

Spring Times

NEW HORIZONS

By Anne Kyle, Commodore

A major bank is running an advertisement: Why wait for normal, let us build the 'New Different'!

This perfectly sums up our positive approach to the pandemic, we have concentrated on what can be achieved within the rules and regulations, rather than what we cannot do.

There is no doubt that the winter lockdown has proved much harder for everyone, but particularly the young and those living alone. I hope in our own small way, we have eased the long winter months and evenings with our curry take-aways, virtual entertainment and email newsletters.

The last summer and sailing season proved, despite the restrictions, surprisingly busy and there is no reason why the months ahead shouldn't be the same, or even busier. We certainly have a packed season planned.

This year's Taittinger Regatta will hopefully go ahead on the weekend of July 17. If the Government Roadmap goes to plan, it looks as if we will be able to hold the Champagne reception and other social gatherings that weekend as well. But, like everything in these uncertain times, it could be subject to change.

We also have Dinghy Week, Folkboat Week and the Sunset Series to look forward to, in addition to the racing on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. So, watch out for Katie's sailing updates.

Despite social distancing, the Club has proved it can be buzzy and fun. Happy Hour on Fridays will return from April 16, albeit outside initially, and who knows, from June 21, we may even be mixing more freely.

A number of events planned for the start of this year could not go ahead, but many have only been postponed to new dates, such as the Fitting Out Dinner, which is now on May 22.

A 'What's On' leaflet and Cruising & Racing programmes accompany this newspaper, so have a look at what we have planned for the coming months.

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RYSC Chef Tom Cripps prepares one of his famous curries: See Page 8

Dom is Club class



Congratulations to Dominic Breen-Turner who wins a meal for two for the best photo of the Clubhouse in lockdown with his dramatic image above, see page 9 for more on the RSYC Photograph Competition

LORD-LIEUTENANT IN LOCKDOWN

Susie Sheldon talks about her roller-coaster year and how the community has come through with flying colours



The Lord Lieutenant Susie Sheldon with her two sons Richard and Charles competing in the socially distanced Chilly Hilly Run in December 2020

Here on the Isle of Wight we have lived through a roller-coaster year. Complete lockdown, gradual release, almost normality; Lockdown 2, Tier 1, Tier 3; Lockdown 3 and who knows what next?

Our adaptability has been severely tested, but I think we have come through with flying colours. At the Royal Solent Yacht Club, the

service given by its volunteers to the community delivering prescriptions and shopping during Lockdown was nothing short of sensational.

As rules have loosened and tightened, social and sailing functions have continued, constantly adapting to the changing regulations. The Wednesday Curry and Quiz nights, especially, have been brilliant.

As Lord Lieutenant, in 2019-2020 I spent my time wearing smart clothes; meeting people; learning how things were done; how to acknowledge a salute; what it was like to have a driver; who everyone was; where charities and organisations were based and how to host royalty.

Almost a year to the day I became Lord Lieutenant we went into lockdown. I have spent 2020-2021 improving my tech skills; learning to Zoom; videoing myself making speeches on line; meeting people virtually; and wearing smart clothes from the waist up - even if I am in my pyjamas!

I have probably met more people virtually than I possibly could have done in the normal round of face-to-face engagements. Whether I will ever recognise them if I meet them face-to-face in the future, remains open to question.

The trouble with the computer screen is that it gives you no idea if people are tall or short, broad or slim, no hint of their body language. And if we add in face masks, there is going to be a huge challenge.

Outside my day-to-day work responsibilities, I have a thriving vegetable garden and am super-fit having run or cycled nearly every day!

Community

The West Wight Sports and Community Centre, like many other wonderful Island organisations, has had an equally chameleon existence. It went from fully operational to overnight closure, and a swift transfer into a Community Hub serving the whole community during Lockdown 1. It then re-opened its activities as permitted, and continued to run the Hub services.

Next came Lockdown 2 and the re-opening in Tier 1. And finally, it became one of the first vaccination centres in the country to open while still fully operational as a Sports Centre.

It was a measure of its extraordinary organisation and depth of volunteers that on the very day the vaccination centre opened, the



The West Wight Sports Centre in Freshwater played a key part in the vaccination process and organised the socially distanced 200 competitor Chilly Hill Run in December 2020

Centre also fielded volunteers to help run Brookside Health Centre and, at the same time, had enough volunteers to run the socially-distanced 200 competitor Chilly Hilly Run.

