

# Bear

# Essentials



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# COMMENT



As you read this I will have been your Commodore since the AGM at the end of March. At that meeting you appointed the new CoM which has already had its first meeting which was very positive and forward looking to the task ahead.

One of the first challenges that lie ahead is that of declining membership. Last year we had about 10% fewer members than in 2015. We are already addressing this and are working on ideas to attract more people into watersports as well as easing the process of existing regular Club users joining.

After serving seven commodores as treasurer Tony Thomas has left to enjoy his freedom and Stuart Cook has taken over in this role. This happens as we are bringing much of the accounting work back in house. This will both save money and simplify management reporting. We all wish Stuart good luck in his new role. We understand that members want more frequent updates on how we spend your money and this we intend to do.

The bars in the Clubhouse need more refurbishment. They don't have an especially 'yacht club' feel or appearance and we need to be more decisive about how we want to use them in the future. We are fortunate that Paul Oakley has stepped up to Rear Commodore and he will be working with Cornel in ensuring the safe and efficient operation of the building.

The marina is an expensive asset and we must make the most effective use of it that we can. Your Vice Commodore Steve Cooper will continue his work in the yard and marina and will be masterminding the operational improvements as well as the continuing maintenance programme. Alongside this we shall be looking at streamlining the whole administrative process, possibly expanding the services that can be delivered online for example.

The way the Club communicates with its members and others who have an interest in the Club seems inconsistent. Some activities of the Club use only the website to communicate with its participants, others concentrate on social media and others by word of mouth or notice boards. It's important that everyone has access to all the news in a more consistent way.

It's great to see the outstanding success of our young sailors in national and international competition. We now need to make more effort in reaching out into our own hinterland to bring both youth and young adults into sailing. It is from this that I see the future of the Club. I believe the training school also needs to be more reactive to changing interests in watersports.

After lunch I'm going for a sail.

*David Cairncross*

Commodore



## Ilfracombe

Ilfracombe wants to end its responsibility for local pilotage. It has a large pilotage area – from Capstone Head in the west to Blue Anchor Point, east of Minehead and up to 1½ miles offshore – but the harbour no longer uses or requires pilots. Consequently it has applied for its designation as a Competent Harbour Authority, under the terms of the 1987 Pilotage Act, to be rescinded. The authority says the move is purely a means of getting rid of the pilotage responsibility and will have no effect on the activities or standing of Ilfracombe as a Statutory Harbour Authority.

## Burry Port

Carmarthen County Council has agreed to spend £2m over several years in a programme of maintenance and improvements to the listed harbour. It will include renovation of the harbour walls and dredging the approach channel to improve accessibility. Council leader Emlyn Doyle said, "This will support the wider regeneration of the area and will provide a real incentive to businesses looking to invest there."

## Newquay

Winter storms have opened vertical cracks in the North Quay of Newquay harbour in Cornwall. Emergency repair work to prevent it collapsing has been approved and will cost £500,000.

## Cardiff

Around 200,000 people travelled on Cardiff Bay and its associated rivers in 2016-17 – three times as many as in 2002 when waterbus services began. The city council is considering spending money on improving the stops – such as providing cover in the waiting areas – and is looking at providing additional stops to serve new developments and any changing commuter needs.

## Milford Haven

The Welsh Grand Prix of the P1 National Powerboat Championships will be held off Milford Waterfront on July 14-16. Milford Waterfront is the new name of the marina area and the re-branding aims to attract investment to the 380,000 sq ft of development space available and make it a destination in its own right. Attracting the Grand Prix is part of that strategy.

## Hartland Quay

The body of a 32-foot long Fin Whale was washed up at Hartland Quay. Fin Whales are not uncommon around the south west of Ireland and the Celtic Sea but are rarely seen east of the St George's Channel. They grow to more than 70 feet in length so this specimen was around half-grown. It's not known what killed it and the carcass has now been removed.

# AGM & EGM

## EGM rejects social membership

A proposal to allow people to join CBYC as social members was decisively defeated at an Extraordinary General Meeting held in the clubhouse last month. It immediately followed the club's annual meeting and was necessary because to introduce a new class of membership required a change in the club's Articles of Association which could only be sanctioned by an EGM.

The proposal arose from criticism at previous AGMs about the running deficit of the clubhouse, the encroaching Cardiff Pointe development and the difficulty – despite many initiatives – to persuade substantially more people to use the bar and restaurant. The proposed addition to the Articles said social members, their partners and children would pay joining and membership fees as determined by the CoM and for this would be allowed access to the clubhouse for social purposes but would not be entitled to vote at meetings of the company, to bring a car onto the premises or to access other areas.

Outgoing Commodore Colin Parsons said the clubhouse was still not attracting enough bums on seats, despite being a superb facility. In the foreseeable future we would be surrounded by houses, occupied by people for whom going out for coffee and eating out were the norm. The numbers would be limited but nevertheless their joining fees, membership fees and £50 bar cards would make a substantial contribution and we would be seen as a friendly neighbour, not 'those b's who come in at 0600 with kids and trailers making a noise'. If the Quarterdeck Bar did get crowded – heaven forbid – we could open the downstairs bar as well, he said.

In the following discussion several members asked about numbers and if, and where, a boundary might be set. It was apparent that, although the meeting was only being asked to approve a change in the Articles, some seemed unhappy – shades of Brexit – about having to vote yes or no to a principle when they didn't know what the deal was. One member pointed out that the club's stated aim was to promote all kinds of water sport, which inviting in social members with no interest in boating clearly didn't do. When one member said there seemed no point in discussing it because we wouldn't attract social members, while another said there might be so many, full members wouldn't be able to get into the room to vote at an AGM, it was clear that there was, for widely different reasons, general dissatisfaction with the idea. "There isn't a yacht clubhouse in the country that isn't running at a loss," said another member. As he closed, following the vote, Commodore David Cairncross reflected that suddenly, members seemed to have become fairly relaxed about the clubhouse loss.

One reason might have been the £63,000 surplus on operations over the year reported by retiring treasurer Anthony Thomas, contrasting with a £17,000 loss last year. He said membership fees were up slightly as was marina income. Margins had improved on both wet and dry bar sales and electricity costs had gone down because we'd beaten down our supplier on price. The training school as beginning to get back on its feet – it showed a loss of £9,000 against £19,000 last year – and the club loan was being paid off at around £16,000 a year with just £23,000 left



New committee member **Chris Pain**



New committee member **Ben Redwood**

to pay. There had been some costs associated with repairs and renovation to the clubhouse.

