

SUMMER 2015

The Channel Sailing Club Magazine

# WAVELENGTH

**DON'T GET  
WASHED UP  
IN COWES!**

**JOHN DURBIN  
DITCHES HIS  
OLD FLARES**

**BUNNIES  
HOP-OFF**



# Two-handed COMES TO A HALT



[www.channelsailingclub.org](http://www.channelsailingclub.org)

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the summer 2015 edition of Wavelength which comes out at a transitional time for the club as it begins the search for a new commodore. On the opposite page Trevor Barker outlines the changing nature of the club and the hurdles a new leader may face. Are you up for this important post to keep a fantastic sailing club on an even keel? There are several people I can think of who would do a sterling job of taking the club forward. While you're thinking of throwing your hat in the ring, peruse a magazine packed with a variety of sailing and non-water based articles. Enjoy!

## CHANNEL SAILING CLUB COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2015



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## Wavelength The Channel Sailing Club magazine

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PLEASE SEND ANY LETTERS AND  
PICTURES TO  
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CLUB NIGHT  
Channel Sailing Club meets every  
Wednesday at The Old Freemen's  
Clubhouse, City of London  
Freemen's School, Ashted Park,  
Epsom, Surrey KT21 1ET. Doors  
open at 8pm. Prospective  
members welcome.

THE CLUB SENDS OUT EMAILS  
on a regular basis to remind  
members of upcoming events.  
Don't forget that if your personal  
information changes you can go  
into your personal account on  
the website and update it online.  
Check out the club's website for  
news and information about events  
- [www.channelsailingclub.org](http://www.channelsailingclub.org)

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A WORD FROM THE COMMODORE

## 'A challenging year'

I would like to begin by thanking those of you who have sent me your felicitations since my announcement that I shall not be seeking re-election as your Commodore next year. Some of them are quite unwarranted and others, for me, positively embarrassing.

As to the club's future, I cannot stress how important it is that we achieve continuity from one committee to another and that is also true for the club's leader. Naturally, it's right for a new commodore to put his or her stamp on proceedings while at the same time not forgetting the club's ethos; ideally, he or she should have a two-year plan in mind before taking Office.

I have found it quite challenging the second time around and not just for the reasons I've alluded to in previous articles. Personally, one of the biggest hurdles has been coming to grips with not just mine, but what appears to be a dramatic age shift in the club's profile. Just eight years ago, when I succeeded Sue Longley, the Channel Sailing Club's first female commodore, we had a much older profile than we have now with more members having more time on their hands to organise and participate in club events. The Spring and Summer Cruises are a good example; they had a much longer period of sea time than they do today and with, at times, up to 30 yachts taking part. Now, it is a major problem finding members who have that time and, not least, the freedom to organise and run these events. Indeed, earlier this year it seemed that as many as half of our planned cruises were in danger of going overboard for lack of an

organiser but fortunately and perhaps typically of our club, we filled the holes, sometimes with only days to spare.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit organisers who, in turn, have to encourage yacht owners to find their time to take part in cruises let alone securing crews for the ones they do get!

However, having now probably given the impression that it's all doom and gloom, it certainly is not; on the positive side you may have noticed that we have just commenced a new advertising campaign using Yachting Monthly and Yachting and Boating World which we trust will increase membership and the innovative Bastille Day Cruise, with its one-stop destination is proving to be very popular as is the Fireworks Cruise. Our racing programme also remains extremely competitive, and very well attended. On the social front things are also looking good; the in-house talks and dinners, which culminate at the end of the year with the ever-popular shenanigans in Cowes that is the Icicle Cruise, are always well supported.

Finally and surely indicative of my earlier comments, it is with sadness that I report the passing of long serving club members Peter Nevin and Brian Thorburn. True sailors, and in their time, great supporters of our club. Our thoughts and condolences go out to their respective families.

Good Sailing  
Trevor Barker

Race report

# SHHHHH...IT HAPPENS

Peter Thomas laments the two-handed race

**I**t was a lovely day, sunny, calm sea, reasonable, but variable wind strength, when nine yachts started the two-handed race on Saturday, May 16.

This was the first club cruise/race that I had organised for probably 15 years. The main thing to remember is not to take or accept any criticism. If someone complains tell them they can organise next year's event.

So I was on Knights Challenge with Janet Sainsbury, mainly to prepare for the Round the Island Race, where I am skippering as Janet is away, to find out where the yacht is parked, where the dingy and the outboard are kept, where the spinnaker lines are hidden.

But I was there, with Janet, to win.

