



# Club Newsletter

## Christmas 2023

### CONTACT US

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### FROM THE COMMODORE

I need to first mention the sad news about the club's inaugural commodore, Mark Greenwood, who passed away on the 28<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

Mark started the club in 1998 with an inaugural rally to Cowes in May 1999.

He passed it on to Ron Lane in May 2007. Ron ran it jointly with his wife Nichola till he passed away in 2009, when she ran it on her own until Tony Giblett took over the helm in April 2011. Tony in turn passed it on to me in Plymouth in August 2015 (when he turned up in the Mayflower Marina and dumped the files, burgees and ties, together with a 28 pence petty cash shortfall, on our boat).

Some of you will remember the tragic loss of Fastflow, a 1997 Aquastar 38, in June 2022. It caught fire and sank in The Solent; the only items left floating were the fuel tanks. After the insurance company raised it and carried out numerous and lengthy testing the cause of the fire unfortunately still remains unknown.

For those interested in electric outboard motors, the July edition of Practical Boat Owner has not only a comparison of petrol and electric ones, but a guide on how to choose an electric one. Additionally it has a review on the Diesel Dipper diesel filtration system from Marine 16, which follows on nicely from the review and fitting of it I did 5 years ago in my Christmas 2018 newsletter. If you are interested in fitting an ultra violet filtration system for drinking water, their September issue covers the research as well as carrying out a DIY fitting of their chosen system.

### JUST CHECKING.....

As I mentioned in last year's newsletter we always try a go out for a few days to the Isle of Wight before we come out of the water in April/May for the annual 'dirty work' and checks underneath. This will hopefully check that no problems have been created by the annual engine servicing which we traditionally have done in the preceding November!

Some of you will remember from last year's newsletter that our engineer had made such a hash in making and fixing the rocker cover gasket on one engine's servicing that no fewer than three trips had to be made before the oil and fuel leaks he created had been resolved. Since we additionally had had both salt water pumps replaced in the winter service and both engine gearbox solenoids replaced, as well as the propellers balanced after last year's cross-channel French rope escapade, we were looking forward to checking all was now indeed well.

We put aside 3 days in the week after Easter which looked perfect; then the weather changed to a forecast of force 7 gusting 9, so this was postponed to the following week which now looked great again. One day before departing, having just cancelled the papers and arranged accommodation for our 13 year old Rhodesian Ridgeback, the forecast changed for the worse again. We were resigned to the shakedown cruise having to be after we returned to the water.

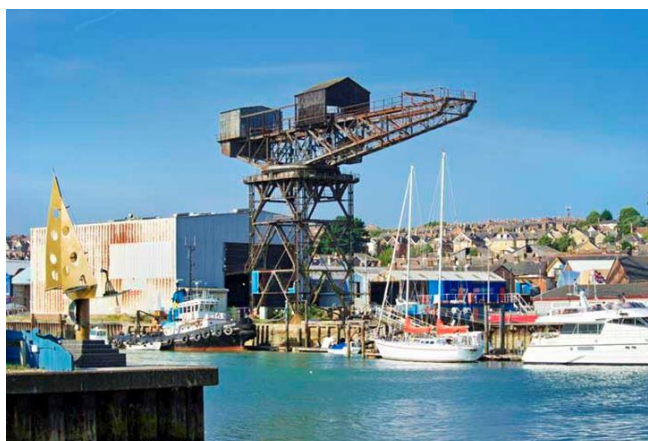
Though fortunately no issues were encountered when we did finally manage a couple of days to the Isle of Wight, of the two packets of the new twin pack 'Prop-Defender' treatment which we had been offered to try out on our propellers, only one arrived in time before the boat had to go back in the water. As one of the local contractors says he often uses the conventional Hempel Ecopower Prop system, we went back in the water with one black traditional system (port) and one new clear hydrophobic "Super Slippery" system (starboard)! It will be an interesting, though not ideal, comparison.



Well, we did have a sort of technical hiccup on our trip to Cowes as this photo on the left shows. I recon the resonant frequency of a Force 4 Loo Roll is at engine revolutions of 2850 rpm.

The right photo of 'Quay Arts' shows our usual lunch stop having taken the bus to Newport. We did notice that since our visit last year another number of shops had sadly closed down, and chatting to the waitress in that veritable restaurant from way back into the 20th century which we love, *The Red Duster* (37 High Street, West Cowes, 01983 290 311), she informed us that not only were they not opening every evening yet, but the Red Funnel ferries were still on their winter timetables, so low were the visitor numbers. In fact when we had tried earlier to book dinner at the Island Sailing Club, with its marvellous balcony and views over the water, they were not even open yet during the week for normal evening meals.

Every time we visit Cowes we marvel at that amazing Grade II\* listed hammerhead crane. A little investigation reveals that the 1912 80-ton crane was ordered by Cowes shipbuilder J.S. White in 1911 and came into use the following year. It was the key element of a new fitting-out quay, as part of White's increased capacity for the production of naval warships. The Crane was designed by Babcock and Wilcox and engineered at their Renfrew plant, but it was the only giant cantilever Crane they ever built. This type of Crane would eventually dominate the skyline of shipyards throughout the world. The Cowes structure falls within the first decade of their development and the Crane is probably the



Historic England Archive:

earliest example in existence beyond the Clyde. It is also the only remaining pre-WW1 hammerhead crane in England.

Two warships that were built under the crane are still in existence; HMS Cavalier preserved at Chatham, and the Polish Navy's destroyer 'ORP Blyskawica' preserved in Poland.

### 2023 WEST COUNTRY CRUISE-IN-COMPANY.

When is a rally a cruise-in-company, and when does a cruise-in-company become just cruising? As a result of participants either changing their availability schedule at the last minute, or the age-old issue of mechanical problems, it was indeed different to last year.

Nevertheless we did get into double numbers for the annual dinner, and Ingvar and Anna by way of example had the pleasure of meeting up with 15 other current and past Aquastar owners over their 2½ weeks away.

June - Monday 19

Star left Chichester Marina at midday to make best use of the tide.

After a smooth trip to Yarmouth, dinner was booked at our favourite "On the Rocks" (where you cook your own steak on a lava stone).