As last year, he warned that the discount on harbour dues that the club has enjoyed on the first 300 boats has been decreasing and would disappear in 2021 when we would be expected to pay £80,000 more to the harbour authority than we do now. Whilst we have a surplus of £63,000 this year the extra harbour dues would eliminate that and take us back to deficits. The club has also to build up a cash reserve of which could amount to perhaps £240 – £250,000 over the next four years. This would be necessary to avoid any overdrafts but to also meet some significant capital expenditure to maintain our assets such as the hoist and pontoon system.

It was suggested that if the club had borrowed to pay for the wavebreak pontoon and to replace the electricity bollards on the gold pontoons instead of paying cash we would have a cash reserve. Anthony Thomas said, "Sometimes we have to spend money to stand still. These don't generate extra income and I don't like taking out loans for things that don't generate income. Like taking out a mortgage to pay the electricity bill – I don't do it."

He ended by saying he had now served as treasurer under seven different Commodores. It had made him feel a bit like Sir Humphrey Appleby in 'Yes Minister'. "But it's been fun," he said, "most of the time."

Membership Secretary Jason Griffiths reported that there were 818 members in the club, of which 717 were full members. Over the year 46 new members had joined, 107 had resigned, 18 had been lapsed and one member had died.

Stuart Cooke was elected treasurer and his post as Sailing Secretary has been taken by Sean Carter. Paul Oakley is the new Rear Commodore and the gap on the CoM was filled by the election of Chris Pain. Five other existing CoM members were re-elected. Club President is Syd Hearne.

Following the AGM Andy Freemantle resigned because of increasing RNLI commitments and the committee unanimously agreed to co-opt Ben Redwood to take his place.

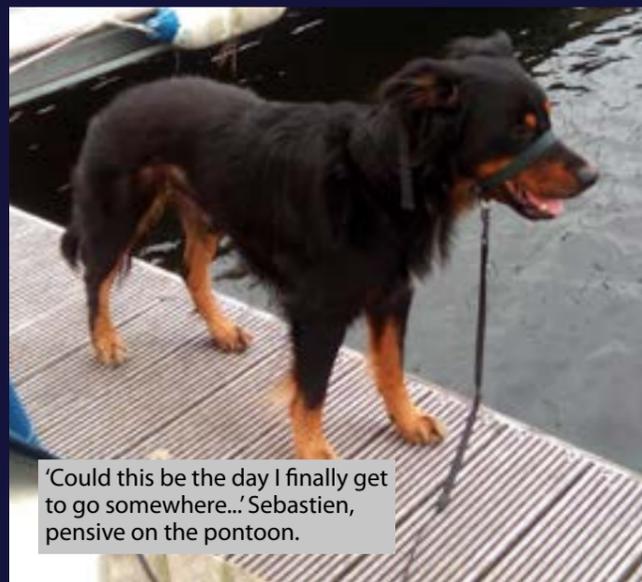
# Pets on the Pontoon

## Sebastien

To begin with, Sebastien isn't old. He is, says his owner Vikki Crawford, like Benjamin Button, getting younger by the day. So, although he's technically 12, like that F Scott Fitzgerald character he is adding achievement on achievement as time passes.

Last year he was introduced to partner Andrew Potts' VeeExpress 267 motor cruiser, Megaphobia. Now he's getting his sea legs with trips around the Bay. This summer... who knows? Possibly off to Lydstep, near Tenby, where Andrew has use of a drying mooring in the bay. He was named Sebastien after a member of a band that Vikki's daughter liked, not because of any French ancestry. In fact, a dog from the same litter was DNA tested by its owner and found to be a cross between a collie, a Staffie, a Rottweiler and a Portuguese water dog. Sebastien is, fortunately, unaware of the test results. Leave that mix of DNA at a crime scene and you could get away with anything!

Andrew says Sebastien likes jumping in and out of the sea – or, indeed, any water – and watching water birds. He's an easy-going dog who takes things as they come. Or, as Sebastien might say, "And so we beat on, boats against the current...."



'Could this be the day I finally get to go somewhere...' Sebastien, pensive on the pontoon.

# A Winter's Tale

Story and pictures by David Richards



On a chilly night in January a few hardy souls got together in the bar (as you do) and, fuelled with alcohol, decided that it would be a good idea to have a pre-SWOG cruise-in-company to Bristol.

Arrangements were quickly made, communication achieved with the harbour master's office at Bristol, which requires visitors to give 48 hours notice outside of the sailing season, and the trip started to take shape. The evening before we left for Bristol we met again in the club bar as two of the boats planned to lock out at 0630 and the rest half-an-hour later. After another late, alcohol-fuelled night, (there's a theme emerging here) everyone headed happily off to their berths for a few hours kip. I awoke at 0600 and looked out and in the absence of morning sunshine it was clear that one of the company remained in complete darkness. A gentle (ok, maybe not so gentle) bang on the deck prompted the appearance of the skipper and shouts of 'Oh FLIP - I've overslept!'

With the 0700 lock approaching I was already onboard Iona with Mike Elworthy who radioed to the barrage to ask for a lock out using the correct procedure and speaking clearly, considering the early hour and lack of sleep. The reply was interesting. "Two" was all that came back from the barrage. Not being entirely sure what 'Two' meant, Mike questioned the response. "That's what I said," was the reply. Guess that's Lock Two then, we reckoned... and assumed that the person on duty had got as much sleep as we had!

With all boats through the locks we headed out to the Outer Wrach and we were greeted with a calm channel and... fog, lots of it. Together with that dull light that constitutes a dawn in

the Bristol Channel, visibility was down to around a few hundred yards. I clearly remembered Ian Aitkin's teachings from the Yachtmaster course we'd completed the previous year, so a watch for any traffic was set and Ed and Aly on Moonshine Bay kept us informed of what was showing on their AIS.

A motor up the channel was the only option as zero wind had been forecast and, unusually, that is exactly what we'd got, so Moonshine Bay, Capricorn, Blue Ribbon, Just For Now, Inside Trader, Sonrisa, and Iona all headed off in convoy. By the time we got as far as Clevedon the fog was lifting to reveal a beautiful day and sight of the freight traffic on the King Road that we could hear but not see before the gloom lifted. Before us was Portishead and crews were preparing the boats to venture up the river, i.e. putting the bacon on, when a call came over that someone had run out of fuel. It had been a close run thing but, realistically, £3.50-worth of diesel was never going to get him from Cardiff to Bristol! That boat shall remain nameless but whenever I hear the name I think of chocolate wafers....

When locking in to Bristol floating harbour you are directed by the harbour guys on the quayside and as none of us wanted to be first against the wall there was some jostling for position. It is always an interesting experience and for those who haven't ventured there yet but are considering the trip make sure to take enough long lines for bow and stern.

You will be required to hand a line that is passed through an eye on the wall and then back and these lines have to be tended as you move either up or down the wall depending on passage.

