



SSC Newsletter September 2003

COMMODORES COLUMN

The summer of 2003 has definitely been one to remember. It's ages since I've seen so many enthusiastic newcomers on the water, Saturday, Sunday and Wednesdays, Karen tells me that we have gained 20 new members, and all are out there having a splash.

All our Events seem to have been well attended and blessed with blue skies and warm winds. Notable successes have been the Fun Weekend, Open Day, Saturday Race Training, Bala (see Mark's note below) and the main Mere Regatta.

It has been quite a hectic task for the committee members to keep pace and who have worked tirelessly at keeping the club afloat. I should like to say that on behalf of all members, we are extremely grateful for all the hard work that they have undertaken.

Note AGM – Please note that the AGM is fast approaching – **21st November**

If you have any issues or points you would like to raise please get in touch with our General Secretary, Mark Davies. The more feedback we get the better the club.

- Do you like or dislike the way the club is run? Have your say! Vote in the people you want!
- Our fees are the cheapest anywhere but should we increase them (substantially) to get better facilities such as a range of club boats, new buildings etc. etc....

Congratulations – To Helen Austin and Dave Cripps, who (about time) have started on the road to wedded bliss. Both Helen and Dave are keen sailors and are often found instructing on our RYA sailing courses. The club wishes you both all the best for the future.

Warning – Please note that a wallet, monies, and keys have recently been lost in the men's changing room. Such occurrences are rare, but could all members please avoid keeping any valuables in the changing rooms and ensure they are securely locked away. Please be vigilant and report any trespassers.

Choice of Boats and Preferred Classes

Why do we have "Preferred Classes" in the club and why do we state that current (or new) members must approach the sailing committee if they want to use a boat that's not on the "Preferred" list?

There are many reasons and the aim of this article is to outline the problems that face all sailing clubs and why the Sailing Committee follows some tough decisions to make to keep the club viable and please racing and cruising interests.

We know from bitter experience that sailing clubs fold up if they take a "come one, come all" attitude to classes. i.e. any boat is accepted into the club. What happens is that there is little to interest members other than an occasional sail-around. What gets people interested is some common ground, and the obvious common ground in a sailing club is to share experiences in the same class of boat – whether this experience is in cruising or racing – in fact there wouldn't be any racing if we didn't have a set of class boats to race.

I think it's fair to say that it's the racing types that generally have the experience and skills to pass on to others and if we can't interest the racing types by good class racing then we won't attract them into the club and frankly, we won't have a club at all.

The Sailing Committee spend a lot of time reviewing the Preferred classes. We need to have classes that represent the broad spectrum of sailing whether they are primarily aimed at cruising or racing, single or two man and young and old. Our current list tries to meet these requirements and is under continuous review.

So what happens if you are a current member and have a boat that's not a "Preferred" class? Current members are under no obligation to change to a preferred class boat, however, if you decide that you want to change classes and are considering a non-Preferred class then there is a club rule that you must approach the Sailing Committee **before** going ahead. We do consider all requests and this is how new classes have been introduced – witness the recent arrival of the Solo, Pico and Laser 2000 classes. We would also say "No" if after due consideration, we feel that the request would dilute the current classes or offer no value to club membership.



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For new members who don't have a boat, we actively encourage them to get a boat from the Preferred list. If a proposed new member already has a non-Preferred class boat then we may make it a condition of membership that they change to a Preferred class within a given timescale – after all, we don't want to discourage membership.

Our current Preferred List includes GP14, Solo, Laser (1), Topper, Lark, Flying 15 and Laser 2000. We also seem to have “collected” a fair number of Pico's

In conclusion, the rules governing Preferred Classes may seem tough but they have been assembled over many years and with much experience to ensure that our Sailing Club remains viable. If you would like to discuss any of this then please don't hesitate to approach the sailing committee and give us your views.

VICE COMMODORES COLUMN

New Club Boat

It's here at last ! After months of searching, we have finally found a new club boat. It's a Series II GP14 in glass fibre – rather like Dave Templeton's but a little older. It has a light blue hull and has “SSC GP14” on the cover. It's fully equipped with a spinnaker and rigged for centre mainsheet (although an aft sheet horse is stored in the sail bag and can be easily rigged if you so desire).

