	Catherine Fearon 07738 503552
2013 January 16	AGM	The Naval Club	Nic Block 01963 362068

For further information on any of these events, please contact the organiser directly and you will be sent a calling notice.