



OUR CONTACT DETAILS

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If you're visiting, do let us know.

COMMODORE'S JOTTINGS

Hello Everybody,

Normally we would have put a newsletter out around Easter but as it came so early this year we thought we would wait. By doing so we may have been hoping that the weather would have been more conducive to annual maintenance and even getting out on the water. However, today is cold, wet and more like pre-Easter than post but we're not worried as we aren't coming out the water until June.

We are fortunate to include two articles from members, and would like to thank Tony Giblett and Howard & Pauline Bond for these contributions.

We have reprinted a couple of items by the RYA on red diesel. If anybody comes across any other information on the way ahead after the end of October we would be interested to hear.

As if Nichola is not sufficiently employed, she is hoping to stand for the RYA Council this year. Weymouth and Portland sailors need to protect our waters from being completely commandeered by the Olympics so a local rep. was considered necessary. Please give her your support if you can.

Finally our best wishes to you all for a thoroughly enjoyable time on the water in 2008,

Nichola and Ron

ARE WE ADDRESSING YOU CORRECTLY?

Please let us know if any of your details contain any errors or need any changes. We sometimes get forgotten when members change address.

The Font of All AQUA-STARS

Geoff has decided to standardise the font used for all occurrences of the written words AQUA-STAR. This is the nearest font I can find – CENTAUR in BOLD – and it is quite a small typeface for the font size - this is 12 point.

2008 Rally

We have several ideas about a rally in 2008. We thought, Weymouth might be a good stopping off point for members, but then we thought this might be better left until 2009 when we could all go to the new Dean & Reddyhoff Marina adjacent to the W&P National Sailing Academy - the venue for the 2012 Olympic sailing events. Next choice was Plymouth, particularly since Tony Giblett offered to help, and finally we thought about a get together during the Southampton Boat Show, although berthing is not easy then. Many of you do either live around the Solent area or could travel there easily by car, so even if we did not have a boat rally, does anybody fancy a dinner on the last evening of the Boat Show (Saturday 20th September)?

Let us know your preferences/ suggestions and try not to let last year's weather put you off!

Factory News

Geoff reports that the 78' boat build complete with a hydraulic swim platform is well underway. Two 57' boats are also on order.

The modifications to Wind Cheater have been completed and Richard has returned to the UK while benefiting from the stabilisers and the new covered afterdeck. This is proving to be a popular arrangement with a new 48' Azure being recently sold. The demonstrator, having been sold after the last boat show, has had the two modifications and will be going into the water next week. In replacement, Geoff is having another 48' Azure to be called Lady Azure. She will be on show at the Guernsey Boat Show at the end of April and Jersey Boat Show over the early May Bank Holiday weekend.

Roma is at present undergoing annual maintenance at Marine and General – don't forget that David Norman is a fellow owner and has really good offers for Club members. Geoff is also expecting the 74' Twisted Pair to return to her makers from Norway for refurbishment. This is the boat seen covered in snow in the Aqua-Star adverts – a good example of one kept in a harsh environment!

As there was so much to get on four sides, please can you refer to previous newsletters for the list of discounts, or contact us for details. We'll make sure they are included next time.

The RYA and BMF (British Marine Federation) can now confirm that the key features of the new scheme for charging duty on marine diesel to be introduced by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) with effect from 1 November 2008 will be:

- Private users can continue to use marked fuel (red diesel) providing they make a simple declaration to the supplier and pay the full duty rate for heavy oil;
- Registered Dealers in Controlled Oils (RDCOs) will be responsible for declaring the duty collected to HMRC; and,
- Fuel purchased for domestic use (i.e. not for propulsion of the craft) can continue to be purchased at the rebated rate.

HMRC have yet to issue a public statement but have released to the RYA its Impact Assessment which is available in related links above.

Under the new scheme, HMRC envisage that boaters will 'self declare' whether they are a commercial or recreational vessel and recreational vessels will pay the full duty rate. Fuel used for heating purposes on board will continue to be sold at the rebated rate of duty and the retailer will take the owner's word, again based on self declaration, on what proportion is for heating or lighting and what is for propulsion.

Dave Fitzgerald, HMRC confirmed that the core policy had been fixed but that they would be working closely with RYA, BMF and other stakeholders in relation to developing the detail of the declaration process and apportionment of fuel for domestic use. Following that consultation process, HMRC will produce comprehensive guidance.

Neil Northmore, the RYA's Government Affairs Advisor, said: "Since the decision was made to charge a higher rate of duty on red diesel, which required a new regime, we have been working hard with HMRC to find a sensible solution for all.

"Our main concerns were availability and safety, and we were aware that there was a danger that some retailers in more remote areas would simply not bother selling to pleasure boats on the premise that it would be more trouble than it was worth to distinguish between private and commercial craft, and then process the paperwork."

