



Watermouth Yacht Club
Berrynarbor, Ilfracombe, North Devon, EX34 9SJ
51° 13' N 04° 05' W



AHOY

Newsletter November 2013

Commodore's Column

I am so please to be able to say that Watermouth Yacht Club has successfully weathered another year and as you will see from the Treasurer's mini report, we have come through it in the black – financially. We have provided the usual Social events at the club house which have been supported well enough to allow us to pay off our debts. For the Social Calendar 2013, whilst we kept to the standard format for Carveries and BBQs when it came to the Annual Dinner & Dance we trialled a very different event. The D&D usually breaks even, but does not generate any income for the club however the 'Captured by Pirates' evening produced a profit well in excess of £400 + the bar takings. I know the D&D is popular with some, and the club did lose out on making presentations of trophies etc, but if you want it back in one form or another please let me know, and we have to have the support of the membership to make such an event viable.

The club runs almost exclusively on volunteers and the majority of these volunteers form the committee. The present committee, by and large, have been in situ for several and in some cases – many years. Please don't let this prevent you coming forward if you wish to stand for Committee. It is not a 'closed shop' and the present Committee keep standing mainly because no one else does, but in any event we love the club and are not prepared to see it fail for want of a functioning Committee. Whilst I am trying to encourage some new blood to the Committee, you should be aware of the activities undertaken. It cannot be taken lightly.

Bar – Keith has consistently run / managed the bar for so many years. Yes, he jokingly says he doesn't mind on which side of a bar he stands, but that must not detract from the fact that if he hadn't run the bar weekend after weekend, no one would have done.

Treasurer – Steve has quickly brought the control of the money side of WYC into the 21st century. i.e. we now internet bank, he has negotiated new tariffs from our service providers, is continuously reviewing options where we could save money.

Secretary – Trevor deals with all of the local officialdom on our behalf – he knows the licensing and planning laws & fire regulations better than the local authority does. He holds and renews annually, the Liquor License on our behalf.

Maintenance – Simon constantly reviews and maintains the fabric of the clubhouse and the surrounds. Just now he has insulated the whole of the roof space, has cleared the roof gutters of leaves and debris, has made good the access to the back door and prepared an area for a storage facility.

Membership – Carol maintains our membership lists and sends out those renewal notices and reminders! No mean feat as she does not live locally.

The rest of us pitch in on each & every occasion. The club does not run itself.

However, all that said – I really believe Watermouth Yacht Club is a glorious club, made even better by the natural surroundings and the sea-farers and their families who frequent it.

In closing, my predecessor John always had a quote, so here goes

"Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than those you did. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from safe harbour. Catch the wind in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

— Mark Twain

With very best regards to you all, and best wishes for the coming festivities and New Year.

Moira



Treasurer's Column

The years 2012 and 2013 have not been easy for the club, and if ever there was a baptism by fire, this was mine! The financial legacy of the recent building extension works has been a significant concern throughout, but in turn, that adversity has brought out the best in your committee members and their faithful helpers.

Some six months ago I wrote of the difficulties we faced, the measures that had been taken and my hope that we could clear our balance sheet of debt. That monetary debt was of course owed to a small number of committee members, whose personal generosity had enabled the timely completion of our building project. My fear going forward was of a protracted liability to those committee members, and of the understandable dilemma when faced with other calls on our resources.

I am pleased to say that whilst improved weather this year may have helped in small part, much hard work and the support it deserved has contributed to a welcome outcome as we approach financial year end. Our club is now free of debt and whilst I do not expect conditions next year to be any less demanding, a milestone has been passed and we can now seek to make provision for future improvements, improvements that will be possible with continued support from all.

Headline figures at the time of writing are as follows:

Income from subscriptions	= £4,016.00
Income from bar	= £2,141.38
Income from social activities	= £2,089.97
Income from gifts	= £1,548.50
Loan repayments	= £7,500.00
Cash at bank	= £4,364.48

The above figures, although still fluid, represent a guide to this year's activities and an approximation of the club's cash reserve to be carried forward. The full audited account will be made available at the Annual General Meeting.

May I take this opportunity to wish all members and their families a most enjoyable festive season.

Steve Barron

Membership

Welcome to new member Colin Goodyear with his boat Octopussy, a Quicksilver 500 Angler and Brian Parsons who is re-joining after a break of several year with Martine, a Goldenhind.

Membership renewal has traditionally fallen due on January 1st with invitations being issued in December. The committee has taken the view that members often have many commitments at this time of the year, and may welcome the delay of this matter at such a busy time.

From and including 2014, membership renewal will be due on March 1st and invitations will be issued in February. Please therefore do not be concerned by the expected invitation not arriving in December.

