

# Spring Times

The Covid Years

## GOING FORWARD!

The first live AGM for three years, which will be held in the Clubhouse, marks the end of the most extraordinary period in RSYC's history in modern times. The period was punctuated by three lockdowns and brought to an end by three violent storms within a week.

Despite bar and dining room closures and the cancellation of many social events, the Club's finances are sound and membership is up.

Further marking the end of the Covid years, major events are planned for the summer including a bigger than ever Taittinger Regatta, the Jubilee Weekend, the Platinum Palace Party and the Summer Party.



Derek Sandy evening. Photo by Steve Butler



Storm Eunice batters the Island. See our photo feature on page 7

### In this issue

- Sailing News
- Commodore's farewell
- Man Overboard!
- The Great Storm of 2022
- A Tough Shout
- Stella Hurley
- Events planned for the summer
- Social Round Up



Smiling through Covid! Photo by Jake Sugden

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# A most unusual yet rewarding time

*As her tenure comes to a close, our Commodore Anne Kyle says farewell. Throughout Covid, the Club has not only survived but thrived*

My term as your Commodore is coming to a close – the past three years have gone very quickly, particularly the last two which seem to have morphed into one. For the first year we lived in normal times and at my first Fitting Out Dinner I laid out my hopes and visions for the next three years. I remember someone asking me what I would like to achieve – peace and harmony was my reply. I like to think that harmony has prevailed.

Throughout the lockdowns we worked hard to keep in touch with our members, providing a weekly take-away curry and virtual entertainment in the form of talks and quizzes. And our volunteer members and staff were able to help with the deliveries of prescriptions and food orders to all those in the local area who couldn't get out and about, whether members or not.

When talking to other Commodores, the one overriding comment was how much harder the Flag Officers had to work. I expect many thought that as the Club was closed we didn't have anything to do! Far from it, it was a busy time – in the early days of the pandemic the Flag Officers met 3 or 4 times a week via "Zoom" and the Covid Team at least once a week. The administration staff were down to two, our Club Secretary, Claire and our Accounts Administrator, Janet who both did an amazing job keeping on top of communications and administration with help from the Flag Officers.

When we did re-open with table service only, the Flag Officers and other Members took on the mantle of "Maitre Ds" – meeting and greeting, showing people to their tables and quite often taking and delivering drinks orders. It certainly gave us an insight of how hard our staff work.

One of my hopes for the future was to encourage our younger members and there is no doubt that Dinghy Week has gone from strength to strength over the past few years thanks to Katie Davies and her team of helpers. Those youngsters are growing up and we need to encourage a new generation.

I want them to look upon the Club as somewhere they can meet and in their own words "chill out". With this in mind, we are remodelling the Hudleston Bar to make it a more attractive and useable space. It should be somewhere for the sailors after racing, the younger members and, in the summer, a bar that attracts all members to sit and enjoy a drink in the sunshine. Another project which had to be put on hold is the refurbishment of the eastern balcony – this is now in hand.

So, I feel some frustration that I couldn't achieve all I had hoped to, but looking back over the past three years, what do I feel and what are the highlights? It has certainly been strange and not a little challenging. We have had very successful sailing seasons and some great events in the Club – the highlight of which has to be The



*RSYC Commodore Anne Kyle has diligently steered the Club throughout difficult times. On behalf of the Officers and members, we owe her an enormous thanks*

Great Gatsby New Year's Eve Party. Then came Covid and our lives changed forever. One of the first problems we had to face was when and how to hold the AGM – due to the restrictions in place it was held virtually on Zoom in both 2020 and 2021. Brave new world! This year is back to normal and it will take place in the Club.

Messages of support from the members have lifted me during difficult times and have been very much appreciated. I have also enjoyed contacting members on their birthdays and, no, my emails were not automated!

