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January 2009

A LETTER FROM OUR NEW COMMODORE



Happy new year to all at Llandegfedd SC, and a big warm welcome to our new members.

2009 promises to be an exciting season with a full program of club racing, open meetings, training and social events to cater for all ages and abilities from our youngest novice to a seasoned International Star.

Rumour has it that 2009 will see our first foiling craft flying at the reservoir adding a new dimension to an already exciting mix of club craft.

Our successful junior sessions on a Tuesday evening will be repeated this year and hopefully with encouragement a number of these juniors will progress to take part in club racing.

There are currently very few juniors taking part in club racing at Llandegfedd which is not a good sign for the development of the club. In part we are a victim of our own success with the majority of our junior membership heavily involved in National and Regional squad training and competitions. It is to the future benefit of Llandegfedd SC and our sport that we continue to introduce, encourage and develop new juniors to our wonderful sport and fill this current void of young active club sailors.

Congratulations to all our representative members for their achievements in 2008 taking the name of Llandegfedd SC onto the water both Nationally and Internationally and good luck in 2009.

“Love your sport”

Dave Timson — Commodore

Looking forward to 2009

OD Training

As in previous years new members and level D OD's will be allocated times when they will shadow other more experienced OD's on an actual race day. Additional courses will be allocated when premises become available and sufficient demand is demonstrated.

Safety boat training

PB2 is now a mandatory qualification for all users of the club powerboats. All members who do not have this qualification will be required to obtain it in order to perform their duties. This year we are looking into third party resources using grant funding to accomplish the task. We do still have two qualified instructors within the club membership who may also be able to help. The club's policy is to encourage members to now go through Safety Boat training as the next stage too as we do need a number of people to have this qualification.

Safety boat storage

There is a plan to add high level natural light apertures to the rescue boat container this winter as finding stuff in the dark can be difficult if not unsafe. You should see some progress on this soon.

This page used to be dedicated to "the Plan" for the year ahead. Not much change here from 2008 but if you have a cunning plan for the club, please let me know.

Race Management Equipment

For some years Keith Sykes has maintained our race equipment with the help of a few volunteers. If anyone has an interest in taking over this onerous duty then please make yourself known. As always, many hands make light work. There is always something broken, sunk, off position or missing so it's an ongoing duty. A big thanks to Keith for his efforts to date.

Multiple starts & courses

The asymmetric and conventional courses will continue. It is hoped that Junior races will be run as well over the conventional course or a shortened version of it.

Training

All RYA 1 and 2 level courses will again be co-ordinated by Sarah Green this year for the June/July club courses.

Andy Howard will be running more advanced courses for club sailors who wish to develop their skills and become more competitive.

Llandegfedd Water Sport Centre

Paul Thomas and Simon Stanley now represent the sailing club on the Liaison committee which is meant to keep the club informed of activities and acts as a means of incorporating the needs of the club into the design of the centre and it's daily operation.

Newsletter

The newsletter has suffered through lack of support this past year. You will see a number of requests throughout this issue for you, the readers to submit articles for future publications. Remember it's your newsletter so please support it. If you have any ideas for inclusion please speak up.

Yearbook

This year the yearbook will be issued a little later once Memberships have been received so that it can better reflect current membership details. It will contain the sailing program in full, social and other events with a membership list and details of how to perform OD duties. As always we will be looking for advertisers, so if you know anyone who may be interested please put them in touch with the Commodore.

Website

The website underwent a major facelift last year and a great debt is owed to those who put the effort into that. Well done to the Web team.

Results

Huge thanks are due to Tony Tucker for transforming the results collation and publication process last year. I think I'd echo all members when I say "Well done sir!" Tony has written a detailed explanation of how he derives all the numbers which appear on the website and it's really worth a read. It is a bit too large for the newsletter so it too has been made available on the website.

Tony has asked that we all spend a little more time filling in the results sheet accurately, giving details of Helm and crew where applicable, sail numbers and please don't forget your rescue boat teams names. Given the service we get from Tony I think this is the least we can do in return.

Sailing secretary's locker:

Your Sailing Committee for 2009 comprises:

Martyn Osborne – Asymmetric Fleet Representative

Nigel Tinkler – Single Handed Representative

Neil Sharrat – Conventional Fleet Representative

Tony Tucker – Results Secretary

Simon Stanley – Youth Fleet Representative

Mark Williams - Sailing Secretary

The Sailing Committee deals with all issues relating to racing. The objective of the committee is to facilitate, promote, manage and administer inclusive, fair, enjoyable and well run dinghy racing. If you have an observation, suggestion or comment on any aspect of the club's racing please speak to, or email, a member of the Sailing Committee.

CLUB RACING AND PROGRAMME

The 2009 sailing programme has been finalised, copy enclosed. The racing format is similar to 2008 but your attention is brought to the following:

CYRC 6th June

Regatta 7th June

Topper Traveller 13th and 14th June with normal club racing on the Sunday.

Presidents Weekend 19th & 20th September.

There will be a race on the May Bank Holiday Monday.

Two club handicap races will take place on the Sunday of the Vareo open. First start 2.30pm

The start time for all racing in October and November is 12 noon.

