



Watermouth Yacht Club

Berrynarbor, Ilfracombe, North Devon, EX34 9SJ

51° 13' N 004° 05' W



AHOY

Newsletter October 2017

Vice Commodore's Column

Nights drawing in, the clocks go back next week - so that's the end of summer then !

A few boats are already ashore for the winter and I'm sure there will be a rush to get the rest out when Keith gets back from his holiday.

This year summer seems (to me) to have flown by and seems to have been particularly compromised by too much or too little wind or having to get up at the crack of dawn to catch the tide, although I could have solved that problem by making use of the club's outer moorings; hopefully the conditions were better suited to the motor boats and fishermen.

As ever, Brian Jones managed to have a good cruise by repeating a previous voyage to Milford Haven and following the Cleddau and the East Cleddau rivers to their furthest navigable point - see his account at the end of this Ahoy.

Geof Pierce

Membership

We have two new members to welcome at this time John Cocovini with his boat "Alice" which is a Pandora International made by Ridgeway Marine and Andy Sullivan-Webb with "Troon and Hanley" which is a 19ft Searay 200 made by Manta.

We look forward to seeing them in and around the harbour and in the club."

Carol Gell

Social Events

As we have held our last social event at the clubhouse for this year, our new members will find that WYC goes into hibernation pretty much for the winter. The majority of the membership does not live locally and we have found over the years it is not practicable to remain open or to put on events during this period.

I would like to say thank you to everyone who donates and helps at the events we have had, very importantly these include the money collectors (!), washer ups, plate clearers, dessert donators and others who quietly donate in the background. Many thanks to John Culley who set all of the questions for the quiz, anyone who has done this will know it is a task not to be taken lightly!

Just as important are all of you who attend the events and thereby support the club, thank you.

Moira

Annual Dinner & Dance 2017

Saturday 28th October 6.30 for 7.00 start at Ilfracombe Golf Club

Dean's renowned carvery + desserts + coffee & Troy's Disco providing music of your choice!

£25 per person Friends and family welcome - Smart dress essential

Please email for info or booking watermouthyachtclub@gmail.com

Treasurers Report

Another year comes to a close and the broad outline of the Club's financial activity throughout 2017 begins to take shape. In very general terms, 2017 will see performance in keeping with recent years.

Whilst a rising income graph would be pleasing on the eye, I think in terms of the current and local participation levels within our sport, we have done well to maintain the status quo. My tributes, as always, must go to the hard working members who make our social events the enjoyable occasions they are and help keep the Club solvent.

Cash reserves this year are approaching the levels once enjoyed by the Club prior to the building extension works some years ago. It is now possible to consider improvements without fear of financial embarrassment and as a result, works to replace fascia boards and soffits along with, as yet undecided, works to the front elevation of the building will soon be underway.

Headline figures at the time of writing are as below:

Income

Subscriptions (inc club mooring premium)	£ 4,280.00
Social	£ 1,975.61
Bar	£ 1,621.66

Expenditure

Insurance	£ 1,070.00
Maintenance	£ 1,311.80
Club Moorings	£ 690.00
Sailing and RYA Subs	£ 175.00
Cleaning	£ 126.70
Utilities	£ 400.20
Cash at bank	£20,113.27

The annual dinner and dance will soon be upon us and I look forward to seeing you there. For those who can't make it, may I take this rather early opportunity to pass on season's greetings and hope to see you all soon.