Highlights over the past three years include being the first Club to start racing and to re-open after the first lockdown, hosting a dinner for all the

other Commodores from across the Solent, which gave us the opportunity to exchange views and problems. Unlike many other clubs, our membership has increased – not only have we survived, we have thrived.

I have been both honoured and humbled to serve as your Commodore but I could not have done this without the support of the membership but more importantly without the Flag Officers and Committee Members. I have always been a team player and a better team I could not have had.

Finally, my thanks go to the staff – we are extremely fortunate in having such a team – the warmth and welcome that they extend is praised constantly by members and visitors.

In short, we have a wonderful Club and I for one, am proud to be a member.



# MAN OVERBOARD!

*Christine Webster describes the sailor's ultimate nightmare*



*Quadrille an Oyster 435 Ketch*

It was a pitch black night- not a glimmer of light anywhere - and I saw him go..... *Quadrille* lurched on a large rolling wave and Adrian fell backwards over the guard-wires into a black, black void - and vanished.....I froze!

Adrian and I had sailed *Quadrille*, our Oyster 435 Ketch, from Southampton to the Canaries in late September. We had entered the ARC- The Atlantic Rally for Cruisers, which runs from Grand Canaria to St Lucia. We were joined by friends

Colin and Stuart and my cousin's son Zander. *Quadrille* was laden with food and beer and all the safety gear that was required. The Oyster team in Grand Canaria checked her rigging and helped us solve a single sideband radio (SSB) problem. We had attended all the lectures, read numerous articles about crossing the pond - and we were excited and ready to go.

The start was fairly calm and sunny and we and the other 220 yachts quickly hoisted spinnakers. It was a

splendidly colourful sight with only one boat marring the photo shoot by hoisting hers from the clew! We decided to follow the advice of our mentor and weather-man, 'Stokey', which was- don't sail too far North, because of adverse weather and not too far South, but at 25 deg N, 25 deg W - hang a right!

We settled into a routine of four hours on, four hours off, rotating so we always had a companion in the cockpit. There was a rule, of course, that we all always wore a lifejacket at night and always clipped our harness onto fixed rigging or the jackstays, outside of the cockpit, at all times. Within one day there wasn't a boat in sight, just a vast wide empty ocean. I got a bit tired doing the cooking and most of the clearing up as well as the watches but that was my fault for not including 'cook and clean' in the rota. I operated the SSB radio to communicate every day with our group in the fleet- to check the weather forecast and anything unusual.

Although it's supposed to be a 'rally' most of the yachts seem to take it as a 'race' and act accordingly. We flew a spinnaker together with a cruising chute when we could -and even in high winds carried the spinnaker, Alexander got a nasty rope burn on his hands by trying to control a spinnaker sheet as we were dropping it. I came up on watch at midnight one night to find the winds above 35knots and the spinnaker still up. I made some comment about why wasn't it down to the riposte 'well you get it down'!!

We tried fishing every day without much success. Usually the line would start screaming out and somewhere in the distance a huge unidentifiable fish leapt into the air- and 'bang' we



*Journeys end, Quadrille in the Caribbean*

lost another lure. We ran out of large lures and had more success with the smaller ones but we usually had a fish jumping round the deck shedding scales because we didn't have the heart to club it to death. Even the cheap vodka in the gills didn't always work! We didn't drink it -Honest!

The winds increased as we progressed and the waves increased accordingly. The auto helm started to make strange noises and we helmed manually for quite a while. I couldn't control the yacht for more than 20 minutes but Alexander (who was a Cambridge rower) controlled her with ease.

We chafed through several spinnaker halyards at the top sheave and Adrian and Colin took turns dangling aloft sorting them out.

There were a few days when I couldn't keep anything on a table, couldn't control the violently swinging stove and gave up producing a hot meal. Fortunately I didn't feel sick below deck, but it was very frustrating.

