

SCUTTLEBUTT

SUSSEX POLICE OFFSHORE SAILING CLUB



NEWSLETTER

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In 2014 the Sussex Police Offshore Sailing Club brought about a change in Chair and a number of new members on the Committee. The election at the AGM of the first woman chair has proved to be an inspired choice by the members. Anne Darling's enthusiasm and dynamism has raised the SPOSC profile, also bringing open and transparent decision making with all meeting minutes published on the website. Anne has ensured that the details of the Club appear on a regular basis on the internal 'intranet' website plus, with Terry's assistance, Scuttlebutt is seeking to be published quarterly. In turn, this means we need more contributions from members. This year we held a SPOSC Social BBQ at Lancing Sailing Club and for all those attending it was a very enjoyable afternoon and evening. The committee is moving apace to review the 'Advice to Skippers', 'Risk Assessment Form' plus the club rules to update them and comply with RYA advice. In addition, the committee are researching and reviewing future additional sailing opportunities for members.

Racing; During the AGM, several members requested sail racing opportunities. Both Chris Young, Eastbourne and Alwyn Evans, Solent have offered such opportunities.

The 2014 PSUK and World Sailing Championships event in the Solent provided us with a new race skipper and several new crew members. This was combined with additional new members on the support yacht. A great event enjoyed by all.

Cruising; The year commenced with the Frostbite comprising a two yacht charter; one off to Dartmouth, the other visiting the Solent ports. The PSUK race and support boat plus Frostbite charter involved some 32 members; eight of which were new members and involving two new skippers. The Owners Rally held their annual event but with less yachts. We would like more yacht owners to come forward and be involved in this event. For the third year running, SPOSC members are taking up the opportunity to sail in Greece having in previous years competed in the Southern Ionian Regatta Race. This year there is a charter via our member Alan Costello out of Lefkas in the Southern Ionian, plus another yacht chartered out of Skiathos.

Gurney; - www.gurneyfund.org/ Steve Rigby yet again this year took on the immense responsibility of organising the annual Gurney yachting experience for teenagers. This week long event took place in the Solent with a number of the Skippers and Co-Skippers coming from our Club.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the committee and members of the club for their dedication and hard work. We cannot be a successful sailing club without all the time, support and effort each puts into making SPOSC a first rate club..



Editorial Note

Please remember that this is your magazine and should reflect your views and experiences for the benefit of other members. If you have any comment, articles or photographs you feel are appropriate for inclusion then please forward them to me terryclothier@hotmail.com for publication.

The opinions expressed in articles within Scuttlebutt are those of the individual only and not necessarily those of the Sussex Police Offshore Sailing Club. No responsibility can be accepted for any inaccuracies or omissions.



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What do you say when someone asks – “Should I get Insurance when I go sailing?”

Every sport has an element of risk and sailing is no exception. In general sailing is a very safe sport. You are more likely to suffer from sun burn than anything else. But we should not underestimate that sailing at times can have its dangers

“Yachtsman killed after being hit on the head by boat's boom”

Hurricane Bertha claimed its first victim in Britain as a yachtsman was killed after being hit on the head by a boat's boom in near gale-force winds. Coastguards, police and the RNLI scrambled to reach the injured crew member, who was onboard the yacht Remi, at Gurnard near Cowes shortly after 1pm on Monday.

Rescuers winched down onto the yacht but the man was declared dead at the scene. Hampshire Police confirmed a man had died after suffering head injuries in a yachting accident after being hit by the boom on the private boat.

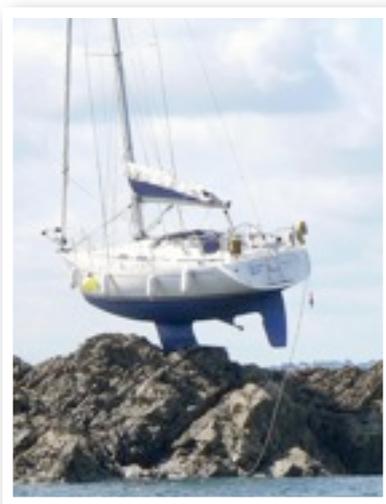
Cowes lifeboat station duty officer Harry Leslie said the lifeboat crew worked with the coastguard helicopter and police to deal with the incident.

