



East Cowes Sailing Club Newsletter Summer 2020

Covid-19 Update – Cautious Optimism

The club formally reopened on 14th May 2020 as soon as the CHA had relaxed their restrictions on the use of the river.

The facilities block is open but the clubhouse remains closed for the time being. As I write this on 4th July further restrictions have been lifted. For example, pubs are open; you can visit a hairdresser and eat out. However, the operating requirements for a club such as ours would place too great a strain on our limited resources.

Accordingly, at the July meeting of the General Committee, we agreed to reassess the situation at next month's meeting. If there is a significant change before that time which means that we can safely and legally reopen the clubhouse, I'll let you know.

We are starting to resume activities in a Covid-safe way. A fishing competition is scheduled for 12th July and one a month thereafter. Racing is tentatively planned to restart for the late summer series of 5 races from 5th August. Some social events are pencilled-in: the Prize-giving at Waverly Park on 24th October and the Xmas meal on 5th December at the Lifeboat. We may even be able to manage a cruise to Portland to coincide with the Parade of Sail for the Mayflower 400 celebration on 15th August.

Above: the view from the second of the new webcams.

CHC Pontoon Development

Earlier this year, I wrote to you with descriptions of four possible options for the CHC Pontoon Development, that is: Option 1—No Involvement; Option 2—Replace the hammerhead with CHC owned pontoons; Option 3—Join D pontoon to the new hammerhead without services; Option 4—Join D pontoon to the new hammerhead with services.

It was intended to follow-up with a ballot paper for members to make their first and second preferences known. However, there was an intervening petition for an EGM which prevented completion of the ballot at that time.

A traditional EGM was impossible under Covid-19 restrictions so the General Committee tried to comply with the EGM petition by enacting a byelaw to make a digital EGM possible.

A digital EGM was scheduled but the RYA advised that the enabling byelaw would be open to challenge in the courts. The General Committee cancelled the digital EGM and rescinded the enabling byelaw.

To progress the matter, a new sub-committee was formed (latterly) under the chairmanship of the ECSC President; comprising the President, a facilitator, two members of the EGM petitioners

and two members of the General Committee. The purpose of the sub-committee was to describe the concerns of the EGM petitioners in the form of questions to the CHM.

The CHM's responses would be reported to the General Committee along with the recommendations of the sub-committee. The CHM agreed to delay the development to allow sufficient time for the sub-committee to complete its work.

As I write (4th July), this process is on-going.

House and Stores

The kitchen has been mothballed pending work, consultations, inspections and certification to confirm that the facilities meet building, fire, and food hygiene regulations.

Essential concreting has been carried out in the yard and on the slipway. In particular, the annoying unevenness in the short slipway which made the launching and recovery of boats harder than it ought to be has been corrected.

In response to concerns raised by nearby residents, **a new hydraulic gate closer** has been fitted. As a result, the entrance gate no longer slams shut (thank you Dave Casson). Screening intrusive security lighting is next on the list to help improve life for the club's residential neighbours.

Two webcams have been fitted that cover all the club moorings and many boats of club members on adjacent CHC moorings (thank you David Tebay).

The view from one of the webcams is this edition's cover picture.

Qualifying Levy Period is extended until October 31st 2021

If you have managed to perform any duties for the club this year, thank you. You have donated your time to the club under very trying circumstances.

Covid-19 has disrupted the operation of the club to such an extent that the General Committee has voted to extend the levy period until October 31st 2021.

All hours worked this year will be rolled over to next year. This means that the total requirement for 2020 and 2021 is a total of 10 hours of work for the club.

If you have paid the Duty Waiver this year, you will be exempted from the levy for 2021. Effectively this year's (that is 2020's) payment covers you until October 31st 2021.

Rear Commodore Sailing

It was with regret and understanding that I accepted the resignation of John Garlick from the position of Rear Commodore Sailing in early June.