# Club Events

*Social events that took place throughout the winter*



**RNLI Fish and Chips Supper**  
8th October 2021



**New Year's Eve**  
31st December 2021



**RNLI Needles Relief**  
11th December 2021



**Wight Night**  
12th March 2022

One evening, about 700 miles from St Lucia, the lads were watching a video of 'Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels' and I went on deck to cool off and check things. Oh no! There was nothing forward of the main mast!! The spinnaker had chafed though again - and was under *Quadrille*! The lads were soon on deck pulling up the heavy sodden sail into the cockpit.

The Yankee was unfurled and we decided to leave the spinnaker in a mess where it was, till morning. Adrian was walking down the starboard deck coiling up a sheet when it happened. The boat gave a large lurch and Adrian, wearing only a T shirt and shorts, no lifejacket, no harness, vanished backwards overboard. He was still clutching the sheet but it was ripped out of his hands.

Stuart grabbed a lifebuoy and tried to throw it overboard but it was attached to a Dan buoy. I leapt to release it, but struggled to remember which side of the mizzen shrouds to throw it. I eventually chucked it overboard and both the Dan buoy and lifebuoy got caught at the stern on the davits- both flashing brightly in the jet black night. That was all we needed!

I started the engine forgetting that there could still be lines in the water. Colin took the wheel. I tried to raise help on the SSB- to no avail as no one listens at night and no one would have been near enough to help us anyway. I activated the man overboard button on the GPS.

Stuart and Alexander furled the yankee and dropped the main, then Colin steered a reciprocal course

and Alexander grabbed a searchlight and scoured the ocean. It seemed hopeless but suddenly he heard a shout. We had been sailing down wind and now as we motored up wind, the sound carried towards us! Alexander spotted a head in the beam of light and we motored towards him. Adrian reported that he could see us at all times and he seemed to have confidence that we would find him! And he seemed convinced that sharks don't feed at night! Then, as he saw *Quadrille* coming towards him he could see the nav lights showing red, green, red, green- he thought 'they're going to run me over!' The mizzen was still drawing but as we steered into wind, it stalled.

We got alongside and someone yelled 'throw him something'. I picked

up a sheet with a huge shackle and threw it at him (I used to be a discus champion) and fortunately it didn't crack his head and he caught it. I yelled 'drag him to the stern platform' where I tried to pull him out - but I didn't have the strength. Adrian said 'Give me a minute' but before he had drawn breath Stuart lent over and grabbed him with his huge muscular arms and he shot on deck!

Phew! We kept strangely quiet the next day on the SSB call.

Of course we all had slightly different versions of the incident. We had all practiced man-overboard in the Solent, but there's a missing ingredient when you do it for real, at night, in the pitch dark, mid Atlantic—PANIC!



# A TOUGH SHOUT

*60 knots of wind, 25 foot waves and a lee shore are all things to be avoided; Put them together on a pitch black night in February and you get 'A tough shout'. Miles Peckham describes the incident*



*The Yarmouth Lifeboat. The Severn Class The Eric and Susan Hiscock crashing through waves.  
Photo by Nigel Millard, courtesy of the RNLI*

***"The last time that the Yarmouth Lifeboat encountered such severe sea conditions was in the storms of the late eighties"***

***Howard Lester  
Coxswain, Yarmouth Lifeboat***

From yachtsmen in minor difficulties on sunny Sunday afternoons, to desperate calls for help in atrocious weather conditions, the Yarmouth Lifeboat has seen them all.

When the crew pagers of *The Eric and Susan Hiscock* sounded at 18.20 in the evening of the last Sunday in February this was the third day of very violent storms which had started

on the Friday with storm Eunice delivering record wind speeds of up to 122 mph at the Needles. When the crew pagers went off it was a pitch black night and already blowing 50-60 knots. Ten crew members responded to the 'shout' and when the Lifeboat was launched at 18.42 seven crew members were on board.