By the time the lifeboat arrived, officers from the police boat were already on board the yacht, which had been out cruising before the drama.”

Extract from the Telegraph - By Keith Perry - 4:58PM BST 11 Aug 2014

In addition Alwyn has highlighted that a crew member on his yacht during Cowes week this year broke her arm!

N.B. The current SPSA insurance cover is being assessed. For foreign sailing charter adequate travel insurance is essential.



Accidents do happen!

In the interests of your family, all crew members are advised to ensure that they have adequate personal insurance cover.

The aspect of Insurance has taken up a considerable amount of time and debate by your Committee, in particular by Owen Poplett who has been researching our Insurance seeking to establish that we have adequate Public Liability cover, Damage cover and the issue of Personal Insurance cover. Common sense plays a major part in sailing activities including - the wearing of a life-jacket, checking weather forecasts, sailing only in sea conditions that are within the capabilities of skipper and crew, taking personal responsibility to be mindful of the inherent dangers from boom and associated rigging, winches etc., to always have ‘a sure foot’ and ‘one hand for the boat’.

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Cowes Week by Alwyn Evans



Having posted several photos of this years Cowes Week on the SPOSC Facebook site our Editor Terry Clothier invited me to 'pen an article' for Scuttlebutt about the week. So here we go

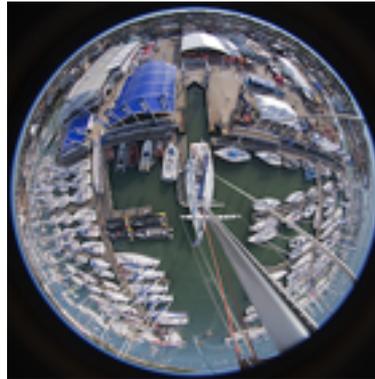
Brief History of Cowes Week

Traditionally, Cowes Week takes place beginning of August. Historically the first race was for a Gold Cup value of £100, held in 1826 for just seven yachts under the flag of the Royal Yacht Squadron. The early 1900s saw the formation of Cowes Regatta with the graceful 15 - 23 metre boats racing in all their glory, followed by J-class boats in the 1930's.

It was not until 1964 that, on the suggestion of HRH Prince Philip a regular competitor and Admiral of the Royal Yacht Squadron, Cowes Combined Clubs was formed to run and organise the regatta. This body represented the seven clubs involved in managing the racing (Royal Yacht Squadron, Royal London Yacht Club, Royal Thames Yacht Club, Royal Southampton Yacht Club, Royal Southern Yacht Club, Island Sailing Club and Royal Ocean Racing Club) and Cowes Town Regatta Committee. The Royal Yacht Squadron line became the universal start line and there was one set of sailing instructions and racing marks for the Week.



In 1995 Skandia became title sponsors of the event. Over the next 14 years as Skandia Cowes Week, the event developed rapidly as the partnership between Skandia and Cowes Week made major improvements and importantly the event became more inclusive.



The regatta evolved enormously since 1826, and now between 800 and 1,000 boats in up to forty different handicap, one-design and multihull classes race for eight days. It is this complete mixture of classic and ultra-modern designs that gives the regatta its uniqueness.

Around 8,000 competitors now participate, ranging from Olympic and world class yachtsmen to weekend sailors. The spectacle that the racing provides, together with the vibrant festival atmosphere attracts over 100,000 visitors to Cowes during the event. In 2011 Aberdeen Asset Management became title sponsor of Cowes Week.



Since retiring in 2004 I have raced at 10 Cowes weeks as a professional skipper for charter companies, BBC or corporate companies to take clients out racing all

week. For the last 6 years I have skippered for Cazenove and latterly Schroders Investment Management.

