



Newsletter Winter 2012

The club's mains water supplies will be turned off in January and February so if you are racing or visiting socially, please bring along your own water

Diary Dates

01 January, Fun Racing from 12 noon - as in past years this is best tackled in a Topper (drop me an e mail if you want to borrow a club Topper) or other boat that is not easily damaged since other than starting on time, this event is no holds barred and few of the usual rules will apply. For more info, talk to last years **survivors....**

22 March, Annual Dinner, Prizegiving and Disco at the Boathouse, Ellesmere

06 January onwards - want to race in January and February Frostbite? contact [Dave Wright](#)

24 January, racing rules evening from 7.30 at the Narrowboat Ellesmere Road - contact [Tim Allan](#)

People

It's nice to say thank you sometimes so ... thank you [Ross Brown](#) for helping out with the club PC system. It's pretty vital for race management calculations and even more so these days when most of us have forgotten how to do it on paper. More thanks to [Chris Cater](#) who has taken on board the maintenance of the club Laser 2000's and to [James and Francis Baldwin](#) who took a long hard look at the club RS Fevas (despite some unwelcome news regarding one of them!). Thanks to everyone who supports the club whether in committees, providing professional or technical expertise or by getting their hands dirty.



[Arnold Grayston](#) tells us that his 7 week cruise to Scotland this summer had many both enjoyable and testing moments. In particular, the wet crossing of Pentland Firth, a Force 7 off Cape Wrath, the magic of the Summer Isles and fog banks flowing down the mountains of Skye. Most memorable was seeing a dolphin racing a beam reaching RS 420, back and forth across Castle Bay in the Hebrides - I wonder who won? And ...

Arnold is planning a different way to circumnavigate Wales using the inland rivers through Shropshire fundraising for Severn

Hospice with an attempt this Spring. He is looking for helpers with the operations as well as fundraising activities. Interested ? Contact Arnold or see the link to everything on Facebook and Google+ at www.allbywater.com

Technical Bulletin 3 – Safety Boat Anchor Buoys

Sometimes you just want to anchor your safety boat for some reason. Might be to be the end of a practice race start line, to do some maintenance on a buoy or just because there's not much going on. **Suddenly**, you need to up-anchor and dash off somewhere else. **Oh no (!)**, you have to drag up the anchor before you can go anywhere. No so any more. Our safety boats are being fitted with a lift buoy spliced to the bitter end of the anchor rope (you know, the end that's not connected to the anchor). Just chuck the whole thing overboard and the buoy supports the anchor line. Just come back for it when the crisis is over - in bright colours so you should be able to find it.

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Masthead Buoyancy (MHB) - what is it and do I need some?



Any boat can capsize and capsizing is a normal part of sailing that happens to all of us sometimes. The club teaches capsize recovery and has published advice on entrapment [here](#).

It's what happens after your capsize that this is all about. Do you quickly leap onto the centre/dagger board and pull it back up or do you fall in and have to swim around to get on the centre/dagger board? If the latter, chances are it will invert/turn turtle. How quickly it inverts depends on boat design and the buoyancy in the mast. In the mast? Well, yes..

Before a capsize, all dinghies have some air in the mast. Some such as Toppers have a sealed floatation chamber built into the top section; a Topper with the bungs intact will usually float quite happily on its side without inverting. If your Topper doesn't, look [here](#) ...

One factor is the length of the mast. The longer the mast, the more the leverage. If you have lots of halyard holes via which to fill the top of the mast with water then the faster the inversion. If you have lots of mast top buoyancy then that leverage works the other way to slow down the inversion. Another factor is that hulls of modern dinghies tend to float higher in the water than older designs which increases that leverage. Lastly, there's the speed of your capsize - the faster you are going (particularly upwind) the faster it will capsize and the faster it will invert. So it inverts. So what? Here's some things to think about.

You have read about entrapment. It can happen but it's much more likely that you will end up in the water with the boat capsized or inverted beside you. You will need to recover it - rather more difficult when inverted than when just capsized. Worth noting that our mere is, in many places, too shallow to allow a boat to fully invert without touching the bottom. If you see an inverted boat at what seems a bit of an odd angle, it's a fair bet that the head of the mast has dug into the bottom of the mere. Getting that out will often require the help of the safety boat and do remember that if the safety boat is helping you unstick your mast from the mud then at the same time it can't be helping someone else (or vice versa!).