The marina wi-fi speed checked out at a miserable 1 Mbps so we 'tethered' my iPad to my iPhone which by comparison had a good 4G signal.

Tuesday 20

We heard from Flight (also a 38) that their skipper was still suffering from what was probably Chinese Flu so they sadly had to postpone their departure.

Before leaving Yarmouth we rang to see if the Lulworth ranges were conducting live firing exercises seaward, and they confirmed that the inner range was in operation all afternoon, so appropriate course adjustment were made to arrive at Weymouth Marina for the 4 p.m. bridge. The recent upgrade to the marina facilities has resulted in one of the best shower + toilet arrangements we have seen in any marina.

For those that frequent the area the military phone number which is answered by a real person (to see if live firing is taking place) is 01752-557550.

Our on-board oven was used for supper for the first time this year.

Wednesday 21

We remain convinced that Weymouth still has the highest concentration of mobility scooters roaming the pavements and pedestrian precincts. Even in some of the shops one has to be extra vigilant to avoid being run over or bumped into!

Dinner was booked for our favourite Italian that evening, Enzo, on the front overlooking the beach. We were not disappointed - it is <https://www.enzo-ristorante.co.uk/>

Thursday 22

Not having used our live-aboard folding Brompton bicycles this year, after extricating them from under the front bunks



and pumping up the totally flat tyres, we cycled along the old railway line to Portland, and thence up to the top to enjoy that magnificent view over Chesil Beach and beyond. We did cheat slightly as we had added an electric conversion kit two years ago.

The evening meal was provided by what is undoubtedly the best Fish & Chip takeaway in the town, Marlboro, which is on the east approach to the town lifting bridge.

We were sad to hear that though Flight had banished the Chinese Flu and left Chichester, one of their exhaust alarms decided to sound so they had to return to port. They subsequently confirmed it to be a faulty sensor unit.

#### Friday 23

A late departure for Brixham was scheduled in order to avoid the worst of the Portland Race. Gallant Lady (another 38) was there to kindly take our ropes, and followed this with providing some most welcome refreshments on board their boat.

#### Saturday 24

We explored the town and went for couple of nice walks.

Supper was enjoyed at everyone's favourite fish restaurant "Simply Fish" - they provide a huge portion, plenty of chips (though no greens!).

We received a message that Dutch Courage (a 45) had safely arrived at the Mayflower Marina in Plymouth.



#### Sunday 25

Star and Gallant Lady left for the Mayflower Marina at 8 a.m. as a force 5 was predicted later at Prawle Point with the accompaniment of 1.4 metre waves.

We saw a pod of dolphins playing en-route, and luckily arrived just before the winds got up.

Gallant Lady unfortunately discovered a cracked elbow joint between the turbo and the water injection bend, so a new one had to be sourced. It was in fact the original part so was 22 years old.

A new Tesco Express has sprung up since our last visit and is half the walking distance of the half an hour to Aldi and Lidl. Star hosted drinks for Gallant Lady, Dutch Courage and Onar (a 47) who had also recently arrived at the Mayflower.

#### Monday 26



First day of the holiday when the clouds replaced the sun, but fortunately there was no rain. 7 p.m. saw 13 of us meeting at Jolly Jacks for a drink on the terrace.

Tony Giblett (ex. Fastflow) and Roo and



Kath (ex. Water Bear) joined us. A splendid dinner then followed inside.

Tuesday 27

Dutch Courage left for Falmouth very early to avoid the worsening weather at lunchtime, and Star left for a buoy in Fowey after breakfast.

Onar was having a service on their dingy lift so planned to depart for Falmouth the next day, whilst unlucky Gallant Lady had to remain behind and wait for the exhaust elbow and gaskets to arrive.

As Star had had quite a bumpy and very wet passage over we had to get out a bucket and siphon to remove all the water which had ended up in the bilge - a standard procedure as the engine room air intakes are far too near the water on a 38 (and also on our old 33). Two bucket fulls were removed.

Wednesday 28

This was a day of rest and exploring Fowey and the adjacent shoreline.

After a nice walk we had afternoon tea in the recently refurbished Fowey Harbour Hotel with its magnificent view - with Star in the background.



A splendid dinner was had in the

Royal Fowey Yacht Club.

Strangely 5 minutes before we were going to turn off our generator at 9 pm, with which we had been recharging our batteries, the output suddenly stopped, though the diesel engine continued to purr nicely.

Oh dear - as it was not a simple matter of a fuse, and there was also no voltage coming out of the alternator terminals, we decided to leave it for the experts to look at back at home. (It turned out to be a blown capacitor in the control box).



Thursday 29

An early start (for motorboats at least) of 8 am gave us a smooth ride with a mirror like sea after rounding Start Point.

We even had to slow down once to admire a pod of dolphins showing off in front of us. We moored up in Darthaven Marina in Kingswear, and after elevenses walked along beside the railway line to Noss on Dart Marina to see how their redevelopment was progressing. Basically the marina is almost finished, and the adjoining flats and commercial units are nearly there too and filling up. The piling for the hotel has also now gone into the ground. Dinner was greatly enjoyed at the 'under new management' very friendly Ship Inn.



Friday 30

We welcomed Gallant Lady, who had arrived from Plymouth, mid morning. Later on Onar arrived from Falmouth, whilst Dutch Courage decided to stop half way in Fowey to shelter from the nasty weather which was due to arrive imminently. Drinks were had on Star, followed by dinner at the Royal Dart, which disappointingly had a very much reduced and also rather unexciting menu.

Saturday July 1

We could not resist a trip on the Dartmouth Steam Railway - which we had been watching from our berth. The views along the coast in the sun were stunning. This picture is across Torbay with Brixham Pier and Berry Head in the far distance.



Gallant Lady hosted what must be the best nibbles this year with drinks for Onar and Star.

Sunday 2

Gallant Lady left just before 8 am for her home port of Lymington, promptly followed by Star who had booked a few days in Poole.

Onar decided to stay till Friday before going on to explore Exmouth Marina which was now apparently open for bigger boats.

75 miles, and 4 hours 40 minutes later, Star's lines were caught in Poole Quay Boat Haven by Flight who surprised us having arrived an hour earlier from Weymouth.

Dinner was enjoyed by all at the local 'Rockfish' restaurant which had an amazing selection of locally caught fish.