In his time as Rear Commodore, John strengthened the reputation of our Thursday evening racing. As a result, participation in our comprehensive and extensive race programme showed a significant rise in uptake. John has immeasurably increased our stock amongst other clubs and for that alone we should be grateful.

That was not John's only contribution. He ran the Wednesday Club until ill health forced him to take a back seat in recent months. John told me one day that he thought his most prominent contribution was organising the newly painted doors on the Centre and South Stores and the refurbished flag pole replete with brand new Red Ensign.

Peter Jackson has taken over the Chair of the Sailing sub-committee and will advise the General Committee on sailing matters and anything else in which he feels able to participate. He will, however, not vote at General Committee meetings.

Perry has taken over the Wednesday Buoys in his inimitable fashion and continues in his endeavour to make our club a place of fun, fellowship and participation.

Personally, I'm sorry that I won't be able to call on John's experience and level-headed advice quite so much in the future.

I'm sure that you, like me, wish John every success for the future.

News from the General Committee (two mid-term vacancies)

Dave Casson has taken on the new the role of Deputy to the Rear Commodore Stores. While the Rear Commodore Stores continues his recovery, Dave will Chair the Stores sub-committee, manage yard movements, storage and club moorings.

We have two mid-term vacancies; Rear Commodore Sailing and Honorary Treasurer.

A nomination form will be pinned up in the Centre Store until the end of July. Nominations should be proposed and seconded. An unopposed nomination will be considered carried. An opposed nomination will be put to the membership via WebCollect (with copies by post to those without email addresses). Members will be supplied with a ballot paper and invited to return their choices to the club by hand or post by mid-August.

The Beginning of an Adventure

The Garlick Brothers

Dawn and I purchased Midnight Getaway; a Tony Castro designed MG 335 in early 2011, and spent the spring working on her in Davis' Boatyard in Poole in preparation for the voyage west to Plymouth, our home port.

It became quite a steep learning curve, though not unexpected, as we grappled with the intricacies of Midnight's engine, electrics, and plumbing systems and finally, when it eventually arrived, the new standing and running rigging. The various tasks and challenges were not helped by the 200 hundred mile round trip to the yard from our home. Although we spent some days camping on board to hasten the departure date it was very cold that spring and the work seemed at times to proceed very slowly. Eventually however, we reached the point where Midnight was ready for sea and I could call for assistance for the 150 mile voyage westward. Midnight Getaway was finally craned into the water on the 6th June.

My brother John and I were able to sail Midnight Getaway to Plymouth on the 9th June although the weather forecast was not encouraging; strong winds from the west.

The voyage began with one of the engine alarms sounding when we were only 100 metres from the quay from which we had been launched. In the belief that it was a 'false' alarm, and not wanting to return to the boatyard for a further delay, and the additional costs, we carried on, and to our relief the alarm stopped after 5 minutes. The next barrier to our homeward voyage was the road bridge separating the upper harbour from the lower. We gently circled and awaited the scheduled opening.

Exactly on time the bridge rose and we were finally free to escape from this confining backwater. A brief sight of Dawn and Sue our respective partners on Poole Quay and then we were out of the shelter of the quayside and for the first time confronted with the full strength of the wind. It was intimidating. A dark threatening grey day, with the wind blowing at the forecast 30 plus knots from the south west.

We raised and reefed the mainsail as best as we could in the limited shelter of Brownsea Island and then, hard on the wind, headed for the entrance. The engine, which was on tick over, alarmingly stopped as the boat gathered speed and heeled over to the full force of the wind. Unable to restart the engine and aware that turning back to Poole Quay in these conditions was not an option, we raised the number 4 headsail, the only sail that fitted the new roller reefing system, and with some trepidation bore away down the fairway, aware that the chain ferry had right of way. With considerable relief we sailed past the ferry emptying its cargo of vehicles on the Sandbanks shore, and fetched down the fairway. For a June day this popular sailing arena was disconcertingly empty.

