



Half Hitch

The monthly news sheet from Wells Sailing Club



January 2014

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL MEMBERS

A new year and a lot of new (and younger) faces on the committee promises great things for the club this season. With Chris Hardy keeping a steady hand on the Club's tiller, we have so many things going on it's hard to know where to start: the tide heights and times are more favourable than they have been for a few years, we have strong and imaginative leadership from Chris Gibbs on the sailing side, the National Sharpie Championships are being held here in June, David Blakesley is proving a dedicated house officer* and getting great results on the social side... we seem to have everything in place for a memorable season.

The hard work being put in by all committee members and volunteers is ensuring that we all have the chance to get out on the water at every opportunity – and enjoy ourselves at the bar when we come off the water.

Here's to a great season enjoyed by all members.

**seen doing washing up on New Year's Day*

NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

The Sailing and House committees met for the first time on Friday 10 January, both Chris and David had been working hard on getting to grips with their responsibilities and brought great drive to the meetings. With the whole season's events to plan there was a lot to discuss, but the meetings were concluded in good time before the main committee met for a round-up of the month's work.

The Flood

We are pleased to report that WSC Member Jason Carbis, an experienced bricklayer, has volunteered to repair the flood damaged wall in front of the clubhouse – thanks Jason, that's just the sort of support we like!

Natalie Gail

The *Natalie Gail* is now out of the water and sitting in the Harbour Commissioner's compound. James Case has been asked to assess the maintenance and repairs required and a plan of action will be put in place once we see his report.





Communication with members

Our new drive to communicate more frequently with members hinges on us having the correct email addresses, not only of the member who pays the subscription, but also of family members who would like to be sent notification of sailing and social events, and these newsletters.

You will notice that the new membership renewal forms have a place to include email addresses for all family members as well as the subscriber member.

If you are aware of any member missing out on these emails please let us know, and it will be corrected immediately.

Please let our Hon. Secretary Robert know if your email address is missing from our list or changes during the year: robertwynne@live.co.uk

The Quay Wall

Simon Neale, David Pentney-Smith and Andrew Cracknell have secured the use of a mechanical digger, to dig down behind the quay wall to find out how the wall is constructed and whether there are useful ties holding it back.

Having investigated this Simon and David will make a report to recommend the best course of action to maintain the wall.

HERBERT E TRAILER

The *Herbert E*, our rescue RIB, was in dire need of a decent trailer but luckily we have very handy and capable volunteer in David Pentney-Smith who has assessed the existing one with Richard Cracknell.

They found that the boat supports, rather than being wooden and rotten as expected, were fibreglass and in pretty good condition, which has simplified the task a little. David is currently designing a new trailer which he will build around these supports.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership renewal forms have been sent to all members, mostly by email but by post on request. Please be sure to return these to Mim Gibbs, 83 Cecil Rd, Norwich, NR1 2PJ. If you didn't get yours or know of anyone who didn't get theirs or are having trouble printing it, please let Mim know at this address or by email mimgibbs@googlemail.com

EVENING TALKS

Our proposal to have evening talks was welcomed, suggestions for topics included 'A history of Wells harbour', 'Racing rules for beginners', 'Advanced racing rules', 'Being a race officer' and 'Handling the rescue boats'. Please let us know if any of these interest you. Suggestions for other subjects are always welcome.

The committee are researching speakers for these talks and will be advertising the evenings later in the year.

GETTING INVOLVED

After an encouraging response to last month's Half Hitch we are planning to invite members to be observer/helpers on the *Natalie Gail*, she is such a stable craft that almost all members will feel happy and safe aboard her. We hope that by being out on the water watching the sailing and maybe even pulling up a flag or two we will be able to involve members we see less frequently... and we're sure they will enjoy themselves!

Ideally, we hope that these members will be enthused by their experience and pluck up the courage to take a sailing boat out on the water. Those of us who do sail *appear* to be having a good time!

WINTER SAILING PROGRAM 2013/14

Unsurprisingly there was little enthusiasm for the winter sailing events... it must have been the low tides.



The clubhouse being prepared for a committee meeting



CLUB SAILING BOATS

The club has a variety of boats which are available to members without charge. These include a brand new Wayfarer, three Fevas and two Lasers. The principle aim of these boats is to encourage as many people as possible to come and give sailing a try, and to get as many club members as possible on the water. We even have waterproof outfits and lifejackets available to borrow.

The boats will be available when the season starts and we will let you know how to arrange to borrow the boats nearer the time.

For competent sailors the boats can be used without supervision, but the Wayfarer and Fevas in particular are ideally suited to newcomers and novices and can be used as training boats with instruction.