Under normal circumstances all club racing should start at the programmed time. Race officers and rescue crews need to organise themselves with this in mind.

SOME CLARIFICATIONS FOR 2009

AWARD OF OD2s FOR RACE OFFICERS AND SAFETY CREWS

The award of a second place to race officers and safety crews is just reward for giving up a day's sailing but to ensure series results aren't unduly skewed the following limits will be applied in 2009. For a short series of 8 races or less a maximum of 1 No OD2 can be counted by any one helm. For longer series a maximum of 2 No OD2s can be counted. (However, where the discounting of a OD2 means a helm fails to have sufficient race results to achieve the minimum number to count, the average of his/her other race results in the given series shall be awarded – rounded to the nearest whole number.)

THE SCORING OF THE CLUB, ASYMMETRICAL AND CONVENTIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The system utilised in the 2008 series favoured sailors that completed all of the series. The following changes are intended to make the 2009 championship more inclusive:

The standard RYA scoring system will be utilised ie 1 point for first, 2 points for second etc.

Half the number of series plus one to count - meaning 5 series for the Club Championship and 3 series for both the Asymmetrical and Conventional.

The RYA method current at the time will be used to separate ties.

RETROSPECTIVE ADJUSTMENT OR RACE RESULTS

After much discussion by your Sailing Committee it has been agreed that no retrospective adjustment of race results to correct for boats disadvantaged by the timing of the shortened course signal will be permitted in 2009. This will apply where boats are disadvantaged by a dying wind and where a boat is beaten by a boat of the same class which has completed a lap less.

Mark Williams

Sailing Secretary for 2009



Prize Giving and Results for 2008

The venue for the 2008 prize giving is booked for Saturday 31st January 2009 at the Ponthir Village Hall. For the benefit of those who do not know, Ponthir is located on the B4236 on the left hand side about a mile out of Caerleon if headed toward Cwmbran. For those with GPS and a drink problem the bar is at exactly: 51 37 50 71N and 02 58 31 30W, the toilet a little south of that!

Message of thanks from Dave Downs

For some years now Dave Downs has performed OOD duties for the club on certain events and last year he covered The Assymmetric Open for us. He has historically accepted a token gift (often alcoholic in nature) as recompense, however in 2008 he asked that we support a charitable event in which he was taking part. After receiving our contribution we received the message below from him which the committee would like to share with you:

"My thanks to the club for sponsoring me in my Round the Isle of Wight Challenge. The event took place in May on a very warm and settled weekend with high pressure dominating the picture (probably the last such weekend we have had this year). We were up at a ridiculously early hour on the Saturday to start the sailing race, but there was no wind and lots of mist off Cowes, so it was decided to motor to the Needles and start the race there. At the Needles it was still like a millpond so we motored to St Catherines where the race started in a very gentle breeze, an hour and a half later with us still off St Catherines the race was abandoned and we motored to Bembridge. As the tide turned we started the race at Bembridge and 'sailed' (largely propelled by the tide) back to Cowes. We crossed the finish line with the sails down and lying across the tide!

Sunday's 65 mile cycling lap was not officially a race, but times were recorded for information. It was again very warm, with sun burn and dehydration being the order of the day. One of our team came off and went into a hedge on a fast downhill stretch and we had to wait 45 minutes for the ambulance to come and stitch him up, but the rest of us finished ok and caught up and overtook several other teams on the way.

The massage at the finish back in Cowes was very welcome, except for the sun burnt bits! We raised over £5000 for charity
Thanks again,

How many of what?

Ever wondered how many of what we have at the club? Relax those fingers and brain cells and take a look at this:

1 x 420, 8 x Asy Canoes, 2 x Dart 16, 3 x Enterprises, 1 x Hawke Surfcat, 1 x Laser,
6 x Laser 2, 3 x Laser 2000, 1 x Laser 3000, 1 x Laser 4000, 1 x Laser EPS,
1 x Laser Radial, 3 x Laser Stratos, 1 x Laser Vago, 1 x N12, 7 x Optimists, 5 x RS 200, 6 x RS 400,
1 x RS 500, 2 x RS 600, 1 x RS 800, 2 x RS Feva, 10 x RS Vareo, 6 x Solo, 1 x Spice, 1 x Supernova,
4 x Toppers, 1 x Topper Topaz and 1 x Unicorn.

That's 84 boats not including non-club members. Wouldn't it be something else to see them all out at the same time...

Anyone seen any new designs coming along whether radical or just plain old nice and functional, why not give us all a heads up in the next issue



Thinking of selling your boat? Why not use our for sale section. We can print it in the newsletter and put it on the website free of charge!



Photo: Hyde Sails

Here's an image which may become familiar at the pond ... if Robin can crack it. (maybe bad choice of words there?) No not the far distant sandy beach and glorious sunshine. The Foiling Moth. There is an inherent problem with one of these though. See page 13.

Joke de Jour?

Your Jokes here. Just send them in.

Kids—got any embarrassing photo's of Mum or Dad they'd rather nobody see?

Send them to news@llandegfedd.org.uk and I'll ensure they get exposed!

Did you hear that they are considering taking the word gullible out of the English dictionary?

