

WINTER 2014

The Channel Sailing Club Magazine

WAVELENGTH

FOUL PLAY

JANET TAKES A DIVE

New diesel
dilemma

**TO BUY OR
NOT TO BUY**
top tips on
yacht charter

SACRE BLEU!
Andy Struthers
endures French
berthing

CARESSA
clinches it!

Over the top

WW1 fun and games on the Icicle



www.channelsailingclub.org

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the winter 2014 edition of Wavelength. Anyone struggling to find a berth on a sunny summer day in the Solent will be amused by Andy Struthers' tale of pontoon bashing in Brittany. And if you're thinking of hiring a boat for a trip to France, then we have an essential guide to yacht charter. There is a busy diary of club sailing events in 2015 too, so there's no excuse to not get on the water. And now's the time to give your sailing kit a makeover, so read John Fitcher's top tips. Wishing everyone a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year. Simon

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Wavelength The Channel Sailing Club magazine

EDITOR
Simon Worthington

ART DIRECTOR
Marion Tempest

PLEASE SEND ANY LETTERS AND
PICTURES TO
wavelength@channelsailingclub.org

CLUB NIGHT
Channel Sailing Club meets every
Wednesday at The Old Freeman's
Clubhouse, City of London
Freemen's School, Ashted Park,
Epsom, Surrey KT21 1ET. Doors
open at 8pm. Prospective
members welcome.

THE CLUB SENDS OUT EMAILS
on a regular basis to remind
members of upcoming events.
Don't forget that if your personal
information changes you can go
into your personal account on
the website and update it online.
Check out the club's website for
news and information about events
- www.channelsailingclub.org

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A WORD FROM THE COMMODORE

“As the sun sets”

It is really a year since the last AGM, where has the time gone? It's been so busy; your committee has been superb at picking up the previous administration's work and, as so many of them have not served on any form of committee before, it's quite amazing how they've coped. The stalwarts like treasurer Phil Martin and company secretary Peter Denning have been as diligent as ever but the newcomers have matched them.

My thanks go to all but particularly to Clive Hall for his handling of the move to the new clubhouse; Teresa Hemingway, who knew nothing about our IT set up when she took on the challenge but is now an old hand; Frank Gibson who has seamlessly taken over Jane Shott's role of membership secretary and Janet Sainsbury who has had a difficult year sorting out our racing programme.

Then there are Debbie Wiffen, Steve Cole, David Surman, Jeremy John and John White not to mention Simon Worthington who, along with his wife Marion, really take the biscuit for the production of the new-look Wavelength. On behalf of all club members, my thanks go to you all.

Your generosity is appreciated

I have often been asked about the commodore's charity the Gwennili Trust, which this year alone has organised over 100 seaborne events with more than 500 people of all ages and with varying degrees of disability including 130 wheelchair

dependent, taking to the water. It's a splendid organisation and well worth your support. The club has sent them £300, a result of 50% of our various raffles profits. I hope we can at least match that figure in 2015.

I know those who attended the Icicle rally with its World War 1 theme enjoyed themselves, I know I did. It really finished the year off in grand style. Congratulations to the crew of Shibumi which, in the opinion of the commodore (oh that's me!) deservedly won the prize for the best show, even if it was the only show and even if I was the butt of it. May I thank everyone for the good spirit shown and sorry, but I can't remember who provided the best rum ration! Well done.

I really hope that the club has a good 2015 with an increased membership, with at least as many activities ashore and on the water and bigger turn-outs on Wednesday evenings. Two events to look out for are the club dinner-dance in the 19th Hole at the RAC Club on Saturday, 18th April, and a very special buffet in the Cholmondeley Room and Terrace at the House of Lords on Wednesday, 24th June.

Good sailing and season's greetings

Trevor Barker



PAINTINGS BY ALISON STRUTHERS

SOUTH BRITTANY

WHY AND WHEN TO GO?

If you read the very good pilot book for this area – West France Cruising Companion by Neville Featherstone – one thing becomes very clear – it's going to be busy during the French annual holiday season. In particular to enter the area from Brest to the Loire including the nightmare that is Benodet, les Glenan, Belle Île and the Morbihan is verging on madness. No chance of a berth and full of enraged Frenchmen seeking the last buoy. With superb planning we managed to be in this area this summer right in the middle of this period and experienced the French way of berthing.

