



Club Newsletter

December 2015

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FROM THE COMMODORE

As you will know from my introductory communication of November 3rd the Aquastar Owners club has a replacement commodore.

It's not through natural attrition or even general 'wear and tear' either he assures me - it was totally Tony's idea. Admittedly it was after a few rumbles, but he just turned up to our visitors berth at Mayflower Marina and dumped the files, burgees, ties and a 28 pence petty cash shortfall on our boat! But in true Tony style he did also bring along a bottle of bubbly with him as well.....

Though your replacement commodore has a level of experience considerably less than that of his noble predecessor in matters nautical, and indeed Aquastar related too, he will of course do his best to 'wave the flag' which Tony has so effectively raised up.

The prologue (apologies to Frankie Howard)

From a sailing background, starting with my own dinghy in Sweden back in the 1960s, our first motor boat was a 36 foot 1972 Northshore Oceanranger with Ford Sabre marinised lorry engines. A lot of restoration work was required on her, from Anna and I changing piston rings on the kitchen table, to myself installing a completely new 24 volt domestics system together with up-to-date Simrad navigational equipment. The learning curve was immense. In her we did our first Channel crossing (courtesy of Motor Boat Monthly), visited the Scilly Isles(also with MBM), and even went up the Thames to Oxford on our own.

Seven years ago we changed to our first Aquastar, a 1992 build Aquastar 33 called 'Perroquet'; the highlight with her was another MBM trip, this time to Paris. Last summer we upgraded to the grown up version, our 38 foot 2002 'Star'.

2015 Cruising

As this year's Aquastar cruise was unfortunately cancelled due to 'lack of interest' it reverted to two venerable Aquastar 38s, Gallant Lady and Star to fly the flag and 'cruise in company' for what in fact was the second time together this year.

In the first trip in June we met up at Port Chantereyne in Cherbourg (5 hours from Brighton) to enjoy the local 'fruits de mere'.

We were pleased to discover that if you presented a RYA card one became eligible for a most generous 20% discount. (Does anyone know of any other marina where a RYA or other club card elicits a discount?)

Then on to St Peter Port where we of course had the obligatory visit to the Aquastar yard where we saw Patience having her teak decking replaced, and her hull compounded and polished, together with a new 49' being built).

Then we sailed on to Carteret which was a first for both of us, with its amazing marina behind a sill nearly a mile inland from the sea!

The next port of call was Alderney (a first for us so we were pleased with the company of a more experienced Gallant Lady). We even managed to get two adjoining buoys, though for one worrying moment as the wind and tides were changing at different rates for the two boats we reckon we could have jumped from one bathing platform to the other as the boats swung around at different rates and almost touched!

After a couple of days there we went to our home berths, Gallant Lady to Lymington via Cherbourg, and us to Brighton via a couple of nights at Bembridge.

In our August cruise the focal point was to meet up for the British Firework Championships, held annually at Plymouth every August since 1997, this year it was on the 13th and 14th. Four tonnes of pyrotechnics are expended over these two nights by six firms each allowed a 10 minute slot. Gallant Lady, ably piloted by Tony who had joined us for the occasion, dropped anchor in the prime spot off Mount Batten breakwater to view the proceedings.

To get to the event Star had hopped from Brighton to Weymouth (5 1/4 hours via the south of the Isle of Wight to avoid Cowes week).

After that we started having problems finding marinas with available space: we could not get in to Darthaven Marina, or even Brixham, but fortunately found space in Torquay. The 'Living Coasts' centre there is actually brilliantly done and well worth a visit. It is a combined coastal zoo and an aquarium all in one, outdoors but all under netting.

Even Mayflower marina in Plymouth were not sure if they were able to put us up - fortunately they did but it was right at the last minute.

After the really amazing fireworks the two boats agreed unanimously not to go further west. It even became too wet and windy for a visit to that picturesque anchoring spot Dandy Hole which we were looking forward to revisiting having been introduced to it by Tony a couple of years ago. Not wanting to have an enforced stay up the Yealm, we made a dash for it. Yet again no space could be found for us in Brixham, so we ended up once more in Torquay. The next day we parted company with Gallant Lady when they finally managed to find a slot at Brixham. The following photo shows why they were so keen to visit it - all fished from their boat and consumed at breakfast!