Full details of subscriptions for 2014 will be contained within the invitation but are briefly as follows:

Membership = £65

Mooring premium* = £25

* The mooring premium is payable by those boat owners who wish to make use of the club's deep water moorings (conditions apply).

The committee hopes that this change of renewal date will prove helpful.

Hopefully 2014 will bring good sailing. Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all.

Carol Gell

Club Maintenance

The weather has turned stormy now after a much better year for boating and the club is winding down for the winter.

I have managed to complete the path to the back door and also have finished insulating the loft over the new extended area. Hopefully this means that the improvements to the club are now nearing completion and I hope to get the Building Control out in the New Year to see if anything else needs to be done to obtain a completion certificate. It would be good to have the work signed off.

You may have noticed that I have levelled off an area at the back which can be used for a storage shed when funds permit.

Steve has also been busy fitting a new burglar alarm which is now up and running.

We have decided that if the weather gets very cold (below freezing) to turn off the stopcock in the long white cupboard in the hallway. This will minimize the risk of burst pipes. If anyone needs water when it is turned off it can be turned on for your use but please ensure that it is turned off again when you have finished. I have put notices in the club to this effect.

Sue and I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a good New Year for boating.

Simon

Fishing

In order to embrace all aspects of boating taking place at Watermouth I have been asked by our new editor, Geof Pierce, to write a few words for the Ahoy about fishing, which is a little ironic because firstly, I am well known to be the worst fisherman in North Devon and secondly, even the good fishermen are not catching many fish locally.

Various reasons are being put forward about the lack of fish, long cold winters mean that the sea temperature remains too cold into the early summer and of course overfishing especially by the trawlers which Hoover up just about every fish as they sweep the channel right down to the sea bed, removing the juvenile fish which will never mature and of course removing a food source for larger predator fish.

Local professional fisherman agree that potting and line fishing catches have reduced dramatically in the last few years and I now hear that mackerel fishing has virtually ceased by the Ilfracombe charter boats as there are so few about. Lobster and edible crab are also very poor, barely covering the cost of fuel.

Commercial fishing is of course banned out of Watermouth - we are classed as "hobby fishermen". Lobsters and brown crab catches are limited by number and most species of fish have minimum size that can be retained, any undersized fish must be returned to the sea.

It is strictly illegal to sell any fish or shellfish without a license, therefore, all catches landed at Watermouth can only be consumed by the fishermen themselves or given to friends, relatives or neighbours.

Penalties for any breach of the regulations are severe; the Fisheries Protection vessel does patrol the Bristol Channel and can board your vessel without warning or your permission to inspect your catch.

Dave Gough

COQUET

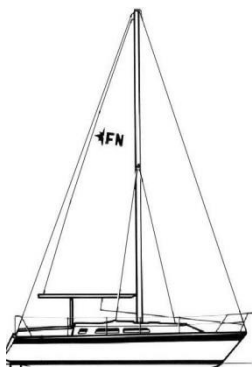


When I sold coquet she went to Shepperton marina London by low loader, the new owner said that he wanted to do a few changes to her and he was going to have her craned out on hard standing in the marina and then, when the works were completed he would transport her to the south coast and put her in a marina there.

Well, Pauline and I went to London for a couple of days recently and I wanted to see if I could find her, drove into the marina and found her, well I was almost in tears - shock almost made me sick, Pauline tried to console me by saying at least she will be used, my thoughts were to go and get a gallon of petrol and a box of matches and give her a dignified end as she deserved, but I think she will end up a gin palace on the Thames. (THEY SAY YOU SHOULD NEVER GO BACK).

Dave Little

The Ionian Dream of John and Wendy with “Wild Thyme”



We had talked of sailing to the Mediterranean when we were both retired, but then I decided to grab the opportunity of extended working, and that was followed by a year of part-time working to build a nest egg.

Last September we chartered a yacht from *Rhodes* and sailed around the *Dodecanese* area in company with our friends Keith, Moira Trevor and Jane and our dream was rekindled. In January this year we were fortunate to be invited along on a *British Virgin Islands* charter in the same company. It was fantastic.

Now with our dream very much re-ignited, we decided we would go for it, whilst still “young” enough and healthy enough to do so.

We rethought our original plan of sailing our present boat a Moody 31,” *Sea Pearl* as although a lovely boat the necessary modifications required for med sailing were not cost effective, (Increased capacity Fuel and Water storage, Holding Tank, Fridge, Bimini, Solar Panels/Gantry/Electric anchor winch etc. “*Sea Pearl*” was put on the market and she sold to the 1st enquirer at a reasonable price.

We then booked flights out to *Preveza* in April having studied literally hundreds of boat adverts online and arranged a viewing of a bilge keeled Moody 34 in the Ionian Boat yard at Aktio which is across the water from *Preveza*. We dealt through a UK broker “Williams & Smithel based at *Lefkas*. We were disappointed with the Moody 34, then looked at further boats including “**Wild Thyme**” a Westerly Falcon 34 fin keel, that was extremely well set up, including beaching legs, Wind vane steering, Water-maker and radar.