The first Clubs and Coaches Conference held across Wales took place on 6th & 7th December 2008. On Saturday North clubs and coaches descended on Plas Menai and on Sunday the West & South clubs and coaches arrived at a very cold Castle Hotel in Neath. Andy and Ruth Howard, Phil Tilley and Mike Walkin of Gwent adventures attended.

Following introductions, the conference opened with a very informative and interesting talk from Chris Gowers, the Olympic Sailing Team Head Coach on the search for the Holy Grail 'how to run the perfect session'. Following that was the launch of the RYA coaching handbook and all the resources that went with it, DVD's posters and some very snappy Green Blue Bags! The afternoon was then spent on effective club training pathways and how to retain youths and juniors in the sport.

"We had a discussion session on the way that a new visitor or new trainee gets handled from the moment that they walk on the site; Are they greeted? welcomed? and how do they find out what we do? How do they progress from the sailing course to be involved in club activities? Buddy systems?"

The other discussion session was on club development; how to link with partners, make use of club resources out of season, sources of funding. In our case this is a pretty straightforward path, as we obviously need the Watersports centre, and co-operation with Gwent Adventures, Monmouth Boys school etc. to ensure that sailing is developed and continues safely at Llandegfedd", Said Andy Howard.

NEWSLETTER APPEAL

Some of you may have noticed a distinct lack of club newsletter in the past year. For some it may not have mattered, but I used to look forward to reading what everyone had been up to so I for one have missed it. Unfortunately, I'm partially to blame as I've apparently not pestered everyone enough to provide articles. Without Articles there can be no newsletter! With that in mind we go into 2009 with this, the first of my newsletters and I ask you all, young and old to have a think about jotting down a few words now and then in support of our publication. It need not be an epic story, perhaps just a fact, opinion, suggestion or even just a joke. Write up's on away trips are always interesting. How about a "Your letters" section where we can throw ideas and opinions anonymously if necessary (anonymity is assured) to see what reaction we get, though we will not print anything rude or offensive. If you have anything you would like in print, then please send it to news@llandegfedd.org.uk

Dave – Newsletter editor

Membership Report

Despite our lack of facilities we did however in 2008 increase the membership yet again.

We have 73 memberships made up of:

2 Affiliates; 6 Cadets; 1 Group; 2 Honorary; 2 Temporary; 3 Seniors; & 57 Full Memberships

Welcome to the people below who joined in 2008 some Trainees and some already racing with us.

Member-ship Type	First Name	Surname	Joined
Full	Chris	Smith	2008
Full	Simon	Collinson	2008
Cadet	Daniel	Waters	2008
Full	Allen	Pritchard	2008
Full	Stuart	Linton	2008
Full	Fiona	Carthew	2008
Full	Robert	Storey	2008
Full	P.D.	Mullin	2008
Cadet	Katie	Thompsett	2008
Full	Timothy	Nutting	2008
Cadet	Callum	Gibson	2008
Full	Matt	Topham	2008
Temp	Ed	Walker	2008
Full	Peter	Englefield	2008
Full	Christopher	Jones	2008
Full	Ferenc	Gemes	2008
Temp	Jonathan	Thomas	2008
Full	Ian	Fryett	2008
Cadet	Rebecca	Lewis	2008
Full	Phil	Tilley	2008
Cadet	Jack	Thompsett	2008



Mandy Sykes

Membership Secretary

Think you know your boats do you?



What kind of boat is this? First correct answer will be revealed in next newsletter.

(Will try and allocate more space for this next issue)

RS VAREO Report

The RS Vareo is currently the club's largest racing fleet with 12 or so boats. Information on the boat, the racing circuit and some racing tips follow:

The boat

The Vareo is a well sorted and ergonomic design which requires very little maintenance. In terms of performance it's PY is 1038 which is faster than a RS200 (1060) but slower than a RS400 (952). In reality it isn't particularly fast upwind, about Laser speed, but is surprisingly quick off wind - probably slightly faster than a RS400 in planing conditions offwind.

The Vareo is easy to sail and forgiving as the hull is inherently stable. Sheet loads are low and it carries a variety of weights and heights quite well but in strong wind, above say F3, it can be hard work for lighter helms to keep the boat flat upwind.

Whilst the Vareo is very easy to gybe most capsizes occur when gybing the kite in wind. This is normally caused by gybing straight onto a reach, rather than onto a run, and the combined main/kite sail area then takes the boat over before it is up to speed. Most capsizes can be dry as it is easy to step onto the boom then mast and hop over onto the dagger board. The boat then comes up easily providing the kicker is off. In stronger winds it is necessary to first drop the kite but again this can be done without getting wet.

Although raced as a single hander the Vareo was designed to take an occasional crew and has plenty of space and even toe straps up front. It can also be raced without a kite (must be left ashore) and the PY is then 1060 I believe.

The boat does have one significant fault. The mast isn't really stiff enough and whilst LDC, the builders, have tried to rectify this without making all old boats obsolete, masts can still be bent if sailed hard in strong winds - as I have proved! In normal club sailing the risk on bending a mast is very low.