Picture the scene. We have – amazingly – got a berth in the small fishing harbour of Port Tudy on the Ile de Groix. A berth frees up near us and

Andy Struthers recounts a summer sailing trip to the south of France



in comes a weighty gaff rigger with a huge bow sprit. He has to back in and it's tight. He turns but not enough and about 15 of us pull and push and round he comes. Many "mercies" and "un Ricard pour vous ce soir?" follow.

Pardon my French

In comes another gaff rigger – smaller and with husband and wife crew. There is one empty berth next to gaff rigger 1 and he is a French sailor so he will back it in too. After two attempts, he has drifted into an impossi-

ble angle, but won't give up. On his third attempt disaster strikes. He ends up broadside across the bow of gaff rigger 1, entangling his rigging comprehensively with the raised bow sprit, threatening to rip it off.

I learned many new French words in the next few minutes and my French insult phrasebook (always worth carrying) was hugely extended. So in response to pilot book concerns my view became – don't worry because you will get into that tiny space eventually and for sure someone has cocked up worse than you earlier.

Not very Yarmouth!

What I particularly enjoyed at Port Tudy was the attitude of the capitanerie which is

the complete opposite of Yarmouth. I love Yarmouth – it is my favourite Solent harbour – but it is not French.

In Port Tudy the capitan of the capitanerie is an imposing man who prowls his harbour walls with handheld VHF and a Gauloise clamped to his lips providing instruction to his dories below.

But what intrigued us was the long periods when neither capitan nor dories were there at all – lunch, aperitif time, just had enough?

If this sounds a bit Jeremy Clarkson then it is the exact opposite. I enjoyed every minute of it and watched in awe as the harbour at Port Tudy filled to capacity during the afternoon. The avant harbour had fore and aft buoys and by evening it was nearly possible to walk across the harbour by jumping from boat to boat. Being French no one had thought to rig lines or fenders as they arrived because as we discovered you get them out after you come alongside.

We were away nearly 3

While Andy improved his French, his wife Alison took time out to paint the scene

months and never saw a harbour full sign, always finding a home and often a friendly Ricard.

We sailed back at the start of September and reached Yarmouth at about 1800. The harbour full sign was already up and we were lucky to get an outside buoy. If Yarmouth was French or you went back 20 years then you would get far more boats in the harbour.

The French have retained the joie à vivre which is what sailing should be all about and I fear we are in danger of losing. We will return to the land of Ricard and Gauloise next summer and look forward without any trepidation to joining the bunfight that is the French annual holiday.

SAILING EVENTS 2015

Provisional dates for races/rallies in 2015

MARCH 21/22: Frostbite rally

APRIL 3-6: Easter cruise

APRIL 18-19: Long race

APRIL 25-26:
Experience weekend

MAY 2-4: Milk O Punch
Sunday rally to Alderney

MAY 16-17: Two handed race

MAY 30 - JUNE 6:
Spring cruise

JUNE 20-21:
Wooden Spoon race

JUNE 27:
Round the Island race

JULY 4-5: Sprint races

JULY 11-19: Bastille Day cruise

AUGUST 1-3:
Lymington race and rally

AUGUST 15-22:
Plymouth fireworks cruise

SEPTEMBER 5-6: Joint rally
with Sutton Mariners

SEPTEMBER 12-13:
Passage race & rally

SEPTEMBER 26-27:
Foxhunt rally

OCTOBER 17-18:
Navigators' race & rally

OCTOBER 31- NOVEMBER 1:
Pursuit race & rally

DECEMBER 5-6:
Icicle rally and dinner

JANET DIVES IN!

Drama at the end of the exciting Navigators' race

Caressa is doing well!

If you all stand on the bow, we might see the propeller

After a tow to Cowes

All hands on deck

The day started well with several boats from the club racing to Cowes on our annual Navigators' race, when after a good days sailing disaster struck.

Janet's boat Knight's Challenge ran into problems when it got a line wrapped round its propeller. It took the combined efforts of members and bystanders to raise the stern and Jeremy to finally free her, but not before Janet had got very wet.