Said Jeremy Willcock, the RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager, "The mood amongst those left on the pontoon was unusually sombre as the Lifeboat pulled out into the storm, all knew it was going to be a very long night, in dreadful conditions by the notoriously dangerous St. Catherine's Point".

As the Yarmouth Lifeboat rounded the Needles it encountered atrocious seas. Speed had to be reduced to 14 knots but running with the seas she made good time to the search area in Chale Bay where the search pattern instigated by the Coastguard was hampered by the 25' high waves. This prevented the Lifeboat from going as far inshore as the coxswain, Howard Lester, would have liked due to the unacceptable risk to the safety of the vessel and crew.

With the winds blowing off the scale, flares proved ineffective, as they flew horizontally after launch and ended in the sea some 50 yards away. Nor was the Bembridge Lifeboat, coming

from the east, able to help as waves of over 30' barred their passage around St. Catherine's Point and they were forced to turn back.

With the search pattern completed and no further communication received from the apparently stricken vessel since the initial 'Mayday' some four hours earlier, the crew began a long and arduous journey home whilst continuing to scour the shoreline even though four of the highly experienced crew had succumbed to seasickness.

Nearly home, and after rounding the Needles, with the wind and tide behind them the Severn Class Lifeboat briefly touched 33 knots when picked up by a wave, underscoring a trip of horror.

Said Commodore Anne Kyle, "The bravery of these local volunteer lifeboat crew, many of whom are also members and staff of the Royal Solent is unquestionable; one minute they're at home on a Sunday evening with their families the next they are heading out into the dark in awful conditions to one of the South Coast's most notorious lee shores.

The Royal Solent salutes all the crew and expresses sincere gratitude for everything that they do to keep us safe on the water."

**The crew on the night of Sunday 20th February were:**

Howard Lester (*Coxswain*),  
Peter Lemonius  
Richard Pimm  
Graham Benton  
Guy Ashton  
Adam Preece  
Alex Pimm.

# The Great Storm of 2022

*In February, Storm Eunice hit the Isle of Wight with a vengeance. The Needles reported gusts of 122mph. These photographs show the wrath of that memorable day*

## **A walk on the wild side**

*Chris Waddington photographed the maelstrom by Yarmouth Mill while exercising his dogs*

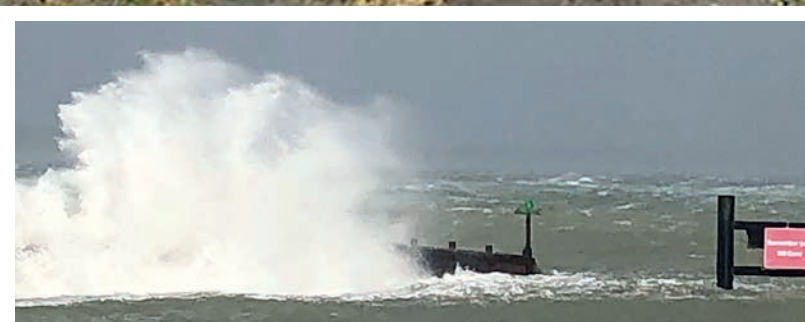


**Right:** Yarmouth breakwater almost submerged with waves frequently breaking over. Out in the Solent, the storm rages. Photo by Miles Peckham

**Below:** The Needles at the height of the storm. Photo courtesy of the Isle of Wight Observer/ Chris Cornford

**Middle Right:** This barn took the full brunt of Storm Eunice. Photo by Keith Davey.

**Below right:** White horses rarely seen on the quay at Yarmouth. Photo courtesy of Chris Cornford





# Mary Davies Obituary



Mary Davies, who passed away on the 24th of February was one of the longest serving members of the Royal Solent Yacht Club having joined in 1958. She developed a love of sailing before the war, cruising on the East Coast in her Father's converted fishing smack. She took up racing at the RSYC initially in an Enterprise dinghy before buying Y7 *Blandina* and sailing her for some 17 years before the class disbanded. In addition