N.B. Attached with this newsletter is an interesting 14 page pdf guide to the Lynher & St Germans River from the RYA, which includes Dandy Hole and its approaches.

Star's planned next stop was Poole: even here the first three marinas we tried were full because of an air display, so we went under the bridges (where chaos of course reigned) and ended up at Cobbs Quay.

We have never experienced this difficulty in getting berths before. A few enquiries suggested that it may be a combination of more new boats being purchased without the older ones being correspondingly removed from circulation, more foreign boats coming here for the various rallies, or possibly even the weather keeping boats tied up 'at home'.

Interestingly The British Marine Federation has reported that more members had found increased sales activity between last November and this June than the previous six month period.

Anyway a rainy departure from Poole and an equally wet arrival at Cowes Yacht Haven meant the alternative 'wet weather' plan continued with a trip across the chain ferry and a walk to visit Osborne House, and the next day a visit to the new location of the Classic Boat Museum, having moved from Newport to East Cowes. The first building of this museum houses the old records and photographs and is indeed thoroughly recommended.

Also another problem reared its head in the victualing department: why is it that every shop we have tried this year west of Brighton, from the Isle of Wight to Plymouth, does not stock grapenuts; most disappointing. However by contrast I am pleased to announce that every hostelry we visited west of Brighton were able to supply Newcastle Brown when requested, quite the opposite to back home in Sussex!

The Cripple Cruisers & Hopalong Holidaymakers - the saga continues

Mike and Dave continue with their adventures on Nibby. Mike informs us that his new hip has been successful, and that they are wintering in Lagos (the Algarve one). They plan then to go to the Balearics and the south of France (Monte Carlo boat show ? - ed.) hopefully to reach Sicily by winter 2016/2017.

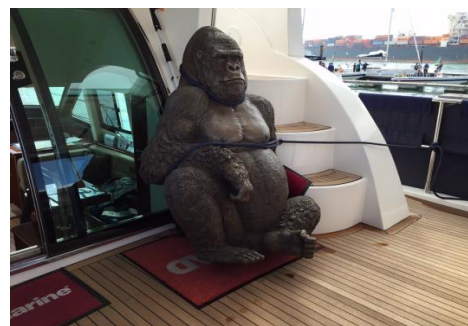
They have also met another three '38s so far, what a small world it is.

News from 'The Yard'

Patience of Chichester after looking splendid with the new Aquastar fitted teak decks and compound and polish etc is now sold to new owners Barry and Carole Alford. We hear she will be heading for the Mediterranean in the Spring.

The Southampton Show - despite the rain Aquastar had a steady flow of enquiries for both new and brokerage boats. There is now a shortage of good used 38' aft cabins for the yards brokerage and Geoff would like to add to the list.

The Jersey Skipper of "Lady Azure" also does work for Princess, and Princess asked if they could put a 4 foot Teddy Bear on board on the last Saturday to hitch a lift to the Channel Islands, on Sunday. Geoff was a bit surprised when the Teddy Bear



turned out to be a Serious Looking Gorilla. Someone joked maybe it was Princess's idea to frighten off potential Aquastar buyers; it did raise a few eyebrows.

Lady Azure is now based in Jersey, for new owner "Terry Ruane" and the yard have laid down a newbuild 49' to be ready for next year's Jersey Boat Show, then another 430 in build to follow.

From our data department.

The results from my request for help in updating our database has been interesting. I have been most grateful for the numerous emails of encouragement and kind wishes, as well as some most helpful feedback.

However after 4 weeks had expired unfortunately no reply had been elicited from 52 of our registered 92 members! Rather than write them off now as having moved on, (or up), or no longer interested, a phone call to some revealed that it would be worth waiting a bit longer and at least trying to make one phone call to these 52 to try and raise them. This will accordingly be the last communication to those with whom I remain out of contact.