Provided with a list of surveyors we selected a YDSA registered surveyor who himself has a Westerly in *Lefkas* Marina and luckily were able to arrange the survey without delay. The task of cataloguing an inventory of the boat proved very difficult as she was quite literally packed to the gunwales with equipment. The survey went well until the hull moisture readings were taken, which showed very high content, we then found out the boat’s history, Osmosis had been detected two years previously but had not been properly treated, in fact it had been sealed in. Some research showed that virtually all boats of that age (1985 and type Westerly, Moody, Colvic etc) are likely



to show similar problems, but they are surmountable at a price. We were able to negotiate an exceptional purchase price based on the survey findings and have arranged to have the hull gel coat and 1st resin layer stripped off and redone this winter, by a very respected GRP repairer carried out under Surveyor's supervision. At the same time the hull will be Copper- Coat protected. I would certainly endorse using Greek based UK brokers and Surveyors for any transaction, particularly bearing in mind the € and the Greek banking crisis.

For the initial pre-purchase trip we flew out from Gatwick to Preveza and actually found it cheaper to book a week's self-catering holiday at Nidri on Lefkas, and to hire a car, which worked out the same as the flights alone had we booked directly. That gave us the freedom to tour around the various boatyards and explore the area.

Having purchased "**Wild Thyme**", which transaction took a good month, we then arranged to go back out, to ready her for the water. Despite her being so well equipped there was still a need to bring out a lot of things so we decided to drive out to Greece, breaking the journey in the Italian Alps to visit friends. Thus entailed a very long drive through France and Italy eventually to Venice where we boarded a Ferry for the 27 hour journey down the Adriatic to Igoumenitsa, Greece.

Two weeks in the yard being plagued by mosquitos whilst getting the boat readied including the removal of the servo self-steering gear from the transom, which we quickly decided would make the "*Stern-To* mooring very problematic. We received valuable help in removing this beast from John Boulter (Aquatint) who had recently launched from the adjoining yard.

To have a boat in the water in Greece requires that you obtain a "DECKRA" permit from the local Port Police, the obtaining and subsequent monthly stamping of these documents is extremely and requires a large amount of both tact and patience with bureaucracy, qualities that I have little of.

The launching went well, very professionally handled, initially loaded onto a hydraulic lift transporter and then transferred to a conventional boat lift.

Our first trip from the yard at *Aktio* was headed inland to *Vonitsa* in the landlocked *Gulf of Amvrakia*, which is an old fishing village now developed a little but very much a resort favoured by the Greeks with a really lovely beach and a pine-clad island in the bay. We spent our first night at anchor behind the island and experienced our first taste of the daily katabatic winds. They certainly do blow and I was worried, as it was we did drag our anchor, so next morning relocated to the quay side which does have a small degree of protection from a breakwater. We explored the backstreets away from the glitzy bars and found a lovely family giro (kebab) shop where they still used a hand turned rotisserie over a bed of coals, with really large chunks of pork and a big chunk of bread and glass of local beer. It was lovely, we found ourselves in company on the quay with two boats owned by members of the Bristol Sailors Club (which we also belong to) so cockpit drinks were the order of the day.

Next we ventured back to the *Preveza* anchorage for a couple of nights but were not very happy with the anchorage, due to the proximity of a nasty reef, and a constant current. However *Preveza* town itself is a strange but lovely place. A myriad of alleyways, shops and pavement bars.

Next port of call was Lefkas heading out to sea, over the submerged road tunnel linking *Preveza* and *Aktio* then following the buoyed channel for several miles before turning south and heading for the entrance to the Lefkas Canal at Santa Maura.

The entrance is well marked but we had been advised of an increasing sand spit on one side and rocks on the other, which although marked by red buoys, needed a good margin of error. We entered okay but have since witnessed several yachts grounded there. *Lefkas Canal* is entered via a dog leg at *Santa Maura* then you come to a permanently positioned ferry that swings aside hourly to permit boats through. To all intents it is a swing bridge but is called a Floating Bridge as this maintains the Island status of Lefkas and draws EU funding!!!

Lefkas is a very busy town with a large marina but being paupers we anchored in the main harbour to go ashore. Lefkas comes alive at night with a myriad of bustling alleys and pedestrian squares thronged with people and scooters etc.

We have visited Lefkas regularly as it is a re-provisioning stop. We must own up to one evening having had "Wild Thyme" go walkabout when we mistakenly had insufficient anchor scope and she was recovered and re-anchored by a couple in a "Seahawk" whilst we were ashore and we did not notice she was in a different place to where we had left her. We are yet to find them to thank them.