After passing through the lock and the Cumberland Basin - there is something very satisfying about holding up the weekend

traffic as they swing the bridge - we were soon through to the berths by the Arnolfini Gallery. The crews then had a nice walk in the wintry sunshine down to the harbour office to pay the harbour fees, with a few refreshment stops (as you do) on the long return. Then back on the boats for cheese and wine plus Mike's special cheesecake to finish off with. In the evening we made use of a local hostel, The Shakespeare Tavern, purveyors of fine ales and good food, and had a communal hot meal in traditional surroundings. The rest of the evening was a bit of a blur unfortunately but at least some people actually made it back to the correct boats before retiring for the evening.

Morning, for some, saw the obligatory visit to Wetherspoons for breakfast before heading off down to the locks. Some of the boats then got to play dodgems with the local rowers who had decided that it would be a good idea to hold races in the morning. Honestly, who rows on a Sunday morning? So as we were all going down the docks, trying to manoeuvre in a gusting side wind down the narrow channel, there were several megaphones shouting at us to stay out of the way. No one was injured or got wet during this part of the trip, which was a satisfactory outcome for all concerned... but I know where I would have liked to stuff that megaphone.

Once down the Avon and into the channel, sails were hoisted and the convoy had a fantastic, albeit long, sail back, tacking against steady, but easing, westerly winds. A great, impromptu weekend was had by all.

Where next then people?



A grey mist on the sea's face and a mystified look on the face of Mike Elworthy

## Q. Will a new baby affect my sailing?

### A. Yes, you'll need a bigger boat!

Louisa Laurent launches into both.

New boat or baby is usually the question. However Richard and I decided we wanted both... and why not at the same time! Were we crazy? No, we were excited, and reckoned with a little planning and forethought we might get a season of sailing in on a new boat before our new crew member joined us. Our beloved Beneteau First 24, Harta, was our baby, our little gem, but we felt that it was time to get a bigger, newer model; big enough for us and our planned expanding family.

We wanted hot running water, a fridge, heating and shower, all that Harta lacked. We found Taiyo, a Jeanneau Sun Osysey 32.2 in Swansea in November 2015 and by January 2016 she was with us in Cardiff, having sadly bid a farewell to Harta. This boat did not need such extensive renovation but of course I got to buy some new scatter cushions and girly touches like candles and throws. Richard of course looked at some improvements and upgrades including new LED lights, electrics and stereo and speakers. She was looking good and in the spring we signed up again for the SWOG series.

Within days of discovering I was pregnant, a trip to Portishead was underway. Instead of sea sickness I now faced all-day sickness. And despite my tale that I was on antibiotics and therefore not drinking, fellow swoggers suspected I was pregnant. There was only so many weekends I could keep up my chest infection decoy. Early June saw us charter a catamaran in Greece with Sandy and Paul from Dream Chaser; Kay and Mark of Onya Marx and Andy and Jane. Each night I devoured some delicious Greek cuisine only later to regret it very soon afterwards.

The holiday was fabulous but the sickness was horrid. That, together with my teetotal status meant here was no hiding the pregnancy any longer. It was going to be a long nine months of no gin and tonics, especially being on the Party Pontoon.

Despite my expanding waistline and sickness, we managed some great trips on Taiyo. We stayed on her every weekend but had to be more picky about what weather conditions we would sail in. One particular trip - when I was 6 months pregnant - was pretty memorable. Tenby was the destination - no hopping on and off the boat for me now - so my duties comprised tea-making, snack acquiring and sleeping. When we arrived in Tenby, however, the easterly wind was blowing so strongly that it was difficult to stand, sit, lie down or even think! Therefore after an hour we were off again en route to Milford Haven. My bed summoned me once again and I fully lived up to the name I had been given, Louisa the duvet queen. Poor Richard sailed singled-handed for all that way. He was just fine though, plenty of snacks and warm drinks kept him going! The vistas were amazing especially sailing past St Gwynn's and Manorbier. We were even joined by some dolphins.

By the autumn it was time to keep Taiyo in her berth. It started to become a little difficult to stay on board, let alone sail. Although the sickness had passed, other ailments now affected me i.e. getting stuck in the aft cabin, difficulty getting up and down off the low toilet and even the steps down into the boat were a challenge! When we did visit, Richard would be tinkering and I would be in bed - the place in which I was happiest. With snacks of course!



Little Oliver arrived three weeks earlier than planned on December 29 2016 weighing 6lbs 5ozs and Richard was chomping at the bit to introduce him to Taiyo. Since then Oliver has been on the boat a few times and has his own life jacket, courtesy of Steve and Anne of Inside Trader. Oliver has a wealth of sailing and sea inspired clothing and has been about in a Force 4 a good few times despite only being 11 weeks old. We haven't slept on board yet but as soon as it's a little warmer we will. We have already noticed the huge amount of gear that now accompanies us every where we go. No more tidy boat.

We are hoping for a summer of light winds and calm seas so we can all sail as much as possible. No doubt we will start with some little trips over to Mermaid Quay, short hops to Portishead and then further afield. I am keen to go to Watchett as we haven't been there on Taiyo yet and it's such a pretty little harbour.

We will again be joining SWOG and in addition to our event wear will be ordering a SWOG babygrow. For now, Oliver can lay back and chill out in his carry cot while we sail. It's when he starts walking that the challenge will begin.

We have more improvements planned for Taiyo including new sails which are on order and no doubt some modifications to keep Oliver safe and secure while on board. The next few years will be amazing, a new boat with everything we wanted and a little boy to pull the ropes and help daddy... while mummy sips her G&T!



## Me and my Boat

### Stuart Preece meets a motorboat man who's decided to try sailing.

John Lewis (no, not that John Lewis. The one better known as Leggs) has just acquired a Tomahawk 25 - Snow Goose more affectionately referred to as 'The Goose'.

Leggs has been a member of the club for nine years but only really came to general attention about three years ago when his dog Meg was mistaken for a fox on our balcony. Meg has now moved on to a family with more time for her, whereas Leggs remains to enjoy some of his many leisure activities which include sailing, motor boating, fishing, and his special favourite - partaking in the Club's social side with many of its members who he also regards as friends. Surprisingly he fits all these activities in between his busy Mobility company and jokes with his fellow members that he regards the club's demographic as a potential business opportunity.

Just Right, a Maxum 3000 SCR motorboat is his main mode of buoyancy, but due a lucky win on a super steed he decided to buy a sailing boat to find out what it was like to be wind assisted rather than £ assisted.

