
The Old Worcesters' Yacht Club Newsletter



February 2016

A Message from the Honorary Secretary

Our Club had two successful events last year, the Commodore's Rendezvous in Milford Haven and the Autumn Lunch and AGM at the Royal Southampton Yacht Club, both of which were fully reported on in the Dog Watch. The auction of marine oil paintings at the Lunch raised £960 and I am pleased to announce that the following contributions have been made to marine charities.

£300 The Mission to Seafarers, Felixstowe Branch.

£300 Seafarers UK (King Georges Fund for Sailors)

£300 The Sea Cadets, London Branch, HMS Belfast.

Membership of the Club remains stable at 159 although we have seen an increase in ensign permit holders from 49 to 51.

On 1st January Cmdr. Bob Lineker RN (68) stood down as Commodore, and our Vice-Commodore, Capt. Trevor Crawford, moved up to become our new senior flag officer. Our Rear Commodore, Richard Curtis, moves up to Vice Commodore. At the same time our Honorary Treasurer, Ian Ward (53) has stood down and Bob Lineker has kindly volunteered to take up the position. The Club's thanks and appreciation must go to Ian who has served us so well for over the last fourteen years.

During the current year we will be having two events, details of which are below. I do hope that many of you will be able to support the Rendezvous and Autumn Lunch.

Annual Commodores Rendezvous in Ramsgate Tuesday 14th to Thursday 16th June 2016

The choice of port for our rendezvous is the prerogative of the Commodore. Over the years we have met in many of the South and East Coast ports stretching from Milford Haven in the West to Lowestoft in the East. However, by far the majority have been in the Solent area, meaning that the East Coast boat owners have to set aside the best part of two weeks, bearing in mind passage times, in order to attend the event. (And that's not taking into account the delays sometimes experienced of being stormbound in port!) Being an East Coast sailor I am delighted to see our Commodore, Trevor Crawford, has chosen Ramsgate for this year's rendezvous, a mere six or seven hours sail for boats on the Blackwater, Orwell and Deben and only a little more for those in Southwold and Lowestoft. It is also excellent news for the boat owners based in Dover.

The event will be based at the Royal Temple Yacht Club close by the marina details of which can be seen on their website:

<http://www.rtyc.com/content/tour%20around%20the%20clubhouse>

The RTYC has their own accommodation and we have pre-reserved all eight rooms. Details can be seen by clicking on their website.

<http://www.rtyc.com/content/bedrooms>

Our Commodore is currently finalizing the programme of events and we hope to have details, including booking form with prices, with you in early March. In the meantime please block off the dates in your diary!

Autumn Lunch and Annual AGM. – The Royal Southampton Yacht Club Late September 2016

We have not been able to finalize a date as yet but we hope to have our autumn lunch and AGM at the RSYC. Last year's event was very well attended and we will again open it up to all OWs, not just OWYC members. Further details with the date for your diary will be sent out with the Rendezvous booking forms in March.

Future Events and Rendezvous

In 2017 our Commodore will be Richard Curtis (63) who keeps his Nauticat, *Tundra Wolf*, in Southwold, Suffolk. It is therefore his intention to hold his June rendezvous in Southwold, a great upmarket holiday location and home to Adnams Brewery. As an East Coast sailor, it is one of my favourite harbours with its pier, theatre, sailor's reading room and dock side inn.

In 2018 the Association is holding a big three day reunion in Greenwich from Thursday 7th to Saturday 9th June, preliminary details of which you should have already received. As with the Portsmouth 2012 Reunion, the OWYC will be jointly hosting the event and our boats will be based in Limehouse Basin. It has been arranged that we can have the use of the Cruising Association's HQ for our cocktail party and buffet supper on the evening of Thursday 7th June (2018). The Cruising Association has recently refurbished their overnight accommodation at very reasonable prices and all five cabins have been pre-reserved for club members without boats.

List of Members and their Contact Details

I have pleasure in attaching the latest mailing list of members together with the names of their boats.