## In the lead

We had a fantastic start, crossing the line in the lead, and heading to the first mark, Horse Elbow. Change of Course was first round and we kept second place fighting off Matumba and Petal. We had

the boat sailing really well.

I won't mention the starboard foresail sheet coming undone or Janet going behind Petal when we were on starboard tack, as we were doing really well, still second behind Change of Course which had disappeared. Petal was now behind us when she raised her spinnaker and overtook

## We were miles in front of Caressa

us on the way to Kemps Quay. Trouble was we were headed to Mother Bank. That was Petal's challenge gone. All the other boats started to fall further behind and Caressa was going well in third.

We were miles in front of Caressa and after another couple of marks, we headed for the penultimate one, Portsmouth Sailing Club. This mark is the middle of three, the first (westerly) being RNC&RYAC. We decided to head for the first mark, identify it, then go to PSC and sail to the finish line being Spit Sand Fort/

Gleeds. Confidently sailing along, with no need of a chart, we came across Harrow Bank, just off Fort Monckton. Being low water, we ground to a halt.

## Distress

Now I have run aground many times, and could be called something of an expert, but this time all my efforts to refloat failed.

Caressa saw our distress and requested that PSC be abandoned as it was in shallow water. With our approval they sailed straight to the finish line. We were busy taking down the sails, etc, and noticed all the other yachts sailing round PSC obviously not having heard our conversation. So as committee boat we had an issue, where two different courses had been sailed.

We decided to give Caressa the same finish time as the third place yacht and on handicap this gave them second place, a thoroughly well deserved result.

But, as they say, shhhhhh...it happens.



Knights Challenge races ahead before her lead comes to a halt



## Safety advice

## A BITTER PILL

Nigel Barraclough promotes the use of a personal grab bag

As some of you may recall a year or two back I had a ride on a new search and rescue helicopter from Stornaway, flying across the Highlands to Inverness hospital for a CT scan. I will not go into how I came to be in that predicament but suffice to say there was concern about damage to my neck and hence the need for a helicopter.

It was with some difficulty that I was taken off on a combination of stretchers (tied so securely that if they had carried me upside down there was no way I would have fallen out) and put in the (now landed) helicopter.

## Perplexed

On arrival one of the questions asked of me by a medic in the A&E department (presumably to check my state of mind) "what day of the week is it?" My reply of "I haven't a clue, I've been on a boat for the past 10 days" perplexed him.

Happily following the scan I was discharged from the hospital later that afternoon. It was only later I

found out I had badly bruised ribs and much later that I had broken my tail bone clean off – one doc said he had never seen one this bad before.

## Medical history

I have the sort of medical history that causes the chancellor to raise taxes – it doesn't make me unfit for sailing nor is any of it life threatening. But it does mean I: a) have a medical history; b) carry a number of medicines. For many years I have carried my pills in a box with all my key medical contacts and a complete prescription – all anyone has to do is give it to the winchman. This undoubtedly worked and many times I heard medics noting: "Refer to note in bag". However it did not contain any medical history.

It meant we ended up in a difficult three way phone conversation with me shouting out answers to someone else who was trying to explain to a doctor what my medical history was - it would have been more difficult had I been knocked out.

When I was discharged



## A bruised Nigel is winched to safety

from Inverness hospital it was 4pm, I was in a land about which I knew very little and only had on me what I was wearing. I am not suggesting the hospital was unhelpful – far from it but their responsibility had ended. Happily and thanks to a little prep I also had a 'grab bag' with cash, cards, house keys and a mobile phone – it wasn't much but I could keep in touch with friends, find somewhere to stay and, if necessary, get home.

We talk about having "grab bags" for the boat but what about one for you? You don't have to be carried off in a helicopter to need it. Feeling ill in France? Need a French hospital? You might want to add a phrase book to the bag!

## CHANNEL SAILING CLUB, SAILING AND SOCIAL EVENTS CALENDAR 2015

This calendar is designed as guide only. Events may be subject to alteration. For full details of events and latest information see [channelsailingclub.org](http://channelsailingclub.org)

JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
1 BBQ	1 Lynton rally	1	1	1	1
2	2	2 Rally briefing	2	2	2 Cruise briefing
3	3	3	3 Navigators Race	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5 Joint rally	5	5	5 Icle cruise
6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7 TALK: Mike Tozer	7	7
8 Briefing	8 Cowes week	8	8	8	8
9	9	9 Rally briefing	9	9	9 Mulled wine
10	10	10	10	10	10
11 Sprint races	11	11	11	11 Quiz, Pie 'n' mash	11
12 Bastille cruise	12 Cruise briefing	12 Passage rally	12	12	12
13	13	13	13	13	13
14	14	14	14 Race briefing	14	14
15	15 Plymouth cruise	15	15	15	15
16	16	16 Greek night	16	16	16 TALK: Ian Currie
17	17	17	17 Pursuit race	17	17
18	18	18	18	18 TALK: R Nicolson	18
19	19	19	19	19	19
20	20	20	20	20	20
21	21	21	21 H'wn night	21	21
22 Race briefing	22	22	22	22	22
23	23	23 Rally briefing	23	23	23
24	24	24	24	24	24
25 1-handed race	25	25	25	25	25
26	26	26 Foxhunt rally	26	26	26
27	27	27	27	27	27
28	28	28	28 TALK: R Hunt	28	28
29 Rally briefing	29	29	29	29	29
30	30	30 Race briefing	30	30	30
31	31		31		31

# STARBOARD!

## COLLISIONS DOMINATE RACE INSURANCE CLAIMS

**C**ollisions make up a third of all boat insurance claims and just over 10% of these were for crashes during races, according to Bishop Skinner Marine. The next most frequent claims were for vessels capsizing and there were numerous claims for broken masts and sails from storm damage, running aground or righting the boat after capsizing. Bishop Skinner says that when racing this summer, it's important that the type of boat you have can decide the insurance cover available.

### Check policy

Motor boats are unlikely to get any cover from a standard insurance policy and probably won't get cover in the usual insurance market. If they are racing, they will probably have to use the insurance scheme that the race organisers have. Dinghies will typically get full racing cover as standard,

but yacht owners will have to check their policy. Extra cover for racing may be required, which will typically incur an additional premium.

Standard racing cover for yachts usually only protects you against hull damage and legal liabilities to third parties. If yacht owners wish to insure their rig while racing, insurers can offer an extension to cover the mast, spars, sails and rigging (MSSR).

### New or old

Your rig will then effectively be insured separately under your policy while racing, so it is important to make sure that the sum insured for replacement is adequate. With the exception of running rigging and sails, cover is generally given on a replacement value of new for old. Thinking in terms of market value could result in you being underinsured. Rules of the sea  
Larger yachts normally race at sea and so fall under mar-



itime law. The sums insured are more likely to mean insurers take the outcome of a protest committee as guidance, but apportion liability on a split basis. Even if you win a protest, you may find you get less than 100% of your claim, because both parties are under a legal requirement to avoid collisions under the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea. Extent of cover  
Under the Bishop Skinner's yacht policy, a racing risks extension is the only cover that covers MSSR, but is not automatic unless you are an RYA Gold member doing class association racing. It is

### Race collisions make up one in three boat insurance claims

likely that you will have to declare the type/amount of racing you do, in order to rate the risk. If you only declare local club racing, you won't have MSSR cover if you race at a different club to your own.

It's also important to understand that many policies will cover you for racing, but not include a Racing Risks Extension. If you race and hit someone else or strike a sub-

merged object, both should still be covered. Check your policy to make sure it doesn't exclude racing altogether. If you are doing a winter series, make sure your mooring allows 12 months cover afloat on your policy; otherwise you need to launch and recover for each race. Marinas will normally have year round afloat cover, but many swing moorings don't. Races such as Round the Island, are often the only race of the year for some. You don't have to declare this at the outset of the policy, but if you do enter and you want MSSR cover, remember to get an extension before you take part.

## SAILING SPECTACLE

America's Cup  
debut in Solent

**T**he thrill of the America's Cup arrives in Portsmouth for the first time in July, promising high-adrenalin sailing just outside the famous naval harbour.

Spectators on the water and ashore can witness the world's best sailors hit speeds of 34kts in their spectacular AC45s. Never before has such fast and furious sailing action been so accessible to UK race fans, with miles of close-quarter vantage points along Portsmouth's historic waterfront.

Leading the field (we hope) will be Britain's Ben Ainslie, whose team will compete for the first time on home waters.

### Regatta village

Organisers say the racing will be almost within touching distance from the onshore spectators. In addition there will be big screens, family entertainment and a regatta village on Southsea Common.

The event is being held over four days, from Thursday, July 23, to Sunday, July 26. The first two days are for practice, while racing takes place on Saturday and Sunday.

■ Tickets cost from £20 for practice days and £45 for race days.

# NEW COWES BREAKWATER

## Guidelines for harbour users

**T**he new break-water at Cowes has prompted the Harbour Commission to update its guidelines for boat owners in the busy mouth of the River Medina.

Sailors may be accustomed to the sometimes-congested area as they jostle for space with other yachts, motor boats, water taxis and Red

Funnel ferries, which can seem very close at times.