Monday 3

A good day to remain in the marina, one gust we even registered there as force 8.

Dutch Courage even had to slow down to 7 knots on her passage to Portland Marina.

Star met up with the previous owners of Amazing Grace (ne Patience, a 45) who had recently changed to an even bigger boat, though alas it was a Squadron.

Tuesday 4

Flight left at 6 am for a very leisurely return to Chichester (they did have a sailing boat before!) nicely timing it before the wind and rains arrived.

As we were on the furthest away pontoon the marina wi-fi was non-existent so the 4G on my phone was used again to download the newspapers onto our iPads. Apart from the odd shower mainly overnight, today was the first day when we had serious rain.

Wednesday 5

Star left Poole at a relaxed 9 a.m. and after passing the ferry immediately turned sharp left to enter the shallow East Looe channel beside the Sandbanks beach. It was surprisingly calm for a change.

A while later we entered the corresponding North Channel between Hurst Castle and The Shingles. This is where one aims straight for the beach then turns right when less than 90 yards away, then one has to avoid the contra current through 'The Trap'. To do this one aims for well over half way across the narrows to the Isle of Wight then turns sharp left again where our tidal push became 4 knots as we proceeded through the boiling water as we hurtled past Hurst Castle into the Solent.

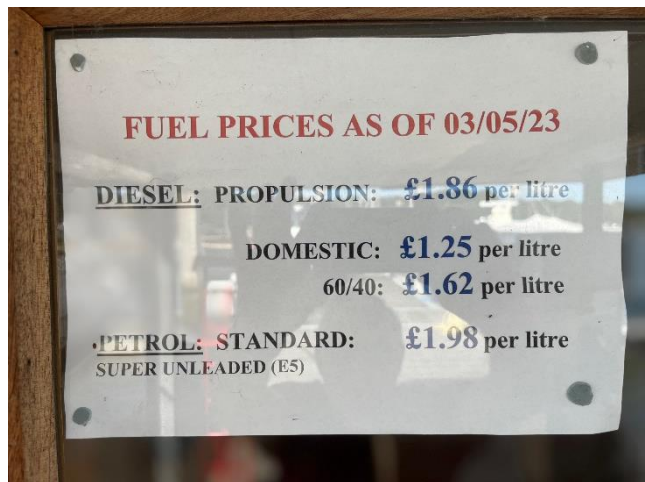
A short passage then to Bucklers Hard at displacement speed enabled us to put the kettle on and relax somewhat.

Thursday 6

This is certainly the most expensive fuel we found on our holiday.

A 2¼ mile walk along the river brought us to the Beaulieu Bakehouse where we had our traditional huge salad with choice of fillings for lunch.

The Bucklers Hard Museum entertained us for one hour and a half that afternoon, and we were delighted that after several years of closure the Master Builders' adjoining Yachtman's Bar was finally open again for food and drinks.



Friday 7

As we were getting low on fuel (having filled up at Weymouth on June 20th) we decided to return the 26 miles to Chichester at our most economical speed, that of displacement of 7.5 to 8 knots.

We had run 389 nautical miles and done 28 engine hours.

### SUBSEQUENT VISIT TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

Onar, in their wisdom, suggested a final meeting of those who had participated in the summer trip, on the Isle of Wight in October before the winter set in. As everyone liked this suggestion 2/3 nights were booked at the Cowes Yacht Haven for the weekend of October 13th - 15th for Flight, Star, Gallant Lady, Onar, Dutch Courage and Windcheater (an Aquastar 47 owned by Mike Willson, who is Geoff's brother, and who had heard about this get-together - and did not want to miss the fun).

However the Indian summer we had been experiencing down south decided to end the weekend before our meeting and as force 5 gusting 8 was forecast for the Friday, Star took the easy option and crossed from Chichester on the Thursday. And yes, gusts of force 7 was indeed experienced inside the marina on Friday morning.

Strangely, though throughout the summer cruise the engines had behaved impeccably, we could not get over 2900 rpm as the turbos failed to cut in on either engine, so a slight drop back to 8 knots displacement speed was adopted to avoid any engine strain.



Our local engineer suggested that as long as the air and fuel filters were reasonably clean it was most likely due to a build-up of coral worm on the props, a situation he had encountered several times before at our marina.

I had been in two minds for some time about buying a waterproof endoscope so enquiries resulted in a trip the next morning using our (age-related!) free bus passes to the Newport branch of Toolstation to purchase a Draper wi-fi Endoscope (which connects to an iphone / ipad) (product code 44614) at the special offer price of £29.98. This indeed confirmed the presence of coral worm on our propellers (left hand picture).



Later on in the afternoon, after it had calmed a bit, we saw the arrival of Gallant Lady, Dutch Courage and Onar, all in good time to enjoy champagne aboard Gallant Lady to celebrate Ray and Maureen's "significant" - almost joint - birthdays.

Suitably warmed up we enjoyed a good value 3 course dinner at the Island Sailing Club, though their accounting system did not seem to be able to cope with dividing up payments for a group booking!

10:30 Saturday morning the 10 of us met for a private tour of the Sir Max Aitken Museum, which had opened specially for us.



Saturday afternoon saw the arrival of Flight, and Mike Willson - but without his boat Windcheater due to 'engine issues'.

Onar kindly hosted the 14 of us for drinks onboard before we all departed for dinner at the Red Duster.

On the Sunday, as the stormy weather was returning in two days' time, we all made different plans for the next couple of days, with Star departing first homeward bound for Chichester, as due to the coral worm, we could only travel now at 8 knots rather than our usual 18.

## **PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR THE 2024 'CRUISE IN COMPANY'.**

Alternating each year, as we normally do, between visiting the West Country and France plus the Channel Islands, the plan for 2024 is the traditional Channel Islands based cruise, possibly going on from Guernsey to Jersey and St Malo or Saint Cast for those who wish. A visit on the way or way back could be made to Alderney and / or Carteret,

We can investigate the new port facilities in St Peter Port and the expanded marina in Carteret.