Whilst the boat will be used for training during formal training events, it will also be available for hire. You'll find a **booking diary** and cashbox on the tables at the back of the club. You can book in advance or just turn up on the day and hope that it's not already in use. We would like the boat to be available to as many members as possible so block bookings will be discouraged!

Current thoughts on hire rates are £3 for an evening session, £4 for a morning session (until 12.30) and £5 for an afternoon session from 1.00 p.m. We hope you think these rates are reasonable – given that even a new block costs around £10and we would like to keep this boat in really good condition ... cash and cheques (to “SSC”) accepted.

Club Boat Booking Diary

*The Sailing Committee are pleased to note that the club Laser and Topper are getting a lot of use. This is really good news but they have also found that odd bits have gone missing – most recently, one of the new sheet blocks on the Laser. This argues that we need some basic control over the use of these boats. Henceforth, anyone using these boats is asked to “book it out” using **the booking diary and note any problems with the boats.** This booking system will also help us understand how much use these boats get and the maintenance needed to keep them in good condition.*

Ladies Changing Room

What a great job Stuart Murray has made of the ladies changing rooms ! Have you seen them ? From 60's tin to millennium chic in one fell swoop – well, over two weeks anyway. Just a lick of paint and wood stain to complete the work. Complaints that the ladies now have better facilities than the gents will only be entertained if you gents are willing to have a go at your own changing room.

I don't suppose that many members will remember when the corridor leading to the rear of the premises was last open. It's even less open now since it's been bolted and nailed shut. Reason for this is that the steps leading to the back door have completely rotted away ! Another job in the pipeline will be to remove the door and re clad the area.

Maintenance

You may also note that the front Laser area has sprouted another berth – our thanks to Mark Davies for this. He claims that we worked away on this whilst being encouraged (but not helped) by members of the Solo fleet !

Please do take a look at the “Maintenance List” that's pinned to the notice board. We really do need your help to keep the grounds and buildings in good condition.



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REAR COMMODORE & SAILING SEC'S COLUMN

It has been pleasing to see the interest in the Saturday afternoon Novice Racing. This was intended to be a six week trial but has proved so successful that the Sailing Committee decided to continue running races. Hopefully Committee volunteers will organize races until the end of the scheduled Saturday sailing, if members are still keen this could possibly continue on!!

As you will read elsewhere in this letter some members of the Club enjoyed a visit to Bala over the August Bank Holiday weekend. It was disappointing that more members were not able to join this visit. Whilst it was primarily a racing weekend it was possible, as advertised on our Club board, just to go and sail as David Templeton proved.

We had a turn out of 20 boats for this year's Mere Regatta, part of the Ellesmere Festival. Members seem to enjoy this local change of water and scenery and this year was no exception. Whilst the winds were a little light it was a very sunny day and some good racing was enjoyed. Thanks to The Flying Fifteen fleet for running the races on the day: Bob Robson, Basil & Rachel Thompson, with Geoff Jones and Richard Astley-Jones on Rescue.

This year the Festival Committee had, in response to our comments, set up more events in this area. We as ever received much interest from passers by and from those watching from the road shore. A number of people commented how nice it was to see the boats on the Mere and asked, "Why couldn't we always race there?" Some interest in joining the Club was again shown. The results are shown below:

MERE REGATTA RESULTS						Points	Position
Boat No	Helms Name	Crews Name	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Best 2	Final
Solo 4142	FA Hodge		1	1	3	2	1
Lark 2163	S Norris	L Norris	2	2	2	4	2
Solo 4334	M Clifford		4	6	1	5	3
Laser 100363	F Staples		3	4	6	7	4
Phantom 1014	M Tustin		5	3	8	8	5
B Moth 789	JJ Shipp		14	5	4	9	6
Solo 4370	B Johnson		13	7	5	12	7
N12 3286	D Evans	J Neilson	8	11	7	15	8
Laser 83521	J Clifford		9	13	9	18	9
Laser 107973	P Simpson		7	12	12	19	10
Laser 143598	C Adlington		10	14	11	21	11
Mirror 4662	R Shelley	G Shelley	12	9	DNS	21	12
Mirror 23721	C Morris		11	10	DNS	21	13
Solo 2336	D Rugman		6	16	DNS	21	14
Solo 3679	B Morton		15	17	10	25	15
GP 14 11168	J Webb	I Webb	17	18	13	30	16
Mirror 19166	G Mackellar		19	15	DNS	34	17
GP 14 12067	P Turner	L Bateson	18	19	DNS	37	18
GP14 13753	D Templeton	L Templeton	DNS	8	DNS		
Laser 58025	K Ashton		16	DNS	DNS		

Boat Security

With the Autumn now fast approaching we need to ensure that boats are securely tied down. This particularly applies to dinghies moored on the shore line, where although they may have a rope to secure the boat down to the steel ties the boats are vulnerable to wind lifting the transom and blowing the boat round where it can often cause damage to itself and the dinghy berthed next to it.



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I have described in an earlier newsletter a method that I use which is to tie the transom pintle to an attachment inserted into the ground. The Club has purchased some of these screw in devices, the proposal for shore line dinghies is that they be positioned between berthed dinghies allowing a securing tie down over the rear of the boat. Hopefully these will be fixed shortly and we would encourage members to tie down their boats securely.

Autumn season

With the summer holidays behind us we now have the season run down approaching. This does often give us some of the best winds and the best attendances of the year, so don't miss out get down to the Club whether you are cruising or racing and make the most of the back end of the season.

GP14, Menagerie & Solo Regatta

Hopefully you will receive this newsletter prior to this event scheduled for Sunday 5th October 2003.

Whilst we have run this event for GP's and Menagerie for some years it is the first year that the Solos have taken part. Each fleet will have its own start so we should see some competitive racing, no handicaps to worry about just concentrate on beating your own class boats. It would be great to see a full turn out of all fleets, however we know that the GP fleet may have one or two boats spare due to injuries or holidays, including the Club GP.

If you are a member of another fleet why not try a GP for the day?

Damage

The Sailing Committee are very disappointed at the damage to the propeller and safety guard on the new rescue boat. It is clear that this engine has been run aground into stones or gravel resulting in a severely damaged prop compounded by the guard being deflected so much as to cause this to be cut by the revolving propeller.

With the short shaft on this engine there is no excuse for this kind of damage, which will cost the Club a lot of money to replace.

It is believed that the only area where this could have occurred is off the main beach area where there are stones and gravel.

In order to try and minimize further damage Rescue boats should only be berthed on either the main Committee/Rescue boat jetty or on the extreme end of the dinghy jetty. They should not normally be used off the shoreline inside the end of this jetty.

It would also be nice if members did advise the Bosun or a member of the Sailing Committee when they know that damage has been caused.

Bala Weekend –by Mark Davies

Friday

I left Oswestry at 3pm, as Brian and Bryn (with the clubs new GP14) had said they would. But I forgot, Bryn works to Bayston Hill time. By 4:30, the tent was up and the kettle on, before I discovered no tea bags and the Bryan and Bryn causing trouble in the campsite shop. Dumped the boat in the Sailing Club, went in to Bala to buy more forgotten items and returned to the site to eat. Karen and Brian also appeared to pass the time of day, killing time in the hope that Mary would put their tent up before they arrived. Strolled down to the Sailing Club bar at the at about 8:00 catching up with B&B again, who tried their best to ignore me. Bryn clutched on to the smallest kettle I have ever seen - a souvenir of Bala I think. Brian and Karen also appeared at the bar. A few beers consumed, watched the sun go down across the lake, followed B&B back to the campsite, through the dark, so they fell in the potholes first.