Steve Barron

Club Maintenance

We have accepted a quote for replacing the fascias, soffits and guttering so that should take place before too long. There has been a bit of a rethink about when to repaint the clubhouse because the rendering on the front wall, (facing the harbour), is in a poor state and should either be rendered again or a better solution may be to have cladding fitted which should improve weather resistance but unfortunately that involves a Planning Application and a few hundred pounds extra cost. If any member has an alternative suggestion, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Geof Pierce

WYC Dinghy Rack

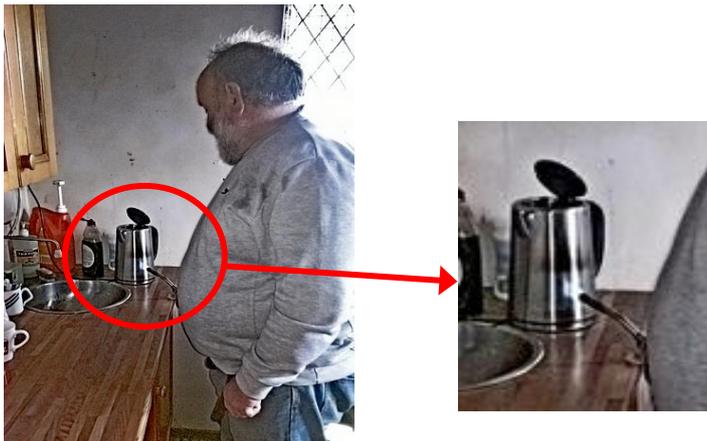
A final reminder about the WYC dinghy rack beside the clubhouse.

There are some dinghies and canoes that have not been used for years which are in a very dilapidated condition and make the main entrance to the club an eyesore.

As per Watermouth Harbour Ltd, all dinghies must be identified with the owners name or their boat name, so, if you wish to keep your dinghy/canoe in this rack, please ensure it is marked with your name or boat name. The September deadline has passed and we will remove dinghies and canoes that are not identifiable by an owner's name or boat name over the next few weeks

WYC appreciate member's cooperation to help us make this area more useful facility for club members.

Caption Competition No 12



Keith won't let a power cut stop him making a brew

Not an easy one as there were only three captions from just two people

Simon Kemp Is this a standard 13 amp connection or did he have to change the plug ?

Richard Hildred Won't be long now Moira - I think I'm nearly boiling.....

Did you say you paid the gas bill Moira ?

As there were only two captions, I think we will call this one a draw

Last trip of the Season

Geof and Simon on Chaser heading out to Lundy for the last time this year. There was more than enough wind to start with and a very lumpy sea but then we had to motor the last 10 miles as the wind was dropping away and we wouldn't have made it to Lundy before the tide turned.

A pleasant hour was spent having lunch in the landing bay, but on the way back there was no wind at all until Lee Bay, when it filled in on a favourable heading to enable us to finish the day by sailing the last few miles to Watermouth.



Caption Competition No 13



Anyone who has seen John & Wendy Culley's Facebook will know he has a 'thing' about Rupert Bear, in fact, Rupert seems to accompany them wherever they go.

This pic is from their recent sailing holiday with Trevor & Jane and Keith & Moira.

I don't know if Rupert had upset Trevor but there just has to be a caption

Rouselle's Mini, Milford Haven Cruise

On Thursday 6th July this year Rouselle was carried well down the harbour by Keith's crane as we were leaving the following day for Milford Haven but as we floated around 4.30pm, David Lines and myself decided to leave for Lundy where we would anchor for the night and sail to Milford the next morning.

We arrived at Lundy at 9.30pm and found three other yachts were there, one from Brittany and two other UK vessels on passage. There was also a small coaster and a fishing vessel. We had a very good night with a slight roll as the west wind had a bit of north in it and the next day we sailed from Lundy at 6am bound for Milford Haven.

To start with the wind was South Westerly force three and we were on course sailing at 5 knots. However at 8.30am the wind veered to WNW and we were forced to motor sail for the remainder of the passage. Although our area was in a complex low pressure area we enjoyed blue skies with no cloud and a hot sun which was very welcome. Luckily The Castle Martin Tank range was not operating so we were able to cut across the south west corner of the range area and pass the Gowan Light buoy and Linney head fairly closely. We arrived and anchored in Castlebeach Bay which is just south of Dale Point and had lunch in peace and quiet out of the swell and wind.