Janet takes a dive

And a brief discussion of the problems

SAILORS TAKE ON GERMAN U-BOATS



There has been much recently on the 100th anniversary of the start of WW1, but what about the little-known part played by sailing boats in the conflict? Naval historian Antoine Vanner* looks back

Although the “age of fighting sail” ended around 1840 as regards major warships, small sailing craft were to play an important role in World War 1 in Britain’s battle against Germany’s U-Boats.

The image most of us have of sinking of British merchant shipping by German U-Boats, in WW1 is by torpedoes. However, small submarines carried few torpedoes which were reserved for big targets. At this time most seaborne freight was carried in small vessels, many of them still sailing craft which sailed alone. Encountered on an empty sea, and usually without radio a small ship could be approached with impunity by a surfaced U-Boat. Gunfire could then be used to sink her or she could be boarded so that explosive charges could be placed below the waterline.

For much of the war Germany refrained from unrestricted submarine warfare and internationally-accepted “Prize Rules” were applied, these dating from the age of fighting sail. These stated that passenger ships could not be sunk, that crews of merchant ships must be placed in safety before their ships were sunk and only warships and merchant ships that were a threat to the attacker might be sunk without warning. Germany’s surface raiders and U-Boats stuck to these rules, until their departure triggered American entry to the war.

Prize rules

Anti-submarine technology was also in its infancy. Only limited progress had been made on detection methods – sonar, or asdic, would only become effective after

the end of hostilities – and without them the use of the primitive depth charges of the time was mostly ineffective. The most likely method of destroying a U-Boat was to catch her on the surface and to finish her by gunfire or ramming. The challenge was therefore to lure the U-Boat to the surface.

Observance of the “Prize Rules” was to make U-Boats vulnerable to being trapped by apparently innocent-looking merchant or fishing craft which carried concealed weaponry. These would sail under merchant colours and a naval ensign was to be run up only when the U-Boat was sufficiently close to allow fire to be directed on her. The crews wore civilian clothes and in many cases a “panic party” would drop a boat and row frantically away from the ship as the surfaced U-Boat approached so as to allay sus-

picion. A hidden crew would however remain on board and once the U-Boat was in point-blank range screens and other disguises would be dropped to allow the guns to be fired. These vessels were known to the British as “Q-ships”, taking their initial letter from Queenstown (now Cobh), the southern Irish port where most were based.

A Q-ship would usually cruise in areas frequented by U-Boats. She would be packed with light wood so that even if torpedoed she would stay afloat, encouraging the U-Boat to surface and sink her with a deck gun. The Q-ship’s appearance might be changed frequently, by painting or by erection of dummy funnels and deckhouses, to deter suspicion of the same merchant vessel being seen area. Crews were Royal Navy personnel and reservists. A total of 193 Q-ships were commissioned during the war, of which 38 were sunk.

High price

German coastal U-Boats represented a significant threat to fishing craft and in early June 1915 three smacks from Lowestoft were sunk, after boarding by U-Boat mariners.

The response was to arm four fishing craft as Q-ships. The first success was by the sailing smack Inverlyon which was armed with only a single 3 pounder gun. Approached

on the surface by the German UB-4 near Great Yarmouth on August 15th 1915, the Inverlyon pumped nine rounds into her at close range, sinking her with the loss of all hands. As the UB-4 sank, the Inverlyon’s fishing skipper, a man named Phillips, dived in to try and rescue a German crewman in the water.

In retrospect it seems irresponsible to have kept the smacks in service and a particularly high price was to be paid in 1917 by the smacks Nelson, Ethel and Millie. On August 15th these craft came under fire by a U-Boat. Fire was returned but the Nelson was overwhelmed. Thomas Crisp, her skipper, was seriously wounded but he ordered resistance to continue. With only five rounds remaining he ordered “Abandon Ship” and pigeons to be released with information on the position. Badly wounded Crisp refused to be moved and even dictated the message for the pigeons as “Skipper Killed” before going down with his ship. The Ethel and Millie had also went down fighting and their crew were hauled aboard the German submarine, where the Nelson survivors last saw them standing in line being addressed by a German officer. They were never seen again and disappearance remains a mystery.