This was the triumph of the Lord Lieutenant's year of running and cycling. A 10-mile cross-country run to the Needles, across Headon Warren and back.

Committed to it by my family early on, I had thought to escape when its original date was scuppered by the November lockdown. But the revised date just gave me the extra time to train, and there was no escape as my son, Richard, was able to complete his quarantine on return from Canada in time to join Charles and I competing.

We had a great support team of Jamie, following on his electric bike, and Sophie at key points with refreshments. To me, that day in December was not only an eloquent reminder of the strange contradictions of the year we have

lived through, but also a great indicator of hope that life would one day return to normal.

Through the ingenuity and determination of our West Wight community, people were living life as best they could under the restrictions, while, at the same time, embarking on what has proved to be this extraordinarily efficient and successful vaccination programme.

Optimism

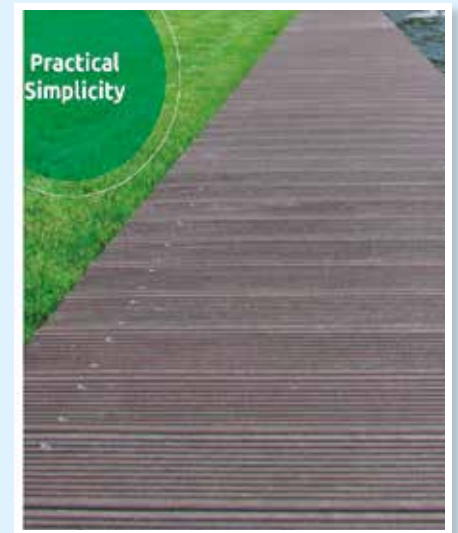
And how brilliant in particular the roll-out of vaccinations has been from the Brookside Health Centre. Going back into full lockdown from the beginning of January has, I think, tested our optimism, particularly in the dark gloomy weather. But, as the days get longer and the millions of vaccinations administered increase, I look forward to getting back on the water this summer.

We have lived an alien life over the past 12 months but we are truly lucky in the community we live in.

Sponsor a plank



The Club Slipway which has been in use for around 35 years



The environmentally friendly artificial planks made from recycled plastic

Our Club slipway has served us well for around 35 years but now it is sorely in need of refurbishing and a bit of general TLC.

Time and tide have taken their toll. Power washing to remove seaweed, along with movement of the shingle as the ferries come and go, have reduced the planks to a shadow of their former selves. The bolts holding the planks to the bearers below have also rusted and expanded thereby splitting the wood. In short it is no longer fit for purpose and will soon become a safety hazard.

Your General Committee has reviewed the options and decided to carry out a re-decking programme using environmentally friendly artificial planks made of re-cycled plastic. These still look the part, are far stronger, last longer, can be power washed and are now used on many slipways and marine projects throughout the UK. The maintenance is less and they come with a twenty-year guarantee but are expected to exceed this by some margin.

Members are invited to support this project by "Sponsoring a plank" at £75 each. There are 200 planks in total so no restrictions on the number of planks anyone can sponsor. Names of sponsors will be engraved on a plaque which will hopefully be placed just inside the wall at the top of the slipway.

To book your plank please email the Secretary at secretary@royalsolent.org. The planks have been ordered and work should begin at the end of March/early April.



A LAUGH ON THE OCEAN WAVES!

Michael Grade looks back on 40 years of fun out at sea



Michael in warmer climates

Michael Grade at the helm, one of many spells during his 40 years experience

You definitely need a sense of humour to go sailing. That is my conclusion after some 40 years in the Solent, the Caribbean, the Med, Cape Cod and once in Sydney. My formative years were spent crewing on an Oyster 41 competing in Cowes Week. The owner/skipper was a seriously fine seaman who taught me, amongst other things, not to panic. One example. We were jockeying for position in the fleet, 10 minutes from our start off the Squadron line, when there was a horrible crunching sound on

the port aft quarter. A Jeanneau 45 had collided with us. Their helm immediately owned up and in a thick French accent, holding the large wheel above his head, said: "I am so sorry, eet came off in my 'and!" We laughed all the way back to Cowes.