Start the Sailing Season with a New Ensign and Burgee

With the sailing season fast approaching, now is the time to look at replacing the faded ensign and burgee as well as treating yourself to a new yachting hat. Full details of what is available can be seen by clicking on the website link which follows:

<http://www.hms-worcester.org.uk/page13.html>

Cruising News from the Southern Ocean

Prior to our last rendezvous I received an apology from Simon Rendal (62) that he would be unable to attend as he would be sailing in Antarctic waters. As Hon.Sec. of the Club I am used to receiving far-fetched excuses for not attending events but this really stretched my credulity. Although it was mid-summer in the northern hemisphere, it would be mid-winter in the Southern Ocean with all that entails. Proof was clearly required and suspecting a 'Donald Crowhurst fantasy cruise', I asked for his log book or journal. This is what I received.

'I had seen the adverts and been thinking about it for a long time. When Nancy (my wife) said "if you don't do it now you never will", it was the jolt I needed. I immediately applied but was informed that the *Pelagic Australis* had a full crew. However a week later Skip Novak came back and informed me that someone had dropped out, so it was on.

We have now been sailing our Southerly 115, *Footloose of Worcester*, in the Baltic for 10 years and have explored from Oslo to St. Petersburg and everywhere in between, sometimes twice over. It's a spectacular cruising ground but I yearned for something different and perhaps more demanding.



The trip on which I was to embark on was the delivery of the commercial Antarctic cruise sailing vessel, *Pelagic Australis*, from her base port of Puerto Williams in Chile to South Africa for her annual refit. Starting at the beginning of May to the end of June (mid-winter in the Southern Ocean) we would sail from Puerto Williams, round Cape Horn to Cape Town, 42 days away.

Last year I helped a friend sail his Najad 44 from Lisbon to Antigua and enjoyed it enormously and wanted to do more, so this was a great opportunity. My 120 litre kit bag for the voyage was filled with fleeces, jackets, trousers, socks, wellies, (they recommend muck boots), hats, gloves, long johns, thermal underwear and of course a sleeping bag. The flights to Puerto Williams were particularly arduous, taking 42 hours and going via Buenos Aires, Santiago and Punta Arenas. Planning involved endless hours on the computer booking the flights and sitting about in airports. I finally got there a day early and booked into a B&B for one night which I had reserved online. Just as well as no one spoke English and there is a shortage of accommodation. What you do get is very, very, basic!

Puerto Williams is a Chilean Naval base and calls itself the most southerly town in the world. I think town is a bit of an exaggeration! There is not much there but boaters find it cheaper, more convenient and less hassle than Ushuaia in Argentina, just across the Beagle Channel.

Next day I joined *Pelagic Australis*, a purpose built boat for high latitude sailing, 73 feet long, aluminium (apparently the bow plating is 45 mm. thick) Described as Slutter rigged, it had three roller reefed foresails, a Genny, a Yankee and a staysail with four roven reefs in the main. I measured the main top shroud at 27mm. dia. It was fitted with a folding keel and rudder with a very sturdy wheelhouse as well as central heating. There was no fridge, freezer or electric winches but a grinder behind the mast. The boat is equipped with four 200 metre spools of big rope one at each corner for tying up to the rocks.

The three permanent crew were the skipper, a mate and a girl Friday who did everything. All were competent, professional, hardworking and most important, fun.

The total crew complement was made up with eight paying guests and what a mix. An Australian ENT surgeon, another Australian couple, a Cheshire chicken farmer, a Yorkshire printer, a hedge fund manager and finally a lady GP. All were experienced, some having done 'The Clipper round the World Race'. And then there was me, all of us in four twin bunk cabins.

The first five days were spent in a classroom doing an RYA Yachtmaster Course. I had done this before, about 40 years ago, but it did no harm to do it again.