We come then to masthead buoyancy. The club has masthead buoyancy bags for club boats that are considered most at risk - the adult boats (Laser 2000's, GP14) and the Fevas. These bags are just a small 17 litre buoyancy bag (< £20) inside a homemade sailcloth bag. They can be attached to a halyard (Laser 2000) or to the top of the main sail (GP14, Feva). If you wanted your own, you could do the same or buy one of several other solutions on the market.

Questions and Answers

Do they work? *Yes they do.*

Will it stop my boat inverting? *Depends on the size but will always slow down an inversion. On tests at the club, it proved impossible to invert a Feva with the 17 litre bag fitted.*

Does it make much difference to the sailing performance of my boat? *No.*

Should I practice capsize recovery? *Yes, with and without MHB (do tell the safety boat crew!)*

Are there times when I shouldn't use one? *A boat on it's side will be more affected by the wind than a boat upside down so it will move more quickly through the water. This could be an issue for very crowded waters (the RYA recommend MHB but not for example at Vasiliki in Greece where there are big waves, strong winds and lots of people in the water - though that's not an issue on sheltered inland waters).*

Do I need one/should I use or get one? *It's up to you to assess the risk and decide for yourself.*

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Club Committees

There are some vacancies on committees and the club would really like to fill them for 2013. In particular, the Sailing Secretary would like to talk over the role of the sailing committee with anyone interested in the more practical aspects of club sailing - not onerous, six Monday evenings a year ...

Need a junior wetsuit to stretch the sailing season?

Brand new shortie wetsuits for disposal. We have 3 Size 2 (for ages 5/6) and 5 Size 3 for ages 7/8. Now just £8 each straight into club funds.



There are Winds of Change at Whitemere says Vice Commodore Brian Rapson

If you have had a chance to visit the club recently you will have noticed quite a change at Whitemere; the loss of the trees along the road side shore. The trees were removed for several reasons. Those nearest the road were old and rotting and deemed a potential hazard to traffic while those trees on the lake side were removed for conservation reasons. The roadside trees will be replaced by a fence and indigenous species hedge after the road drainage has been sorted out. The work on the lakeside trees is one of the consequences of the project that is being carried out by the [Meres and Mosses Landscape Partnership](#). The Partnership, a group of organisations coordinated by Shropshire Wildlife Trust, is working to restore and conserve the Meres and Mosses, raise awareness of their importance and develop community involvement. It was formally launched on 2 November 2012, although some work has already started, and will run for 5 years. The partnership has secured nearly £2 million in funding, some of which will be available to landowners in grant form to carry out work in support of the objectives of the partnership.

How will it affect Whitemere?

The two main strands, conservation and community involvement, will both have a direct bearing on Whitemere.

Conservation and restoration.

Whitemere, Colemere and Whixall Moss have been chosen as the three main conservation projects for the whole scheme.

The removal of the scrub trees along the water margin at Whitemere is the first stage. The trees have a detrimental effect on the valuable ecology of the margins. Not all the trees will be removed, and those that are will be done in conjunction with the landowners, the copse to the South of the Mere and the one to the West will be retained. Sailors are already noticing the beneficial effects on the wind over the water with the removal of the trees. When the trees in the South West corner, the prevailing wind direction, are taken down the effects on the wind will be even more noticeable.

There may be other changes;

- The copses left used to be partly Alder carrs, Alder trees with semi-submerged roots; there is a discussion taking place with the interested parties on the Mere and Natural England about raising the water level to re-establish the carrs. Any such project would have an effect on jetties and boat parking which would need to be factored in.
- Restoration of the margins between the Flying Fifteen jetty and the boat house. It has been suggested that there could be funding to remove the artificial edge (concrete blocks and old tyres) and restore the edge to a sloping beach. This would require some landscaping work and rejigging of berths but would mean boats could be launched directly into the water.

Community involvement.

The second strand of the Partnership, increasing community involvement with the whole Meres and Mosses Landscape, is being approached in a variety of ways across the scheme. At some meres and mosses it will mean the extension of existing footpaths to allow access. At Whitemere one approach proposed is to run school visits that will include conservation awareness, wildlife study and an introduction to sailing. The club, if member volunteers can be found, will participate in a pilot visit during the summer from Lakelands school.