The onus will be on the owner of the boat to self-declare whether they are a commercial or recreational vessel and pay the appropriate rate of duty at the pump. Anyone falsely declaring they own a commercial vessel may be subject to enforcement action by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

Howard Pridding, Executive Director of the British Marine Federation, said:

"While no-one is going to pretend that the duty increase on red diesel is a good thing, we are pleased with how HMRC has managed the consultation process and the position that they have finally adopted. There were real fears that the marine industry would be hit with significantly increased costs and administrative burdens but HMRC has listened to our concerns and come up with a system which the BMF feels able to support.

"The proposed system spreads the burden between boaters and the industry in a fair way and hopefully will ensure that, with the industry able to keep the existing infrastructure, boaters will still be able to access fuel in convenient locations."

The campaign to secure future diesel supplies for recreational boaters has been running since 2003.

The RYA and BMFs work with the HM Revenue and Customs has been instrumental in ensuring diesel remains available, particularly in remote areas where the priority has always been supplying commercial vessels.

"This solution ticks many of the boxes for recreational boaters. Availability will not be affected, which gets rid of the safety concern, and the potential for reams of paperwork or even registration of craft, to identify commercial vessels from recreational ones, has been minimised" Neil added.

The only real remaining issue is how the impact of increased diesel prices will affect the marine leisure industry and participation. The RYA will continue to work with the Government to assess the impact of this.

Boating Abroad and Red Diesel

Article dated 04/04/2008

As it is still legal in the UK, to purchase red diesel for use on pleasure craft, until 1st November 2008, technically there is no reason why a UK pleasure boater should have any trouble boating elsewhere in the EU this summer provided they:

1. keep receipts for the diesel, to prove that it was bought in the UK and ideally log the engine hours to back up these records
2. do not carry red diesel anywhere other than in the main tanks
3. do not purchase red diesel in a country where the purchasing of rebated fuel by leisure craft is prohibited by law. NB
 - o we understand that this is now the case in Belgium
 - o rebated fuel in Ireland is coloured with Green dye rather than red, and remains available to leisure craft

Should you encounter any problems and be fined in respect of having red diesel in your main tanks, you should ensure that you receive paperwork documenting the fine; this will help to demonstrate if a foreign official has misinterpreted their own legislation.

The RYA are interested to hear if you are involved, at first hand, in such an incident. Please contact boating.abroad@rya.org.uk

New Members

Even the winter has resulted in new members who we are delighted to welcome to the Club:

Peter & Rosemary Taylor	Devon	Diomed	River Yealm
Jim & Jill Hilson	Hampshire	Premier Crew	Med. Based

If Jim and Jill aren't in the Med now, I bet they wish they were!

2007 (the Lost Summer) – by Howard and Pauline Bond

We departed Plymouth onboard Griffin II as planned on 1st June and made directly for Camerat, some 140 nm on a long rolling swell which we covered in 10 hours, the Chenal du 4 was calm. After a two night stop we were on our way again through the Raz to Benodet, followed by stops at Concarneau, Ile de Groix and eventually La Trinite. It was while at La Trinite the weather decided to fall apart but after an extra night's stop the wind dropped sufficiently for us to progress to La Turballe. This is a fishing port and marina with a common entrance and can be entered at any state of the tide.

It then transpired that the little breeze we had experienced at La Trinite had just been a practice session and the wind made a greater effort with six to seven WF. When we had checked in with the Marina master on arrival we were told we, together with many other Brits, would have to vacate our berths after two nights as they were expecting a large rally at the weekend. The morning of departure arrived and there was a notable reluctance for the Brits, including ourselves, to depart as we did not expect many yachts to arrive in such poor conditions. However, a "little breeze" was not going to stop French yachties and we were eventually surrounded. We decided to depart, having convinced ourselves that conditions had abated (who was kidding who?) so instead of making for Pornichet we motored all of five miles to Piriac, where fortunately the tide was right for us to enter immediately.

It was at Piriac that we met up with a number of fellow members from the Royal Southern and had a great time with much lifting of the right arm, again more delay due to 38 knots plus of wind plus a sand storm for good measure as the beach was to the windward side of the marina. Next from Piriac to Pornichet through a lumpy sea for a two night stop, then some eight days later we managed to leave Pornichet after experiencing continuous high winds which never seemed to drop or stop. In fact 41 knots was recorded by a yacht berthed on an adjacent pontoon. During this period two Dutch girls arrived and it took four of us on the pontoon with some effort to get their small Swan berthed.

We had wanted to join some friends at Noirmoutier all of 12 nm distance for a 70th celebration over this period but no luck. We had now run out of time to go further south as we had to go up the Villaine River to pick up some friends who flew in from the UK for a restful holiday! A further enforced stay of some three or four nights at la Roche Bernard due to the high winds and then we locked out of the Villaine to proceed to Piriac and onward to Quiberion, over a flat sea, something we had not seen for several weeks.

To avoid boring you more we eventually departed France from the new marina at L'Aber-Wrac'h some eight and a half weeks after leaving Plymouth. In the meantime we had run in to a heavy squall (some 36 /40 knots) after departing from Morgat and rounding Cap de la Chevre where Gryphon II gave a fair impression of one of HM submarines. I have also passed over the lock out by French fisherman, due to high fuel prices and restricted size of fishing nets, at La Turballe.