His first trip was moving The Goose to its berth with the help of a few friends. This included our President Syd Hearne who was kidnapped for a trial sail around the Bay while he was viewing the

accommodation below. Syd's face was a picture as he appeared through the hatch to realise he was on his way across the Bay and not tying up to a nearby pontoon. Being a long-established fisherman, Syd crawled up to a 'safe' corner in the cockpit, looking worried when the engine was turned off. Only the foresail was pulled up as a starter, due to its easy roller reefing and Leggs was told to look up to the sails to ensure they were set. "I can't do that, I suffer from vertigo!" was a surprising response as he is 6'6" tall.

On the return journey from the Bay our new sailor couldn't understand why he had to keep tacking and couldn't go in a straight line, as he was used to with his motorboat. "Why are we going back the way same \*\*\*\*\* way we came," he demanded. It was explained that tacking needed to be done quickly so that the boat didn't lose its momentum, and concentration was also needed at the helm so as not to turn it the way one was looking!

Leggs is looking forward to a summer on the water, whether gaining more sailing experience with his daughter Tegan, or motoring if he wants to get to his destination a bit quicker, and if there are any sailors in the Club who would like to accompany him for a few hours practice he would be happy for you to join him followed by a few beverages 'apres-sail'.

Leggs is currently single and looking for Miss Right to accompany him in his motorboat Just Right. You never know who could be around the next harbour or in the next port...





# Fire Service Takes to the Water



Pictures by Andy Masters

## Prevention Better Than Cure

**South Wales Fire and Rescue Service** recommend all boat owners to have working carbon monoxide alarms and working smoke alarms. They also recommend anyone on or near the water to wear a buoyancy device. Over 50% of people who drown never expected to be in the water.

### Every child knows that if it's red and has blue flashing lights it's a fire engine but it's still a little bit of a surprise to see one in the middle of Cardiff Bay.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service has two craft permanently based in the Bay and over the past couple of years they've been playing an increasingly important role in search and rescue as well as providing fire cover for the thousand or so leisure and commercial boats based here.

And seeing firefighters on the water will become a more familiar sight in future because, from April, Welsh brigades have been given responsibility for all inland water rescues.

The two craft in Cardiff Bay are operated from Penarth Fire Station. There are other boats based at Barry, Malpas and Ebbw Vale stations for flood emergencies or river rescues but the Penarth unit is the only one with purpose-designed firefighting capacity.

One of their two boats is a rigid-hulled Pioneer equipped with a pump capable of throwing 1,000 litres of water a minute onto a boat fire. It also has floodlights for night operation, ship-to-ship communications and a bow door to help retrieve casualties. It could carry up to eight people but is usually operated with a crew of three and is permanently based in the Bay.

The other craft is a RIB and, like those at other stations, can be trailed to wherever it is needed.

We were invited along to an exercise which was joined by the RIB from the Barry station. In the scenario a fire had started on board a boat and the owner had jumped overboard, necessitating an MOB recovery as well as tackling a fire.

As the RIB moved in to rescue the casualty the Pioneer's crew laid down a flat-fan spray of water between them and the 'burning' boat - to shield both the person in the water and the rescue team from heat and smoke. Once the casualty was retrieved the spray became a jet to tackle the fire. Not a straightforward task as the jet tends to push the bow of the boat around and keeping the jet on target requires concentration from the helmsman.

All the crews operating the boats are PBII trained - many here at CBYC - and then go on to Menai Bridge where, in the fast flowing currents around the Swellies, they train and qualify in flood rescue boat operations and swift-water rescue swimming.

Head of the Bay operation is Dave Ansell, station manager of Penarth and Cowbridge fire stations. He says they aim to be on the water within eight minutes of getting the call in Penarth.



Station Manager Dave Ansell

"On one occasion we actually had the casualty in the boat within the eight minutes," he said, "but that can depend upon the time of day and whether or not we have people down here when the call comes in."

They get a lot of calls to help the police search for people who are thought into have gone into the Taff or the Ely rivers and operate as far up as Tesco on Western Avenue and the old Wiggins Teape site on the Ely.

"People go in either deliberately or by accident," said Station Manager Ansell. "Some of those who go in by accident are under the influence of alcohol. Cold water shock is a big issue as is the existence of debris under the water."

Given those circumstances it's inevitable that a number of calls end up as retrieval of a body but there have been a lot of successful rescues.

"We've rescued people who have fallen off the pontoons, kayakers and even one lady who decided to try and swim across the Bay," he said.

They were called to the recent incident on Cardiff Yacht Club pontoons where a man collapsed due to carbon monoxide poisoning from engine fumes. Two others found him and tried to resuscitate him on site but were also overcome because they didn't realise the engine fumes were the problem. The original casualty later died. So how did the firemen realise what the problem was?

"When you have one casualty you go in but if there is more than one alarm bells should start ringing with the officer in charge. It is their responsibility to assess the situation and develop a safe system of working. In this case they made the right call."



# Broads Disasters (part 3)

Mike Slater

In the sixties a group of lads who grew up together on Tyneside decided to teach themselves to sail on the Norfolk Broads.

News of our disasters on the Broads were recounted to friends in hilarious and, sometimes, exaggerated detail over the weeks and months that followed our initial foray. More decided to come along and within three years there were up to a dozen of us each year in three boats.

We tried to avoid, as much as possible, giving any advice to the newcomers. We four pioneers felt we had gained our rudimentary knowledge in a hard and painful way and so were reluctant to give it away. There was also the entertainment value of seeing others make the same elementary mistakes and we were secretly and savagely amused when Alan greeted each request to join the next party with, "Of course... we're always pleased to see new blood." With three boats there were, naturally, even more original and interesting disasters than with one.

We worked out that our disasters were, for some reason, original by the reaction of the boatyard workers who were sent out to repair the damage. Typically we would set out on Saturday afternoon and, when the boatyard opened again on the Monday morning, would phone them to say what was wrong, could someone come and fix it and which pub they would find us in. Typically the person who arrived would survey the damage, shake their heads and say, slowly, 'Waal, oi never sin anything loik that afore.'

There was the time Richard hit one of the huge posts marking the navigation channel up Beydon Water. The post went through the shrouds, the chainplate was ripped from the deck, the backstay snapped and the whole mast collapsed forwards until it stuck out the front of the boat like a giant bowsprit. Derek managed to rip the back off the cockpit by trying to tow another boat off a bank. Ian, while sailing serenely down the New Cut managed to get a trailing jib sheet around a post on the bank which ripped the

bronze jib track out of the deck and left it dangling on the sheet like a huge clockwork spring. "Waal, oi never sin anything loik that afore," said the boatyard man. "It was a sudden gust," said Ian. The boatyard worker turned slowly to look at him with a look of complete disbelief on his face. "A very strong gust," said Ian, doggedly.