Relevant distances are:

St Peter Port - Carteret = 31nm

St Helier - Carteret = 26nm

St Peter Port - St Helier = 29nm

St Helier - St Malo = 38nm

St Malo - St Peter Port = 54nm

St Malo - St Cast = 12nm

St Cast - St Peter Port = 52nm

Normally we put aside 3 weeks and 4 weekends, but due to moving house (the inevitable downsizing) and having to keep an eye on the builders doing an extension and the other 'works', we have to restrict our time away to 2 weeks this time round.

The plan would be to meet up in St Peter Port on or by June 21<sup>st</sup>, and take it from there.

We have booked the club dinner at the Guernsey Yacht Club for Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June, with the customary tour of the M & G facilities, Q & A session on boat maintenance, problems etc early the following week. Our Favourite Pier 17 restaurant, the crab sandwich café at the Pleinmont beach, amongst others, will also receive our usual visit.

I am in the process of negotiating a significant discount on the Guernsey fuel prices for club members, so don't forget to fill up your tanks before returning home!

We would be delighted if anyone would like to join us for some or all of our cruise. Do please register your interest with me as soon as you are able to do so, if possible by the end of February.

## **NEWS FROM 'GEOFF'S YARD'**

We are still busy with our boat maintenance on our Aquastar Island customers. Our Brokerage has been active but we need more Aquastars to come onto our brokerage to fulfil waiting clients.

Please note our new address: Aquastar International Ltd, La Houquette, Rue de la Houquette, St Peters, Guernsey GY7 9JZ. Email; [aquastargsy@gmail.com](mailto:aquastargsy@gmail.com) Tel: 07781144550.

## **NEWS FROM THE M&G BOATYARD IN GUERNSEY**

"Marauder" my 2001 Aquastar 48 with a pair of Volvo Penta 63p's had an apparent overheating problem at the end of 2022 which we resolved last winter (apart from a coolant loss from a failed exhaust manifold which failed after 7 years) we cleaned the fresh and salt water cooling system and dismantled the coolers and established that it was a problem with the panel gauges and not the engine itself!

During the season I had an EC throttle control problem - a failed potentiometer which affected revs and gear selection problems which are interesting when you don't expect it, luckily we had a potentiometer in stock. Otherwise we had a problem free 2023 season 54 running hours, 772nm and 28 nights in foreign ports, France and Jersey the best year since 2018.

The weather was very poor and unsettled from the end of May until the end of August.

Entry into France requires a little homework and submitting forms but is quite achievable and we had a good season in Carteret, St Cast, Dahouet, St Quay-Portrieux and Paimpol. This was also helped by having found a good and obliging dog sitter at home for our Ridgeback.

If anyone wants to talk about France Entry next year drop me an email on David.N@mge.gg with your mobile number and I will call you back.

M&G has had a very busy year, despite me being mostly retired, and is doing well, we look after a number of Aquastars: 27's, 33's, 38's, 48's and a 74 as well as my own.

M&G are now also a dealer for Yanmar as well as Volvo Penta so this now greatly improves the range of engines we can offer.

With the high price of new boats many people are looking to repower. This is especially true of semi displacement hulls such as Aquastar.

At M&G this winter we have an Aquastar 33 in the yard for a repower for one of our Jersey cousins, the boat is "Etoile du Nord".

This early 1980's Aquastar originally had a single Ford 120hp, she was much later repowered with a new Yanmar 330hp, many years on M&G are now fitting a Yanmar 440hp package with a new gearbox and electronic controls.

We have also replaced the engine beds, sealed off the engine room keel so it is now a watertight compartment with a shallow keel a sump at the rear with an electric and a manual bilge pump all flow coated. The engine room air inlets have been increased in size and new louvres grills fitted.

The New items fitted: shaft size has been increased to 1.75 inch, GRP stern-tube glassed in, five bladed prop, Tides Marine stern seal, R&D coupling and clamp, exhaust hose increased in size a Halyard silencer and fittings, Bennett trim tabs, raw water pickup and sea strainer, and engine room sound proofing.



The supply times for new engines is now much better but still quite a bit longer than pre-covid. A repower needs to be fully planned, the

engines ordered ideally 6 months or more ahead depending on the model and the owner needs to look carefully at all the work required and list it, if M&G is undertaking major works such as this we need to plan labour availability and start ordering engines and parts for the job early.

A repower is ideally undertaken over the winter i.e. August onwards and a time period allowed for the work of 2 to 3 months for the various jobs and the emergent work one finds on a job such as this.

The Managers at the M&G Boatyard: Joh, Andy, Alexander or Nick can be contacted on email Boatyard@mge.gg or call 01481 200900 for a preliminary chat (or myself David.n@mge.gg 07781 104 411).

David Norman (Aquastar 48 "Marauder")



## FROM OUR TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT

### 1) That dreaded 'chalking' on dark blue gelcoat.



The transom of our 21 year old 38 faces west for most of the year in the marina, so we are increasingly battling with the old blue gelcoat degrading to that chalky white special effect.



The local marina expert in these matters did a 'brilliant' job on our transom for us using a 3 step approach, first the G3 Pro liquid fine compound, followed by the 'Glart' finishing polish, finally with a 'ceramic' finish to follow, like one of the two options on the right hand side picture. Apart from the Glart which is available from Amazon, the remaining 3 items may be purchased at Halfords.

### 2) Engine descaling of the salt water cooling system.

Most people (who wish to keep their engine systems as clean and fuel efficient as possible) use Rydlyme every 2 to 5 years (depending on whose advice is taken). But there is now a new kid on the block and it is getting rave reviews!

It is more cost effective and it has even been mentioned as being more 'boat friendly'. It is called Wessex Proflush Marine Engine Descaler and may be purchased from here: [https://seamarknunn.com/acatalog/Wessex-Proflush-Marine-Engine-Descaler-WP2101---5L-ISWC\\_PROFLUSH\\_5.html](https://seamarknunn.com/acatalog/Wessex-Proflush-Marine-Engine-Descaler-WP2101---5L-ISWC_PROFLUSH_5.html)



### 3) Digimap.

Based in The Old Tobacco Factory in St Peter Port, Guernsey, they produce over 60 marina and associated guides, primarily covering the French coast, but also the Channel Islands and a few of the more popular English south coast ones. They have additionally produced many YouTube videos for entering and exiting several of these marinas.

We first used them for our initial visit to Carteret where their information and photographs were invaluable. For a summary of what they offer please visit: <https://www.digimap.gg/marine/marinas/>

## INDEX OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION FROM PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS.