As the Partnership project progresses I think there will be benefits for the club; improved wind, possible new members and possible help to improve the jetties and berths. Greater community involvement will be no bad thing when the club is looking for funding for a new club house.

[Brian](#) would be happy to respond to question regarding this article ...

Swallows and Amazons for the more mature sailor?

Matt Lush and Simon Martin-Jones epic adventure in an open boat ... read on ...



A truly sensational mid-summer night sail in 2010 from Abersoch to Shell Island formed the seeds of an idea for Old Peculier's next adventure. After securing a long weekend pass from the ladies of our life (at no small expense), Simon Martin-Jones and I planned a long cruise in the waters of Loch Fyne in Simon's open dingy - a Drascombe Lugger. The original plan was to sail from Lachlan Bay mid-way along the southern shoreline of Upper Loch Fyne, north to Inveraray, then head south to Kilbride Bay, and with a fair tide and good weather, dash across to the Island of Arran.

We reckoned it was just about doable in the time we had, somewhere in the region of 60 miles. As we found out, what you think you can do and what you actually can do are two separate things. The following account tells something of what happened over that long weekend in June. And as for the next adventure.....Cornwall is calling, so watch this space.

The cold water lapped at my thighs and my feet turned from white to a lighter shade of blue. As I hung onto the transom and tried to point all 18' 6" of a Drascombe Lugger in the general direction of a supposed channel, Simon completed his mini-lecture on the workings of outboards. He leant over the transom from the relative warmth 'on deck' and continued fiddling around with the prop, mumbling away to himself. I'd switched off to his dulcet tones, because for the second time in under 20 minutes, we had managed to split a shear pin. Thankfully, Simon always carries spares, but now we were down to the last one. We needed the outboard to get us into the channel and out onto the open water. The tide was by now really on the ebb and it took most of my effort to keep our floating home, Old Peculier, from heading down Loch Fyne along with everything else and bumping her way into the surrounding menacing rocks. This wasn't quite the picture perfect cruising weekend I had envisaged when we set off from sunny Shropshire 15 hours earlier.

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Simon and I had done a bit of lake and coastal sailing in Old Peculier, mainly at Bala and Abersoch. After hearing an inspiring talk on cruising at the club in the early summer, and after missing most of the sailing in 2011 due to the arrival of a little Lush, we were both keen to get some miles under our belts. I'd love to say we were months in the planning, but the reality was we were months in the dreaming and weeks, if not days, in the final planning. With enough food to last us a fortnight, a brand new tarpaulin cover for a tent and the latest set of charts marked out, we eventually set off at six on a Friday evening.



The drive up from Shropshire was fairly uneventful except for a crazy few minutes spent circling empty car parks on a vast retail park looking for a fast food outlet around one in the morning. I needed coffee. Simon needed food. He has the enviable condition of a high metabolism which, on the downside, means you need to feed him or else he gets awful grumpy.



Now on the Saturday morning with a solid breakfast powering us on, and after nervously pushing out from the shore for the third time, the elusive channel finally let us slip out onto Loch Fyne for our shake-down morning cruise. It wasn't the sail we had planned, that's for sure. The wind was from the south-west, right up the Loch, and it had been building all morning. The nice moderate breeze had given way to a real blow with wave tops flattened and white horses tumbling along. Showers hammered down across the water so that we couldn't even see the opposite shoreline. We heeled right over and shot out from Lachlan Bay into the maelstrom. It was probably around this point that we thought it might be a good idea to abandon our run up the Loch to Inveraray. Sure, the pub at the end of the pier sounded great, but that might be the end of our trip if this blow kept up much longer. Ideally, we wanted to head south-west, but right now that wasn't going to happen. Our first tack made us aware of our predicament with sheets jamming, sails flapping and a general sense of not being quite prepared. With a rocky lee shore on our port, we were glad to round a promontory and get back to sandy shores where we ungracefully beached the old girl. Walking Old Peculier back along the shoreline to where we had started so many times that morning was a bit demoralising, especially as we could now see the channel we had earlier craved. It was a good lesson – always recky where you are going to launch and recover your pride and joy! We decided to place a bow and stern anchor, extend a painter up the beach and go have some food and a cup of tea. As we'd read from the cruising legend, Stock, "Always brew when you can – you never know when you'll next get a chance." Advice we took seriously!