But the new breakwater has thrown up some fresh challenges as well as created a small craft channel for boats coming in or going out the east side of the harbour.

The Harbour Commission has also created an exclusion zone round the breakwater while it is under construc-

tion, marked by several small cardinals.

In a statement out recently, it said: Cowes Harbour is the main commercial port for the Isle of Wight and one of the foremost destinations for yachtsmen in the world. It can be entered by day or night and at all states of the tide by vessels with draft up to about 3 metres.

## Large ships

The main hazards when approaching Cowes Harbour are: Frequent movements of large commercial ships including liners, tankers and container ships using the deep draft channel immediately to the north of the harbour; vehicle and fast passenger ferries and smaller commercial ships entering and leaving Cowes itself; strong tidal streams running across the entrance at speeds up to 3 knots; the very shallow Shrape Watersports Area

immediately to the east of the entrance; a large number of race marks and moorings in both the Inner and Outer Harbour, mostly unlit and with buoys that can be dragged beneath the surface during rates of maximum tidal flow.

## Bramble Bank

Cowes can be approached safely from the north, east, and west. When approaching from the north, care should be taken not to infringe large vessels in the Southampton Precautionary Area. Vessels over 150 metres in length have a Moving Prohibited Zone that requires smaller craft to keep a minimum of 1,000 metres ahead and 100 metres either side. The Precautionary Area can be avoided completely, when taking passage from Southampton Water and the River Hamble, when height of tide permits, by passing to the

east of the Bramble Bank and entering Cowes via the Small Craft Channel.

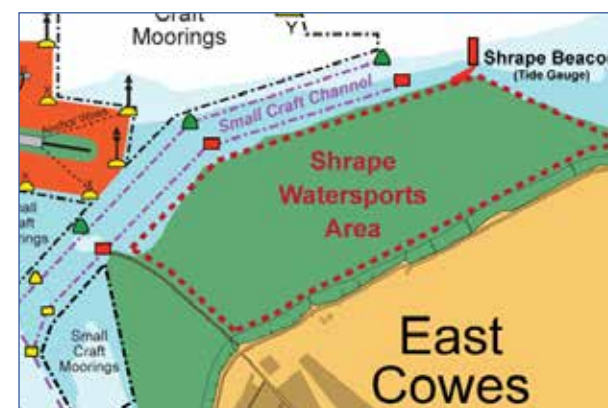
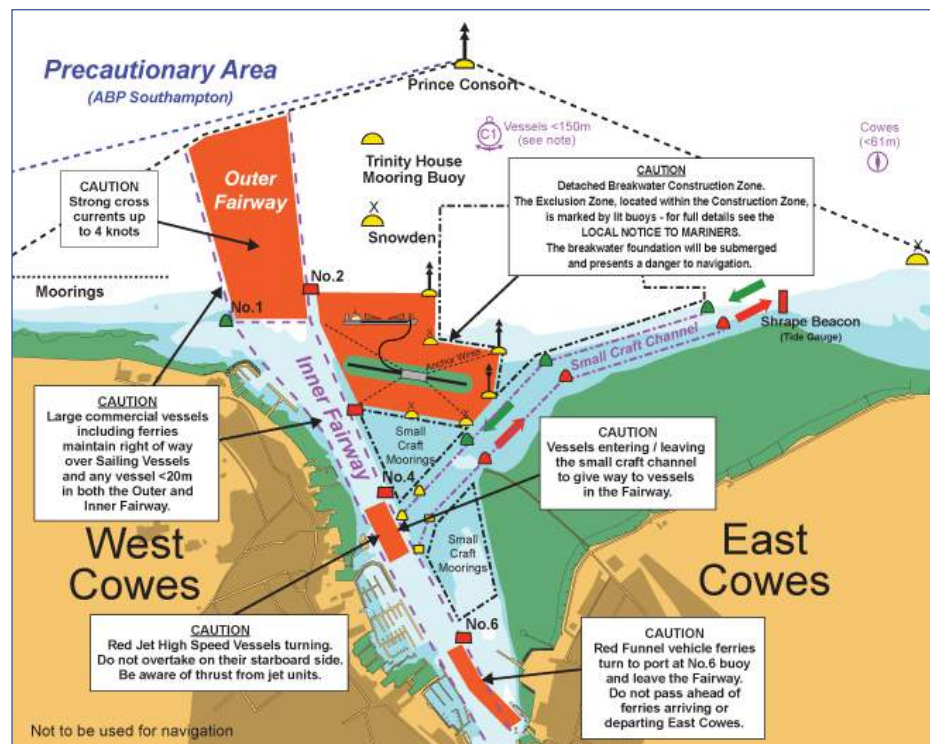
Approaching Cowes from Spithead and the east, look for the Shraper Beacon, about 300 metres northwest of Old Castle Point. The tide gauge on the Shraper Beacon will indicate if use of the small craft channel is practicable; if not, head for Egypt Point to the west, leaving any small craft moorings to port before entering the Inner Fairway north of the Royal Yacht Squadron.