Yet in all those years we only managed to sink one boat. We were moored at The Duke's Head in Somerleyton and Ian and Robert had returned to the boat – Ian for a snooze and Robert to read a book on advanced mathematics. Robert is a medical consultant at a large northern hospital and has always been pretty bright but stereotypically absent minded. At that time he was studying AS level maths so he could understand the maths in the Open University Astrophysics degree he was doing in his spare time! Yes, that sort of bright.

As Ian slept, water started to appear through the cabin floor. Robert merely lifted his feet onto his bunk and continued reading. Ian woke to see Robert sitting like an enormous grasshopper with his knees around his ears. "Why are you sitting like that...," he began and his eyes travelled downwards, "aaaagh, we're sinking." They got out just before the boat settled gently on the mud of the river bed. An examination after the boat was raised showed a leaking stern gland was at fault, possibly as the result of the prop hitting an underwater obstacle – something Ian has ever since denied. It was a source of comfort to know we had a doctor in the party but what we didn't realise for many years was that away from the indemnity insurance of his own hospital, Robert was unwilling to advise on anything. The revelation that our confidence had been misplaced came when Raymond had to dive under his boat at the quayside at Reedham to free his own mainsheet from the prop and gashed his leg badly on some jagged metal on the wooden piles. "What do I do with this?" he asked Robert, as he stood on the quay, blood pooling around his foot.

"I would rinse it with clean, fresh water," said Robert. "And then...," prompted Raymond. "Er, I'd seek medical advice," said Robert.

We were reflecting on our persistent bad luck in the pub one lunchtime. "Why do we always seem to have more accidents than other sailors?" asked Ken. We agreed it was probably because we always went at the end of March – very much off-peak so the only time we could afford to hire the boats – when there were invariably very strong winds.

"Yes," persisted Ken. "But why do they always happen in the afternoons?"

We thought about it. He was right. Almost all our disasters happened in the afternoons. We reflected and theorised over several more pints but by the time we left for the afternoon sail had still not come up with a satisfactory explanation.

When you keep getting whacked on the head by a boom made of a 20ft length of pine you learn what you are doing wrong quite quickly. Other lessons took longer. It took us all years before we realised that the rivers were tidal for quite a long way. So progress when tacking was sometimes frustratingly slow, sometimes gratifyingly fast, without us ever working out why. It took even longer to realise that tacking in light winds with the tide could seriously affect your ability to manoeuvre. Picture the scene. It is early evening, mild for March, as a man stands at the end of his private jetty puffing his pipe and watching the peaceful scene of three yachts tacking upriver towards him.

His calm becomes concern as he sees the lead yacht turn slowly out of its tack and then head straight towards him. His concern turns to panic and he turns and begins to run. Seconds later three tons of mahogany and lead scythe through the jetty right behind his pounding heels. Two other boats then tack serenely through the floating wreckage of his jetty leaving him gibbering with fury on the bank.

"Bloody jetty must have been rotten," said Derek surveying the damage bill presented to him by the boatyard.

We agreed "You did him a favour, I reckon," said Alan. "A jetty in that condition was a danger to him and his family."

Still, nothing we did was potentially criminal. Well, only one thing, and it was tacking again.

We were tacking up a river narrowed by moored cruisers and houseboats and were using every inch. Robert completely misjudged the turn and hit a houseboat full on. There was a loud bang and almost instantly two agitated, middle-aged women appeared on deck. As he bounced off then stopped dead in the water the tide took his stern and he gybed back downstream before turning at the opposite bank to try once more. It was unfortunate, as we learned later, that one of the occupants was recovering from a nervous illness and her companion had recommended a houseboat holiday on a quiet Norfolk river as the ideal way to recuperate. It was doubly unfortunate that as Robert headed back across the river Dave should shout jocularly, "Look out missus, he's coming for you again!"

Robert again failed to complete the tack and not only hit the houseboat but rammed his bowsprit through one of the portholes. The two women gave a loud shriek, fled down the gangplank and ran off along the riverbank. The police found us in the pub that evening. They were looking at malicious damage at the very least but just ten minutes of talking to Robert convinced them he was just an amiable idiot and he got off with a caution. Our ways of ending up in the river were equally original and spectacular. They ranged from walking off the edge of the dock while returning from the pub, being catapulted in as the result of a collision and being swept from the side-deck by an involuntary gybe. Ken went in as he tried to fend off after collision with a moored coaster in the swiftly flowing river at Great Yarmouth.

The boat moved away leaving Ken stretched horizontally, his toes on the cabin roof and his fingertips gripping the coaster's rail. His feet lost their grip and like a giant pendulum he swung flat into the side of the ship, gave pained yell, and dropped into the water. Steve went in on the calmest of days, sitting on the boom as we goosewinged down a river. There was an unexpected gybe and the boom lifted, taking his feet off the cabin roof. Three people ducked as the big wooden boom and Steve, his feet pedalling thin air, passed slowly over their heads. At the end of the mainsheet's scope the boom stopped, the sail filled and Steve was flicked neatly off into the river. And there was the time we blacked out an entire village. We were in Beccles, Suffolk, and had spent two hours trying to find a pub with decent beer. "Well I'm not stopping here," said Pete, at the fourth establishment we visited.

"There's a pub at Geldeston, we're going to motor there." "We're not supposed to use the boats after dark," said Ian, "They don't have lights." "Well then, there won't be anyone else on the river will there," said Pete. "We're off. If the pub's any good we'll call this one and you can follow." "I wonder if Pete knows about the overhead cables," said Ken after Pete and crew had left. "There was something on that map the boatyard gave us."

We borrowed a river chart from the bar and, sure enough, there was a zig-zag line across the river at Geldeston with the legend '12kv - hire craft lower masts'.

An hour later Pete and crew were back. "Waste of time," he announced. "We must have hit something going up there 'cause there was a bang and a shower of sparks. And to cap it all, when we got there the place was dead, not a light anywhere."

These days we're all going on 70, five of us own our own boats, most have sailing qualifications of one sort or another and we sail together in Scotland, The Solent, the Bristol Channel and the Mediterranean. We still go the Broads each year but now the boats we hire are immaculate and we take a pride in sailing them well and returning them in a similar condition. We are no longer adding to our catalogue of disasters but then, as every pub, every village and just about every bend in the river recalls one daft adventure or another, we don't need to.



# Wales' Tall Ship is 'Vessel of the Year'

The highest award in the sail training industry has been awarded this year to Challenge Wales. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and the Association of Sail Training Organisations (ASTO) made her UK Sail Training Vessel of the Year after examining a range of criteria which included good management, safety, high quality sail training, volunteer management, innovations in the types of young people groups jumping aboard, maintenance management and how results are measured.