The promised statistical analysis of boats and their locations will accordingly follow next year.

However in the meantime an enquiry to 'Geoffs Yard' elicits the number of Aquastars built to date as follows:

Aquastar 27' up to 100 built
Aquastar 32' up to 200 built
Aquastar 33' up to 50 built
Aquastar 38' up to 200 built (150 aft cabin)
Aquastar 45' to 48' up to 50 built
Aquastar 57' approaching 10 built
Aquastar 65' 3 built
Aquastar 74' 12 built
Aquastar 80' 1 built

This implies that there are indeed a lot of Aquastar owners who are most likely not even aware of our owners club existence. When my son has helped me create a website for our club next summer, I will then take the opportunity to publicise its existence in the various on-line and the other boating magazines.

Nevertheless of those few who did reply and kindly offered some suggestions on the way forward, together with comments on my reflections on the recent Aquastar Rally as mentioned in my Hello Sailor missive of November 3rd, my initial feeling for that special breed of Aquastar owners is along these lines;

1 - put on hold the annual (one to two week style) cruises.

2 - alternate an annual get-together plus dinner between Guernsey St Peter Port one year and somewhere in England the next where those with boats too far away, or if the weather suddenly becomes too bad, can still attend if they wish in person.

3 - at this annual 'meet' one would have the opportunity to either continue on afterwards for a few days and visit a few nearby places by boat, or if the weather becomes inclement visit some local land based attractions instead.

For this to work efficiently I would look for support from someone who berths there and knows the area well to help me organise the event.

4 - anyone who is planning an interesting trip and wishes to have company could see if anyone else is interested in joining them. This could go onto a special 'members only' page of the proposed website, or by notification to me for inclusion in the next newsletter in the meantime.

There certainly seems to be quite a concentration of boats around Lymington, (at Berthon especially), and this could be a venue for 2016 perhaps? (potential apologies in advance to Gallant Lady).

One kind member has introduced me to an on-line scheduling tool called 'Doodle' which I could use to work out the most acceptable date to our members out of a selection of available ones for the 2016 event. I shall be looking at this rather clever program further.

In the meantime I would appreciate to know if a Saturday for the actual annual dinner is the preferred day of the week, and whether you would like, in the UK at least, to stay clear of the school holidays.

From our technical department.

ON A 33,

When we had our 33 we could not work out why we kept getting water into our engine room after most of our trips. As we run a dry boat (in at least the bilge context of the saying) this naturally caused me many sleepless nights. We eventually worked out that it was coming in through the engine room air intake vents. These normally have a modest moulded tray inside the vent to hold any water which enters through them and then tips it out again when the boat leans over that way. If you raise the height of the sides and ends of this sill by 50 - 100% this will solve this particular problem and help keep your engine room dry. We purchased a stiff rubber sheet which when cut to size we stuck on with Sikaflex in the following shape onto the sides of the boat at either end of the vent, and onto the side and ends of the tray itself.



On a 38

The ceiling panels in the main helm, as well as downstairs, are usually held up, where the edges butt up to another panel, by a plastic strip which clips into a plastic base. After much taking down and putting up (at least as we do) with age these start becoming cracked or bits can break off. New lengths of this 'plastic headline backing' may be purchased from the office at Aquastar Ltd: as they are a bit unwieldy collection in person is the most cost effective solution. (aquastar@guernsey.net)

Commodore's complaints

Grumble no 1.

Shortly after purchasing our 38 we discovered that the lower helm horn button only operated intermittently. I eventually identified this as due to the fact that the horn had been replaced with one of a higher current draw to the original fitted and that the long cable run created too much of a voltage drop. So I resolved the issue by fitting a relay bought from our local marina electrical suppliers in that ceiling void below the upper helm near the other horn button. Two weeks ago the lower horn button stopped working again! Galley ceiling panels down again I traced this to the new relay having got damp and

corroded inside. On inspection I realised I had been sold a standard automotive relay, so went 'on-line' and bought an identical but waterproof version for £ 3.50 which was indeed significantly less than the price charged me for the original one!