About 450 Vareos have been built to date and the early boats (numbers started at 100) can compete with the latest boats (now around No558). Prices for a complete boat with sails, covers and combi trailer range from £5,500 for a brand new boat to around £2,000 for an early example.

The Racing Circuit

The racing circuit is sponsored by Fat Face and includes one day and two day open meetings, plus two day Inland Championship at Rutland and a three day Nationals on the coast. The Llandegfedd Open doubles as the Welsh Championship. The turn out at events varies from 8 (last year Chelmarsh - gales were forecast) to 45 at the best supported events. All abilities are represented. In 2008 the guys to beat were Richard Willows, Chris Larr, our Nigel Tinkler and myself. Chris Larr is young, fit and heavy and is the outstanding heavy wind sailor in the fleet. Luckily for the rest of us he isn't so fast in lighter winds and hasn't won an event in medium or light winds to my knowledge.

Nigel won the Fat Face circuit in 2008 and I was Inland Champion in 2007

In 2009 we expect Jeremy Symons to also be in contention. Furthermore John Regan, Gareth Edwards and Martin Peters are all capable of winning event races so Llandegfedd is well respected on the circuit.

Some Tips for Racing a Vareo

Outhaul - don't flatten the mainsail too much, look at other boats to see what others are doing. Nigel talks more about this on page 12.

Downwind in strong winds - as with skiffs it pays to power the boat up so you need to be at least lightly hiking downwind. It may be tempting to sail deeper but the speed drops off quickly. It also pays to look for gusts as the speed bonus in gusts can be huge.

Downwind in light airs - sit forward and sweat the boat as deep as possible.

Gybing in strong winds - gybing from a broad reach to a broad reach is fast but risky so to minimise risk of capsize gybe onto a run, get settled, then power up.

Gybing - as you move from one gunwale to the other I recommend having tiller in one hand and kite sheet in the other, only swapping hands when the gybe is completed and the kite is pulling. Takes a bit of practice but if you have sailed a Laser it will be second nature.

Trying to lay a mark on a tight reach with kite up - don't let the kite flap. Use full Cunningham and let off kicker to de-power and dump main if necessary but don't let the kite flap!

Upwind in stronger winds - flat is fast but difficult to maintain. Nigel is best at this so copy him!

Capsizing - as mentioned above try to stay dry. Step on boom and mast then hop onto board. This avoids having to haul yourself onto the board from the water and means you can get the boat upright and not be out of breath!

If you fancy trying a Vareo speak to a Vareo helm.

Mark Williams

Our Newly appointed Vice Commodore Jeremy Symons gives us a history lesson...

An interesting position [That of vice commodore-Ed], possibly the start of history repeating itself ... how? ... well some of you will be aware that the Symons family goes a long way back with Lladegfedd Sailing Club. My father, Roy Symons, held many positions within the Club from Press Secretary (self promotion) through to Commodore and President.

What some people do not know is how the Club has changed in racing terms since those early 1970's days when racing was held on a Sunday and Wednesday, with some experimental racing on Saturdays.

The Sunday race was the big event, one race at 3pm starting from the OD Hut. The race lasted 1 ½ hours and often involved over 50 boats, with fleets (6 or more) including Fireball, Kestrel, Laser, Mirror, Topper together with a small general handicap fleet. Each fleet started at 3 minute intervals sailed a conventional course over somewhat fewer bouys, with, no 9 & 10 or any letters. The original bouys were in slightly different positions, with bouy 1 close to the dam with a reasonable beat, and 3 was where No 1 is now.

At the end of racing there were obvious winners and losers, leaving only a small handicap fleet to require calculation. Racing, which whilst friendly often involved protests with protest committee sitting maybe at 1 in 5 races. These committees would huddle at one end of the Club House (unused Workmen's Hut now) whilst sailors anxiously waited their outcome. The clubhouse would be a very busy place with sandwiches, cakes, confectionary, tea and coffee, prepared and served by wives, girlfriend's mums and dads of sailors. In those days there was as much a rota for helping in the clubhouse as there was for doing OD.

The sailing year could often involve 4 or 5 fleet open events, the Welsh Championships a Regatta and Presidents Day. Open events would regularly attract over 20 visitors and would be run over 2 days. We even had a period of Mirror team racing with 3 boats per team and participating Clubs including Barry, Margam, Mumbles, Chew Valley and Portishead.

So when did it all change? It started with windsurfing in the early mid 1980, when many younger sailors transferred to the high speed thrills, (some even raced the sailors on a conventional course would you believe!) Then the recession of the 80's, water disease reaching a low ebb in the 1990's, a situation exacerbated by the lack of decent facilities.

Here we are now, with fewer boats but much more racing for members, and on the brink of a new watersports centre which will be the making of the club. We have a committed bunch of sailors and well trained and successful youth sailors with every reason to believe that the future is bright.

Club members are successfully competing in national events with accolades for Robin Wood, (International Canoe), Nigel Tinkler (Vareo) and in youth Hannah Tilley, Myles & Sara Jackson, Helen Stanley, Rebekka and James Thomas all doing well in the national fleets.

Lets continue the good work and fun into the 2009 and the future, where I am optimistic that we will soon see a return to the numbers of 1970's encouraged by the new facilities in 2010.