Then it was off down the Beagle Channel to anchor in some of the crews favourite and most picturesque places, one was at the bottom of a glacier, very close and calving all the time, and some walking in the mountains. This was cut short as we had a good forecast for four days ahead off Cape Horn and then lots of wind for the following week. We rushed back to Puerto Williams and provisioned for the trip from the meagre selection of shops. Our next port was to be Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands. A big job was the checking in and out of Chile which was achieved very painstakingly and patiently by the skipper.

We set off westwards initially down to the Horn which we rounded in sunshine, good visibility and a balmy 20kt. Breeze. Lots of photos were taken but unfortunately we were not allowed to land without permission. Then our course was set for Stanley, 350 miles away. As there were 8 of us we kept watch by cabin, 4 on 12 off. The crew did 4 on, 8 off, but 2 hours different so we changed our watch leader half way through our watches. It was quite windy, we saw 55 knots, but the boat handled well and with the wind on the beam we had plenty of reefing and unreefing the main as well as rolling in and out of the 3 foresails as we surged along at 11 knots, making Stanley in less than two days.

We were now ahead of schedule so had 5 days off to take on provisions for the big trip to Cape Town as well as explore the Island. We did war site trips to Goose Green and San Carlos and various other places, with a very knowledgeable guide and also visited a Penguin colony. Stanley has British supermarkets with the same goods as in the UK so shopping was plentiful and easy. We had two full Falkland Island sheep carcasses tied to the aft gantry! The Islanders understandably dote on Maggie Thatcher and there are roads named after her as well as a bust of her outside the town hall.

We set off for Cape Town with the wind on the beam at 30 knots, wonderful. The track took us right past the volcanic island of Tristan de Cunha, a British Overseas Territory, which last erupted in the 60's when the entire population had to be evacuated to the UK. Many of them later returned but its isolated position means there are few visitors. One of the reasons it is very rarely stopped at is that the prevailing wind blows straight in to the open harbour and the swell is always big, but as the forecast was good we slowed down to arrive off the harbour at dawn. It was a perfect arrival and we blew up the Zodiac and went ashore in groups of four to be checked in by the local police and immigration man to have our passports stamped. His name was Glass, one of the original 6 or 7 family names from the first settlers in 1810. Of course he just happened to have copies of a book he had written about life on the island to sell us. There are currently only 267 inhabitants. On the day we visited one died and one was born so it still is 267! We walked round the town in hot sunshine and stumbled on a first birthday party in the town hall so free beer and a chance to chat to the locals. The first party back to the boat dangled a fishing line over the side with some lamb on it and immediately caught 3 sizeable fish which did our supper that night. The wind was rising so we weighed anchor and set off again after our 6 hour stopover, with *Pelagic Australis* effortlessly back up to 10-11 knots.



Approaching Tristan da Cunha, 6,765 ft.high, the world's remotest island, home to 267 residents

We all cooked including the crew and the food was fantastic and plentiful, I can't cook so I did a lot of vegetable preparation, spud peeling and washing up. There was a daily cleaning/chores list and I did wonder, as did the others, when we had our head in the bilges or cleaning the loo's, why we had paid so much to do this.

We sailed on and on, wind on the beam constantly at 20 to 40 knots, speed 9 to 11 knots all the way. It felt strange crossing the Greenwich meridian and thinking home was 5,500 miles due north. Finally we arrived in Cape Town after a 3,440 miles passage and a record for the boat of seventeen and a half days. The yard crew greeting us on arrival brought an ice box full of beer on board. The boat was anything but dry in port but dry at sea. Paying off was out of the question as we had work to do. All the sails were taken off and the boat stripped and cleaned and finally after 3 days we were allowed to leave.

I didn't use three quarters of the cold weather gear I took as it was never really that cold and even in Puerto Williams there was only thin ice on the puddles in the morning. However we did have a bit of snow in Stanley which the locals said was unusual. The boat's central heating kept us all warm so it was tee shirts down below and light weight sleeping bags.

Six weeks in a boat with eleven people and not a cross word. Wonderful trip.'

Simon Rendall (1959-62)

Clive Bradbury (61)
Honorary Secretary

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