*Antoine Vanner is the author of the *Dawlish Chronicles*, the third of which, *Britannia’s Shark*, is out on Kindle and paperback.

TONY’S BENCH

Nigel Barraclough finds a dedication to a former club member

A few weeks ago I was out walking around my local patch and came across a new seat, being of a curious nature I went and had a look and found it was in memory of Tony Turner. The seat is sited on the edge of a track in the downs just south of Leatherhead and has to be reached on foot, bicycle or horse back. Lat: 51° 16' 4 N, Long 000° 21' 3 W 220°T Leatherhead FC 1¼mile Grid Ref: 148539. It is in a lovely spot and is a fitting tribute to a fine sailor.



SLOW BOATS TO HAMBLE AND BEYOND



Club Event

Simon Davey on the Wooden Spoon race

The morning was full of promise for a warm possibly sunny day but devoid of the magic ingredient: wind. Nevertheless as Officer of the Day boat we set off to motor to the Winner buoy that was to be the start of the Wooden Spoon. 21 fine craft in all, 8 from CSC and 13 from the redoubtable Chichester Cruiser Racing Club.

The start looked unlikely for some time but as 1230 approached so did a tad of wind from the east which was just enough to get boats

over the line but after half an hour or so when the wind expired with a sigh and the fleet were likely to be taken back over the line by the spring tide going west the race was abandoned.

Four leg race

However undaunted the Race Officer suggested that the fleet motor-drift on the tide down to Mother Bank where, wind permitting, a new though shorter race would be commenced at 1430, and it did. The wind never became too overpowering but proved to be enough

for a four leg race finishing at Hill Head, from where it was a short trip into the Hamble river and Port Hamble where berthing down tide proved a little tricky for a few CSC boats. The combined 70 crew enjoyed a splendid evening at the RAF Yacht Club at which speeches were made with references to the Pirates Cruising Club of old and a chance meeting in Normandy between the Pirates founder David Evans and the Commodore of the CCRC, David Perrin. However in the end the results had to be announced and CCRC were

congratulated on a win over CSC and the retention of the Wooden Spoon. Although the margin of triumph was substantial 51 to 87, it was less than the previous year giving us hope that next year victory might be ours!

The race within the Wooden Spoon race for CSC boats was won by Eagle, a little to their surprise as they were getting quite used to finishing fifth.

Hardly a cloud

As a bonus CCRC invited all interested CRC boats to join in their Sunday morning race back towards Chichester. The morning was gorgeous with hardly a cloud around and WIND. So we set off at 1000 from Hamble Winter Series with three CSC boats, Eagle, Petal and Knight's Challenge and the CCRC fleet. Eagle made a great start leading the fleet to the first mark but after were overtaken by the CCRC boats Markova and Exeat to finish 3rd in their alpha fleet with Petal in 7th after a shortened well organised race.

And so home ports.



RACE SEASON ENDS WITH TIGHT FINISH

There were ten races, with two discards. 16 boats took part in at least one race, the largest entry being 12 in the Two Handed, 11 in the Navigators' and 10 in the Pursuit. We welcomed a newcomer, Ian and Trish Emery's Dragonfly and hope to see them next season. Five different boats gained at least one win during the season.

We run a variety of different races, short sprint races, longer passage races, the navigators' race which involves using navigation skills to get the best result, and a race against the Chichester Cruiser-racing Club. I would like to run a single handed race next year, not to be part of the series, and possibly we could allow entrants from nearby clubs. We also usually have competitors in the Round the Island Race. Petal and Gary McKay won the trophy for the best CSC cruising boat.

The races are run using a rolling handicap system based on the NHC, the aim being to give all boats a fair chance of winning. Racing encourages better sailing practices, getting the best out of one's boat, and hopefully, a healthy,



competitive team spirit. Mainly it is supposed to be fun and not a cut-throat war. Although many boats have a permanent crew, many others do not and are always happy to take anyone who is keen to learn. In fact you can learn a lot by sailing on different boats with different skippers. Any suggestions for new races and also volunteers to organise some of the races will be welcome.

Results of 2014 championship:

- 1 Caressa
 - 2 Matumba
 - 3 Myst
 - 4 Papillon
 - 5 Petal
 - 6 Knight's Challenge
 - 7 Eagle
 - 8 Celestine
- Harlequin Trophy for most improved handicap: Petal

I wish you all good racing in 2015.