Jeremy

That was interesting Jeremy. Lets hope that the current membership can leave a legacy for the youth of tomorrow to write about



From the next issue we will be running a prize for the best letter submitted for the newsletter. Please write in with something witty, really interesting or controversial and you may just win yourself a bottle of Vino, some beer or Chocolates. Come on. Put pen to paper or fingers to keys!

Your 2009 committee members are:

President	Paul Thomas	Senior Officer
Commodore	Dave Timson	Chief Executive of club
Vice Commodore,	Jeremy Symons	Social activities, commodore in waiting
Sailing Secretary	Mark Williams	All sailing matters, calendar and events
Membership Secretary	Mandy Sykes	Membership applications and payments
Treasurer	David White	Looks after the money
Secretary	Julie Boswell	Administration, minutes of all meetings
Webmaster	Andy Howard; Tony Tucker; Chris Stanley	Looks after the website
Newsletter	Dave Brannigan	Compiles Newsletters and Yearbook
Bosun (main)	Martin Phillips	Maintenance of all equipment
Bosun (Topper)	Neil Williams	Maintenance of Topper dinghies
Bosun (Oppie)	Pat McLeod	Maintenance of Optomists
Bosun (420)	Bill Jackson	Maintenance of 420
Bosun (Enterprise)	Vacancy	Vacancy
Bosun (Rescue)	Nigel Tinkler	Maintenance of rescue boats
Conventional Fleet Rep	Neil Sharrat	Captain of Conventional fleet
Senior Instructor	Alan Bolton	Main instructor for RYA training courses
Asymmetric Rep	Martyn Osborne	Captain of asymmetric fleet
Youth Reps	Rebekka Thomas; Kate Stanley	Promote junior sailing and social events
Child Protection Officer	Gill Williams	Child protection policy manager and adviser
OD Roster	David Green	Decides who does duty and rescue
Training co-ordinator	Sarah Green	Organises training events
Results Secretary	Tony Tucker	Publishes and collects events
Social Committee	Sally Thomas	Members of socialising committee
Race Development Officer	Andy Howard	Development of club racing skills
W.Y.A Race Coach	Bill Jackson	W.Y.A area representative and junior race coach

As newly appointed newsletter editor and "give me some content bully" I thought it best I lead by example and add a little content of my own so here's a short story of how we got into sailing.

The Brannigan Story...

When I was a young lad of about 5 years old my father built a Mirror Dinghy (18648). I can still remember the copper wire stitching and the smell of fibreglass resin even today. That boat stayed in the family for years eventually coming into my charge about 25 years ago. Her inaugural launch was at Uskmouth Sailing Club and we subsequently sailed it at Llangorse, but more often than not at Llandegfedd over the years. There were a few years here and there when it never saw the water and at one point in my life I just had to experiment with powered craft so she was laid up for several years, but once the children came along and were old enough, Sandra and I thought it time to get the old girl back out of retirement and onto the water. Llandegfedd was the obvious choice once more, but as before we continued to sail as non-club members as we found the sailing club to be rather elusive and exclusive at that time. In April about four years ago we once more brought the old girl out of hibernation with the intention of painting it ready for the season, but with a heavy heart decided that enough was enough and it was time to upgrade to something that wouldn't rot. I could have bought a decent boat for what I was paying in paint over the years, and a new gaff five years ago had cost me three times as much as the original kit for the whole boat in 1968. Alas we sold her to a guy who was going to take her to Cornwall. Boats and outboards website. Gone in a week.



Not being a club member I was a bit shy of asking around the compound for advice on what to replace her with, and after a short impatient search I found a Topper Cruz Classic living in Cardiff. We had it on a trial basis on a freezing April weekend before committing to the purchase. I know what you're thinking, I hadn't heard of one of them either, but it seemed like a nice big safe boat with lots of room for all 5 of us and was made by what I thought was a reputable manufacturer. She carried lots of sail including a fair sized spinnaker and could carry an outboard that could provide safety at sea. Anyone who had a go in her will know that she was, in reality, not that stable. On our maiden voyage (on Mothers day no less), Mother ended up freezing after a cold capsized and was not impressed! Despite that we decided to buy her and hopefully learn how better to keep her upright. In many ways it was a nice boat. For family cruising in light to medium winds she was OK. We had a lovely week sailing around Poole Harbour a few years back and didn't capsize once! Just as well or we would have drowned the outboard. However back at Llandegfedd things were not getting any better and we went swimming just about every trip out. The one positive thing the Cruz did do for us was to break the ice with the sailing club. As the boat was a little unusual people who we had seen for years and never spoken to suddenly started to talk to us about the boat. We became an entity at last! There may be a little lesson in there somewhere. Anyway, this social interaction led to us putting the children on the RYA start sailing course with the club and as part of that we all became members.

I began reading books on sailing and realising what all the control lines really did as opposed to what I originally thought they were for, and Sandra got better at packing the spinnaker back into the bag after a capsized. Teamwork!