Vessels approaching from the west need to keep a close lookout for unlit mooring buoys inside the large Gurnard north cardinal buoy, and where possible, yachts starting and finishing races off the harbour entrance.

## Novice crews

All vessels approaching Cowes should do so at a safe speed, maintain a good lookout and give full consideration to other vessels, many of which are manned by inexperienced crews.

Rod Hodgson, Cowes' deputy harbour master, told Wavelength that information on the marking of the breakwater construction zone will be updated throughout the season as work recommences. Latest information can be found at [www.cowesharbourcommission.co.uk/local-notices](http://www.cowesharbourcommission.co.uk/local-notices) to mariners





## Practical advice

# BRING OUT YOUR DEAD (FLARES)

John Durbin's tips for old pyrotechnics

When I bought my twin-engine, 30ft motor cruiser more than 30 years ago, it came with sea-going aids such as VHF, a set of flags and inshore flares.

I intended to use it on the Thames inland waterways and apart from a trip to Holland and latterly France, I have had no need for the flares. Consequently, they are very out of date so I investigated how to dispose of them.

It may be worth passing on some information I dug up about flares. For a start, unless you have a vessel longer than 37.5 metres, there is no regulation to have them on board, but ColRegs recommend that we yachties do carry them as one method to indicate distress. I have never been on a club boat which does not carry them.

## Laser flares

With the development of electronics, we have seen the marketing of Electronic Visual Distress Signals (EVDS) or laser flares, as an alternative to pyrotechnics. However, from a practical perspective EVDS produce a light pattern very different to the intense burn of a conventional flare and there is concern this might not be recognised as a distress alert, so they are still being evaluated internationally.

So what to do with out-of-date flares? It is an offence to put in household rubbish or public litter bins, dump at sea or leave anywhere a member of the public could find them.

You should contact any of the following – take them back to where you bought them (if they offer a return scheme), some marinas might take them (a small charge may apply), also some liferaft service stations or council recycling centres.

I investigated all the options and, frankly, nobody wanted to know. The only certain way to dispose of old flares is coastguard or a maritime rescue co-ordination centre and I found the coastguard most helpful.

I contacted their office at Lee-on-Solent they put me in touch with Cheryl Daborn. Her number is 01329 244 501 and email [cheryl.daborn@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:cheryl.daborn@mcga.gov.uk). She arranges a day each month when flares can be returned.

A final thought: several years ago Bill Sandford arranged for the club to use one of the Nescott playing fields and we were given official approval to let off our old flares. I recall it was a very enjoyable social evening! Interestingly, the success rate for the old flares was surprisingly high, so it may be worth keeping them (securely) for a while as backup.



So what do you do with out-of-date flares?

PICTURE: BOATING IN CONNECTICUT

## Catering

# EARLY-BIRD MEALS



Brekkie ideas to halt hungry crew mutiny

Breakfast on-board comes in various guises, from the leisurely “the lock is not open for an hour” type or the “we have to go now!” variety and as no crew sail well on an empty stomach its wise to have a couple of options. I like bircher muesli for its thick unspillable consistency and healthy oats and fruit. As it’s made the night before there are no anxious glances at the clock.

## Bircher muesli

*Serves 4*

The night before mix together 8 tbsp of porridge oats

with 16 tbsp of apple juice, (you just need to have twice as much juice as oats) in a click-top plastic box and pop somewhere cool to soak. In the morning divide the soaked oats between 4 mugs, top with chopped apple, (or any other fruit), a couple of spoons of yogurt, or milk, add a spoon of sugar or a drizzle of honey and that’s it. Of course anything with seeds in is now immensely trendy so go ahead and sprinkle with toasted pumpkin or sunflower seeds if you have any.

For the more relaxed breakfast try this ome-

lette. One of the joys of the omelette is the adaptability of the recipe, as long as you have a good non stick frying pan, you can basically throw anything in there with the beaten eggs: crumbings of cheese, chopped pepper, thin sliced boiled potato, chopped cooked meat, tinned sweet-corn, olives or sliced chorizo depending on what’s to hand.