Saturday

Slept like a log, and had a late breakfast. There was a good wind and the lake was definately not flat, like it should be. Looked forward to the first gybe with some trepidation. Frank also arrived for the day with his solo, as did the Templeton's with their GP14. Three races starting at 12:00, hot food and drinks available all day, wind dropping. Mary arrived for the second race with the Laser. Karen had stolen the Laser from Brian and started with the slow fleet - five minutes after the fast fleet, with whom she should have started. It was not one of my better efforts, for she caught me up! Up to the campsite for a hot shower and dry clothes, strolled back to the bar and the only remaining knuckle of Lamb in red wine sauce, desert, coffee and mints. Not at all bad for £7. The wind died completely, leaving the lake glassy smooth. Karen was determined to stay so far out of the kitchen that Brian was allowed milk for his cereal. but no bowl to eat it in. I declared that even a dog would be allowed a bowl and got my legs slapped. Followed B&B again back to the campsite, they fell into the same potholes again. Brian insists this is not true, they



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were checking on my progress home – he said - " we can't afford to lose club members just because they have been to the bar and can't find their way back to the tent on their own".

Sunday

Another full English and racing starts at 10:30. The wind had reversed direction completely and was fairly light, just like home. John arrived with Mary's solo and swiftly disappeared on his bike. These RS skiffs on a reach don't like being luffed. But I'm still intimidated on the starts. Dunked it once on a run - caught by a gust. But then, you knew I would. The second time was 25 yards from the finish. The Race Officer set a hooked finish, making us round the mark and then cross the line. This caused much chaos and confusion and a certain amount of name calling. I was transfixed by the entertainment and dunked it again (B&B were watching in high glee). Another meal in the bar and a few beers. Mary was getting the hang of the Laser and had overtaken me. She put it down to the weight I was carrying - equivalent to a small child, apparently. I resolved to cut out Breakfast.

Monday

Another full English, but earlier, to get the tent down before the first race at 10:30. Only two races today. And scores to be settled! With the wind gusting, it took us three attempts to get started as boats were all too eager to cross the line. With all the boats ashore after the races, the prizes were presented and the winners had been to our Lark Open. It's a small world. I did learn two things - our starts are a pale imitation of a big fleet and just because they have a posh boat doesn't mean they can sail it better than I can! I was home by about four and the boat was back at Whitemere by about 4:30. And all I had to show for it were the bruises, a lawn that needed cutting and the memories! Three days in good company, sailing every day. Count me in next time.

... and now an article from Dave Turtle ...

Some quite radical ideas here. Would you agree with any or all of this ? Do you have other ideas or opinions ? Why not come along to the **AGM** and air your views ?

SUNDAY SAILING – A NEW APPROACH ?

The number of members enjoying Sunday racing has dwindled over the years and now it is not uncommon for races to be cancelled due to lack of interest. This can be extremely disappointing not only for the potential competitors but also for the Race Officials who have given their day.

How do we encourage more boats to join the racing scene?

My suggestions are these:

1. Afternoon racing only, say 13:30pm start.
2. Shorter races (40mins maximum for first boat).
3. Only one Race Officer and a Rescue person on duty.

Shortening the racing day has a number of benefits. To start with, it allows time for cutting the lawn or even Sunday lunch with the family. This could go along way towards keeping the peace and earning a few Brownie points!

Also, the lake would be available in the mornings for use by the "Saturday" sailors who might be enticed to stay and take part in the racing?

Shorter races would encourage beginners, particularly children who often sail the slower boats and end up with races lasting well in excess of an hour. This is a long time to retain an interest especially at the back of the fleet. In any case, the outcome of a race is usually decided on the first few legs of the course so why prolong the agony?!

There are clubs that run races of 25 minutes using the normal PY handicap system so that should not present any problems.

Finally, why the need for 2 Race Officials plus a Rescue Officer to run a race that on a good day only has 7 or 8 boats? Some members seem to spend more time on duty than actually sailing and reducing the number of officials



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for the day would reduce the number of annual duties required. Time is a precious commodity these days and there are a host of other activities all vying for a slice.

It would be interesting to hear the views of other members but perhaps a radical change is what is needed to revitalise the racing scene?

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Solo, GP14 & Menagerie Regatta	5 October
Halloween & Bonfire Party	1 November
AGM	21 November
Dinner Dance & Prizegiving	24 January 2004