to sailing she loved skiing and participating in Royal Solent trips. Mary was also a keen gardener, a talented artist, skilled seamstress and tailor, a milliner and a boat builder – building a fibreglass sailing dinghy from scratch. She was widowed in 1985 and moved to Yarmouth in 1987 where she lived happily until her death. Since the early 1990s she enjoyed cruising with her cousin Ian Dallison, sailing all over the Channel and the north coast of France. She was something of a fixture in the Club bar on Saturday lunchtimes and latterly enjoyed watching rugby on the big screen in the Hudleston bar. She will be missed by all who knew her.

# CRUISING



On board Brainwave

The first "Out to Lunch" of the season to Lymington Town Sailing Club was attended by forty-three members who travelled by boat, ferry, car and bicycle. Several boats hosted pre-prandial drinks which got everyone in the mood for an excellent lunch. The Commodore, Anne Kyle, thanked the LTYC for their hospitality. On the way back Brian Crawford stood by *Tyrrick* which had brief engine failure in the Solent due to an electrical fault, quickly remedied. Our next event in the Club, a talk by David Temple (Three Atlantic Crossings and 18,596 miles), followed

by lunch was, at the time of writing, booked by 45 members. Our lunch on the 19th. April. at the Rising Sun, Warsash, has already attracted 10 boats and 30 members, whilst the trip to Alderney, organised by Shaun Smith, from the 23rd-26th April has 3 boats confirmed and a further 2 interested. The rest of our programme is on the website and everyone is welcome to join. It doesn't matter if you don't have a boat, just contact me or the Sailing Office and we will try to fit you on boats, in cars or even on bicycles !

David Porter





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# Sailing Report

The Winter Series was well supported with twelve boats taking part in some or all of the racing. Congratulations to Folkboat *Mimi* for sweeping up the silverware for both Series 1&2 at the Winter Series Prize Giving in the Huddlestone Bar straight after the final race. Sadly no Boxing Day Race as the weather wasn't kind, so crews hunkered down for the winter months with 13th March etched in diaries for when racing would begin once again.

It was still mid winter yet felt like the sailing season began in early February with International Judge John Doerr giving an entertaining and informative Racing Rules of Sailing talk, the Solent Room was full of sailors refreshing their memory of how to approach a crowded racing mark. John ended his evening with slides and stories from the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, a fascinating insight into Olympic life behind the scenes.

In glorious sunshine, the sailing season began for real on Sunday 13th March for Class 1&2, and the Huddlestone Bar was full afterwards for Class 1&2 Winter Series Prize Giving & complimentary Mermaid G&Ts, is there a better way to start the season? As ever, we are hugely appreciative of our racing mark sponsors, all of whom have agreed to renew their sponsorship for 2022;

Spence Willard have agreed to continue their sponsorship of our popular Wednesday Evening Racing from April to September; Wight Marine & River Yar Boatyard will sponsor the Winter Series. Many thanks to these three local businesses for their on-going support. The Sailing Calendar is now live on the RSYC website. Looking ahead, you will see we are planning a RSYC Platinum Jubilee Regatta on 2nd & 3rd June with two races each day for all classes. Sailing Instructions will go onto



## RACING MARK SPONSORS

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the website soon and we hope many boats will sign up. On the 6th August, all Solent yacht clubs are being invited to participate in a Solent Platinum Jubilee Celebration. This will be in the form of a Fleet Review the Saturday after Cowes Week which will begin at 8am with all boats dressing overall. The choreography of the day is being planned with military precision due to the number of boats anticipated to turn up. Boats not sailing Cowes Week will be invited to participate in a 'motor past' and our own Rear Commodore House