Later that week, we were racing in a light sea breeze, fighting a foul tide with the whole of our class flying their biggest, lightest spinnaker on the way to a leeward mark. Running our foredeck was Billy Bullard, who had been bowman on Britain's

Americas Cup challenge in 1983 aboard Victory, a man who knew the rules of racing as well as anyone.

The wind died, so kedges out, with a beer and the liar dice on the foredeck. Suddenly we seemed to be the only boat on the Solent beginning to feel some breeze.

As our spinnaker started to fill, very quietly and gently we lifted the kedge. Of course, the breeze died, the spinnaker flopped and we were going astern at three-knots with the tide.

To port, astern, was a kedged Dragon. We were bearing down on him, helpless. Understandably alarmed, the Dragon skipper shouted to warn us, adding anxiously: "What appalling seamanship!" Very politely, Billy B leaned over the port rail and offered not an apology, but a point of racing law, saying: "I think, sir, you are the overtaking vessel!"

Happily, we narrowly avoided the Dragon by a whisker, even though we were laughing helplessly.



Michael during a race in the Solent

Cruising in warmer parts has its moments, too. Outstanding for me was a BVI bareboat charter cruise. The boat company required all its skippers to check in around 6pm every evening, as a safety measure. Sipping our customary dark rum and tonic at sundown, we were ready to check in when the VHF sprung into life.

An American voice called the base with a serious problem. The base, anxious to understand the issue, asked the skipper to explain. Back came the skipper, somewhat panicked in tone: "Hello, base. We don't have an anchor." Base: "I'm sorry to hear that, skipper, but there are two anchors aboard which we checked before you set off yesterday, one on the bow and a spare in the starboard lazarette. Over." Skipper: "Sure, but we have used those."

Through our laughter, we could only guess that they either didn't know how to use a windless, or they didn't have one – and they couldn't imagine you were required (at these prices) to pull such a heavy lump by hand.

Finally, out of the dozens of hilarities I have enjoyed at sea, let me recount an early,

bareboat experience. I was pretty inexperienced and didn't feel confident to skipper a Catalina 50 out of Oyster Bay (New York) for a cruise to Cape Cod. My best chum wasn't available for the first week (he was more than qualified to run the boat) so we invited a chum of his who he assured me was qualified.

I flew into Kennedy, straight to Oyster Bay where Joe had prepped the boat and we were ready to cast off. We set off in the dusk, up Connecticut Sound, bound for Nantucket. Jet lag soon saw me head down to my bunk. Conditions were flat and benign, no wind, so Joe was happy to stand watch. A few hours later, I awoke and became puzzled how light it was, not daylight, but artificial yellow lights. I rushed up on deck to see we were 50 metres off the Long Island shore.

I asked: "What's up, Joe?" He replied: "Er, I'm lost, I'm just trying to read the road signs." The lesson of this episode is that great seamen are not necessarily the best navigators!

Safe watch, and don't forget to laugh...

We can't wait to visit Yarmouth

By Geoff Holt, founder of Wetwheels

It is hard to believe that this year sees the 10th anniversary of Wetwheels. So where did it all begin and why Wetwheels? Following the accident which paralysed me more than 35 years ago, I was determined to find ways to continue my love of sailing, despite the lack of opportunities for someone in a wheelchair.

I have been fortunate to have undertaken a number of sailing adventures, including my first circumnavigation of the Isle of Wight in 1992 (repeated in 1997); my circumnavigation of Britain in 2007 (109 days, 51 harbours and 1500 miles); culminating in my Atlantic crossing on a wheelchair accessible catamaran in 2009/10. It was the circumnavigation of Britain and the Atlantic crossing which made me realise how few opportunities there were for disabled people to get afloat on the sea.

So I created Wetwheels to create that opportunity. My first boat, Wetwheels Solent, was built by Cheetah Marine in Ventnor in 2011. The boats are fully MCA-coded to take 10 passengers. But I wanted Wetwheels to be more than just a trip boat.

She has been designed so everyone, including wheelchair users, have the opportunity to drive the boat and, for a moment in time, to leave their disability on the dock and to be master and commander.

Our first visit to Yarmouth was in 2012, when we took a group of young disabled children out from local schools and disability groups. It was a great success and we have returned every year since. Our visits have mostly coincided with the Yarmouth Festival and many locals will have seen us operating from Town Quay during Carnival Week, courtesy of the Yarmouth Harbour Commission. We have also been supported with wonderful hospitality by the Royal Solent Yacht Club.