Sir Alan Massey, CEO of the MCA, said, "We chose Challenge Wales as this year's highly deserving winner as the vessel stood out for determination and resourcefulness of everybody involved with her to make a real, safe and lasting difference to the lives of the community in which she operates. A fine exemplar of the sail training ethos. We were particularly impressed by the story of one of her voyage crew, an 18-year-old man whose life was given renewed purpose as a result of just a short time with Challenge Wales. This was a wonderful example of what can be achieved by experiencing well-managed, caring and professional training out at sea under sail.

Just a few weeks later Challenge Wales got a second award when the charity won the 'People Development' Category in the South Wales Business Growth Awards. The award recognises the businesses that put their people at the heart of everything they do, enabling and inspiring their team through professional and personal development opportunities and support. Both awards are a fantastic tribute and recognition to the work that the Challenge Wales volunteers and team do.

March saw Challenge Wales undertake its first residential voyage of the season; a 9-day voyage from Cardiff to Lymington. On-board we had petri dishes, microscope, secchi disk, 10 enthusiastic college students and a marine science PhD researcher. Tie in some warden-based activities on Lundy Island, a visit to the fantastic marine-educational facilities in Plymouth University, onboard lectures and learning, plankton trawling and you've got a brilliant way to bring marine science to life. There was always the concern that weather would impact onto the voyage and it was certainly challenging with winds gusting over 45knts.

When Challenge Wales reached Lymington it was time for her to be lifted out of the water as part of the Planned Maintenance Programme. Volunteers were needed to help prepare the hull for antifouling, a mammoth job. Over 1,000 hours of time were donated by our volunteers to ensure the boat was ready for going back into the water a couple of weeks later.

The funding Challenge Wales receives helps support young people under the age of 26 to benefit from a sail training voyage. If you live or work around boats, jumping onto a boat might be taken for granted, and seeing a boat, an everyday occurrence but a large proportion of those taking part in Challenge Wales activities don't have those opportunities. They might be young carers, unemployed, living in deprivation, have learning disabilities and



Top Vessel Award being presented by Sir Alan Massey, CEO of MCA (left) to Vicky Williams, Trustee of Challenge Wales, and Andy Hall, Skipper of Challenge Wales Pic. Max Mudie\_ASTO



our funding helps give these young people opportunities alongside those who are in school, university or employment; those wanting to improve their sailing skills or get sea-miles under their belt and pure adventure-seekers. When people come onboard Challenge Wales the focus isn't on their backgrounds but the now and the life-experience they will get. These life-experiences create a great talking point at interviews, whether going to university or into work where young people can truly give examples of teamwork, facing challenges and understand their strengths and weaknesses.

This summer, Challenge Wales sails through Scotland for the first time and if this is a patch of water you haven't explored yet, then come and join us on our Celtic Challenge voyage. We leave Cardiff and sail the Irish Sea to Belfast. From Belfast we will sail to Fort William and through the majestic 60-mile Caledonian Canal. Unlike any other canal experience in the UK, the man-made canal links scenic Scottish lochs, including Loch Ness. It will offer a truly stunning location with spectacular Scottish scenery and amazing wildlife. We finish our Celtic Adventure in Aberdeen before the next leg, a North Sea Mini Challenge from Aberdeen to Kristiansand (Norway) and if you fancy a longer adventure then stay onboard until Halmstad (Sweden) where Challenge Wales will meet the Tall Ships fleet - 100 vessels including four masted schooners and fully rigged ships. Our Celtic Challenge voyage and North Sea Adventure are suited for those under 75 years!

...and after reaching Halmstad a summer of adventure truly starts (cue Pirates of the Caribbean music). Challenge Wales will be racing with the Tall Ships fleet from Halmstad to Kotka (Finland), cruising in company from Kotka to Turku (Finland) before the next race from Turku to Klaipeda (Lithuania). From Lithuania, Challenge Wales will race to Szczecin (Poland) before our homeward bound delivery voyage from Poland to Amsterdam and back to the UK. Tall Ships Racing is the largest youth event in Europe and with over 3,000 crew expected, the event also includes parties, crew parades, celebrations, fireworks, inter-crew activities and fun. A great way to spend a summer. A berth on Challenge Wales for any of our Tall Ships events are open to those aged 16-25 years. Do you know someone you might be looking for an adventure this summer? What's more, not only is bursary funding available for Welsh residents to participate in the Tall Ships Races but various other trusts are supporting young people wanting to take part onboard Challenge Wales. Unless you have experienced the spectacle of the Tall Ships Races and truly being a part of it, it is certainly an event and opportunity like no other. Come and jump onboard!

To take part or enquire about any of our adult, young person or volunteering opportunities call the Challenge Wales team on 029 2070 4657, email [reservations@challengewales.org](mailto:reservations@challengewales.org) or visit [www.challengewales.org](http://www.challengewales.org)

Vicky Williams

## Anglers Weigh In With Awaydays

### First there was SWOG.

Then came SMOG – Spirited Motorboat Offshore Gourmets – two of whose founders, Stuart and Gaylor Preece are, even as you read, munching seafood with a glass of something chilled on the south coast.

Now the anglers have got into the act with SWAG – the South Wales Anglers Group. The idea is to arrange cruises in company to both fish and spend time ashore socialising and sightseeing.

Club President Syd Hearne said, "This is an opportunity for anglers to get away together and both fish and spend time exploring the area. As well as having a meal and a drink together there will be opportunities, if people wish, to visit cultural sites or places of interest. Usually when people go to fish off Ilfracombe or Swansea or Porthcawl they go there and back in a day but the idea of these trips is to see a bit more of the locality."

The plan is for interested participants to meet in the bar during the week – which day is not quite set in stone, as the poster suggests – decide on a venue and then go for it at the weekend. Be there, do that... and get the polo-shirt!

### Angling Presentation Night

More than 50 people turned up for the angling section's presentation night last month. Jim Henton's 22.12lb cod got him Best Cod but also Best Specimen and the Triac Cup while Syd Hearne got Best Thornback with a 14.33lb specimen and Best Bass. Harvey Preston's 23.08lb conger got him Best Conger and he was also Best Angler. Best Boat was Bill Gronow's Ashley Jade.

Also last month was the annual Bunny Cup competition, fished between CYC and CBYC in memory of Cardiff Bay's Bunny Robinson. It was won by Steve Lane of CBYC in CJ with a 12lb 10oz Thornback beating the Thornback of runner-up Don Sewell, No Worries, also CBYC, by just one ounce. Third was Colin Keanor of CYC in Tiger Bay. The competition raised £223 for Velindre Hospital.



## Myths, Mists & 'Alternative Facts'



Sully Island

Local historian **Alan Thorne** casts a sceptical eye over some of our cherished local folk tales.