## One-pan breakfast omelette

*Serves 4*

4 eggs, beaten  
4 slices ham, chopped  
8 mushrooms, chopped  
8 cherry tomatoes, halved  
Salt & pepper  
Tablespoon oil

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan until quite hot. Reduce heat, add mushrooms, fry for 2 mins, add ham and tomatoes. Fry for further 2 mins. Pour in eggs, season and cook for 5 mins or until the base is light brown, do not allow to burn, then finish off under hot grill. If no grill is available, turn the omelette over using a large plate. By carefully placing the plate over the pan, flip pan over, then slide omelette back in to cook the other side.

Can be served hot or cold, for breakfast or cut into small pieces for lunch or a snack.

*Marion Tempest*

## Travel

David Surman joined the infamous group in the Ionian in April



# EASTER BUNNIES HOP OFF

**L**unchtime, Thursday April 2 and this merry band of sailors and myself, the new junior deck hand, sat at Corfu's Gouvia marina, in beautiful sunshine as paperwork was completed before we took charge of our two Bavaria 45s, 'Jason' and 'Ghost'.

Early next morning we set off south for Preveza – a 55NM trip in a 16kt wind and fine conditions. Dinner was cooked for both boats by the crew on Ghost and professional chef Phil Manby's highlight was oranges in Cointreau.

After Preveza we negotiated the Levkas canal and



PICTURES: DAVID SURMAN

headed further south for Little Vathi on Meganisi, passing private Skorpis island, owned by the family of the late shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis.

Tucked safely inside Vathi's harbour wall, we stayed put the following day as a storm closed in. Next day Phil produced an excellent cooked breakfast, before we set off on a good walk round the island and enjoyed views over the Ionian sea.

## Sparkling sailing

On day five we sailed to Palairos for lunch and rafted inside the lovely quiet fishing harbour, while Ghost anchored off. An excursion into town with some light refreshment resulted in us chatting to the retired locals. We then enjoyed sparkling sailing in the sun before heading to Levkas town. Gerry Roper and myself were the so-called shore managers and we found a suitable supermarket, restaurant and bar for the crews..but not necessarily in that order. That evening we enjoyed excellent meze and other Greek delights as lamb kleftiko and salads.

Leaving the Levkas canal and heading north to return to Preveza, 35kts of wind meant ploughing through choppy seas.



**Martin Thomas broke several ribs after a fall down the companionway stairs**

Next day we enjoyed a beautiful sail to a real jewel: Gaios on Paxos. Summer tourist hoards were far off and only a few locals watched from bar terraces, as both boats tied up in the middle of town. In the warm sun we sat outside and chatted and then donned fleeces as an evening chill descended.

## Strong winds

Day eight and an impromptu two-boat race was won by Jason. We then sailed on to Platarias on the mainland. On arrival, very strong winds and a harbour packed with

fishing boats, made this a testing exercise in Mediterranean-style stern to mooring. That evening, Jason's catering team led by Martin Thomas created 'haute cuisine': spaghetti Bolognese and Greek deserts, before we retired to a family-run bar with arm chairs and an open fire to stave off the chilly night.

On the final day we enjoyed a good sail back to Gouvia. But the end-of-holiday mood was further darkened when Martin Thomas broke several ribs after a fall down the companionway stairs and had to be admitted to hospital.



## History

# THE A3 CAN BE MURDEROUS!

Nigel Barraclough wonders if a curse influenced the building of the Hindhead tunnel

As you sally forth south to Pompey at 60mph through the Hindhead tunnel you may recall frustrating hours spent queuing at the bottleneck of Hindhead traffic lights. Occasionally while waiting in that queue I recalled the tale of a hanging that took place on the hill just above the road and thought I should visit it one day. The tunnel now makes that very easy so park in the National Trust visitor centre just north of the cross roads at Hindhead, take a stroll and learn of murder and the curse!

On September 24, 1786, an unknown sailor befriended three men in the nearby Red Lion pub. They were penniless so he bought them ale using a golden guinea he

had earned from his voyage. He was repaid most cruelly for his friendship – shortly after leaving the inn the three men Edward Lonegon, Michael Casey and James Marshall stripped him of his money and murdered him. A few hours later the men were arrested at another inn trying to sell his clothes.

Six months later they were tried and sentenced to be hanged.

## Barbarous murder

The gibbet was set up on a hill where a Celtic cross now stands. The bodies remained there as a reminder to crime and punishment for three years until brought down in a storm.

The stone was erected in “detestation of a barbarous murder” and this is inscribed

“This stone was erected by order and at cost of James Sitwell Esq of Cosford 1786. Cursed be the man who injureth or moveth this stone”.

on the front. In 1826 to the back of the stone was added: An idle threat? Perhaps, but the warning was added because shortly after the stone was moved to its present location one of the men suffered serious injuries and another an early death.