One of the biggest Corporate client racing fleets has been the Sunsail First 40 fleet, starting few years back with over 40 yachts in the class, but now a reduced fleet of 23. This year I managed the 'Schroders Team' and badgered a fellow skipper, a retired Met officer to skipper the second yacht. With up to 9 clients on board, some whom have never been on a yacht before let alone sailed or raced, I rely heavily on my first mate/bow-man Richard, to take them out and bring them back.....safely from a days racing.



24 Hours at Cowes

The day starts at 0700 and the yacht is 'prepped' for the days racing. We have two Schroder hosts join us each day but luckily they sleep in a crew house, guests in hotels so I have an empty yacht each night..... Heaven! After breakfast with the crew, clients and a skippers briefing, we get them on board at 0930 for a full safety briefing. RYA Competent Crew course is 5 days, Day Skipper theory 40 hours, practical further 5 days plus additional experience and so on. Even at Yachtmaster level flying a spinnaker/kite is not part of the RYA syllabus! Read on!



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Cowes Week continued

Pre Race Training... ha!"

After departing the Yacht Haven about 1015 and a few practice tacks and gybes, barring strong winds, being able to pull the correct coloured ropes, understand a nautical, might as well be a foreign language, we get the 'kite' flying and sometimes even a gybe in. And these guys have never sailed before! Because they don't have a clue of what they are doing they have no idea of what can go wrong (they soon will!) with this monstrous bit of coloured cloth, which has a mind and agenda of its own and of the fear and worry that Richard and I are experiencing!



This 'safe practice' is done amongst 2-300 other yachts all doing the same, waiting to start, or the smaller 'White Group' dinghy classes racing through our 'Black Group'.

The Start

Our start, which is generally 1210 is from what is known as the Bramble start line just west of The Bramble Bank, where a strong tide runs just to add to the interest or calamity on the start line.



I haven't mentioned the course yet. The Race Committee assist us by not overburdening us with this to soon with all the training we have to do with each new

crew each day. So, and I think they enjoy a good laugh here, Castle 1 Committee Boat gives us the course after our ten minute warning signal at 1200, followed I'm sure by several 'guffaws' over the speaker, when 23 yachts are all scrambling around the start line, trying to avoid each other with 1st mates down below receiving the coded course over the radio as numbers and letters, applying a Bletchley Park encryption deciphering procedure to identify which buoys we will be going around. In the meantime on deck, we are executing tacks and gybes like they are going out of fashion (there goes the 5 minute preparatory warning) and trying to miss other yachts in this organised chaotic melee of what we call Cowes Week and yacht racing.

However I should add there are about 10 yachts in this race fleet that have a full crew of regular amateur/professional/semi professional experienced racers on board all week. These are easily identified by all crew in exact same 'cloned' kit, hats and sunglasses and obviously knowing what they are doing. Small things such as the crew all hiking out on the same rail as opposed to suddenly finding two of your corporate crew still chatting away on the leeward rail, up to their waists in the wet stuff after a tack! Also at the pre start a bowman at the pulpit doing hand signals (somewhat different to the ones I use to other skippers!) to the helm letting him know of distance to start line, overlaps, (not flap jacks) and windward boats! The helm takin f' all notice of the bowman but it really looks good and intimidating to other race competitors. My bowman sits on the high rail looking out for kelp!

Back to the start...Clients are trying to take photos and may assist us by winching. Sometimes even the correct winch and on a good day with the genoa sheet the right way round the winch. Sometimes they are a little too helpful and enthusiastic when at 10 knts boat speed, 25 knts of breeze, a dozen

yachts over, around or on top of you they may grind both head sail winches at the same time! Mmmmm not sure what this achieves! Even if I think of a tack to myself our helpful trimmers seem to be able to anticipate this and blow the headsail usually at a time when you least need it. Others may even be jettisoning the previous nights alcohol or last nights dinnerthey were warned!This 'guest' went unconscious forcing us to retire (after a further 5NM racing....that taught him!) to get medical advice and rehydration!