Wales can truly be said to be a land of mountains, mists and myths. But alongside the stories of Arthur and Merlin there are many Welsh maritime stories – local ones too – that I also regard as being myths. As a historian I am presented with many stories and I always apply the 'W's; where, when, what, who, which, why – in no particular order – and a degree of logic. For a story to be believable there must be evidence... official documents, records and, of course, photographs, which can settle the veracity of any story. But the makers or spreaders of these modern myths never give a date or dates, a name or names and when pressed insist there is photographic evidence which is never produced.

Ever since I was a boy I have heard the myth that when Barry, Cardiff, Penarth docks et al were busy and full of vessels you could walk across their decks from one side of the dock to the other. A local variation is that when Cardiff and Penarth docks were busy customs officers could often walk from Cardiff to Penarth across the decks of the anchored vessels. Both of these have appeared in articles and books and the full-dock myth used to be regularly trotted out when the radio programme Down Your Way visited British ports.

Think about it. In a dock – or a roadstead – that full no-one would be able to move. Ships in would not be able to unload, ships unloaded would not be able to get out. There would always have to be clear lanes to enable ships to get to the quays and off again, no matter how many ships were in the dock or waiting outside.

Two other myths I first heard as a boy – and which are still repeated – concern the Bristol Channel pilot cutters. The first is that after the apprentice, or 'boy' had put the pilot on an inward-bound vessel, he would return to the cutter and sail it back to Barry single-handed. The second is that to retrieve the punt, the cutter would be put before the wind, the heavy punt attached to the end of the boom. The helm was then put up and the boom swung amidships bringing the punt with it. Now the seakeeping qualities of the pilot cutters and the skill and courage of those who sailed them are beyond doubt but that all this could go on in the Channel approaches, in possibly a gale, is beyond belief. Yet both these have appeared in print.

A plethora of articles and books make reference to smugglers' tunnels. After decades of research I have yet to find any official record of a smugglers' tunnel. I believe that smugglers never used tunnels for the very good reason that boats, darkness and a varied coastline provided all the cover they needed. However, over the decades I have been told of, and have read of, five local smugglers' tunnels – none of which can be found!

One is said to run from Llanrumney Hall to the riverbank; another from Aberthaw's Blue Anchor Inn to the foreshore. The Captain's Wife public house at Swanbridge is said to be linked by tunnel to Sully Island; a tunnel is said to run from the church of St Nicholas, on a spur overlooking Barry's old Harbour, down to Jackson's Bay and another is said to link the dovecote at Cadoxton Court with Bendricks Beach.

The lack of any physical evidence is convincing but remember many of these smugglers were also sailors, fishermen, farm labourers or farmers. If you stop for a moment to wonder how these comparatively small groups of people disappeared for months on end to excavate complex and lengthy tunnels through solid rock and then manage to dispose of thousands of tons of spoil without anyone noticing you wonder how the stories gained credence in the first place.

Decades ago, in the 'Anchorage' in Glebe Street, Penarth, it wouldn't be long before someone, over a couple of pints, would repeat the myth concerning vessels built for the Neale family (of Neale and West Trawlers, which owned 19 trawlers in 1914) and who lived in the grand mansion, Northcliffe. Harold Clayton established a boat-building yard at the Dock Beach directly below Northcliffe and just south of the now demolished Marine Hotel. His father, Sir Fitzroy Clayton, was Commodore of Penarth Yacht club from 1901–1906. On his father's death Harry succeeded him in the baronetcy and was also, in turn, Commodore at Penarth from 1920-1926. The yard was taken over by Andreas Andresen, who arrived in Penarth in around 1884 as a ship's carpenter and anglicised his name to Andrew Anderson.

Both Clayton and Anderson built yachts and motor launches for J J Neale and his seven sons. Older club members will remember the lovely Linney, launched in 1932 and lost in the Caribbean in around 1990 as well as the Torfrieda launched in 1938 and still sailing. Both men also built dock and work boats while Clayton designed and built the famous pilot cutter Faith, launched in 1904. The myth is that many of the Neales' yachts and motor launches were built in a large room at Northcliffe and lowered down the cliff to the foreshore. No photographs appear to have been taken which is rather strange when you consider the Neales were keen photographers, especially Jack Neale, Commodore of Penarth Yacht Club, 1947-1956.

Another Northcliffe myth is that when the French ship-owner Plisson resided in the mansion with his all-French live-in staff one or more of them signalled to German vessels in the Bristol Channel during the 1914-18 War.

A much repeated myth with no names, dates or photographs, is that when two paddle-steamers were racing from Penarth to Barry, on many occasions one would take a 'short cut' inside Sully Island. Another much repeated myth in Penarth is that during the Great Depression of the 1930s Penarth shipowners who went bust threw themselves off the cliffs. If any Penarth shipowners committed suicide in that way, the deaths were never reported by the press. Another myth still spread by old Penarthians is that years ago (when?) the farmer on Flat Holm (name?) would swim his flock of sheep from the island to the mainland to avoid having to charter a vessel.

Finally, during a two-part, illustrated talk I was presenting on the 'History of Penarth Dock, Its Site and Surrounds' a lady interrupted part two to point out I had never mentioned the 'clippers' that docked at Penarth. When asked what clippers she said, 'The Pamiir and Passat in 1949!' A classic example of how myths start.

# Slap it on - SAFELY!



taking relevant precautions. The survey enhanced its authority by highlighting areas for improvement which included the provision of training courses, better guidance on preparing the boat and disposing of waste paint and further efforts that could be taken to minimise skin contact with paint during application.

The survey and feedback helped inform the RYA's DIY Safe Antifouling initiative which was launched at the London Boat Show at the beginning of this year.

Antifouling paints will still have to pass strict new regulations on biocides across the EU market. Only if we can continue to demonstrate we are using them correctly will we continue to be allowed to apply them ourselves.

Briefly, for removing or applying antifouling you should wear overalls or disposable protective clothing, gloves, goggles and a face mask to avoid breathing in paint dust. Dust should be minimised by using wet abrasion and debris and washings should be captured and disposed of safely. The paint should not be sprayed on, you shouldn't eat, drink or smoke while using it, you should not remove your protective clothing until the job is done and thinners should not be used to remove paint from the skin.

You can download your own leaflet, 'Antifouling Your Boat Safely', at [www.coatings.org.uk](http://www.coatings.org.uk) where you can also find a five-minute video 'How to Safely Antifoul Your Boat'.

It's passed unnoticed by many but we've just escaped regulation that would have restricted antifouling to licensed professional operators. Instead of looking forward to a new season we might have been languishing in a queue stretching to the end of the year for a haul-out, scrub-down and a new paint job.

But this is still last-chance saloon and unless we can continue to convince sceptical regulators that we amateur boat owners can be trusted to remove and reapply antifouling in a way that is safe to ourselves and the environment, we could yet have that freedom removed.