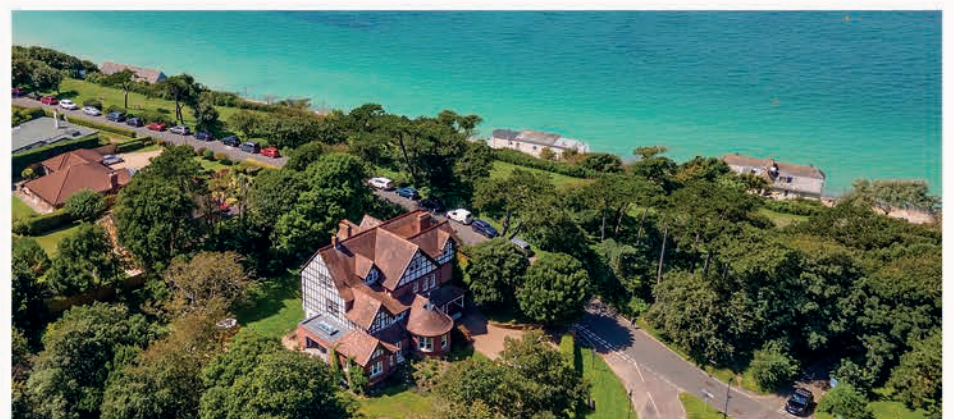
has been tasked with planning a huge party in Cowes Yacht Haven, along with Geoff Holt. All proceeds throughout the day will go towards Wet Wheels. It sounds like it is going to be a memorable occasion to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and we hope many RSYC members will take part. If you would like to know more, please contact the Sailing Office. Even if you don't have a boat, it should be a fine spectacle from the shore, especially as there will be an air display in the afternoon.

Katie Davies, Rear Commodore Sailing

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# STELLA'S RISING STAR

*Stella Hurley aged 15 continues her remarkable success and races down under in a 29er class*



*Stella and Caitlin sailing a 29er in Sydney Harbour*

When Covid 19 stopped all competitive sailing in Australia in 2019, I decided to leave the Optimist Class – I left the class as Australian Female National Optimist Champion, Oceanic Female Champion and also Oceanic Optimist Team Racing Champion. Lockdown prevented lots of activities in 2019, but one activity I was allowed to do was sail on beautiful Sydney Harbour with one other sailor and a coach. For that reason, I moved into the 29er class, at the age of 13. With my partner Caitlin, we trained really hard to come to grips with a very fast skiff, initially we spent a lot of time in the water capsized .... but at least it wasn't cold.

We became Hunters Hill Sailing Club Champions and we entered every Regatta we were able to compete in across the NSW state and Victoria (further travel was very difficult for us) and unfortunately there have not been 29er Nationals in the last 2 years. Saying that, we are the current female 29er East Coast Champions and we are the lead female boat in the 29er Grand Prix event in Australia. With one race day to go unfortunately a positive Covid result meant we couldn't complete the NSW State Championships.

At the moment, we are training really hard for the 29er World Championships in Barcelona in July/August. Our Coach is a former



**Above and inset:** Stella and Caitlin training for the 29er World Championships

double World Champion and he works us very hard. The Worlds are going to be an incredible experience for us, with 300 boats competing in extreme heat and conditions – I absolutely cannot wait.

At this event, I will be sailing for Australia, but I will be proudly flying the RSYC burgee and supporting the Royal Solent Yacht Club.

So, what of my future ???.... I cannot tell. I am now 15 years old and at some point, I will move into a 49er and compete as hard and fast as I possibly can – who knows where that boat will take me. Sailing is my life and I just love being out on the water. I will be in Yarmouth occasionally with my family now as flights are now open and I would really like to sail on the Solent when I am there in June.



# SUMMER SOCIAL DIARY

## TAITTINGER is back

*Bigger, better and after two years absence, the Champagne Reception and the Towers Party are back with a splash*

- JUBILEE REGATTA and Platinum Party

- SAILING SUPPER with music from Derek Sandy

- PRINCE CONSORT RACE and Charity Dinner

- MID SUMMER PARTY



Photo by Jake Sugden



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