



REEF KNOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF WELLS SAILING CLUB

No 4 Spring 2001

From the Commodore

Dear Members,

My first duty, (even before taking office), as the new commodore was as the joint signatory of a begging letter to all members. It is not the inauguration that I would have chosen, nor is it the way in which I would wish to be remembered, but at the time it was necessary, as the replacement of Miss Judith became a priority. A priority, coming hot on the heels of the need to replace the engine for Herbert E., the club safety boat. The response to the request for interest free loans has been tremendous, and has enabled the purchase, refurbishment and engine replacement of the Natalie Gail to be undertaken. For this response I thank you. A small, but select group lead by our rear commodore has been busy preparing Natalie Gail for the approaching season.

As I write this, my first letter to the membership, within a few days of the beginning of spring, it occurs to me that spring is the season of promise, where the smallest beginnings of plant life thrust optimistically upward into a hostile environment. In much the same way many members are busily preparing their own craft for the onset of the season. At this time of the year the fine days of spring seem to be something of a rarity, and finding the right day to move boat maintenance forward seems rather difficult. One thing that is certain, is that the weather will improve, and when it does the warm sunny days will be on their way, and the boats will be ready.

I hear news of other sailing clubs, in different parts of the country suffering from a declining membership. Although Wells is a small sailing club, it is the envy of many others. What makes Wells club special, is the response of the members to the clubs needs. We have a splendid club, of which I am very pleased to count myself a member. The club is able to flourish because the members use it. There is now an even

greater need to support your club. We are indebted to those members who have loaned money to us. To repay those loans we need a successful season with club functions on or off the water being fully supported. We all share the responsibility of raising the profile of the club to enable its progress to grow and develop. The vice commodore Chris Hardy, and the house committee have planned a season of social functions which I trust will be well attended. The primary aim of having a social programme is to gather together like-minded people for the purpose of mutual enjoyment. If whilst doing so we are also able to boost club funds then things will be moving in the right direction. The rear commodore, Gary Anthony, and the sailing committee have put a lot of hard work into the preparation and presentation of the sailing programme. The best way that we can show appreciation of the work of the flag officers and their committees is by supporting them as much as possible with our physical presence.

I wrote earlier of raising the profile of the club in both town and around. To this purpose, the flag officers and committee of Wells Sailing Club have agreed to act as hosts to the 'Round Britain RIB Challenge' when they visit Wells during the early part of July. On the fourth of July the participants are due to arrive in Wells from Berwick on Tweed and are due in Ramsgate on the fifth. The numbers, as yet, are not finalised, but drivers, co-drivers and support teams are anticipated to be about a hundred and fifty people. Like many of the things which we do, catering for this will be an act of faith. I am convinced that good will come of it. Junior Week is again scheduled for this summer and plans are moving ahead to repeat the success enjoyed in previous years. The demand for places last year was so great that this year it will be necessary to restrict invitations to participate to junior members and family members only.

See you at the club,

Terry

Sailing Secretary's Report

Dear Members,

The start of the 2001 sailing season is nearly here with the first race scheduled for Saturday 14th April.

The signs are that this year could see improved turnouts in both fleets which will reverse the recent trend.

The sailing programme will be out very shortly, being printed at this moment.

The winter has been a very hectic period for the Sailing Committee and some local members, that lovely new "Lady" "Natalie Gail" being the main reason. A tremendous amount of work has been done by "the few" and in future I will be looking for help from more of the membership, especially those who sail! To alter John F. Kennedy's famous inauguration speech "Do not ask what your Club can do for you, ask what you can do for your Club"!

The boat has been transformed from her condition on purchase and although the launch date has slipped (mainly due to weather) I hope that she will be up and running for the start of the season.

New floorboards, donated by "Uncle Ed", are magnificent and will put a real polish on the finished craft. Ed, from all of us, thank you.

I do plan to run handling sessions on both Natalie Gail and Herbert E. O.D's. or any member who is keen please contact me.

It just leaves me to wish you a happy and successful 2001 Sailing Season.

See you on the water.

Gary

From the House Committee:-

Dear Members,

With the nights drawing out and the season nearly upon us, it is time to look at our social events for the year.

All members should have by now received copies of the social programme through the mail, so we will remind you of a few of the important dates for your diary.

Sunday 14th April – 1930 hours

Fitting Out Supper - (Barrel on the bar)

Saturday 19th May – 1900 hours

BSOA Open Meeting and Supper (we are trying to arrange a guest speaker for the evening)

Saturday 23rd June & Sunday 22nd July

The tides are right for a social gathering on the East Hills lets hope the weather is kind to us. We intend to put on a "ferry service" from the slipway.

Saturday 14th July – 2000 hours

Nautical Evening dress for the theme of the occasion

Sunday 26th August – 1400 hours

Wells Regatta Barbecue

Saturday 6th October – 1930 hours

Laying up Supper

Hope to see you at the Club soon.

Chris

CRUISER NOTES

Congratulations to Martin Nicholls on taking over the co-ordination of the Wells Cruising Association. The fact that Martin and the B.S.S.C. Cruiser Fleet Captain, William Fillingham, are both W.S.C. members should make for smooth running of joint cruiser events this season.

Following last year's very successful Wells Sailing Club Cruiser Supper, another has been planned for this year on May 5th. The postponed 2000 Cockle Race will take place the same day. The reciprocal

B.S.S.C. Cruiser Supper will be held on July 7th and it is hoped that a sizeable fleet of Wells yachts will make the trip.