Later that afternoon we sailed up the Haven, past the oil refineries and through all the commercial shipping and into the Pembrokeshire National Park, which is just past the Neyland Road Bridge. We still had the flood tide with us so we continued on past Rudders Boat Yard, Lawrenny Yacht Station, Benton Castle, Beggars Reach, Llangwm, Black Tar Point and anchored in 24ft at Sprinkle Pill for the night and in time to see the Canada Geese fly in to graze on the pastures.

We were able to have a lie in the next day as we intended to take the late afternoon flood tide up to Blackpool Mill. So after rising at 7.45am we breakfasted and spent the day doing those odd jobs that crop up after a passage which for us was the first of the season. At around 4pm we set off motoring up towards the confluence of the East and West Cleddau and upon finding the deep water passage past Landshipping Point we entered the East Cleddau. Once past the buoyed yachts the river widens out to around a quarter of a mile and shallows in the deep water passage to around 10 feet., which gives us 8ft under the keel. The broad is nearly a mile in length but the water was totally smooth as there was no wind at all. We had already sprayed ourselves with Jungle Juice expecting gnats and mosquitoes as we were entering a fairly quiet brackish part of the Haven. Leaving the broad we entered the river that passes Slebech House Hotel and Park on the northern side and enters another shallower broad which is over a mile in length and about a quarter of a mile in width. This broad is bordered on each side by dense reed beds which look about 6ft high. Beyond the reed bed on each side is a fairly dense wood. The meandering channel is about 8ft in depth, 6ft under the keel at nearly high water for its entire length.

It is in this broad that we notice a difference in the wild life. There are numerous Shoveller ducks, Tufted ducks, Herons, flocks of Common Sandpipers, Kingfishers, Cormorants and so on. Apart from the wild birds and the chuckle as the water peels away each side of our bows, there is no other sound present as we enter The Secret Waterway.

On the southern side the broad narrows to a very shallow river which is about 35ft wide and at the entrance four to six feet deep, (two to four feet beneath the keel). As the river continues it's bordered on the southern side with a steep bank which is probably sixty feet in height and then it merges into the side of a hill covered in deciduous trees and rhododendrons which look a real picture when out in blossom in May. On the northern side the reed bed continues and merges into a wood. Further on are two long thin Islands which we pass on the southern side as it's about six inches deeper than the north side and we hope less cluttered with old farm yard machinery.

We managed to pass the first island with not too much trouble but we ran out of water on the second island. This is normal as we always go aground at this point and have to await the tide to lift us off. After only a few minutes we were lifted slightly and enabled to move forward but our keel was moving stones and so forth out of our way.

Ahead of us I saw what looked like two large branches sticking out of the water at the end of the second island just where the river bed rises and the depth drastically lowers. I aimed for the middle of these two branches and feeling an obstruction tried to increase our speed. We rolled over something large and then became firmly stuck. I had visions of being stuck there all night but after about ten minutes we somehow got free and were able to continue.

Once past this point the river narrows further but it is a little deeper. Trees on either bank stretched their limbs towards the middle allowing us just sufficient room to pass through. Upon rounding a bend we saw the Mill ahead on the south bank. However, unfortunately as I had not come this way for 6 years, I found that the Ash tree on the south bank had grown considerably and overhung the river. On the northern bank there is a large gravel bank that protrudes into the river. It seemed that this bank had grown somewhat larger and was further in the river. I discussed this with David and the only way that we could get through was to go across the river and into the tree. That would either stop the boat or break the branch. With fingers crossed we drove Rouselle like a battering ram into the branches. Luckily they broke and we were showered with branches, leaves and bits of bark all over the boat.



After we had removed the debris we turned around and moored to the Staithe and upon looking back we wondered how the devil we had got through the gap.

We climbed ashore and went round to the front of the Mill. I knew it had changed hands and now belonged to The Oakwood Theme Park but I was not expecting to find it all locked up with cameras and floodlights bolted to the walls. The car park was covered with weeds and everything was overgrown with no sign of life there at all.