Now, anyone who knows Sandra and I will know that even today we are far from immune to the odd capsize, but that boat was something else. As a new club member, I accosted someone reputed to be a competent helm to see if the problem was my doing, or if there was indeed something wrong with the boat or rig set up. A certain Mr Jackson accompanied me in my first ever race taking the helm and before we got to the start line we were on our side, then again twice during the first race and once more in the second. That race restored some self-confidence as I felt that if it can happen with Bill it must surely be the boat? There are a couple of theories as to why she was so tippy, but I'll not dwell on them. With some level of Kudos restored with Sandra a decision was made to trade her in for something more forgiving and the advice came flooding in.

Paul Thomas recommended we buy a Laser 2000. The fact he was selling one at that time of course had no bearing on that, and Bill Jackson suggested an RS400. Bill was in the process of selling his RS200 and going back to a 4. Anyone who is willing to buy another of something they owned before is a good recommendation for me and he didn't even try and sell me the 200 so he clearly has more scruples than Paul. (Just joking Paul). Both of these boats were in contention anyway, and when Mandy and Keith offered up Gandalf for a trial go one evening we jumped at the chance. I recall my first impression of the 400 being of how wide and spacious it was. It is a fair old hike from one side to the other. It was also very unstable when boarding, a trait which happily resolves itself once under way.

So, it was between a Laser 2000 or an RS400. Strange comparison to make I know, but different reasons for each. With the 400 came the problem that there was no longer room for cruising with the family, but I had plan B up my sleeve to address that if needed. I tend to be a little impetuous me, and within a week, before I even had chance to try the Laser, I turned up at the lake with "Floozy II" our RS400 which we picked up in London. A month later we deployed plan B and bought "Floozy Feva" at the Southampton boat show. (One of our speedboats was the original "Floozy")

When we bought the 400 there was a rumour that the fleet was set to grow and that was a deciding factor in getting one. Bill was selling his 200 to get one, Phil Tilley was rumoured to be coming back to Llandegfedd with his, Phil Weston may soon finish his house and start sailing his again, and with the Sykes's and the White's already sailing regularly there was to be a good spread of competition. The reality this past year has been somewhat different with only Keith and I regularly helming a 4 on the weekends which has been OK, but not what it could have been. I see elsewhere in the newsletter that there are 6 x RS400 in the membership, so we have our fingers crossed that some of the others come out to play more regularly next season. The more the merrier!

We did get to try a Laser in the end. I used one during the instructors course and last year Tony Tucker swapped his Laser 2k for our 400 for an hour or so. I have to say that we feel we made the right decision for us, though the 400 may not suit everyone. Sheet loads are quite high, especially for the crew and it can be a bit of a handful above a F4. They are forgiving though and very ergonomic. Everything just falls to hand. If anyone fancies a try of one just ask and I'm sure we can accommodate you. I'd love to encourage the fleet to grow.



We still have a long way to go in improving our sailing, particularly in strong winds where we have problems getting the kids out in the Feva and keeping the 400 upright on the gybes, but we're getting there. Practice as you know makes perfect. Unfortunately for the last two years it's either been howling or dead calm so good practice conditions are often hard to get.

I think if we'd kept the Cruz we would no longer be sailing, but may instead have gone back to water skiing and Scuba diving. That boat lives in Brittany now after I put it on the Boats and outboards website and again within a week it was gone. We used it for one season and got £100 more than we paid, making it the only thing I ever made a profit on but we paid dearly in other ways!

So that's our story. Do any of you have a tale to tell...?

Nigel Tinkler, One of our resident Vareo Champs has some food for thought...

Travelling around the circuit this year I was surprised on the different thought processes concerning the outhaul. Although LDC now fit the adjustable system as standard some people seem happy to set the outhaul before they go out on the water and do not touch it again until they come ashore – it certainly works for some. Others like to adjust it for upwind sailing and only read-just it when travelling downwind. Then there are the others like myself who are constantly fiddling with it. I am sure in my case it is nervous energy, maybe I should sail with some 'worry beads'.

I thought in this article that we might break this down to different points of sailing. I am not advocating that my thoughts are tablets of stone as I am sure some people will prove otherwise. At this point I think I should mention the Cunningham, as any adjustment of this can radically alter the foot and subsequently the shape of the sail. I will leave this to another time and ask someone else to do a piece on it.

So to start with let's look at sailing upwind in drifting conditions. On this I am confident that the foot of the sail needs to be flat against the boom and flat. What little wind there is must flow smoothly over the sail unhindered. If the outhaul is slackened the sail develops a bit of a belly and will stall the flow of wind over the sail. The penny dropped a few years ago on this for me when we were sailing a particularly light Inland Championship at Rutland. I had a tendency to always to leave a bit of slack in the foot and that inch made quite a difference.