The sailing committee are planning to spend a morning before the season starts making sure that all boats are complete and ready to sail from the start of the season. Watch this space!

FROSTBITES!

Our team race event with the Frostbites Sailing Club in Norwich on Sunday 12 January went surprisingly well (i.e. we avoided a whitewash). We gained a 3rd and 4th place in Race One meaning that we stand a good chance of retaining the trophy when we see the return leg in Wells in July.

Decent level of support, many 'hot toddies' consumed and a pleasant lunch so congratulations to Team Captain Martin Read for setting us up for the second leg. Sailors were: Chris Gibbs & Martin Read, James Case & Richard Cracknell, Peter & Jean Terrington.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

The archive photos of the starting hut and the Club slipway in this news sheet were taken by Tommy Thomas, they came to light when Richard Cracknell was sorting through some boxes left to him.

RACE RESULTS

The sailing committee have decided to bring back the tradition of having the race results posted on the Club Noticeboard; Richard Cracknell will produce a chart showing all of the races to be filled in as they take place.

BOAT PARKING

A boat parking plan will be posted on the wall at the sailing club, this is only to be filled in by the Sailing secretary which will do as the appropriate subs are paid.

NEW YEARS DAY SWINDLE PARTY

The New Year's Day Event was well attended and very jolly. A delicious soup was prepared by Gill Lupin, which she made from the leftover Christmas Party Turkey, and with a bread roll this was just what was needed after the excesses of Christmas – thanks Gill!

As usual a stunning array of must-have gifts were donated for the Grand Draw. David Blakesley organised and managed the whole affair to make it an enjoyable event.

BRITISH SHARPIE CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Sharpie Championships will be held at Wells this year on the 20-22 June. This will be a big event for the club and will involve many members in organising, helping and hopefully sailing in the event. The sailing side of the championships is being headed by a small but experienced team comprising Chris Gibbs, James Case and Martin Read and the social side will be headed by David Blakesley and his team.

We are delighted that Andy Turner has agreed to be Race Officer for the event and are very grateful to Paul Pettit who has volunteered the use of his catamaran *Serafina* as principle committee boat.

As we get nearer the event we expect Chris and David to be on the lookout for volunteers to help make the event a big success.

NWNSA 2014

North West Norfolk Sailing Association week will be held in the last week in July, coming to Wells on Monday the 28th.

Martin Read is an experienced race officer at this event and has kindly offered to be Principal Race Officer for us again this year. The event relies on a whole team of volunteers both on and off the water, so if you're interested in giving a hand please let us know

There are very early tides (again!), let's hope the wind comes through this year.

Breakfast will be provided by David Blakesley's team of volunteers.

The racing is a great spectacle with one of the largest fleets of boats we will see all summer racing under the WSC flag



Can anyone date this photo? Is that John Balls who seems to be pulling a sharpie up the slipway single-handed! Can you identify the children in the foreground?



FIXTURE LIST

Special thanks to Gary Anthony for poring over the tide timetables for 2014 and calculating high tide times and tide heights for the coming season. Chris has drafted a racing programme for us which is in its final stages of checking before being confirmed and published.

We are focusing on having a whole series completed in a weekend and encouraging multiple races per day: three races of one round each is generally more fun than one race of three rounds. Sailors will get more time on the water with closer racing and less time between races. There will be a combination of sharpie races, handicap races and combined races so it would be great to see decent numbers competing this year and perhaps the return of the handicap fleet...?!

Special events

We are resurrecting three events that have rather fallen into disuse, the Ladies Race, Crews Race and the Novice Cup, all of these will be in this year's fixture list and we hope to make them as popular as they ever were.

The Sailing committee has also scheduled in 'Fun' days where the emphasis will not be on racing but rather on getting people out on the water, taking the Feva's, the Lasers and the Wayfarer, and maybe even the rescue boats with a picnic in. Canoes will be welcome too! We'll venture up Sluice Creek or to the East Hills by Pool Buoy. Somewhere where we can have land and water-based activities for everyone.

We welcome suggestions for activities on these days.

Tan sail racing

We will be putting on special events for our friends in tan sail boats this year, strengthening relations between our two organisations.

COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

If you have any comments about this newsletter or wish to contribute please contact Ben Cracknell. Boats or sailing items for sale, ideas for articles, anything else! ben@benstudios.co.uk

Dates for your diary

26th January

Alison and Sue's Lunch – book now.



The golden era of the starting hut!

Two more of Tommy's photos, the people in the lower one I believe to be Robin Golding, Ian Barrett, Owen Cracknell and William and Ben Cracknell. Is that Herbert E in the top one?