I have bought an extra as they are always useful on a boat. Should you ever want one it is ebay part number 291292147730, being a potted 12 volt 40 amp relay.

Grumble no.2

Some of you may remember my 'Technical Forum' note in the January 2015 newsletter which said that for boats like our 38 where the fridge was wired to run directly, and only, from the batteries, that this of course can put an undue load on the battery charger especially when it is trying to recharge fairly low batteries as well. We believe this was the main cause of our battery charger dying soon after acquiring our boat, and we then discovered that our previous owner also had had to replace his battery charger not many years earlier: indeed more than just a coincidence!

Taking advice at that time the solution we adopted was to purchase the recommended Waeco CoolPower EPS 100W. As mentioned you just fit it into the existing 12 volt supply to the fridge and connect the box to the mains. If the boat is connected to the mains the fridge is no longer powered through the batteries but through this unit so saving the charger being potentially overloaded if the batteries are low as ours was.

Alas our EPS 100W ceased functioning in the middle of our recent west country cruise.

Complaints to the manufacturer elicited the reply that we had been advised to purchase the wrong model as it was only designed for intermittent use such as for cool boxes in cars or day boats.

They kindly supplied us with the CoolPower MPS35, under warranty, which now I have fitted instead!

Grumble no.3

Some of you, like me, may have the 'Boat Warden' system whereby you are alerted by text message if, for example, the shore power fails. For me that means an alert to my mobile for when I am out and about, and also to my home phone which covers me when I am at home with the mobile switched off (not much signal).

At Brighton Marina I have found this most important as not only do we have a dehumidifier plus two greenhouse heaters on frost-stats, but we are also running an electronic antifoul system which would drain the domestic batteries to 50% of their capacity after a couple of days.

Unfortunately due to a software issue the second phone number is now no longer rung and the firm says the unit has to be sent back to them to sort out this software glitch. Fair enough and after a few years I am quite happy to pay for a 'repair'; however they have quoted 184 euros, for which I am not happy to pay!

I discover this is because they are pushing their recently brought out 'Elite' version. This does not have to be topped up on the PAYG sim, a good idea indeed, and software upgrades, or 'repairs', can be carried out over the air, which sounds even better.

For this there is, alas, an annual contract required which costs 180 euros; you could say this is fair or not depending on how much you want from the system.

But what they go to great lengths to hide is that it will only work with a smart phone using what they call 'a new platform protocol', and this means ones mobile has to be switched on all the time as the system does not send text messages and hence cannot call a

landline; this 'new and improved' version will of course be useless for us and anyone else who cannot get a good mobile signal at home.

I am therefore looking at other systems, without annual contracts, and will be meeting up with a representative from Yacht Sentinel at the imminent London Boat Show.

For the record there are of course other even simpler off the shelf units available incorporating a sim card which one just plugs in a mains socket on the boat, such as the £ 90 from Amazon: http://www.amazon.co.uk/Text-Message-Power-Failure-Alarm/dp/B00LAZGZG2/ref=pd_sim_sbs_23_4?ie=UTF8&dpID=41wyHvqbeeL&dpSrc=sims&preST=_AC_UL160_SR160%2C160_&refRID=0Q376955XA8EPYW2MYA6

This of course does not have the other alarm functions of those designed for the boating and caravan marketplace, but has no annual contract costs and is less than a quarter of the price. Buying a new one of these a year is still significantly cheaper than the annual contract price on the 'Elite' system if all you want is a mains monitor!

General knowledge department

These show active AIS signals on a chart:

<http://www.marinetraffic.com/en/ais/home/centerx:-1.6/centery:50.8/zoom:12>

<http://www.shipais.com/index.php?map=Channel>

<http://shipfinder.co/>

This website confirms that your MMSI is registered to your boat:

http://www.itu.int/online/mms/mars/ship_search.sh

The **shipais.com** website also shows the date and time when your boat was last detected, (enter ship name or MMSI).

For **shipfinder.co** if you go in under map options / search and put in ideally the boat name in the lower 'vessel' box (or MMSI number second choice), a drop down list will appear, click on the relevant one, and it will actually show your last known position on a real map. It will also keep this data for up to ½ hour after the AIS is turned off.