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By Saturday evening, the wind had calmed a little and the tide had returned. In complete contrast, a carefully rigged Old Peculier, gracefully left the shore and poked her bow out into the Loch. We sailed right out to a group of islands, watching with fascination the birds nesting on Eilean Aoghainn. We tacked back and forth admiring the views and the way Old Peculier handled so well. On we sailed till 6 miles later (nautical you understand!) we turned back to shore. The forecast for Sunday was good. Tomorrow we were going to have our big cruise.

Sunday started as well as Saturday had finished but with an added bonus. In the morning, the pesky midges that had somehow squeezed through the mesh on my head netting the previous night (and not Simon's!) had left the shoreline. It was sheer bliss to walk around without our Nora Batty headgear.

Old Peculier was sitting high on the tide, eager to get going. So after getting all our provisions on board, we pushed off in the calm of Lachlan Bay, due west towards Brideagan Rocks. No dodgy rigging this time, just a smooth hoisting of sail and a gradual filling of Old Peculier's fore, main and mizzen tan sails. There was a steady Force 3 blowing from the south west, just enough to let Old Peculier show some more high gloss varnished planking on her windward side. This was going to be a great sail.

We put in a tack not far off Brainport Point and cut flat across the Loch right between the monoliths of Eilean Aoghainn and Fraoch Eilean. The seabirds from yesterday were still making themselves heard, some showing off with a fly-by right past our bows. The tacks continued down the Loch; into Union Bay, across to Lephinmore Point, past the submarine exercise areas, close in to Lephinchapel. It's not far south from here that the shorelines pinch in and we found our tacking more regularly. There were a few other boats out on the water, a couple of yachts with their white triangles stretched tight, catching us up from further on up the Loch. In the opposite direction, where Otter Spit juts out in a dominant sand bar, another yacht was making the most of a slack tide and spinnaker to race through the narrow channel. Using a pair of Simon's World War II optics, we could make out a little to the south of the spit our first destination – Otter Ferry.



There is not much there apart from a long beach that merges with the spit – and a pub with its own pontoon!



Then the sun came out for a teasing moment, hypnotising us with the rippled reflections that made Old Peculier look even more stunning. It was around about this time that it dawned on us that the tide waits for no man. The once slack tide was now beginning to flood with a vengeance. Ordinarily this isn't much of a problem, even on a Loch, because of the width and depth of water. But to get around Otter Spit meant passing through the narrows! With furrowed brow we checked the chart which revealed a steady one knot stream on the rising tide through the narrows around Otter Spit. One knot might not sound much, but with wind and tide against us, things looked a little more challenging.

Now *there* was an incentive to trim the sails and get the old girl pointing straight to 'last lunch orders'. By getting across into Kames Bay on the northern shoreline, with Lochgair just astern, we put in one long tack right across to Otter Ferry. Mooring up at the pier was very satisfying. Onlookers drooled over the classic lines of Old Peculier. Simon was in his element as he explained tirelessly to the gathering throng about bumpkins, mizzens and the advantages of a lifting centreplate. We looked the piece as well. All donned in our wet weather gear and buoyancy aids, we looked more like Michelin men compared to the sophisticated clientele at the pub. After leaving Lachlan Bay not long after 10:00 we were happily munching on our Angus burger and chips, with pint in hand by 14:30.



We marched back to the old girl, swiftly rigged her for action, waved once more to the happy (or merry) landlubbers and headed out. A broad reach west-north-west, almost parallel to the spit brought us up to a fat squat red channel marker. We tried our first tack and made it to the green marker on the end of the spit, a large pyramidal mass concrete block with a cylindrical green tank perched on top. It wouldn't have been out of place on Button Moon. Now came the interesting part. Each time we tried to sail to the northern shore to put in a large tack beyond the spit, the tide (a mere 1 knot!) swept us right back to the red marker instead.