Janet Sainsbury

Club Event

IN HOT PURSUIT

Organiser Stephen Morris on the last race of the season

The traditional season ending Pursuit Race is always well supported. Whether this is because it usually settles club racing championship, it is a last run out for the year or is a chance to race boat against boat rather than just against the clock, is not clear. It is probably a mixture of all of these for the various participants.

This year's event was run on Saturday 25th October, with 10 boats competing. The weather was good with unseasonable sunny intervals and, despite some concern during the week preceding the race, a fresher than expected 15 knots from the west. The very strong spring tide was running down the Solent to the west throughout the race, and this was clearly going to be a major factor for the navigators to consider, especially when combined with a largely east / west course.

Time and tide

The start, at NE Ryde Middle was followed by a short upwind leg and then a longer downwind run to Motherbank. This gave the opportunity to air the spinnakers for those who wanted. The course then headed back to the wide open spaces of the western Solent. The Thorn Channel was thankfully free of shipping, as it was traversed, en route to a series of triangles south of Lepe.

The start was spread over nearly an hour, and as every competitor started on their own, there was no one else to blame if the start



was not perfect. The opposing wind and tide did confuse the time and distance calculations for some though. Tucana being with the lowest handicap was the first boat away and the hare for the others to chase. The handicap calculations meant that there were several clusters of boats starting close after one another and then able to match race all the way. At the back end of the fleet the gaps were larger, and appeared fairly daunting. Jambo! was last off a full 50 minutes after Tucana, with just 3 hours to make up the distance.

The fight is on!

Most boats hugged the island shore to minimise the adverse tide on the downwind legs, and then headed back to the stronger flow for the upwind legs.

Gradually relative performance started to become apparent and the places started to change. If the race works perfectly, then every boat should be in a line at the end. However as usual this did not quite happen. As a competitor you know that any boat you manage to overtake, is really behind you, so long as you stay ahead. You tend to keep a note of anyone you have swapped positions with and when you do overtake, it is great to know that you will not be trumped on handicap later.

With 10 minutes remaining, the race was a series of races within races. At the front,



- 1 **Jambo!**
- 2 **Caressa**
- 3 **Celestine**
- 4 **Change of Course**
- 5 **Tucana**
- 6 **Eagle**
- 7 **Matambu**
- 8 **Petal**
- 9 **Myst**
- 10 **Knight's Challenge**

Celestine, Caressa and Jambo! were in a line, with Tucana and Change of Course also closely matched a little way behind, and Matambu and Eagle challenging each other for sixth position. Those last few minutes were crucial. All of the boats were on a downwind leg and Celestine opted not to use her spinnaker and dropped slightly behind. There was an interesting confrontation of different configurations, with Caressa, as ever revelling in windier conditions, using her conventional kite against Jambo!'s asymmetric. Caressa was able to head more directly downwind, but Jambo was going a little faster and was able to pull ahead and then cover to the finishing time. For fourth, Change of Course was able to pass Tucana, who had gamely held everyone off until the very last leg. Eagle just headed Matambu for sixth and seventh.

The evening was spent in East Cowes, with an enjoyable meal for all at The Lifeboat.



PICTURES: LUKAS PORT



Club Event

OVER THE TOP IN COWES!

Rum punch a-plenty on the Icicle rally

Seven boats and nearly 50 Channel Sailing Club members joined in a fabulous Icicle rally in Cowes which rounded off the 2014 season in style.

With a theme of World War I for the event, boats were adorned with camouflage, Your Country Needs You posters and a range of other wartime memorabilia.

And of course there was the obligatory Christmas twinkling fairy lights which boats hoisted up their masts.

Crews dressed up in a hilarious mixture of wartime costumes with commodore Trevor Barker leading the way in full Naval attire, alarming some Isle of Wight locals as he marched down the high street towards Cowes Yacht Haven.

Shibumi's crew entertained members and guests with a fantastic show which involved the commodore trying and failing to pass a number of mock wartime recruitment tests, complete with alarming

sound effects.

Orcella adopted an 'Allo, Allo' French cafe-style theme and treated visitors to rum punch while Andy Lear entertained all on the accordion.