We hope to be with you again from July 26-30. This will be the week prior to the Festival, but we anticipate operating at capacity again. We normally take more than 120 people on the water during our visit to Yarmouth and, weather permitting, we always try to get to The Needles. I'm looking forward to a bumper year and to seeing our friends in Yarmouth again.

For more information, visit:
www.wetwheelsfoundation.org or
www.geoffholt.com.



Wetwheels founder Geoff Holt prepares for a trip out of Yarmouth with his 'crew'

Matt's golden journey from 1

Proud dad Martin recalls h

By Mal Butler

This is an incredible story which started with a daily eight-mile round-trip bike ride to school. It moved on to the Rio Olympics and a place on the Gold Medal podium. And continues, even now, on a worldwide adventure as part of Sir Ben Ainslie's Team Ineos.

For club member Martin Gotrel, a renowned national time-trial cycling champion, there is a deep sense of pride as he talks about his son Matt's amazing journey so far.

Martin, who owns the jewellers in Yarmouth High Street, said: "Matt was brought up riding a bicycle, we would ride a tandem with him on the little bicycle at the back of me.

"As soon as he went to school, he was riding there and back every day. As he grew up, if he wanted to go anywhere, he had to get on his bike and make his own way there."

As Martin's cycling career wound down, he turned to his other love, sailing and Matt was quickly following in his footsteps.

Matt said: "Dad was always a keen sailor and my first real memories were between the ages of five and eight when I would go to the Draycote Water Sailing Club with dad and my grandfather. My grandfather even set up a trapeze line for me on his boat!

"I started off on the small RS 200s, then the RS 800 which got me onto the national circuit. It was a pathway into the 29ers and the British Youth Sailing Team. "By the time I was 18, I had moved up to the 49er, the Olympic two-

handed high-performance skiff and spent two years full-time sailing in Weymouth.

"I was part of the training squad alongside the guys who made the Beijing 2008 team, and I thought about competing in the London Games four years later, but the competition was so tough.

"Basically, there were 10 teams competing for one place, so I decided to go to Loughborough and study engineering."

Debut

The university brought a change of direction for Matt. He was quickly seconded onto the rowing team saying: "I wanted to keep fit and enjoyed the training and discipline and travelled to Nottingham Rowing Club every day to train."

In 2012, after three years at Loughborough, a university not particularly known for its rowing team at the time, Matt was part of the team that topped the medal table at the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Regatta, before going on to win the illustrious Henley Royal Regatta.

These successes led to a call up from the GB Rowing Team where he made his debut at the European Championships in Italy later that year.

From team spare in his first year, he went on to win two successive World Championship gold medals as part of the Mens Eight, in 2014 and 2015 and then an Olympic gold in Rio 2016.



Matt as part of the Olympic rowing team at Rio de Janeiro in 2016



Matt learning the ropes as a child



*Manning the coffee grinders.
Photo by Mark Lloyd*

Henley to Auckland (via Rio)

How son Matt made it to the top



It was part of the Ineos Team UK bid to win the America's Cup. Photo by Mark Lloyd



Matt with the Loughborough University Rowing team scarf



Matt has recently become a father.
Photo by Cameron Gregory,
Ineos Team UK



Matt and Dad Martin after winning gold
at the 2014 World Championships in
Amsterdam

But, as far as Matt was concerned, he had had enough and decided to call time on that part of his career.

He said: "I was very lucky to be able to join the Great Britain Rowing Team and achieve an Olympic medal in such a short space of time.

"It was a tough decision not to carry on, but the programme is just relentless. You have one day off every two to three weeks, doing three training sessions a day, you buy into it and that's how it is.

"At the end of the day, you are doing it for a gold medal and once you have achieved that, it's difficult to get the motivation to do it all over again."

He got a job as an engineer at Rolls Royce, but, once again, his career moved in another direction.

He explained: "I got a call from a couple of guys from my time with the 49ers. They were getting involved in Sail GP and were looking for someone to grind with them. "I always wanted to get back in sailing, and a couple of our lads were also part of Ben's team and saw that I had the potential.

"So I met up with Ben just before Christmas 2019 and have been with him since."

Matt has spent the last five months in New Zealand as part of the Ineos Team UK bid to win the America's Cup, which sadly failed. He is now back at home in the Cotswolds having returned to wife Katie for the birth of daughter Lara. He added: "I will be home for six weeks and then sailing to Bermuda for a series of seven Sail GP events."