Next, upwind in light conditions, force 2 to 3. My view is as the wind increases the outhaul should be relaxed to a maximum of 4 to 5 inches, thus providing power to the sail, the span of an open hand between the boom and the foot is a good indicator like this:

As we get to force 4 it may depend on the weight of the helm. I think a lot of the light sailors in the fleet start to tighten things back up a bit to depower the rig. I think the heavier sailors, 13.5 stone+ are still able to power their boats up on the upwind legs. When we get to force 4+ opinion alters a bit in the Vareo class. For example if you look at some of the photographs of the Nationals at Lee-on-Solent this year the National Champion was sailing upwind in excess of Force 5 with a very loose looking foot. On saying that if you asked him he would not describe himself as lightweight. This is where I think some people may disagree with me. Using this year's Nationals as an example (and not my finishing position!) I think even as a lightweight sailor I need to sail with the foot a little bit loose, say an inch or two between foot and boom and not pulled flat in against the boom so that the foot looks folded against it like this:



Some sailors would say that because you are being overpowered you need to depower that sail as much as possible and by yanking on the outhaul and Cunningham you achieve a flat sail and this has the desired effect. This in my view might work in very flat water but not in waves and especially in the conditions we experienced at this year's Nationals. The best way I can describe this is a bit like driving a car. If you are travelling along a flat road in say 5th gear at moderate speed the power generated by that gear is adequate for you to drive along quite happily. Now if you suddenly encounter a steep hill and remain in 5th gear you are going to struggle to get up that hill. Sailing in waves is exactly like that, you need more power. By selecting a lower gear in the car or easing the outhaul in the Vareo you achieve the same goal. You are able to power yourself through the waves at lower speed. I must stress at this point the Cunningham and kicker need to be yanked on as tight as possible especially for the lighter sailors like myself.

It is always going to be a compromise and whatever you do, the heavyweight sailors will have a slight advantage in the strong winds like the Nationals this year and the lightweights in the light winds we had at the Inlands. On saying this there are exceptions and if you look at the top three at the Nationals, one of those could not be described as heavy – but definitely fit and young. It might be worth just looking through some of the photographs that have been taken this year at our different events and coming to your own conclusions. Look at the wind strength, water conditions i.e. waves and profile of the sailor.

That just leaves outhaul adjustment on downwind legs. Personally I don't think it makes much difference. Providing it is not drum tight or excessively slack I have not notice any difference and keep the foot of my sail between 2 and 4 inches from the boom.

I have purposely over simplified this because other controls do come into the equation such as the kicker, Cunningham and traveller. Again the traveller adjustment in the Vareo is another topic of debate as views on the use of this control differs quite a bit through the fleet. I think it is one of the attractions of the Vareo that we don't have to spend large amounts of money on the latest gadgets and are able to discuss the fundamental sail controls and leave the rest to the ability of the sailor.

The Bosun's Locker

Doris

A few of us can paint Doris when we have warmer temperatures. We are able, at low cost, to construct a frame using 3 x 3 timber from Torfaen Salvage. The cost of hiring scaffolding is too high. We already have two large tarpaulins, but need to buy a few more. Re-launching needs to be done ready for the 1st March races.

Outboard Servicing

In previous years, Nigel has towed the RIB and Jeannau engine to the boatyard for annual servicing. This year we have reduced cost by having someone from Red Line Boats visit the club. We will need to empty the rescue boat container before the first weekend to provide access to the boats.

Container Improvements

The General committee will be considering expenditure on folding chairs and Perspex covered windows for the rescue boat container. The roof is being made more water-tight, to provide a dry, more comfortable shelter. Since the end of last season I have used a hydraulic jack and length of timber to push up the areas of the roof where the water has collected. Mike and Brigitte have provided us with a lamp for use in the blue container. It needs to be kept within easy view, when the doors are opened. The lock on the blue container is being replaced to allow easier /safer opening and closing. We have steel storage racks in the green container which need to be moved into the blue one. This will improve storage of Buoyancy aids etc.

Club Boats

As a result of Neil Williams' work on the Toppers, they should be ready for use.

The 420 has a split on the underside (I can't remember which one) foredeck gunwhales. This will need to be repaired. The Enterprise and 420 and Optimists will need to be checked before racing.

Race Flags

Keith and Mandy have, as usual, stored these in their garage, away from the winter residents of the OD Hut - hungry mice. Perhaps we could invite the mice to move to the rescue boat container, where there is always a plentiful supply of drinks and snacks left by generous rescue boat crew.

Martin



"Could someone help me launch my moth please?"



“the Waning Planker” – IC fleet gossip

Can I wish you all a Happy New Year and what a year it should be!

A certain Mr Wood has decided to take up flying lessons as he was getting a bit of a complex as nobody wanted to play with him in the races. The real truth is that he was starting to get worried with all the latest AC competition at the Res. All of a sudden he realised he would have to learn the rules if other boats were involved in his race!

Anyway I bumped into Woody who was trying to strike up a deal with Scotty @ RatRigs for the latest dry-suit fashion. Is he starting to feel the cold this winter or is it the fact he is spending that much more time in the water crash landing?? Apparently it really hurts dropping in from six foot above the water and he's sporting a nice set of shroud bruises to prove.

I also hear from the recent Sailing Committee meeting that a PY of 69 has already been set for any foiling Moths who dare to launch at Res or was it 690 or 609 or something really fast was mentioned.

Meanwhile the rest of the fleet are hard training with the prospect of actually being able to win an AC Open event this season.