Shortly after dark, it was time for many crews to have their third change of clothes of the day as they donned black tie outfits and party frocks for the dinner dance at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club.

After canapés in the bar, members enjoyed a delicious dinner of roast duck followed by dancing to a rhythm and blues band till after midnight.

Shibumi clinched the best overall boat award for their show and decorations and Orcella won the midships trophy for the best interior.

While the sail over to Cowes on Saturday morning was in light, north westerly winds, the return trip was in 20-knot plus westerlies, which no doubt cleared any cobwebs lingering from the night before.

Simon Worthington

Radio times

COASTWATCH GETS VHF CHANNEL 65

New service will give seafarers a range of information, including weather

Coastwatch has been allocated a national licence by OFCOM for the use of VHF Channel 65.

The National Coastwatch Institution (NCI) has been allocated a national licence by OFCOM for the use of VHF Channel 65, advises the RYA's Southern Region Committee.

This dedicated channel has been granted to NCI with strong support from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). Channel 65 will facilitate communications between NCI lookouts and seafarers on a variety of routine matters.

Local hazards

Stations will be able to respond to requests from passing, as well as local sailing craft and fishing vessels for radio checks as well as actual weather and sea state conditions. They will also be able to provide on request

information on a range of local facilities including, for example, local moorings, charted anchorages, water taxi contact details and local hazards.

This facility became operational on 1 October 2014 when National Coastwatch stations went live for the first time on Channel 65. The service will replace the practice of some stations currently holding a licence to operate on Marina Channel 37. This will no longer be available.

Seafarers

Richard Brown of the RYA's Southern Region Committee comments "This arrangement will facilitate radio communications between stations and seafarers. Coastwatch will communicate effectively with all who use our coastal waters and with the NCI's Search and Rescue partners at both local and national level".

Simon Worthington



A GUIDE TO YACHT CHARTER

Oleg Lebedev guides us through the ups and downs of yacht charter

It is highly exhilarating to be in charge of a yacht. To do so you could either own (or part own) a yacht or try chartering. Although the former doesn't make any economic sense (or so we are told) people still do own boats. So this article will focus on chartering, i.e how to be in charge of a yacht without the pain of ownership.

Qualifications

You will need relevant qualifications, to prove to the charter company that you know what you are doing and also ensure pay out by the insurance company if you happen to be unlucky. The minimum is Day Skipper (both theory and practice), but be prepared to still be treated with caution and rightly so, by any yacht charter company in the UK, although abroad they seem less fussy. Coastal skipper is generally preferred.

In the UK, cruising is pretty reasonable: you can get a decent yacht for a weekend for £600-£800 depending on the season. Yachts are available

from:

- Yacht school, e.g. Hamble School of Yachting.
- Specialised charter company, e.g. Sunsail or Fairview Sailing, or
- Niche yacht management firm, e.g. Hamble Point Yacht Charters.

Go for niche

My personal preference is c. as these yachts are privately owned, well looked after and anyone who charters them is very well vetted for insurance purposes. I chartered a Hallberg-Rassy 342 to take part in the 2013 icicle rally for about £650 for a weekend from Hamble Point Yacht Charters and can recommend them. Those club members who came on board Blue Lady can confirm that it was a very nice boat.

I have also chartered from a yacht school to go across the channel to Bologne to take part in Bastille Cruise in July 2013. There was a big difference in quality and not much difference in price.

Although the yacht school option is the cheapest, these

yachts generally live very hard lives and are very tired. The Specialised charter yachts are similarly abused due to their use for training and match racing purposes.

Chartering abroad

Racing yachts in the UK, are more pricey, around £900-1000 for a day of club racing to £2K - £3K for races such as Round the Island or a day during Cowes week, depending on the boat. The higher price is due to higher risks and higher insurance premiums.

As for chartering abroad, there is plenty of choice: many yacht charter companies specialise in various destinations and it is usually safer to deal through a UK based company (e.g. Nautilus Yachting). Before you commit to any of the charters, you need to consider the air-fares to the destination as some can be very expensive effectively negating an attractive price of a charter. Weekly prices for a charter are around £2000 and depend on the size of the yacht and the location. Remember, that the cheaper the yacht charter, the more expensive the trip to get to the yacht and back home.