Mindset

Looking back on Martin's part in his success, he said: "I was always disciplined and having competed with dad on the small boats I looked up to him. He gave me the kind of mindset I needed to succeed in the rowing world where there is a very regimented lifestyle."

Martin, who is regularly seen rowing locally, can understand why Sir Ben was keen to have Matt on board.

He said: "In rowing you are part of a team and Matt is a real team player. He leads from the front and brings the best out of people."

Matt has clearly taken the lead from his father, just as his dad led him on that tandem all those years ago.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2016: Olympic Gold - Rowing, Men's Eight

2015: World Championship Gold - Rowing, Men's Eight

2014: World Championship Gold - Rowing, Men's Eight



We've kept calm and carried on!

Although the Club has been closed since Christmas Eve, as many will know we have continued to reach out to members, and the wider community, in a range of ways. The most interactive has been the provision of delicious fresh-cooked curries available each Wednesday. Our Club chef, Tom Cripps, says: "It's nice to have some sense of normality coming into work with Brooke and cooking for members. We've averaged 30 orders each week and it gives me an opportunity to try new dishes. The great feedback is much appreciated, and I'm looking forward to the next live curry night after May 17."

Amongst the praise received is: "We look forward to the Wednesday Solent curry evening. This week the chef surpassed even himself!" And: "Totally delicious, Bravo RSYC. Can't wait for next Wednesday's treat."

Takeaways must be ordered by 4pm on Sunday for collection between 12pm and 3pm on Wednesday.

Many members have enjoyed the excellent Zoom talks given by Kevin Shaw on diverse subjects including Charles I, Queen Victoria, Disraeli, The Great War, Shackleton



Michael Grade and Commodore Anne Kyle collecting their take away curries

and Mallory. Over 100 members attended the recent virtual talks and they will hopefully continue after Easter.

Nick Measor has continued to run his popular and challenging virtual quizzes each Wednesday evening, attracting an average of over 30 keen competitors. The categories are wide-ranging and an extra point or two may often result from remembering that our quizmaster has Hungarian antecedents! His last live event in the Clubhouse before Christmas attracted 47 attendees to quiz and dine.

Members and staff continue to volunteer at Yarmouth Pharmacy, which gained some prominence



Members participating in one of Kevin Shaw's Zoom talks. Kevin Shaw is pictured top left



Tom's curries, enjoyed by many members

in a recent national press article by Michael Grade about the plight of the independent pharmacies such as ours. There's still time to get involved in these and other Club activities before, hopefully, we re-open properly in May.

Anthony Davies

Book yourself into our new club

During the first Lockdown, it was suggested a book club was set up. By the time we had exchanged emails, chosen and read a book, it was July and at our first meeting we discussed 'The Storyteller', by Jodi Picoult.

Of course, Lockdown has affected us as the year wore on, but we have continued to meet by Zoom and have already discussed 'Captains Courageous', by Rudyard Kipling; 'Things Fall Apart', by Chinua Achebe; 'Great Expectations', by Charles Dickens; 'A Year in Provence' by Peter Mayle; 'The Thursday Murder Club' by Richard Osman and 'Transcription' by Kate Atkinson.

We each choose a book in turn and welcome new members. Anyone who is interested in joining us should get in touch with the Club.

Pat Dawson

NEW HORIZONS Continued from Page 1

One of the most heartening matters for me and my fellow Flag Officers, and also the staff, has been the enormous member support we have received over this past year.

This has not only been in messages we have received, but the financial support as well. Our membership has remained steady with very few resignations and members have also kept their payment cards topped up which has been a further support to our cash flow.

I am sure that it won't come as a surprise when I say that 2020 proved financially a very challenging year.

Ahead of the virtual AGM on Saturday, April 17, you will shortly be receiving the accounts and financial report for the year, and these illustrate how tough it has been. However, we did start 2020 in a strong financial position and were therefore able to weather the storm. In addition, we took advantage of the various Government schemes which

enabled us to end the year stronger than we had first envisaged.

We don't expect this year to be easy, but at least this latest lockdown is in a period when the Club makes a loss. In normal times, the Club does not move into surplus until the summer months. So, this year should prove easier.