After about an hour someone who was obviously local turned up and we found out what had happened. The theme park had applied for planning permission to turn one floor of the Mill into a restaurant and to connect their park which was about seven miles away with a miniature steam railway. The locals had objected to the plan and railway and as Blackpool Mill is a grade 2 listed property there seemed little hope that any change could take place. Now they had found dry rot in one of the floors so no one was allowed to enter the building. The property had its own Security Company who patrolled the grounds continuously. There were flood lights on the rear of the mill but they were very kindly turned off for as long as we were at the Staithe.



So our luck had run out, as before there was always a cafe on the side where all our meals could be obtained. Now there was nowhere to go except for The Bush Inn which was over a mile away and Slebech House Hotel which was a slightly further in the opposite direction. David decided to walk to The Bush Inn for a couple of pints and the following day which was very warm with blue skies, saw us wandering through Pickle Wood on the way to the Slebech House Hotel where we had lunch.

Before we went to lunch we took the dinghy down river intending to remove whatever it was that was blocking our passage at the end of the second Island. However on seeing a submerged tree at low water we realised that the only thing to remove it apart from the winter flood that put it there, would be a JCB. So we decided which course to take on our return journey and David put a buoy on it, or rather a plastic bottle on a piece of string.



Whilst at the Mill we met Elwyn who was an elderly gentleman from near Tenby. He visited The Mill several times a week as he liked the peace and tranquillity of the place. He had never married as he could see no advantage in being so and was happy with his own company. He had been a Drayman in his working life, taking beer to all the local pubs in the area and was able to tell us which had closed down in the area. That was very useful information to us but as a lot had closed our chances of getting a meal out was now very restricted, so it was time to leave.

So an hour before high water we left The Mill and meandered back down stream, passing on the south side of our buoyed tree trunk and down the broad past Slebech House Hotel and Landshipping and anchored once again at Sprinkle Pill.

The following day Pembrokeshire received well over one inch of driving rain as a complex low was above us. So wherever we decided to go we would have got soaked so we made a unanimous decision to stay put and potter. The next day dawned sunny and warm with light winds. However the shipping forecast was not so good for the following couple of days so we decided to motor sail down to the entrance to Milford Haven and then use the South Westerly wind to take us round to Saundersfoot.



As soon as we left the Haven which was three hours before low water we were able to sail with full working rig at around five knots towards Linney Head. The current for the next three hours towards low water, ran in our direction with a rate of around one knot. Which meant that if you were travelling eastwards you would have nine hours of current with you. We had only gone about a mile when the Range Safety vessel came alongside and asked us to sail SW for four miles to keep outside the firing

range as it was in operation. I replied that we were heading east to Carmarthen Bay and we were unable to sail southwest and the only course we could sail was west which was rather pointless. So I demanded Right of Passage and we continued on our course. We rounded Linney Head and sailed inside Stack Rock with the wind, for a change. However as we approached Govern Head the wind dropped to around force 2 to 3 westerly which slowed our speed through the water but we still enjoyed an easterly flowing tide.

Upon approaching the Manobier Range area, David said he could hear something that sounded like a drone. We looked all round for several minutes before he saw it. It wasn't a drone but it was radio controlled Target Plane. It looked to be about 15-20ft long and was travelling quite fast, westwards about two cables on our seaward side. It circled around us for several minutes before its flight was terminated and it descended on a parachute down to earth on the cliff by the firing range. As we passed by, the range personnel were trying to get to the aircraft but it had landed in deep thick scrubby bushes. It looked as if they had miscalculated the strength of the wind and it had come down in the wrong place.



We continued on and entered Saundersfoot in the early evening and went in search of a pub and also some Fish and Chips which were very nice and well cooked.

The following day dawned bright and breezy and we left Saundersfoot harbour about two hours after high water and after pottering around in Carmarthen Bay, we decided that there was sufficient wind to sail across to Devon against the last of the ebb tide. We had a cracking sail all the way across on a broad reach and into the harbour where there was just enough water behind the breakwater to pick up our mooring.

Old Sea Dog