Tranquil bay has become a favourite stopover, having easy dinghy access from the anchorage across to the various landings at *Nidri*, which was, until a few years ago, a small fishing village, however all changed when Aristotle Onassis with his new bride Jackie (Kennedy) bought the offshore island of *Skorpios* and berthed his yacht "Christina" there.

Nidri is now a major flotilla centre with both "Sailing Holidays" and *Nielson* and *Sail Ionian* based thereabouts. This, however, is probably its downfall, as on changeover weekends the place is alive with VERY loud music and alcohol fuelled partying. So come the weekend those in the know mosey a bit farther in to the anchorage of *Vlikho* (various spellings but pronounced *VleeHo*). A large lagoon surrounded by high mountains and still very much a one street village frontage, with some newly developed houses set on seemingly precipitous hillsides, and some pleasant waterfront Tavernas on the Eastern side, each with their own dinghy landing stages.

Vlikho is also home to the Vlikho Yacht Club which is really a taverna but cleverly owned and run by a UK couple as a yacht club with book exchange and laundry facilities and some good traditional and very popular Sunday Roast lunches. Full marks for entrepreneurship.

It is only a short hop from Nidri to the Island of *Megganissi* to berth on the quay at *Little Vathi* from where a short walk/climb through the olive groves takes you to one of our favourite anchorages Abeleki Bay, which is very well sheltered and picturesque and the only building is a discreetly positioned Taverna in one corner of the inlet. A truly superb anchorage that attracts yachts rather than noisy stinkboats, and seems to attract naturist activity, (Yes we did join in) and where getting into the sea is usually like a warm bath.

Around the corner is another inlet *Port Atheni* recommended by Geof Pierce which we are yet to sample. (Editorial note – yes it is nice, but in 5 years it was the only place we had a rat get aboard)

We have also visited the island of *Ithaca* where we moored at "Frikes", but it was very busy.

From *Ithaca* we headed for the island of *Kastos* with a stopover at the appropriately named "One House Bay" on the uninhabited island of "Atoko". The swirling rock formations here are quite remarkable. However our stopover was foreshortened when the freshening wind caused our anchor to drag in the sand bottom. Next stop was the small fishing harbour of *Kastos* on the island of the same name. Here we lay at anchor with a long (very long) warp to the quayside. A lovely place with the special feel that islands have and at the time August was packed right across the harbour with yachts and a good few big expensive Italian stinkboats. We will definitely revisit *Kastos* when it is much quieter and have since visited the equally beautiful mountainous sister island of *Kalamos*.

We have since revisited several previous stopovers, and have received so many recommendations of places to visit just within this immediate area, notwithstanding *Cephalonia* to the South and *Corfu* to the North plus the adjoining mainland coast. We know there is much discovery to be done in other years and no rush. We

have found the Greek people we have met to be very helpful and when you see how hard they work and the long hours they work, it is hard to see how their economy has been so mismanaged.

It is now the end of October and we are back home having driven back via Venice, Mont Blanc tunnel and Paris, bit of an adventure as our car GPS thing packed up and we inadvertently found ourselves crossing beneath Paris in a 10000m long tunnel only 2m high with a roof box on top. (Really quite hairy). (Strange people the French. On the outward journey we called into Paris by train and it was a Double Decker – but they had raised the bridges etc.)

We had a fantastic summer and visited many more beautiful places and made many new friends, we had four months on the boat and other than the last three nights when we stayed in the marina at *Preveza* (12€ incl. water and electric) that was the only time we paid to moor/berth anywhere, that is what makes it so affordable.

We hope to give a presentation at WYC in early spring so we can share our adventure with you and show you what a wonderful sailing area we are in. Meanwhile our flights are booked up to return to the Ionian next May for 5 months. We have very much missed seeing our friends from WYC and we would welcome visitors to “**Wild Thyme**”.

PS The local beer “Mythos” is very palatable as also is the Greek “*London Gin*” and if you want a slice of Lime, you pick one off a tree.

John & Wendy Culley

Ken Jelfs

With great sadness we report the sudden death of Ken, 8th November 2013, aged 79 years.

Ken was a longstanding member and supporter of Watermouth Yacht Club having been introduced by Commodore, Lyn Blackmore (Com. 1982).

When at Watermouth, Ken was a familiar sight around the harbour, most often seen going fishing with Alan Field (Sea Wolf) and of course with long-time friend Reg Melhuish.

Only this year, Ken sold on his motor boat Dilos as family commitments and the travelling distance from Bromsgrove resulted in the number of occasions he could visit Watermouth became less and less.

Always willing to lend a hand, always polite and forever the gentleman, we remember him with kind thoughts and memories. All of us offer our sincere condolences to Marie and to Ken’s family.

Moira