I have produced a listing of articles/snippets which I have written of a technical nature from previous issues of the newsletter and put it at the top of the 'Newsletters & Articles' page of the website. I include an updated copy of it here for your information: -

- Christmas 2022
  - Broken zip pulls replacement
  - Removing sliding door on a 38
  - Diesel issues and composition
  - Cleaning freshwater cooling system
  - Volvo seawater pump replacement
- Christmas 2021
  - Protecting horns from water entry
  - Cleaning black corroded wire
  - Canvas fittings supplier
  - Cleaning anchor chain
  - Volvo replacement ECU
  - DIY engine de-scaling
- Christmas 2020
  - Window catches / opening stays
  - Electronic antifoul
  - Primary fuel filtration change-over system
  - Voyage tracking app
  - Outboard motor stand
  - Synthetic teak decking
- Summer 2020
  - Synthetic teak decking
  - Care of GRP; cleaning, polishing & waxing
  - Aquastar 38 fuel consumption
- Christmas 2019
  - where to buy a 2-stroke outboard engine
  - AIS & satellite AIS
  - Volvo EDC control unit repair
  - fuel bug - again
- Summer 2019
  - cleaning heat exchangers
  - bilge pump
  - supercharger/turbocharger issues
  - fresh water filtration
  - LED lighting
  - Volvo KAMD 300 heat exchangers
- Christmas 2018
  - fuel polishing systems & fitting
  - gelcoat polishing
  - Bembridge Bar
  - wi-fi booster
  - supercharger coil burning out on KAMD 300
- Summer 2018
  - steering column oil leak
  - fresh water accumulator pressurising
  - 'Scare Gull' v 'Gull Sweep' update
- Christmas 2017
  - rudder stock greasing
  - 'Aspen' premixed 2 stroke petrol & ethanol in fuel
- Easter 2017
  - replacing a sliding door lock on a 38
  - water injection bends (on KAMD 300)
  - renovating black powder coated engine controls
  - 'Borocol' teak deck treatment
- Christmas 2016
  - shaft brushes
  - 'Plastimo' anemometer repairs

- Summer 2016
  - ships radio and AIS interfering
  - fuel consumption of clean v dirty hull
  - battery monitor issues
- Easter 2016
  - shore power monitoring update
  - 'Scare Gull' v 'Gull Sweep'
  - Aquastar 33 fuel consumption curves
  - Volvo KAMD 300 fuel flow monitoring kit
- December 2015
  - fridge - mains v 12 volts supply update
  - AIS signal monitoring software
  - shore power monitor
  - 12 volt relay issues
- January 2015
  - fridge - mains v 12 volt supply issues
- September 2014
  - fuel bug

## COMMODORE'S COMPLAINTS

### To supercharge or not.

One of the sales points Volvo make about their supercharged engines, such as the KAMD 300 which we have on Star (N.B. they are in fact a more modest 285 horse power!), is that the belt driven supercharger (or compressor) is engaged by an electromagnetic clutch at low engine revs. This forces air into the combustion chamber to improve performance at lower engine speeds before the conventional turbocharger can take over, when the supercharger in turn then cuts out. For the interested it does not run at idling, or in neutral if the engine is warm. (And for the 'very interested' I have written more on this subject in my articles in the summer 2019 and the Christmas 2018 newsletters).

When our engines are warm the supercharger cuts in at around 1450 rpm and cuts out at around 2650 rpm (when the turbocharger is up and running nicely). This equates to 6.5 knots and 13 knots respectively. Our displacement speed is 7.8 knots, which is of course the most economical speed to travel at.



We in fact travel at 8 knots much more now to conserve expensive diesel if we are not in a rush to get somewhere, or are going large distances such as crossing the Channel. Also to get out into the Solent from our berth in Chichester marina, and also back again, we have to travel for the best part of an hour at the maximum allowed speed of 8 knots.

This naturally means we are running all this time with the superchargers in operation and with the electromagnetic clutches getting hot, and this may well explain why we have had to replace both which had in fact burnt out within 4 years of each other.

An enquiry to Volvo UK confirmed that they were not designed for this type of extended use.

So to avoid the inconvenience and the cost of further replacements it was decided to install a three pole two way switch. When the switch was one way this would allow both superchargers to be disengaged with an amber caution light illuminated, and when the switch was the other way the light would be off with both superchargers now activated.

This would be when we wanted to go fast enough to be able to use the turbochargers. The switch + warning light panel for this is at the top of the photo. (Below the fresh water dial are the generator controls, and below that the on/off switch plus indicator light for our ultrasonic antifouling system.)

N.B. I have since found the engines usually have to be turned off then on again to re-engage the superchargers if the engines have been running with them turned off (i.e. this resets the ECU).

### **FROM OUR MEMBERS..... Ian Crosbie writes:**

In 2021 I bought an Aquastar 38 aft cabin. The boat had been due to be sold abroad, however Brexit meant that punitive import duties were to have been imposed and so the original sale fell through. The prospective purchaser had the boat surveyed and his survey report was later assigned to me by the surveyor for a fee. At the same time an engine report had been commissioned and was carried out by the local Volvo agent during and following a sea trial which was also attended by the surveyor, prospective purchaser and owner.

When I bought the boat following an inspection (and sight of the recent survey report) the owner asked me what I thought of the survey. I replied "I think they get their money too easily". He scoffed, but I think subsequent experiences might justify my cynicism. Here are extracts from both the surveyor's and engineer's reports and my own \* notes:

#### **Rudders**

##### ***Surveyor's report***

*No lateral play was detected at the rudder bearing assemblies.*

##### ***Engineer's report***

*Starboard rudder has excess play; potentially caused by top bearing/bush worn/missing.*

\* The nylon bearings were fine and new 'o' rings cured the slop and slight water ingress.

#### **Steering**

##### ***Surveyor's report***

*An initial leak at the pilot pump caused by the vendor 'topping up' the system was rectified before the sea trial.*

##### ***Engineer's report***

*Auto helm pump slight oil weep.*

\* The steering system oil can only topped be up at the upper helm. There is no facility to add fluid at the pump which actually had an internal leak as the Volvo engineer suspected!