Happy sailing, either in the UK or abroad!

PHOTO: PRO/IPC IMAGES

FUEL FOR THOUGHT

Rise in biodiesel level could make boat owners re-think fuel policy

Diesel engine expert Pat Manley has responded to concerns about the increased levels of biodiesel in marine fuels.

In the November edition of Practical Boat Owner, he said: "Un-dyed white' diesel for marine purposes is almost certain to be road fuel, as that is the most cost effective way of supplying the fuel for leisure marine use. Road fuel in the EU is a blend of mineral diesel and biodiesel. The blend varies from 5% to 7% biodiesel and may well rise to 10% soon. In the UK even marine red diesel is likely to be ordinary low-sulphur road diesel, simply dyed red for tax purposes.

Biodiesel has a lower calorific value than mineral diesel,

so mpg will be worse in a blended fuel.

Biodiesel is also a solvent and can damage the rubber seals and pipes commonly found in older engines. Newer engines tend to use synthetic rubber and are not affected.

Blended or not

Biodiesel is also hygroscopic - it attracts moisture and goes stale fairly rapidly. Both effects are undesirable when boats spend a lot of time idle. Blended biodiesel fuels are much more likely to suffer from 'diesel bug' contamination than non-blended fuel.

In the UK, two marina groups say their marine diesel is non-blended, so when refuelling at an MDL or Premier marina you can be sure the fuel is not blended - although

Blended biodiesel fuels are much more likely to suffer from 'diesel bug' than non-blended fuel

of course this may change at some point in the future.

Elsewhere it's likely that staff will have no idea if their fuel is blended or not - or even be aware of the difference.

Unless you know that the fuel is not blended, it could be better to refuel little and often rather than keeping the tank full. This is counter to traditional laying up advice, where the idea is to keep the tank topped up to reduce condensation that can lead to diesel bug. However, only time will tell the best strategy. Adding an enzyme additive such as Soltron will help keep the fuel fresher for longer and help to prevent infection by diesel bug.

The higher the percentage of biodiesel in the blend, the worse it is for the engine. At present, Volvo and Yanmar guarantee their current engines only up to a 7% blend.

Road diesel fuel has anti-waxing additives during the winter, but because marinas often don't top up their tanks in winter, you're likely to be supplied with summer fuel all year round. Operating in cold weather could then cause your filters to clog up with wax."

Practical help

WEARS THE PROOF?

Tips on washing your oilies from John Fletcher

Sailing clothes:

These clothes usually have a thin, porous fluoropolymer membrane with micro pore technology which keeps the rain and wind at bay but allows water vapour out. Sailing clothing is treated with a DWR - Durable Water Repellent, making the water bead on the surface and roll off. The Porous Membrane and DWR finish both work better when clean and regular maintenance will make your waterproofs last longer.

Washing base layers & fleeces:

Standard washing powder will leave a water-attracting residue and fabric conditioners will prevent garments from wicking. Wash your base layers in a pure soap, such as Soap Flakes, Liquid Soap Flakes, Nikwax Techwash or Grangers Cleaner. These will clean and also maintain the water repellent DWR finish.

Washing breathable waterproofs:

Over time the tiny pores in your waterproofs get blocked with dirt and cease to work effectively leaving you feeling clammy. Whilst oil and grease

on the outside of the garment can contaminate the DWR and it can actually start to attract water not repel it.

Washing in pure soap cleans the dirt off and actually restores the water repellence and breathability. You can hand wash or use a washing machine but you are strongly advised to clean the machine first to rid the machine of detergent build up. Run empty on a 90 degree boil wash, and clean around the soap tray. For best results, you should wash only one full-size garment at a time, with zips and velcro fastened on a full 30-40 degree synthetic wash cycle.

Reproofing clothing:

If after washing waterproofs they still don't seem to have a water repellent finish then it is probably because abrasion has worn off the layer of DWR. In this situation, you will need to reproof them.

Proofing agent will attach better and be more effective on clean fibres. Once you have washed your waterproof, and whilst it is still damp, you can then simply spray on a reproofing agent like Nikwax TX Direct or

Granger's XT to the outside of the garment and, if needs be, use a sponge to spread the liquid evenly over the surface. You should pay particular attention to seams and areas of high wear.