We had planned a number of capital projects this year, some desirable and some essential. The slipway for example needs to be substantially repaired - do look

at our 'Sponsor a plank' appeal on Page 3 - plus new fencing and the refurbishment of the eastern balcony are next on the list. We will need to monitor finances carefully before we commit to some of these projects.

There are still many 'ifs' and 'buts'. However, you can rest assured that we will be approaching the coming months with our usual positive view, and we will be working hard on your behalf to achieve an enjoyable season for us all.



Compton Bay, first day of lockdown, Linda Connaughton

LINDA'S LOCKDOWN LENS

Our newsletter at the end of January invited members to look forward to the onset of spring and gradually lengthening days by taking a photograph to enter this competition.

The only rules were: The subject must be outdoors; it must be taken during lockdown; it must be submitted by a member or their family. Thanks to all those who submitted photos - the standard of entries was exceptionally high and Linda Connaughton was adjudged the winner with her entry entitled: 'Compton Bay, First Day of Lockdown' (above).

Our expert judges, Keith Davey, Marion Heming and Paul Brown unanimously agreed this image really encompassed the brief: "It's a great composition and an insight into the lockdown. The distant solitary figure included in the landscape provided a strong and compelling image."

Congratulations to Linda who wins a bottle of Taittinger Champagne. We have also published 11 other runners-up (*see left, right and below*), and all these photographs may feature in a Club calendar.

Miles Peckham, Rear Commodore House



*Sunset from Yarmouth Pier
Andrew Clarke*



*The Pepper Pot, Niton
Victoria Harding-Domeney*



*Dusk at Yarmouth Mill
Harriet Kearns*



*Collecting seaweed for garden compost at Bembridge
Keith Geddes*



*Even those who guard 24 hours
silently wear a mask
Mike Hammond*



*Fishing boat
Brenda Fishwick*



*If Anthony Gormley
lived in Yarmouth!
Denise Cronin*



*Mill Copse teasels
Tony Scales*



*Mill Creek
Agatha Davies*



*Sunset at Yarmouth
Keith Geddes*



*Yamouth from the Sandhard
Nicky Henderson*



PLENTY OF SAILING TO ENJOY DESPITE ALL THE SETBACKS

Rear Commodore Sailing, Katie Davies looks back at a disjointed winter of racing



Freddie and Charlie Davies dressed up warmly for a Winter series race aboard Raev



Miles Norris and Charlie Anderson aboard Svea



Skysmoke finished third in the Boxing Day Race



Bossa Nova won the first winter series

A combination of lockdowns and cold and windy weather has meant there has not been as much sailing over the winter months as we would have hoped.

However, we did manage to run a fantastic Turkey Cup on October 11. With nearly perfect conditions, an amazing 17 boats competed and enjoyed a great course set by Dick and Pat Dawson. Places changed constantly but honours eventually went to the Sowrys in *Mistral*, while the turkey, which is a prize for second place, was won by Patrick Farrell in *Njord*.

The Winter Series, sponsored by the River Yar Boatyard, which took place either side of Lockdown 2, was also run by Dick and Pat and provided some brilliant courses which everyone enjoyed. The first

series was won by David Fox in *Bossa Nova*, with Madeline Green in *Skysmoke* finishing second and Stephen Hucklesby in *Cloudy Bay* third.

Series two, sponsored by Wight Marine, commenced on December 13 and Race Officer, Alan Hans Hamilton, ran two short races on each race morning, allowing us to have a series of four races. The sailors very much enjoyed the format which we may repeat in the spring. The series was won by Mark Hall in *Raev*, *Cloudy Bay* finished second and Nick Oulton in *Zadora* was third.

It is fantastic to see the Winter Series growing in popularity with nine boats regularly competing, and there was a particularly good turnout from the cruiser class. A big thank

you must go to Robert Lombardelli, their class captain, for all his hard work. The overall Winter Series winner was David Fox, so well-done David.

On Boxing Day, we had our annual morning race. Five hardy boats took part, working off their Christmas feasts and enjoying the rather fresh air! The race was won by *Raev*, followed by Susannah Seely and Didi Nicholson in *Seahorse* with *Skysmoke* finishing third. Unfortunately, the Island had just moved up into Tier 3 restrictions, so there was no celebratory drink in the bar after the race - but we are already looking forward to doing so next year!