(1 minute warning) Lots of shouting 'up up up -- winch winch- don't let go of the main sheet! The 'up up up' shouts are now converted to screaming from other crews and skippers which to this day I never know is either one of applying the race rules or just pure fright as 23 x 9 tonne yachts charge over the start line in anything of between 20-30 knots of breeze. Anyway after a lot of flexing of muscles, loads of testosterone, whiffs of body odours, shouts of protest....yeah go on then! and other such excitable happenings we are all away, generally beating upwind and against tide to our first mark down the Western Solent.



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Cowes Week continued

Races generally last about 3.5 hrs and are about 25 NM in length and we beat, fetch, tack, gybe, run, zig zag our way westwards, across the Solent and then back east to Cowes.

On occasions we fly the kite, plenty of photos taken here, loads of broaching to give the crew a bit of excitement, and generally get it back down with only the occasional washing of the kite or trawling for fish!



As mentioned there are 23 yachts in this Class and as well as the experienced crewed vessels, the four Aberdeen Asset Management yachts like to be competitive in as much they crew with one professional skipper and up to four other professional skippers on board acting as mates and crew.

Their 3-4 clients/guests do very little, enjoy a relatively 'shout free sail' and occasionally will be seen hiking out. Looks of envy from my crew as they are stuffing the kite down the companionway.....again, untying themselves from various ropes or throwing up over the side! Did warn them about that last bottle of port last night!



The Finish



Generally finish about 1530 and all back into the Cowes Yacht Haven where the traditional 'dark and stormies' (Mount Gay rum & ginger beer) are enjoyed by all on board over heroic tales and stories from the crew as who pulled or let go of some coloured rope at the wrong/correct time. They now even use nautical language to describe various parts or manoeuvres like hardened racers. Ask any of them if they have understood what they have done all day or where they have been and they have no idea. However you can see from their wind/sun burnt faces and big grins that they have had a great experience and an exciting day.



Apart from the occasional sea sickness injuries are a rarity throughout the week (Touch wood here!) Corporate skippering means that you apportion about 65% of your skills to crew safety, 25% to helming/skippering and the remaining 10% to racing and tactics. Saying all that we did have one injury during the week.

On the Wednesday with a choppy wind against Solent tide and 25 knts of sea breeze we had a very good start, the crew were on

a high and we were leading the fleet with five other yachts racing towards a mark, Quodpossam down towards Lymington. During a tack and the 'rail meat' moving over to the high side, one young lady somersaulted over landing with all her weight on her elbow. Not saying anything she hiked out but her swollen arm and lack of mobility came to the attention of those beside her who raised their concern.

Retirement was the call of the day. Despite the conditions and swell she was manoeuvred into the cockpit, dropped the sails, notified the Coastguard on channel 67 and made our way to Trinity Landing the designated Emergency Services RV point. Ambulance were in attendance and a fractured arm diagnosed.



'Why do I do Cowes Week?'

Phrases such as fantastic racing, skipper/mate comradeship, meeting so many people, fun, challenge, evening entertainment, great music and the unknown all come to mind. Schrodgers hosts look after us fantastically both on and off the water throughout the week. After a hard day racing and most clients have departed they take us for excellent meals followed by a few 'wets' in the beer tents, singing and dancing! There are plenty of bands in the Yacht Haven Marina, The Parade or Shepherds Wharf, plus many of the pubs to make a great evening. And then the following day and day after that and day after that.....,we get up and do it all again!!

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Cowes, the finale...

On Friday evening my family join me and Cowes was entertained, this year by a Typhoon and Red Arrow display over the Town.

This is followed at 2130 by the traditional superb 20 minute firework display which creates a tremendous atmosphere and finale to the week.



On the Saturday my family assist me with a gentle carefree, kite free sail back to Port Solent and I look forward to a restful, stressless week off. Upside is several other bookings for corporate and private charters from the guests and an invite for

my wife and I from one crew member a BBC Producer for a private tour, watch the production and transmission of the midday news followed by lunch.

Will I do it next year? At the time of writing Schroders have e- mailed me confirming next years 2015 booking! Will I accept the booking? Mmmmmmmm thinking about it ? Yes, no, maybe ?????

If you ever get the opportunity to race at Cowes week.....go for it....kelp and all!