So we would start all over again, back to the green marker, swept back to the red. It soon became apparent that we were not going to get through 'The Narrows' unless we had a little help from the 30 year old Mariner perched on the transom. With the silence broken, we made a quick job of passing from Upper to Lower Loch Fyne. We hugged the northern shoreline and noted the wind had backed to a southerly, following the valley shape of the Loch. In the far distance, slowly, the flanks of Arran came into view, the summits shrouded in cloud and mist. The engine went off and we drifted for a moment, taking it all in. It really was quite awesome. Having not been seen this part of the shoreline before, we took to checking the charts, looking for somewhere to beach Old Peculier for the night. If we could time it right, we could beach on a high tide, allowing a comfortable night's sleep aboard (with easy 'shore-side' toilet facilities nearby!). A further three miles due south lay Kilfinan Bay, a beautiful expanse of golden shelly sand that shelved steeply into the waters. This looked perfect. And it was. On the approach in, peering over the side for any sign of a sandy bottom, a sudden burst of gold told us we were getting pretty close. Initially, long strands of seaweed waved

up to us but as we got closer to shore, this gave way to crystal clear waters and unblemished sand. Close in, the centreplate was raised, the sails lashed and the bows swung round from the shore out into the Loch. We dropped our anchor from the bows and let out the chain and line, enough so we could literally step ashore from the stern. With our second anchor, we held Old Peculier perfectly perpendicular to the beach – just like we knew what we were doing! There was no-one else around. All you could hear was the gently lapping of small wavlets on the shore and the singing of oyster catchers all around the undisturbed beach.



Keeping an eye on the tide and our little ship, we scavenged bleached driftwood from the upper beach and got a fire going, brewing up and getting hot food down our necks. The wind continued to ease off through what was now the evening and we were treated to one of the most spectacular sunsets – one that just kept getting better. It was just so good in fact, that we had forgotten to put up the tarpaulin tent on Old Peculier. Armed with our headtorches, Simon grappled with bendy fibreglass poles salvaged from a camping site skip sometime after a heavy blow (he's not one to skimp on quality goods!) and wrestled the reams of white heavy duty tarpaulin into some semblance of a tent.

The springy poles, occasionally partially snapping, were gaffered back together and tensioned off the

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gunwales. The tarp was draped over and pulled tight with guys. A couple of foam mattresses, bivvy bag and sleeping bag and there was our snug home on board for the night.



The next morning was a dull misty start as we wearily peered out from the tarp tent. A few modifications were needed for the next expedition, if we were to stay dry that is. There is nothing quite like experience. With breakfast done and dusted on shore, we packed up and stepped back on board, just at high tide. Stern anchor in, fore anchor in, row out a little way from shore, drop the centreboard a little, and away we go. We were hoping to reach Kilbride Bay, at the southern extremity of Loch Fyne, but as we ghosted south along the eastern shoreline, we knew we were not going that far. A good many hours passed as we seemed to almost drift along, passing salmon farms and rocky inlets. By the time we were opposite Tarbet, and had managed to avoid being mowed down by the maniacal ferry, we knew it was time to head back. It was almost complete calm with hardly a ripple on the surface. There was nothing for it except to fire up the trusty Mariner and head all the way back up Loch Fyne, back to the stillness of Lachlan Bay. Although the remaining cruise was under engine, that didn't stop us from enjoying some of the magnificent wildlife. Loch Fyne is the name of a chain of famous fish restaurants. There was certainly plenty of fresh fish, and not only in the salmon farms.

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Gannets flocked 30' over the Loch and with laser precision punctured the surface like bullets, the only evidence of them being there the plumes of water. Ten or fifteen of the gannets pummelled the Loch at one time, a stunning display, catching fresh mackerel. Further up the Loch a seal looked on with puzzled expression as we rounded Otter Spit, watching us carefully before slipping under the surface. And not much later, a pod of porpoise playfully jumped and arched through the air before disappearing out of sight. We tried our own hand at fishing by casting a weighted crab line over the back with a few mackerel hooks. Within minutes nine fresh mackerel were on the menu.

And so finished our 40 plus mile cruise on the waters of Loch Fyne – as the gannet flies.

And finally ...

Some time ago, a committee was formed to review the state of the club's sailing dinghies and to recommend what changes should be made. Following that committee's deliberations the club has:-

- Written off one RS Feva
- Prepared one Feva for sale
- Purchased new race (XL) sails for one of the two remaining Fevas
- Sold the two wooden Optimists (thanks to Basil and Rachael for donating them many years ago)
- Sold two RS Visions
- Purchased three Laser 2000's
- Purchased one Laser Pico with one standard and two race sails
- Purchased a replacement sail, new XD controls and a new cover for the club Laser
- Applied for grant funding which should provide a new set of sails for the club GP14

Not bad eh? Let's thank the team members - John James, Chris Adlington, Dave Wright and Steve Parker