Going forward, we are very busy in the sailing department preparing for the year to come. Jojo Minchin,

who many of you will know, has joined the team as our new Sailing Secretary supported by the Club's Chief Race Officer Jeremy Willcock.

As I write, I am hopeful that restrictions on organised outside sport have been lifted. That being the case, we are planning on running a Spring Series starting on Easter Sunday with a race for the racing cruisers and the Folkboats. Also, if there is interest and the weather is kind, we are hopeful of running some Laser racing over the Easter weekend. So, please, dust off your wetsuits and come down to join us.

Adam Preece, our Boatman, has been working hard on the Club Lasers over the winter and as a result they look fantastic. So, there is no excuse not to join in. if you would



like to rent one of them, please contact Jojo in the Sailing Office. The Spence Willard Wednesday Evening racing is due to begin on April 21, so even if you are not doing the Spring Series please make sure your boat is ready for the beginning of the season. We all need to do loads of racing this year to make up for last year's rather curtailed season! Looking forward, I am very confident we will be able to run our annual Taittinger Regatta in some form. We will start accepting entries in April, so register your interest via the Club's website and watch out for further email updates.

Although there was not much sailing over the winter months, John Doerr,

the international judge, has given us five excellent talks on the new racing rules over Zoom. I am sure everyone found this very interesting, and I am hoping it will result in less confusion at the windward mark!

Finally, can I ask everyone to complete the 'Condition of Entry', which is on the website, before their first race of the season. Also, take a minute to read the Sailing Instructions. There have been a few changes with the introduction of new racing rules this year, mainly written by John.

Hopefully, see you all on the water soon.



Adam Preece the Club boatman has refurbished the Club's Lasers. They are available for hire for all RSYC members. Please contact the Sailing Office

Natasha is our heroine

Early in 2019, the YOD Class began planning The Towers Party and a major decision had to be made: Which good causes should be the beneficiaries? We like to ensure that local good causes are supported, as well as those which promote sailing for all.

That particular year we chose: Abbeyfield, IOW; Kissy Puppy; UKSA; Yarmouth Sea Scouts; Blind Sailing World Championships GB Team ... and Natasha Lambert BEM.

Natasha, known locally as MissIsle after her first boat, is a young sailor from Cowes and lives with Quadriplegic Athetoid Cerebral Palsy. She has difficulty using her arms and legs, making sailing a little more challenging, but she does not let that stop her. Thanks to her engineer father, Gary, Natasha can sail with the use of 'Sip-Puff' technology and uses her breath to work the controls on her boat.

Natasha's plan was to join the 2019 ARC and sail the 2,700 NM across the Atlantic with her father, Gary; mother, Amanda; sister, Rachel; plus

a small crew. The YODs were early believers and enthusiastic supporters. The Towers Party that year was the most successful ever which allowed us to make significant contributions



Natasha Lambert is a quadriplegic sailor from Cowes. Photo courtesy of the BBC

to all of the chosen good causes - including £7,500 to Natasha's mission.

However, Natasha and her team were unable to make necessary modifications to her boat, *Blown Away*, a Nautitech Open 46, in preparation for a November departure and her crossing was deferred until 2020. Then disaster! Covid struck and a series of

fundraisers were cancelled. Natasha was still registered to set sail from Gran Canaria on November 22, for the Atlantic crossing to St Lucia.

Despite this setback, Natasha set sail from Cowes to Cherbourg on August 1st and spent a week sailing along the north coast of France. Then on August 9, she left Brest and sailed across the Biscay, along the coast of Portugal and Spain to Gibraltar.

After a rest, she carried on through The Straights and down to Las Palmas Marina, Gran Canaria. Natasha and family then left the boat in Gran Canaria and returned to Cowes.

They prepared to return to Gran Canaria in October in readiness for the November 22 start date - and her adventure began. After some updates, the news we had all been waiting for came on December 15, when we received our final status report.

"Thank you for helping to make it possible we are so grateful to everyone who helped. It has certainly been a truly memorable experience

for all of us, especially Natasha. "We feel very privileged to have experienced our Atlantic crossing especially this year. Many thanks once again!"



Natasha Lambert at The Towers Party

You can see the BBC's report and video of Natasha sailing via this link: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-55272570

The YOD Class is proud to have been early believers in Natasha and we are absolutely delighted in the success of this young sailor.

Graham Fell, YOD Class Captain

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