Cruiser passages are also planned to Wisbech, Overy, Wainfleet, Lowestoft, Spurn Point and Blakeney. Perhaps some of the larger day boats might like to join us on the passages to Overy and Blakeney, weather permitting. The final event of the season will be the 2001 Cockle Race on September 15th.

Peter Terrington

IMPORTING A DUTCH TJALK – *VR OU JOHANNA*

During the last few years our organised life has turned on it's head! Those of you who know us well will be aware of our chaotic completion of a somewhat unusual old house near the Buttlands in Wells. After 6 years of part time rebuilding and plastering we finally decided to make Wells our permanent home and cut ties with Hertfordshire.

However, there was a problem! Tony still had a job in Hertfordshire and two hours journey to work was not a good prospect. So, to cut a long story short, we decided to buy a boat and keep it mid way between work and Wells.

The boat had to be finished, clean, neat, minimal, adaptable for rivers and the sea, with a good engine and plenty of sail, sleep four or five, not be too long, have central heating, a good head and galley - in short - perfect!! Oh and vintage, (we have a real soft spot for old things).

Needless to say it took us over a year to find one that almost fitted the bill. Tony is part Dutch so we decided a botta, tjalk, skootji or aark would do. We had numerous trips to Holland, some together and some on our own. In fact the choosing and buying of the boat became a way of life. Until one day we found her. She was in a little village called 'Worms' on the edge of The IJsselmeer. She was a beautiful 48 foot tjalk. The decision was made.

Only then did we realise that the most vital requirement had been left out of our list of essentials. it must have a sound bottom, unfortunately she didn't. The



steel hull was very thin in a number of places. We could not bear to start looking again and had already fallen in love with her. So rightly or wrongly we decided to have her hull plated and the price was reduced accordingly.

We made two further trips to Holland in order to move her the two and a half day journey through the Dutch canal and across the IJsselmeer to the boat builders. This was a very steep learning curve for although we had sailed regularly on Thames barges we had never had experience of a Dutch tjalk, and we found the IJsselmeer a tricky stretch of water to navigate.

We survived! with two pumps on board, just in case. We then prepared for the journey home - there were more adventures on the horizon.

Christine Adams

OBITUARY

ROBIN WOODHOUSE – 1926–2001

Though some members may only have known Robin Woodhouse from his occasional visits - particularly at Sunday lunch times, his membership of the Club has been both loyal and consistent. What often appeared as an abstracted vagueness, hid an active mind, which generated action. At the time when the

Sharpie Class seemed doomed, he financed the building of two of the Australian versions.

Several of our young people may be surprised to know of his promotion of the Norfolk Boat Charity, which gave them an unparalleled taste of deep water sailing.

As far as the Club was concerned he kept a watching brief, encouraging and stepping in whenever he could give benefit, this he did modestly and without fuss, we shall miss his quiet support.

MARTIN EMERSON SKIPPER OF THE 'HERBERT E'

On New Years Day the Commodore made a presentation to Martin in appreciation of all the hard work he had put in to Club activities over recent years, particularly in connection with the Herbert E, which he has skippered for several years. The presentation was an engraved tankard and a humorous gift entitled a broken piston trophy.

On the day in January when W.S.C. members were competing in the team race against the Norwich Frostbites on the River Yare, James Case was driving Martin Emerson down to Dartmouth to start his naval career. Martin had been accepted as an officer cadet in the Royal Navy joining as a midshipman. After an initial six week basic training course he has proceeded on to the main course which includes boat handling, which should provide Martin with no trouble!

We all wish Martin the very best for his future career in the Royal Navy and look forward to seeing him out on the water when he comes home to Wells.

WELLS SC v NORWICH FROSTBITES SC

On Sunday 14th January a good turnout of Wells Sailing Club members travelled to Norwich to compete against the Norwich Frostbites in the first half of the annual team race.

The conditions were exceptionally good, in that there was, for once, an excellent sailing breeze. WSC member, Richard Major, was enthusiastically competing, and thinking he was in a Sharpie, lunged for the toe strap, which is non-existent in a Norfolk Dinghy, and he promptly went over the side. He recovered quickly and managed to only get his top half wet.

In the second race Richard Cracknell did some fine team racing, in the true Cracknell tradition, but despite this we trailed badly on scoring, with Wells 47 points, Frostbites 25 points, which means we have a lot to do when the Frostbites visit us in the Summer to complete the second half of the team race in our Sharpies.

Help wanted by Wells Town Council

The Wells children's playing field is being improved, and the Council is looking for somebody who would be prepared to refurbish the concrete boat on the field, which was previously used as a sandpit. It has in mind perhaps fitting some wooden seats in the boat and maybe putting up a small mast.

Any ideas would be much appreciated.

If you can help or have any suggestions please contact Myrtle French on tel. 01328 710694

REEF KNOT SPONSORS

We have been very fortunate in that, to date, the Reef Knots have not cost the Club anything to produce, as members have sponsored the printing costs. We do thank W.S.C. member Martin Nicholls who has done an excellent job of printing the issues, and has now brought the cost down even further to approximately £25 per issue.

We are looking for sponsors to cover the printing costs of future issues, so if you as an individual or as a business would like to assist in this way, please contact the Commodore.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Thank you to all the contributors to this Reef Knot. It has saved me a lot of time having a number of articles sent to me as Word documents and rich text files (.rtf).

I must apologize to Ian Scott for cutting off his name at the end of his excellent article on "Moonfleet" in the last Reef Knot. However, I think most of you were fully aware of who had written the article, and we much look forward to the next instalment - please Ian.

Finally, our thanks to Terry Angles for kindly sponsoring the printing of this issue.

Jean Terrington