I wonder if this was the reason the planners built a tunnel underneath Hindhead rather than a bypass round it, which may have entailed moving the stone and re-awakening the curse.



## Pastimes



# ACCOUNTING FOR BEEWAY!

Club member Andy Lear is buzzing about his new hobby

This year I have not done anywhere near as much sailing as I would like, primarily because I have been going to bee keeping classes. One of the things I have learnt is that your average bee could pass their Yachtmaster exam with no problems whatsoever.

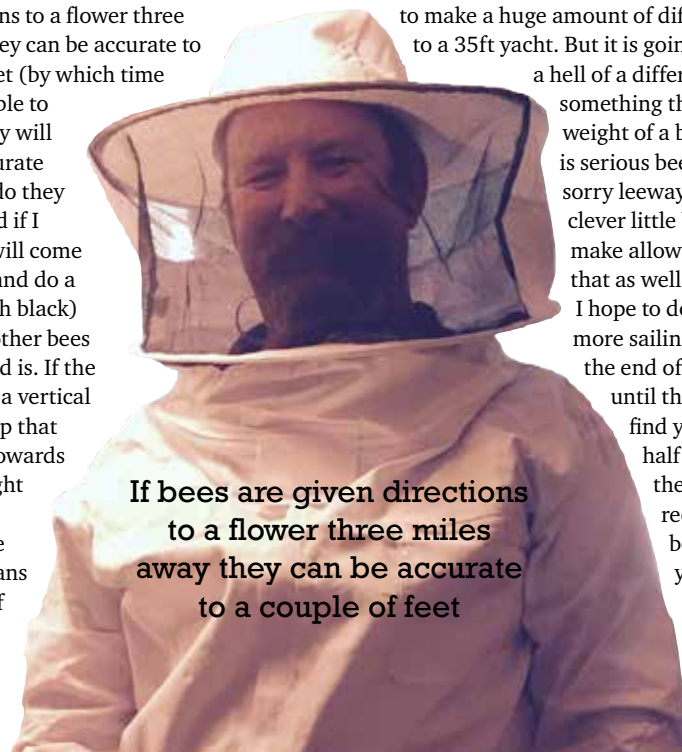
## Strictly dancing

Bees don't have charts, rulers or dividers, they certainly don't have GPS, AIS, radar, depth sounders or logs and yet if they are given directions to a flower three miles away they can be accurate to a couple of feet (by which time they will be able to smell it so they will be totally accurate really). How do they do it? Damned if I know. A bee will come into the hive and do a dance (in pitch black) showing the other bees where the food is. If the bee dances in a vertical line straight up that means head towards the sun, straight down means away from the sun, right means 90 degrees off the sun etc. The trouble

with this, however, is that the sun moves. If a bee did not set off till half an hour later the sun will have moved 7.5 degrees. If they go to somewhere else and there is no food left and they then decide to go to the place recommended by the other bee then they somehow need to work out the new course to steer. Since it could be an hour later by then the sun will have moved 15 degrees (360 degrees divided by 24 hours) and you know what? The clever little buggers allow for it. It gets better. A sidewind of five miles an hour is not likely to make a huge amount of difference to a 35ft yacht. But it is going to make

a hell of a difference to something the size and weight of a bee. That is serious beeway - sorry leeway! - and the clever little bleeders make allowances for that as well. As I said, I hope to do much more sailing from the end of June, but until then if you find yourself lost half way across the Solent, I reckon the best thing you can do is ask a passing bee.

If bees are given directions to a flower three miles away they can be accurate to a couple of feet





# WHAT TO DO WITH A DRUNKEN SAILOR?

Leon Barbour toasts the favourite tippie of mariners

In the early days of the Royal Navy a gallon of beer was issued daily to crew to supplement the often fouled drinking water stored in casks. However, even ale would spoil over long passages and some mariners began to notice that spirits kept much better.

Admiral Penn, upon capturing Jamaica in 1655, began what was to become a tradition by issuing his men the local sugar-cane rum instead of spoiled beer.

Derived from the Latin word 'saccharum' for sugar, rum was called rumbustion on sugar plantations, rumbullion elsewhere and bumbo among pirates and merchantmen when mixed with water, sugar and nutmeg.

## 239-year-old tradition

The idea of issuing rum was officially approved in 1731 when the Navy began giving a quarter pint at noon and again at sunset every day with double rations before and after battle. Rum

was also issued as a reward for special duties such as repairing or splicing the mainbrace. Issued by the ship's purser and known as 'pussers rum', a daily rum ration was to evolve into a 239-year-old Royal Navy tradition.