Whilst the sea was fairly flat within Sandbanks Bay, conditions gradually deteriorated as we sailed out, past Old Harry, and into the Channel. With the tide ebbing to the west we encountered classic wind against tide conditions. However my confidence in the boat began to rise once we settled down to a regular rhythm of carving our way through the endless succession of short seas. It was also reassuring to note that we were both pointing higher, and sailing faster than either of the other two yachts visible in the gloom.

The voyage began to assume a familiar pattern with a succession of long and short tacks taking us to the west and toward Portland Bill. In the overcast conditions and the heavy seas the coastline never looked anything other than grimly menacing. As the boat pitched and slammed to windward we became aware that the rig was very slack with the leeward shrouds bouncing alarmingly. Somewhat nervously I edged along the leeward deck which was awash, and managed to remove the shroud bottle screw terminal split

pins and wind down the rig, before carefully replacing the split pins whilst knee deep in water.

We seemed to be alone in this part of the channel but at least had the comfort of the Bill light away to starboard increasing in strength as day slowly became night. Beating to windward, some 3 miles off the Bill, we had a relatively easy passage but were glad of the shelter afforded by the spray hood.

It is always an achievement to pass a tidal gate like the Bill and to begin to make ground beyond, in this case into Lyme Bay to evade the worst of the newly flooding tide.

From the forecast there had been no indication of a drop in the wind strength, but, as the night wore on we found ourselves off Lyme Regis with barely a breath of wind and a strengthening tide slowly but surely taking us back up channel. In the still calm conditions we shook out the reef from the mainsail and replaced the number 4 sail with a number 2 which although too large for the forestay, at least gave us greater sail area and allowed John and I, in turns, to nurse the boat to windward and stem the effects of the adverse tide.

As the early morning light strengthened so did the wind, but still from the south west. Before long we were back to the number 4 and a reefed mainsail and a slog to windward. However, with the morning light, and after about an hours sleep each, we felt somewhat refreshed. Our course on the wind just allowed us to weather Berry Head with Torbay illuminated in the early morning sun. For me at least the coast line also became more familiar with Start Bay opening up ahead to reveal the usual succession of yachts leaving Dartmouth and heading west. We did notice as we cross tacked with a number of them that, as we neared the Start, they all decided to return to Dartmouth leaving us to face the headland on our own. After the relative calm of Start Bay the rounding of the headland itself was both arduous and agonisingly slow, with the wind and tide against us and a rough sea, my tidal calculations were very clearly wrong. The wind continued to slowly build as we beat westward past Prawle Point, Salcombe entrance, Bolt Head, Bolt Tail and then into Bigbury Bay.

With the tide now ebbing westward progress steadily increased. Off Hillsea point the wind increased in strength again, to over 35 knots, with the seas steadily building to make life very uncomfortable. A long tack offshore failed to provide a better angle for the entry to Plymouth Sound, the wind having moved in to the northwest, forcing us to short tack close inshore into Wembury Bay and then past the Mewstone and into the eastern side of the Sound. Progress was exceedingly slow. With darkness falling we finally beat into the Sound through the eastern end of the Breakwater with the wind now in the north but rapidly dropping in strength.

In very familiar surroundings we beat up river with the last of the flood tide. After ten years of sailing on and off my trot mooring I was reasonably confident we could manage the situation. After phone calls ashore we also had the benefit of one of the club boats standing by, helmed by an enthusiastic young club member. We also welcomed Peter Davis on board for the last 300 yards to assist with the final pickup of the mooring. So in the dark, and with no wind or tide, we ghosted onto the mooring at the end of a 35 hour delivery trip. Ashore the club bar had stayed open for our arrival and we enjoyed a wonderful, but slightly dazed, reunion with our wonderfully supportive wives.



1. Midnight Getaway on her cradle in Davis' yard in Poole before the mast was stepped

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