#### **Shaft etc**

##### ***Engineer's report (only)***

*Small amount of water in port engine bilge, did not increase level during trial.*

\* No comment as to the source.

A little over a month after taking delivery of the boat the water (mentioned in the engineer's report) in the port bilge began to increase and I quickly discovered it was coming from the stern gland which was a Tides Marine Sure Seal type. This is essentially a lip seal running on the surface of the shaft, held in place by a plastic housing which is attached to the stern tube by a flexible hose and large jubilee clips. The Sure Seal arrangement allows for a replacement seal to be fitted to the shaft, and this can be pushed into place after removal of the existing seal while the boat is afloat. There are YouTube videos showing how this is done, and I tried that but with no improvement to the water ingress. On my boat there are no limber holes (yet!) which would allow water collecting in the engine bilges to drain to the centre bilge, and so if the water had been allowed to accumulate in the engine bilge it would have been quickly picked up by the rotating shaft and pulleys with undesirable results.

There was no solution other than to slip the boat and remove the shaft for examination. This required the rudder to be removed but of course the boat had not been chocked high enough as 40" is required below the lower rudder bearing and the ground, so another lift was needed.

The first odd thing that I discovered about the shaft was that the gearbox coupling was only secured axially to the shaft by two grub screws which is most unusual and not really satisfactory. There was a keyway and key to take the torque, but no cross pin to take the thrust. In the area of the lip seal the shaft had a corrosion groove around its circumference, some dimples from old grub screws and a couple of longitudinal grooves, all of which made the shaft unsuitable for use with a lip seal which naturally requires a smooth surface to run on. Apparently this kind of circumferential corrosion is typical of that found where a face seal had previously been fitted. The corrosion occurs between the two 'o' rings on the shaft-mounted seal holder where sea water can be present, but air is excluded: the perfect habitat for crevice corrosion of stainless steel. A basic article explaining the phenomenon can be found here: <https://www.catalinadirect.com/stainless-steel-crevice-corrosion/383/>



*This shows the port shaft damage: a ring of corrosion and dimples from the grub screws of a previous seal type. No lip seal could hope to seal against this damage.*

I ordered a new shaft from Teignbridge and the required new Sure Seals, however boating in what was left of 2021 was over. I sent Teignbridge the original coupling so that they could fit it to the shaft and drill for a cross pin. When the new shaft arrived it was refitted with a new spare Sure Seal and new cutlass bearings, however I then discovered that while the shaft was supported in the cutlass bearings in the stern tube and 'P' bracket it did not exit centrally from the fore end of the stern tube, a specified requirement for correct operation of the seal. I had to make up a selection of accessories with which to extract the cutlass bearings which are held in place in the stern tube by stainless grub screws, again not an arrangement I am



*particularly happy with since the screws are merely tapped into the rather fragile fiberglass tube wall. Above shows the collection of parts I made to use with a length of 10mm screwed rod to enable removal of the two cutlass bearings.*

I enquired of Aquastar how they fitted and aligned the 'P' bracket in production but without a satisfactory answer, so I made up a split plastic collar which could be slipped over the shaft and into the stern tube and would then hold the shaft centrally, this to allow realignment of the engine as required by the Sure Seal.

Fortunately it is possible to lie along the outboard side of the port engine on my boat which makes this job possible, but by no means easy given my advancing years, stiff joints and expanding waistline.



*I made this split collar which slides into the stern tube and holds the shaft centrally so that the engine can be realigned properly.*

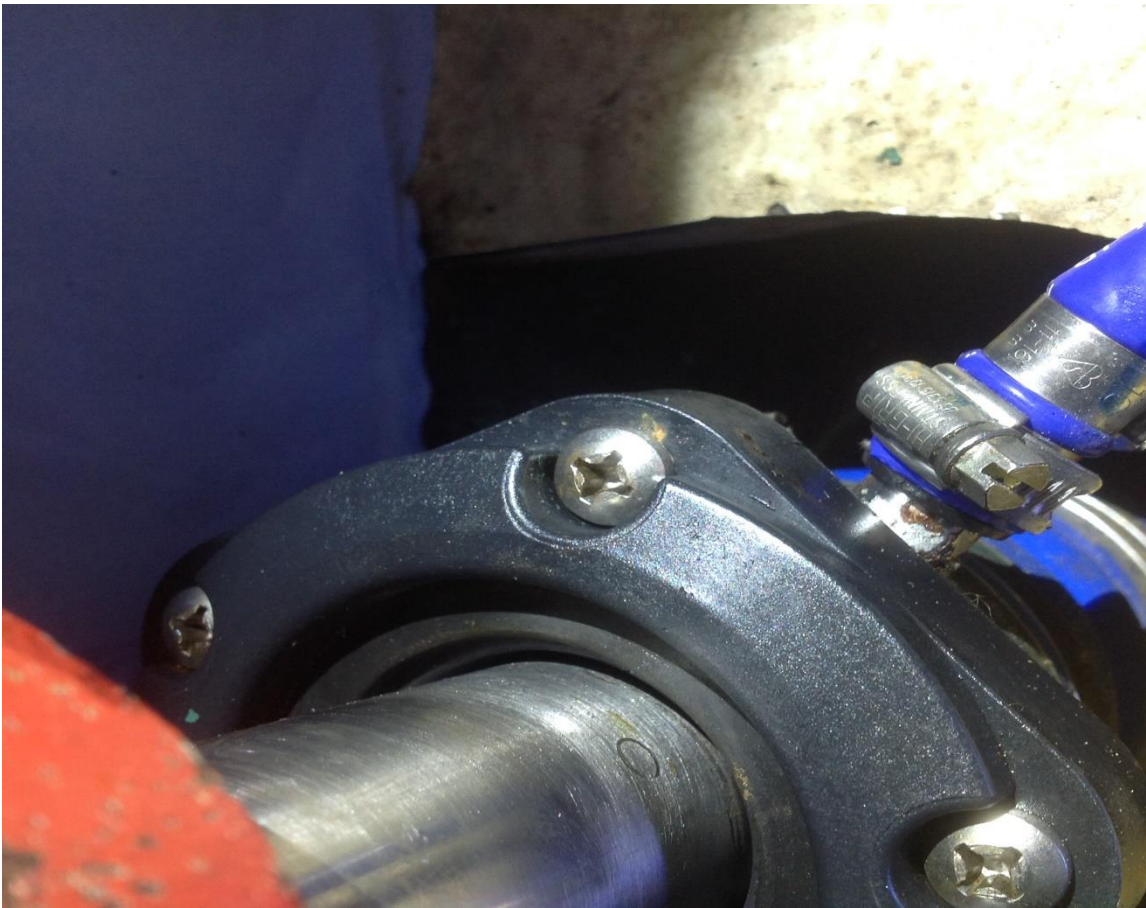
With all the new parts fitted it was time to relaunch and enjoy the first full season of Scottish motor yachting... or so I thought!