Was it worth it? Very much so, as, although we did not reach our objective of La Rochelle, we did meet up with a number of friends who were in the region at the same time. The fuel of course was more expensive but the marina costs compensated and we were well received by the marina staff who made us welcome. Their attitude is more relaxed and one or two of the marinas in the Solent could learn from their approach.

This season Howard and Pauline expect to visit Normandy, the Channel Islands and North Brittany departing in early June, and appear to be up for a rally if we do arrange one.

STROKE: Remember The 1st Three Letters.... S.T.R.

We were sent this through the RNSA. Although it is very simple advice it could prove very useful if the right circumstances present themselves to you. Please read on:

RECOGNIZING A STROKE remember the '3 steps', S-T-R . Read and Learn!

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer severe brain damage if people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

S * Ask the individual to SMILE.

T * Ask the person to TALK and SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE (Coherently) (i.e. It is sunny out today)

R * Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.

If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call 999 immediately and describe the symptoms to the emergency services.

New Sign of a Stroke ----- Stick out Your Tongue

NOTE: Another 'sign' of a stroke is this: Ask the person to 'stick' out his tongue.. If the tongue is 'crooked', if it goes to one side or the other, that is also an indication of a stroke.

A cardiologist says if everyone who gets these instructions sends them to 10 people; you can bet that at least one life will be saved.

FUEL PROBLEMS WITH AN AQUA-STAR 38 – AND THE SOLUTION

Members may recall the story in the September 2006 newsletter about the time we took delivery of our 1997 Aqua-Star 38, Fastflow. We lost both of our Sabre-Perkins 300hp engines on our delivery passage from Weymouth to Plymouth and despite several filter changes at sea we ended up with pretty uncomfortable time caught in the Portland Race before getting a tow from a passing Nelson back into Weymouth.

The problem turned out to be a layer of sludge in the bottom of each of the tanks which had been sucked into the pick up pipes and had blocked them. The filters were not getting blocked but the pick up pipes could not handle the slime. We struggled to get the boat back to Plymouth by blowing the pipes clear each time an engine stopped and when we were home we employed a specialist fuel tank cleaning firm to remove the fuel from each of the tanks, filter it and replace it. We also double dosed with biocide and assumed that was the end of the problem.



Fastflow having her tanks professionally cleaned

During our cruise to London in June last year the port engine stopped during some heavy weather. We returned to Haslar Marina in Gosport on one engine where I was able to see that the old problem had returned and contaminated fuel was again blocking the pick up pipe. It was easy enough to disconnect the pipe, blow it clear, bleed the engine and get started but we were losing confidence. The firm who carried out the fuel filtering the previous September were not very interested but they were prepared to do the work again at my cost (nearly £1000). I didn't see this as a worthwhile investment.

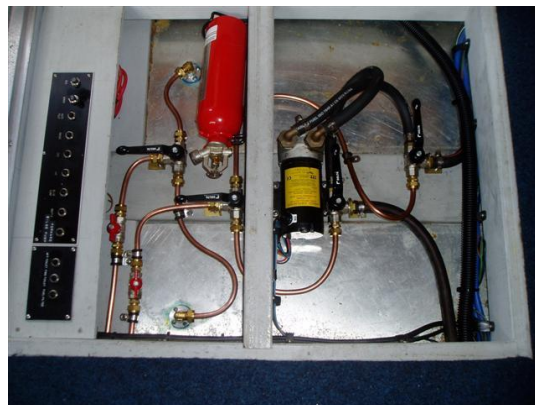
I started thinking about what was happening inside the tank. I reasoned that once something had blocked the end of the pipe it would be impossible for it to dislodge due to the significant vacuum formed by the lift pump. So once the pipe was blocked the engine was bound to stop.

I decided to have a look at the fuel pick up pipes and consider a modification in order to give us a more reliable fuel supply. When I got the pipes out I drilled 2 x 5mm holes at right angles to the tubes close to the ends. My reasoning was that as a temporary measure this would allow fuel to enter the pipe if the end became blocked. Furthermore any blockage on the end would be able to fall away since there was no vacuum formed. Anyway I did it and from then on we had no problems although I recognise that I reduced the range of the boat by effectively shortening the tubes but this was intended as a short term measure.

When we returned to Plymouth, with the money we would have spent on having the fuel tanks cleaned again (well a bit more actually) I bought a 12v on-board fuel polishing system from Separ UK which I have installed in the engine space. The unit takes fuel from each tank, passes it through a magnetic field then into a filter before returning it to the tank. I have arranged mine so that I can set valves to circulate fuel from either tank or transfer it from tank to tank. There is a timer so you can set it to run for a period.



The fuel polishing installation



Pipe work and valves on the tank tops

I have not changed the pick up pipes and I am content to loose a little range to keep my belt and braces solution. Let's hope that's done the trick.

Tony Giblett