A few years later Admiral Vernon (known as 'Old Grog' because of his cloak of 'grogam' or 'grosgrain') became concerned at the inebriating effect strong alcohol had on his men and recommended the ration be diluted 4:1 with water.

This became official in 1740 when the ration was mixed in a 'scuttled' (ie open) fresh water cask or butt supervised by the Lieutenant of

## RUM DICTIONARY:

**NELSON'S BLOOD** - Slang name for rum, erroneously based on the story that Admiral Nelson was preserved in rum after being killed at Trafalgar. He was actually preserved in brandy

**TOT** - Name for the navy alcohol ration

**GROG** - Mixture of rum and water, introduced to the Navy in 1740

**SPLICING THE MAINBRACE** - The awarding of an additional drink on a special occasion

the Watch.

The bosun's mate piped "Up Spirits" at 11am in preparation for the rum issue and "muster for rum" would be piped at noon, served undiluted for senior NCOs, but mixed with water for junior ratings. Lime or lemon juice was added from 1756 to add flavour and to help prevent scurvy, hence the term "limey".

## Scuttlebutt

The butt was gradually replaced by a purpose-built 'grog tub', embroidered with brass rings and the motto 'THE KING GOD BLESS HIM'. Scuttlebutt (or 'scuttled butt') became a term for chatting in the ration queue and too much 'grog' might make a man feel 'groggy' in the morning.

'Tapping the Admiral' became a term on later discovering that rum used to preserve Nelson's dead body on return from Gibraltar had been drunk dry through a small hole bored into the cask. Rum was subsequently dubbed 'Nelson's blood', though it is still debated whether Nelson's body was preserved in rum or brandy.

In 1823 rum rations were cut to a quarter pint and issued once a day, but less dilute at 3:1. It was reduced again to 1/2 a gill, the tot, in 1850 with teetotallers given a compensating allowance of 'grog money' equal to 1s 7d a month.

The ration ended for wardroom and gunroom officers in 1881, but continued for ordinary ratings aged at least 20 years. By 1937 the rum ration was stronger at 2:1 and issued at the end of the day.

After World War 2 the risk of operating sophisticated weaponry was a growing problem and the last tot of rum was finally issued on July 31, 1970 at 11am, known as 'black tot day'. First Sea Lord Sir Michael le Fanu, signalled to the fleet: "Most farewell messages try to tear-jerk the tear from your eye, but I say to you lot, very sad about tot, and thank you, good luck and goodbye".

## Diary dates

# IT'S GOOD TO TALK!

Social talks are back on the agenda at the Channel Sailing Club this winter with a range of speakers already booked

Committee member Simon Davey has arranged a varied mix of speakers to come along on Wednesday club lights and pass on tips and stories.

After a lack of speakers over the 2014-15 winter, members were especially keen to get the ball rolling again, said Simon.

## ■ On October 7

Mike Tozer and a colleague from the Jubilee Sailing Trust will be talking about the marine charity's work and plans for the future.

## ■ On October 28

Richard Hunt from the 1st Cuddington (Warspite) Sea Scouts will be giving a talk on their activities.

## ■ November 18

Promises an evening with global sailor Richard Nicolson. His talk will draw on his vast experience of Whitbread round the world racing, the north-west passage and much more.

## ■ On December 16

Weather expert Ian Currie, of Frosted Earth, will present a guide to cloud watching - their meanings, relevance to sailing, etc.

Simon is looking for more speakers for the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016 and would welcome any suggestions from members.



# Caring for your lifejacket

As with all safety and emergency equipment, servicing your lifejacket is most important. Whatever type of lifejacket you use, it will need basic maintenance to keep it working properly.

## General inspection and maintenance

At least every six months, all lifejackets should be inflated orally or by hand pump to avoid moisture build up inside the jacket, and left inflated for 24 hours to ensure they hold their pressure and to see if there are any leaks or damage. You can also check straps, Velcro enclosures and folded corners for wear and tear and check that the retro-reflective tape is firmly attached to the jacket surface. At three monthly intervals, check webbing and stitching, all buckles, zips and D-rings and ensure the whistle is securely fastened.

If the jacket is fitted with a light, check its operation and that the battery is in date – replace if necessary. Some lights are salt water activated and must be replaced after use.

The lifejacket should be repacked correctly, as per the manufacturers folding instructions. When not in use, lifejackets should be stored in a dry, well-aired area. Out of season the lifejacket should be opened up, partially inflated (to remove folds) and stored on a non metal coat hanger.



Call us for free sea safety advice and information on

**0800 328 0600** United Kingdom

**1800 789 589** Republic of Ireland



# Lifeboats