

BLAKENEY SAILING CLUB

Autumn Briefing 2020

This being my first Briefing as newly appointed Commodore I decided to look through the previous tomes – how things have changed since Séan last wrote such an up-beat and excitable first sentence in his Spring Briefing.

I must admit the role is pretty scary, but I am very relieved to have John Seymour as my wingman, his experience in the sailing club will be a great help. Thanks to Séan for holding the fort magnificently for the last 3 years – having said he would do one year! The highlight of his tenure must be the Facebook musical performances during Lockdown? John Myers has been appointed Vice President as well as being Principal Race Officer for the whole season. We welcome Flo Buckingham as Membership Secretary taking over from Fren Ewing who valiantly set up the Membermojo membership system. Alan Jackson also dragged the race results into the 21st Century by setting up and running Sailwave which calculates and posts the results to the Club website. Jane Bassett has become a Committee Member with special duties as Social Secretary. Huge thanks must clearly go to Steve Soanes who has retired from the Committee and handed the baton to Steve Pailing to compile and produce the Year Book. Ann Cleall has handed the 100 Club over to Alan Collett but I know he would love someone else to take over this role – it is not too onerous, and you bring good news to members every quarter. My thanks to EVERYONE who has helped in the past or is becoming involved now, without volunteers the Club would not run.

Obviously Easter came and went with no sailing allowed, followed by May Bank Holiday but then, joy of joys, we were allowed out on the water again. As if being incarcerated as a Household wasn't enough, we were now allowed to do battle together on the water (George declined and carried on in blissful isolation in his tractor). There then followed a mammoth task of producing a Coronavirus Risk Assessment – this was just the start of it, we are now on revision 7 – complete with Amended Sailing Instructions, both of which can be accessed via the club website :-

<https://blakeney sailing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/BSC-Coronavirus-Risk-Assessment-12-09-2020.pdf>

<https://blakeney sailing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Sailing-Instructions-Addendum-during-coronavirus.pdf>

From June we were able to sail Time Trials and the “Stig Races”. Then in July more traditional racing returned with the July Series being named in memory of Paul Strickland. Paul was a talented Laser sailor and great friend of Blakeney Sailing Club who sadly passed away this summer and will be sorely missed. Flotilla Sailing started again in July, although in keeping with tradition, the first day was cancelled due to high winds. If the first Flotilla event is in March or July, the weather still strives to disrupt sailing! Through all the changes in Government & RYA advice and guidelines, the Committee have studied the minutiae and observed the RYA mantra of “Conservative and Considerate”.

In Fun Week we enjoyed the bike ride to Kelling Heath Campsite in groups of 6 (mostly) lycra clad athletes; it was a beautiful day but I still don't like the hill from Wiveton Bridge up Bridgefoot Lane. Note to self : electric bikes are definitely the way forward. Freewheeling down on the way back with the pub in sight was much better.

The tennis also had an excellent turnout on the Blakeney courts with slightly less lycra and Bill Glauert emerging victorious.

Mid Week Holiday Racing had some incredibly early races and I was amazed to see 13 starters bright eyed and bushy tailed at 7am on the Tuesday. There has been some terrific racing this summer – which has flown by – with excellent courses set by John Myers. In fact we have had phenomenal turnouts for Flotilla and Racing events this summer and have welcomed several new members to both. The Patrol Boats have been manned by individuals or household pairs all of whom have been volunteers from within the Club, so many thanks to them all and to Rod for organising it.

There have been numerous kayak adventures often arranged via the WhatsApp group set up by Jane Lewis. There is another WhatsApp group called BSC Buddy Sailing which supports Flotilla Sailing as well as members just wishing to find a sailing companion on days with no BSC events. To join this group contact Jane Armstrong.

As everyone knows, from Monday we are not permitted to meet up socially in gatherings of more than 6. Fortunately the RYA have established that organised sailing qualifies for the sport exemption, so flotilla sailing, racing and kayaking are still permitted. This includes preparation and 'half time' breaks but we must all still observe social distancing and not do anything which might be perceived as breaking the law.

The possibility of leasing the front room of the Church Rooms was considered and there were wildly varying views on the proposition. We did express our interest but, as suspected, the agents called to tell me the PCC had received 'an awful lot of interest' – although I couldn't understand why a lot of interest was 'awful'. I was grateful to receive a call from The Rectory thanking us for our interest and hoping we do find a Club House in the future.

Replacing the Sim Posts was delayed due to Lockdown and social distancing, but Rod informs me that the post on the western bank is due to be floated out on Monday. We are grateful to all those who have donated and pledged money. Séan researched their history and an interesting article can be found on the History Society website which he wrote :-

<http://www.bahs.uk/history-centre/collection/local-towns-and-villages/blakeney-history/the-sim-posts-at-blakeney/>

As the Patrol Boat engines were causing lots of trouble last year the Committee decided to invest in 2 new engines. They have been well received by all the helms who support the racing and flotilla events.

Alan Collett, who has replaced me as treasurer, is keen to increase 100 Club Membership and thereby Club funds. Half of everything raised does go back to members of the 100 club though and he tells everyone, "Believe me, I hope you win!"

Another excellent way of raising money is to buy the Club Clothing from the link from the Club website <https://www.theoldsaltloft.com/bsc---blakeney-107-c.asp>. It really is good quality from The Old Salt Loft and can be embroidered with your name – a lovely Christmas present?

Despite difficult circumstances we have had a lot of fun this summer, some lovely sailing with good winds, and some more challenging conditions. The Committee have worked hard to enable safe sailing to take place within the guidelines. There are still 3 more racing weekends in the programme as well as 4 more flotilla dates, I hope we see many of you on the water in the next few weeks.

If you would like to race this weekend please can you register with John Myers before 19:00 on Friday by emailing john@jitraveldvds.co.uk. Due to the early tide the first race will be timed from the Cooke posts, finishing at Lapwing.

If you need cheering up as we go into winter take a look at the pictures so far this year.

<https://blakeney-sailing.co.uk/photo-galleries/2020-club-photo-gallery/>

Finally, please remember all boats must be removed from the Dinghy Park before 1st December.

Thank you for putting your trust in me to be Commodore, it has been a fairly eventful start – do I think it will calm down now? Probably not!

Angela Harcourt
Commodore