Steve “Rambo” Bowen who I understand actually gave Woody the money to buy his Moth (“if you can't beat him, get rid of him!”) has been seen training in Bannatynes Gym in his lunch break or was it his morning break or afternoon, well actually does he work at all? Steve has also recently landed a substantial sponsorship deal with SuperSpars, the deal is, he breaks a significant number of masts and hence they sail through the credit crunch with plenty of cash flow.



Dave “juiced-up” Timson was seen recently measuring up Robins canoe – is he looking to buy it? Will it fit in his garage or was he just stealing his settings?? How long is that plank? I'm sure there's a maximum length in the rules somewhere. Dave was also seen pushing his car across the Dam road last week, is this another fitness regime preparing for next season or had he in fact broken down?? I gave him a wave as I passed anyway.

Alex Howard was out heavy weather sailing recently seen mono-cycling on the end of his plank while juggling to train his concentration. Sounds about right for AC sailing!!

In the news recently there was talk of scientists creating a Black Hole on earth. In fact it was Steve Clarkes latest AC creation sucking in all the national carbon fibre stocks to a garage in Chepstow. This year the Williams F1 team have had to resort to “stitch and glue” techniques on their latest car due to the resultant shortage.

Martyn “Prince of Darkness” Osborne has ordered a nice new set of Hydes for his “Red-a-head”. Will this see him work his way to the front of the fleet or will he miss the power produced from his Orange setup? Orange – Hyde – Orange – hide!! When approached on the subject, he stated that the Orange were great on one tack but he has decided that he will progress onto port and starboard tacks with the Hydes.

“Ozzy” has also been seen training with the Penallta under 10's rugby team and a report from the team coach is that his fitness levels are also improving ready for the coming season.



Ian "I used to sail a Topper" Fryatt has been reportedly bulking up for the forthcoming season to try and stop his AC becoming the second foiling craft at the Res. My words of advice were not to bother as he would never get off the ground (or water)! I also advised he tries leaving his kite in the sock to reduce drag. That guy is far too quick downwind!

Terry "I used to sail a Cello" McCool has been busy fitting a fret board to his bowsprit. When challenged for its purpose, I was informed of a new method of fine rig tuning.

F# needs to be maintained upwind and then Bb downwind on starboard gybing to A# on port tack for optimum tuned performance. I will listen out for you on the water Terry but I'm not convinced??

The International Canoe EuroCup 2009 is to be held in Sweden this August; hopefully a strong contingent from the UK will take part including a number of the Llandegfedd boys who were recently seen practising their Swedish cultural songs at a sing along screening of Mamma Mia.

Choir Practice?

Waning Planker



Seems like our AC fleet is going from strength to strength. I wonder how long before those single hander Vareo boys succumb to the temptation?

RACING COACH LEVEL 2 COURSES

Have you ever thought about helping others improve their racing? Why not get some coaching yourself on how to do this?

You do not need to be an Instructor, or anything like that, but you need to have a good standard of racing/sailing. Details can be found on the links below. To give you a clue,

The elements that you will be assessed on during the course will include:
Your personal sailing skills.

- Your ability to deliver an informative and effective brief.
- Running a safe and practical race training exercise.
- Your ability to debrief a student sailor.
- Your depth and range of knowledge of racing.
- Your safety awareness.

Next course for South & West is 28th Feb / 1st Mar at Cardiff Bay Yacht Club. Details of the course and full list of coaching courses can be found on the RYA Coaching Website.

<http://www.sailracer.co.uk/ryacoaching/default.asp?eventid=8078>

CLASSIFIEDS

Anything to sell or anything wanted. Within reason and the rules of common decency, can be advertised here. Call a committee member if you wish to add anything.

Boats for sale

Asymmetric Canoe – Razorback
Carbon Special 2007

Fastest AC with a superb record.

SuperSpars – Hyde sails – covers – foil bags – trolley.

Excellent cherished condition.

Contact – Trainee Pilot Robin Wood

WEBSITE

Visit our website for all current and archive club information with results and latest sailing programme.

www.llandegfedd.org.

DIARY

April 25 & 26 Asymmetric Open and AC premier event

May 4 Mayday bank holiday race

May 16 & 17 Welsh Vareo Championships

June 6 CYRC

June 7 Club Regatta

June 13th & 14th Topper traveller (Normal club racing on the Sunday)

Sept 19 & 20 Presidents weekend

Please remember to register your email address with the membership secretary to allow us to keep in touch. Also make sure you are registered with our yahoo chat group as all results are now distributed by email across this group.

To register send an email to:

*Llandegfeddsailingclub-
subscribe@yahoogroups.com*

LLANDEGFEDD WATER SPORTS CENTRE (LWSC) UPDATE

At the time of going to print we do not have a formal update from the Directors of the Llandegfedd Water Sports Centre, however we can rest assured that there is plenty going on in the background. The AGM for the LWSC is due to be held on:

Date: Wednesday 21st January 2009 at 7.30pm

Venue: Croesyceiliog Cricket and Rugby Social Club

The Highway,

Croesyceiliog

Cwmbran

Everyone is welcome to attend the AGM and stay for the public meeting which is to follow. The purpose of the public meeting is to try and involve potential users of the centre and of course to try and raise funds to aid it's progress.