You can apply a wash in version of Nikwax TX Direct or Granger's Extreme Re-Proof, which work very well, however they have the drawback of adding a DWR finish to the inside of garment. This means that any moisture that you produce actually gets repelled back at you instead of being absorbed through the fabric and allowed to evaporate.

Heat finish?

It is possible to tumble dry to restore the DWR, but be careful as tumble driers can vary in their heat settings and some may be too hot. Seam tape is applied using heat, as are bonding and heat transfers, so if in doubt don't risk it. Its also possible to use a coolish iron to avoid the tape and bonding, always test the heat on a small area first.

● Soap flakes can be found in Boots and liquid soap flakes at Waitrose.

Club event

CURRY'N FAVOUR

Members enjoyed an evening of spicy Indian dishes at the recent curry night

More than 50 members tucked into an array of spicy curries at the popular Indian food evening at the Ashted club house in mid-October.

A starter of poppadoms, with assorted accompaniments, was followed by main courses of chicken, fish, beef and lamb curries of varying strength and heat. Dessert was exotic fruit salad with mango sorbet. The food was made by Debbie John, Debbie Wiffen, Dorri Parker, John Durbin, Linda Varney, Marion Tempest, Mike Price, Pete Thomas and Trish Owen.

A total of 53 tickets were sold for the evening and it made a profit of £140.58. A post-meal raffle conducted by Peter Thomas made a profit of £117, split between the commodore's charity, the Gwennili Trust, and funding the mince pie and mulled wine evening in December.

Organiser Debbie Wiffen said: "I had lots of very complimentary feedback from members. Everyone thought it was a thoroughly enjoyable evening."

"Once again I had great support from volunteers who cooked a great range of food. I couldn't do it without them."

MUG MEALS

When thinking of emergency food rations to take on the boat in winter consider the growing number of products designed to be made and eaten from a mug.

1 Everyone knows Cuppa soup, now Heinz do a 'Squeeze and Stir', slimline sachet of concentrated soup (not dehydrated) for about 60p each, available in four flavours.

2 Quaker Oats So Simple Cuppa Porridge comes in three flavours and in easy to rip sachets.

3 Pasta MugShots sold individually in sachets, lots of variants, including rice.

4 Posher than pot noodles: the Naked Noodle, Ramen noodle soup in three Asian flavours. Made in its own pot so not strictly a mug!

20% Discount on berthing in Port Chantereyne, Cherbourg for Channel Sailing Club members



Berthing in the marina in Cherbourg is based on length categories. Members will be charged two categories below their actual category, which is the equivalent of up to 20% discount. No discount can be offered unless a valid membership card*

can be presented to the marina reception. Being the closest French marina to the Solent, Port Chantereyne is ideally located in the heart of the English Channel. For more information about Port Chantereyne and Cherbourg, please visit www.portchantereyne.fr. *If you do not have a membership card, please get in touch with Frank Gibson, Membership Secretary.

Caring for your lifejacket

As with all safety and emergency equipment, servicing your lifejacket is most important. Whatever type of lifejacket you use, it will need basic maintenance to keep it working properly.

General inspection and maintenance

At least every six months, all lifejackets should be inflated orally or by hand pump to avoid moisture build up inside the jacket, and left inflated for 24 hours to ensure they hold their pressure and to see if there are any leaks or damage. You can also check straps, Velcro enclosures and folded corners for wear and tear and check that the retro-reflective tape is firmly attached to the jacket surface. At three monthly intervals, check webbing and stitching, all buckles, zips and D-rings and ensure the whistle is securely fastened.

If the jacket is fitted with a light, check its operation and that the battery is in date – replace if necessary. Some lights are salt water activated and must be replaced after use.

The lifejacket should be repacked correctly, as per the manufacturers folding instructions. When not in use, lifejackets should be stored in a dry, well-aired area. Out of season the lifejacket should be opened up, partially inflated (to remove folds) and stored on a non metal coat hanger.



Call us for free sea safety advice and information on

0800 328 0600 United Kingdom

1800 789 589 Republic of Ireland



Lifeboats