The crunch came quickly and almost unexpectedly in 2015. EU regulators challenged the established – but unsupported – view that boat owners were a responsible lot who could be trusted to apply antifouling in a way that was safe for both them and the environment. The only way of ensuring that, they concluded, was to restrict it to professional yards. By October that year a spokesman for the British Coatings Federation – the industry body for both commercial and leisure antifouling manufacturers – said the battle to show that regulators could trust DIY users 'had to some extent already been lost' because the presumption was people were not wearing protective clothing and not using the materials in a way that ensured minimum impact to the environment.

To fight back, the Federation organised the biggest survey ever undertaken on the DIY use of antifouling. Through yacht clubs, chandlers, boating publications, marinas and paint and trade associations, almost 2,500 boat owners responded and it suggested that 90% were aware of the dangers and were already

**Antifouling your own boat? Be safe and use PPE**

Antifouling paint and dust is hazardous

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Follow paint manufacturer recommendations with regard to PPE use

When antifouling in a safe location ...

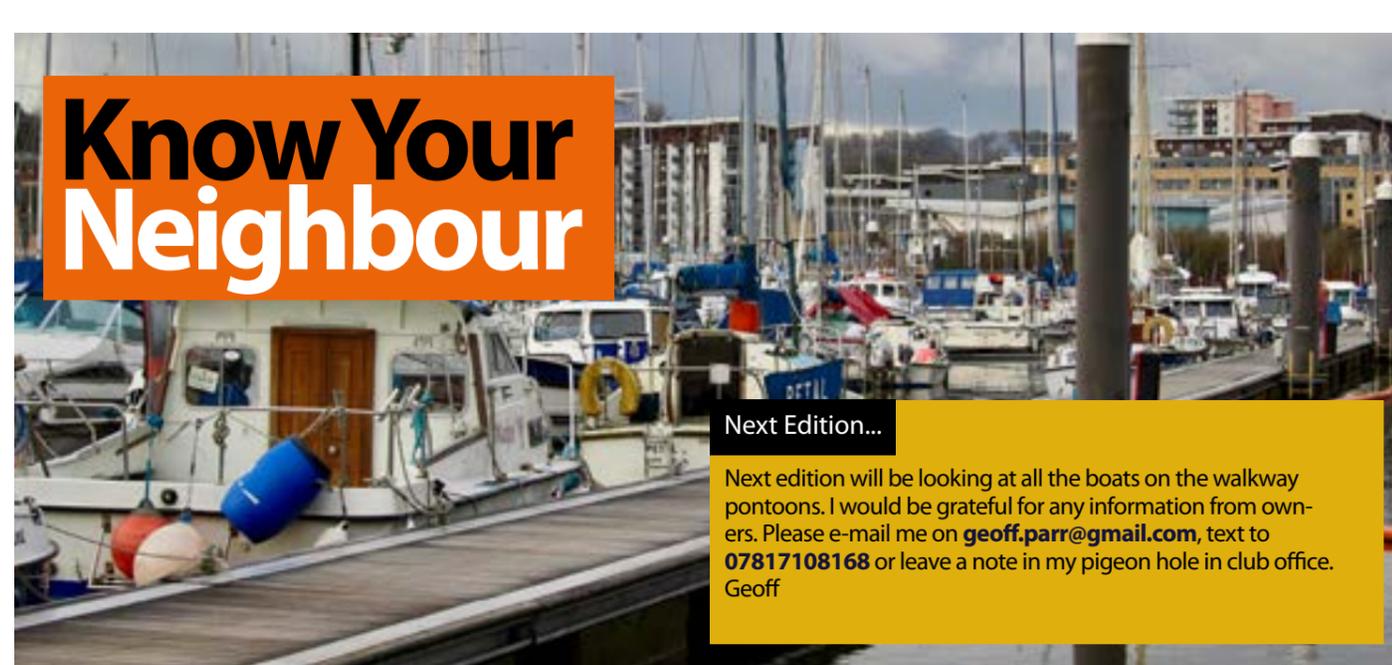
DO	DON'T
✓ READ paint guidance and labels	✗ EAT, DRINK or SMOKE
✓ FOLLOW marina/yard procedure	✗ Apply by SPRAY
✓ MINIMISE dust by using wet abrasion	✗ USE THINNERS to clean skin
✓ CAPTURE debris and washings	✗ REMOVE PPE until job is done
✓ DISPOSE of all waste responsibly	✗ Pour WASTE PAINT down the drain

Be part of the DIY Safe Antifouling Initiative 2017

For more information search 'DIY Antifouling Updates' on [www.coatings.org.uk](http://www.coatings.org.uk)

BCF RYA BRITISH MARINE

# Know Your Neighbour



## Next Edition...

Next edition will be looking at all the boats on the walkway pontoons. I would be grateful for any information from owners. Please e-mail me on [geoff.parr@gmail.com](mailto:geoff.parr@gmail.com), text to **07817108168** or leave a note in my pigeon hole in club office. Geoff

# Quiz by 'Sparky'



1. Where on a boat will you find an angel?
2. It's foggy, getting dark, the GPS is down and you are sailing south without a sextant. How would you know when you had crossed the equator?
3. Ancaophobia is bad news if you are a sailor. Why?
4. Are you a 'Son of a Gun'? What would qualify you as one?
5. When did Dragon Boat Racing first become an official sport?
6. What is the name of a temporary keel attached to the side of a boat?
7. Where does the term 'Taken down a peg or two' come from.
8. One of sour, two of sweet, three of strong and four of weak. What am I?

## Answers

1. An 'angel', also called an anchor keller or sentinel is a weight suspended from the anchor rode to lower the angle down to the anchor on the seabed to increase its hold. It also provides slack to absorb the strain.
2. The Coriolis Effect! For some water down the sink. In the northern hemisphere, it goes down anti-clockwise and in the south – clockwise. It also influences ocean and wind currents.
3. Ancaophobia is a fear of wind.
4. In historic sailing ships, any women smuggled on board for a long sea voyage might eventually give birth and it was traditionally on the gun deck, down between the guns. This was then recorded in the ship's log as a 'Son of a Gun'.
5. 1981 at the EXPO Vancouver World's Fair.
6. It's called a 'Lee Board' and would be fixed on the leeward side, so as to remain in the water should the boat heel.
7. If a senior officer handed over command of his vessel to a junior rank, the flag would then be flown at a subordinate position i.e. 'Taken down a peg'.
8. It is a Rum Punch recipe – one part lime juice, two parts sugar syrup or sweet juice like pineapple, three parts rum and four parts water or any lighter juice. ENJOY!



# Bear Essentials



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