On launching, (on the 1<sup>st</sup> April!) the starboard shaft seal which had been perfectly dry the previous season now started dripping and although it did not get seriously bad for the rest of the year it did gradually increase, so out once again for the same treatment to the starboard side in September 2022. By this time a new shaft had increased in cost from £1038 to £1302 apparently due to the Ukraine situation (it had to be either that, Brexit or Covid!).

Access to the starboard shaft coupling is not so easy since there is less space outboard because of the built-in furniture, and the fact that the main engine and generator exhausts run along the hull side just outboard of the engine bearers, so everything has to be done from the central bilge where again easy access is blocked by the intercooler pipework and the main electrical breakers, housed in a box at the aft end of the engine room. Once the spare seal was removed from the shaft it was possible to insert my iPad camera up close to the shaft seal which revealed the same shaft condition as had been found on the port side.



*This is about as close as a pair of hands can get to the starboard coupling!*



*The photo shows the same damage on the starboard shaft, impossible to see without a camera.*

The new shaft duly arrived and was fitted, this time the alignment did not require any adjustment, which was a relief due to the very limited access on the outboard side of the starboard engine which would have been required to enable access to the mounts.



*The finished assembly with new shaft, seal and the spare seal mounted in the black collar between the seal housing and the coupling flange.*

While engaged in these works I became aware of some fresh water lying outboard of the port engine and initially I thought this might be due to a leaking sink drain in the aft toilet which was allowing the water to lie on a moulded channel and then run into the engine space. Re-sealing the

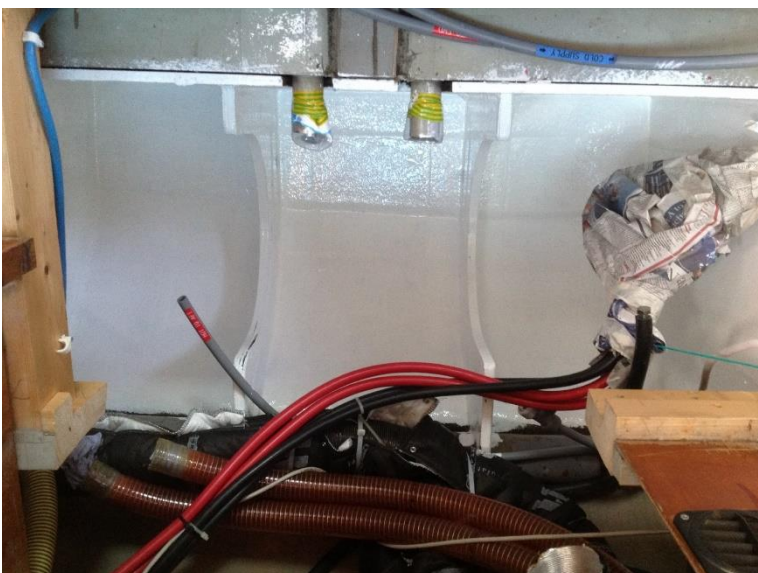
drain fitting did not cure the problem so I had to look elsewhere and discovered that the calorifier compartment was flooded. It turned out that there was a fairly slow drip from inside the tank insulation, but only when the system was under pressure. Inspection by mirror showed that the pipe fittings were not leaking so I had to assume a pinhole or holes in the tank.

On my boat the 50 litre calorifier is fitted on the port side, outboard of the fuel tanks but rather oddly it has no facility for draining the tank, nor for replacing the immersion heater since that is fitted to the aft end of the tank where it is very close to the bulkhead: two rather disappointing design deficiencies. In addition the 14" diameter calorifier would need to be extracted through a 12" space! The pipe fittings on the existing calorifier were top and bottom and at each end, four in all, consequently the bottom fittings are inaccessible until the top fittings have been removed, the tank pumped dry through a top fitting and then the tank rotated through 90 degrees to allow access to the bottom fittings. The foam insulation then has to be cut away after which it is just possible to remove the bare tank through the 12" space between the fuel tank and the beam below the side door.



*Cutting through the beam to allow fitting of the new 14" diameter calorifier.*

Refitting the new smaller 40 litre tank required this beam to be cut to allow installation since with its insulation jacket it too was 14" diameter. To support and correctly locate the beam when refitted an aluminium bracing bar was fitted to each side. This was fitted, drilled and bolted in place with stainless bolts before then removing and cutting the beam, thus ensuring an exact fit as before on reassembly.



*Calorifier space cleaned and painted awaiting fitting of the new tank. Beam removed for access.*

The new calorifier is smaller in length and has all the fittings at one (aft) end thus allowing easier access to the pipework, immersion heater and permits draining. I bought a twin coil one in case I ever get round to fitting a radiator or towel rail in the aft cabin.



*The new calorifier fitted and the beam replaced with the inboard aluminium bracing bar and stainless bolts showing.*

The new installation has been tested and thankfully found to be leak free, but the calorifier hot outlet positioned on the end cover of the tank (rather than on the tank top) means that the tank will never actually be completely full since there will be an air space above the outlet fitting. The original arrangement was a better design, apart from the lack of any drain, the complete inaccessibility of the lower

fittings and no space in which to remove the immersion heater if required. I do wonder if the slightly reduced weight of water in the new tank will noticeably affect the slight list to starboard which my boat, and others I have seen), has.

I won't know until relaunch in a few weeks, but fingers are firmly crossed.

**FROM OUR MEMBERS**..... Keith Gammon writes:

#### EXMOUTH MARINA

Most of my boating last year was curtailed as one of my daughters had to have a major operation. So this year, 2023, I was intending, weather permitting, being away for five weeks on my Aquastar 47 motor cruiser 'ONAR' during most of June and part of July.