The **marinetraffic.com** website however is by far the best for historic information. If you put your boat (and any friend's boats) in 'my fleet' you will make the best use of this amazing package.

As you may have gathered, we, together with many other motor boat owners, are very sorry about the demise of Motor Boat Monthly, not only its magazine but also its cruises. But what I have discovered is that not everyone knows that ex-MBM Neale Byart and Claire Frew launched their own brilliant 'Motorboat Owner' monthly magazine nearly two years ago now. This is free and is on-line and continues the tradition of the excellent work they did for that venerable institution MBM.

Subscribers can sign up via their website www.motorboatowner.co.uk

As I would like to make these sections a regular and expanded feature, to help make it work please do send me your personal experiences and grumbles, as well as advice and

nuggets. I would like it also to include: tips given, problems encountered and their resolutions, technical questions asked - and possibly even answered (preferably relating to Aquastars!), where can I get a ".....", etc. etc.

One could even have a section for passing on tips and experiences encountered from unusual cruises, such as when we went from Newhaven up the Thames to Oxford with our family.

Similarly as it is 'Your Newsletter', any other ideas on what you would like to be included in it overall, as well as feedback on what is already included, will of course be gratefully received. Notification of boats wanted, or for sale, indeed any items for sale, would also be a nice feature to have regularly.

Membership news.

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the club:

Roy & Debbie Burgess - Aquastar 38, Saturn's Moon, Ocean Village, Southampton.

Barry & Carole Alford - Aquastar 45, Patience of Chichester, now moved to Eastbourne.

David & Karen Starkey - Aquastar 43, Kapana IV, another arrival at Berthon, Lyminster.

I have received one request for help:

Having been a past member of the Club, I would appreciate your assistance in sourcing the boat that I regret selling some 6 years ago.

I owned a Aquastar 33 Ocean Ranger called Pheocian and was sold to a guy who failed to sign my RYA Bill of Sale with the correct name (I have found out since). The boat went to the south of UK.

Original owner was a guy called Barry who ran her as an offshoot business from his B&B on Isle of Mull.

So, not a lot of information, I know. The following will differentiate it from others....

- * Painted "Royal Blue" hull topsides
- * Long Wheelhouse in White gelcoat
- * Twin Ford 120hp Diesel engines on shaft
- * Navy Blue canvas total enclosure canopy
- * Bathing platform in S/S Tubing and Teak slats
- * Lifteraft cradle on roof
- * Not fitted with Drying Legs
- * Timber glazed rear doors x 2 to rear deck
- * S/S Snap Davits on Bathing Platform

I realise this will be like the proverbial needle in haystack search however, if you could circulate the above info to members, I will be eternally grateful - we really miss our Pheocian (the children have lots of great memories).

Glyn & Julia Wright.

And one request to publicise, as follows:

Jim Cole, who owns the Aquastar 38 'Jacana' is wanting to sell her to enable him to search for a larger Aquastar 43. He gives brief details as follows:

Aquastar 38, built 1988, powered by twin TAM61A-306hp, she has undergone a major re-fit this year, including all new head linings,

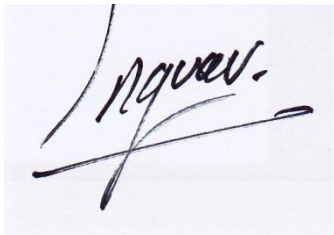
new Raymarine Nav kit, new canopies, carpets etc. and is in excellent condition throughout.

A full specification can be seen on his own website: www.pedroboats.co.uk

Sea Sayings - As the crow flies.

Crows are not sea birds, and will head for land by the most direct route - 'as the crow flies'. When unsure of their position in coastal waters, ships would release a caged crow. The crow would fly upwards until it spied land and then head for the shore, giving the vessel some sort of a navigational fix. The best place to follow the crow's progress was from a platform near the top of the mast - 'the crow's nest'.

Have a Happy Christmas and all the best for 2016.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Inquisit' or similar, with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.