My wife favoured the West Country and I started to think about the itinerary. Although I had an outdated almanac at home, for some unknown reason I started searching marinas/moorings on the internet. Exmouth came up and on reading the blurb on their website, I found they accepted boats up to 15 metres. ONAR is 14.3metres. I was sure this hadn't always been the case as I had wanted to visit before and hadn't been able to. The almanacs incorrectly state maximum length is 12 metres. After a telephone call to the Harbour Master, I had booked up a three night stay during the later stages of my time away.

The Marina is in the old dock which is very small and only has visitor berths for about six boats depending on size. Pedestrian access is gated and you are given the gate code on arrival. There are no lock gates and the harbour does not dry. The website warns of a very strong tide at the entrance, both flood and ebb and I therefore made sure I arrived just after high tide. The well buoyed fairway to the entrance is over two miles long and runs parallel to the beach and at one point you are only 100 metres from it.

In order to enter the Marina, you turn literally 90 degrees to starboard into a small channelled entrance, similar to entering a lock. There is a pedestrian bridge that needs to be raised, but this is something the Harbour staff undertake very quickly if you give them just five minutes notice of your intended arrival via VHF channel 14.

Steve, the Harbour Master and also coxswain of the lifeboat, just couldn't have been more helpful. Nothing was too much trouble. Unknown to me he went off to get an extension lead for me to reach the electric supply as I was moored alongside another cruiser and the supply was a little distance. He need not of bothered as I had more than enough cable onboard. I was given a very clear double sided coloured A3 map of the Marina, town and sea front.

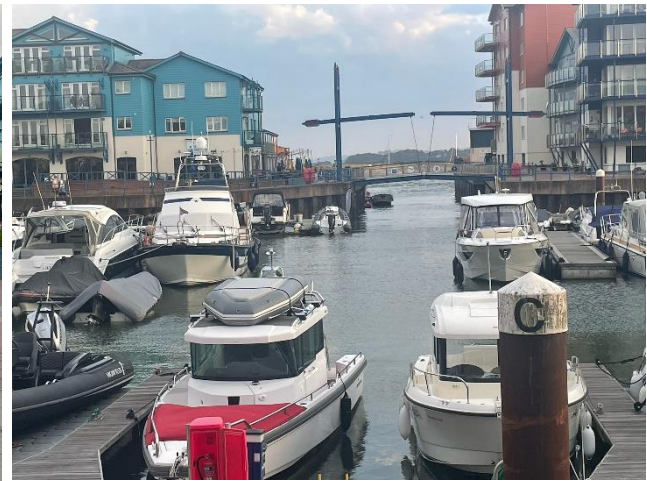
All four sides of the Marina are built up with quite attractive modern apartments in various bright colours. Toilets and shower block are available. There is a small but well stocked chandlery and a café/restaurant and a pub/restaurant, all very modern.

The extensive sandy beach is within 100 metres. Turning left after going through an archway, the town is about a quarter of a mile down a straight road, it couldn't be easier. The town centre is pedestrianised with paving, trees and café tables with shops all around. Although the Marina doesn't have a provision store, M&S, Tesco, Co-op and Aldi are all very close.

The only negative was the absence of Internet in the Marina, not even in the Harbour Masters office. You have to go into the café/restaurant although we found the best place was in 'Rockfish restaurant' just 30 metres away.

The mooring cost was very reasonable at just £38 per night including electric for all boats over 10.1 metres. The fuel station is an alongside pontoon just before the bridge as you enter and turned out to be the cheapest fuel of anywhere we went.

I would certainly recommend a visit if you are cruising to Lyme Bay. We enjoyed our visit which unfortunately, owing to the weather forecast and our need to round Portland Bill, was curtailed to two nights.



The Marina is probably smaller than you will have experienced and I described it as a 'snug fit' for a boat our size. Booking is essential. We certainly will return sometime in the future and look forward to it.



These two photos were also taken by Keith - but in the Beaulieu River in early August.

## MEMBER'S NEWS

**We are pleased to welcome during 2023 the following new members to the club:**

Mr David Skinner, Moth Too, Aquastar 27 Pacesetter Mk II, berthed in Poole.

Mr Henry Hope, Andromeda C, Aquastar 38, berthed in Upton upon Severn marina.

Dr Geoffrey Vernon, Lady Azure, Aquastar 48, berthed in Mayflower, Plymouth.

Mr Chris Jones, Catherine, Aquastar 20, berthed in Falmouth.

Mr Jeffrey Price, Dune, Aquastar 33, berthed in Plymouth.

Mr Darren Vibert, Etoile du nord, Aquastar 33, berthed in Jersey.

## **REGALIA**



We have some very good quality club ties and these are available by post. The design is shown here and the logo is woven into a dark blue tie and is very smart. The price is £15.

Burgees are also available at £18 for the small ones (13") and £22 for the larger ones (19"). These are also well made, sewn and come with the toggle and braid for attachment to your boat.

Payments made electronically are most convenient, and help keep our costs down. Please send an email so we know we are to expect a payment, and to what it relates, (burgee, tie etc.):

Account: The Aquastar Club;

Sort Code: 20-68-10;

Account Number: 43945057.

## **Ahoy, me hearties!**

A true seadog worth their salt would never let aboard a landlubber who calls their *ship* a *boat*. That kind of mix-up is the talk that gets you walking the plank - and you will probably end up in Davy Jones's locker!

Depending on the source, a water going vessel could be considered a ship when it is over 100 feet in length, although by some definitions it must be even longer.

The RYA say the difference lies in its weight; if a vessel weight over 500 tonnes (not tons!) then it's a ship.

Vessels intended for navigation of coastal and inland waters are generally called boats, while ocean-going vessels are generally called ships.

Naval veterans have been heard to say: "A ship has a commander and a crew. A boat just has whomever is on it at the time."

Legal definition of a ship: A vessel shall mean any structure normally operating, or made for the purpose of operating, in navigation by sea, without regard to its power, tonnage, or the purpose for which it sails.

But .... Submarines (even the fleet ballistic missile 'boomers') are traditionally referred to as boats, then there are yachts - both motor and sail.....

