



AQUARIUS S.C.

THE MAIN SHEET

Summer 2006 Edition

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The Commodore writes.....

Keen readers of these newsletters will realise that this edition is rather late: we normally circulate one in time to advertise the Regatta and Barbeque. However this year time seems to have flown by and your editor and colleagues seem barely to have had time to draw breath. Aiding and abetting this delay your Commodore has been dilatory in providing this copy having been enjoying himself too much on (and in) the river!

We have enjoyed a good start to the season and the Club has seemed to be quite humming at times. It is great to see the Club's facilities in use - both on and off the water. The Club boats have seen good use and we are grateful to Graham Thompson for the donation of a Bosun to the Club. Bryan hopes to have this in commission very shortly when it will take the pressure off other member's boats.

We have welcomed a number of new members several of whom have been following the Club Sail Training programme and are now entering the Sunday racing. Our thanks to Richard for organising this training.

On the social side we have indulged in a range of activities - most are reported elsewhere but I would highlight in particular the Regatta weekend when the combination of fine weather, good food and drink, a live Jazz band and some interesting sailing made for a very enjoyable time. It was very much a team effort and my thanks to all who contributed to its success.

The social programme continues with a "charity dinner" on September 2 in support of Project Homerus - a project to encourage the blind to sail competitively. The object is to raise money to support this worthwhile cause whilst enjoying some good food, good company and a selection of wine specially produced for the project. For those with a

technical bent there is also an interesting tale to hear about how sound signals are used to guide boats around the course. More details and a booking form are enclosed with this newsletter

I close with a number of housekeeping issues. Firstly is the perennial issue of site security. Regrettably we are finding too many instances when the site is not secure. The recent unfortunate theft of a trailer from the car park highlights that it is in all our interests to follow the established protocol which is as follows:

The inner gate (i.e. the one adjacent to the car park) must be closed and locked at all times. The only exception is if there is a key holder present in the car park who has personally accepted responsibility to secure the gate on departure.

The outer gate may be left unlocked, but closed, when there is someone on site. (The Club's lock must always be left locked in the chain so that it forms a continuous loop with the other lock). At other times it must be closed and locked.

The green outer gate (which has no lock) may be left open when there is someone on the site.

The second issue concerns the disposal of rubbish: Rubbish is not collected from the site and it is therefore a help if we all take our own rubbish away with us. In the past we have burnt combustible rubbish, but having had a bonfire recently that got out of control, the committee have agreed that this practice should cease. In the future all toxic materials (e.g. paint cans, resin bottles etc) must either be removed or put in the metal dustbin under the starter hut. Undergrowth cut back from around boat moorings should not be left on the bank but should be disposed of in the dip at the back of the car-park.

Enjoy the summer and good sailing!
Nigel Knowles

News of Members - Joan Bray

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Mark & Lesley Benning who were married on Saturday June 3rd. Wishing them a long and happy life together.

WELCOME

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members and wish them many happy and fulfilling years with Aquarius

Mark Cordwell & Marie Holloway
John Courtney
Simon Lunniss, Oonie & Family
Alan Pearce, Joan & Family
Kate Valentine & Family
Grant Guildford & Family

FAREWELL

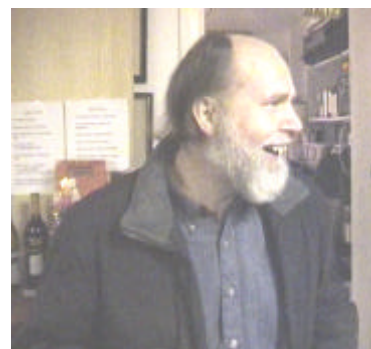
Sorry to bid farewell to a popular long time member and former sailing secretary Linda Tillman

BEST WISHES

Best wishes for the future to Bob and Janet who have moved to Norfolk. Bob is almost a founder member.

Significant Birthday

Belated Many Happy Returns of the Day to Rodger Wheeler who achieved his three score years in early March. Nice one Rodger, we all trust you had a good one! Retirement and Wednesday afternoon racing up to the Magpie beckons!



Rodger arriving at the surprise party in the club house.

Kew Bridge Steam Museum

At midday on Saturday 8 April several club members met at the Rose and Crown on Kew Green for lunch. This was followed by Richard, Pat and Mike heading off to the Kew Bridge Steam Museum, while everybody else went to Kew Gardens. Now I'm hoping one of that group wrote something about 'the gardens' because the rest of this piece is about the interesting part of the day.

The 'steam' museum is located in the historical premises of the former Grand Junction Water Works Company which derives its name from the Grand Junction Canal which joined the Thames at Kew. Pumping at Kew commenced in 1838 and continued until 1944 when electric technology was installed, making the steam engines redundant.

At full capacity the Kew Bridge pumping station supplied 30 million gallons of water every day to its delivery area which extended from Sunbury to Kensington. The water was first pumped to reservoirs at Campden Hill before being pumped to individual streets. In its heyday, around 1900, eight engines and 18 boilers were in operation. The site is still owned by Thames Water Plc who lease it to the Kew Bridge Engines Trust and Water Supplies Museum which is a registered charity.

The museum is housed in a unique collection of Grade I and II listed buildings. They include the original engine rooms, boiler rooms and outbuildings. The tall tower is not, as many people think, a chimney stack, but a standpipe tower soaring 197ft. into the air. Its viewing gallery, right at the top, is occasionally open to the public.

I won't bore you by talking about the exhibits, other than to say it is a remarkable collection of steam and diesels engines. Most work and, with the exception of the Boulton & Watt and Maudslay beam engines, are run during opening hours. The beam engines are so expensive to run they are only used a few times a year. Nowadays all the museums steam is gas heated and with the rising costs machinery running is rotated. What else can I say, other than, the next time it pours with rain and you're wondering what to do, take yourself off to the Kew Bridge Steam Museum, it's fascinating!

Mike (all steamed up) Baker

Men & Motors V Gardener's World Pat Irving

I have a garden which I would describe as a controlled wildness. Nothing grows in neat rows except a small patch of runner beans. I mow the grass but it is not manicured and trees and shrubs are pruned as necessary for their own good and not just to be kept tidy or to grow in an unnatural way, or clipped within an inch of their life! Seeing a row of tulips or delphiniums standing straight like Grenadier Guards is not for me.

So, on our AQSC outing I chose to go to the Kew Bridge Steam Museum instead of the posh bits at Kew Gardens and I loved every minute of it!

When I was growing up we had no car so family holidays began with a train or boat journey. My father took me to see the steam engines - does that date me?! We went down in to the engine room on the ship too and all was explained to me and I have been interested in it all since then.

The magnificent engines were working in turn, when one stopped another was started up and you could walk right round them and watch their minders adjusting valves and of course everything is in pristine condition - not as you would see them working originally, covered with oil and dust etc. I was amazed at how quiet they were, I remembered the noise of a ship's engine room but Richard, Mike and I could talk to each other and the mechanics without having to shout.

The building itself is fascinating too and as the original pumping station it has been wonderfully adapted. Obviously the main accent is on water and there is a collection of washing machines, water heaters and loos - some really antique, along one huge wall. There is a hands-on educational section for the children - I had a go at some of those too. It is a very well set-out museum and well worth visiting.

The pub for lunch beforehand was excellent. I had an ale steak pie made with Old Speckled Hen ale. It was a proper pie with proper pastry and full of meat... owzat!!

One of the many
working steam engines

First Working Party of the Season

The last working party of 2005 moved mountains. The first of 2006 was held on Saturday 11th March and picked up where the last one ended.

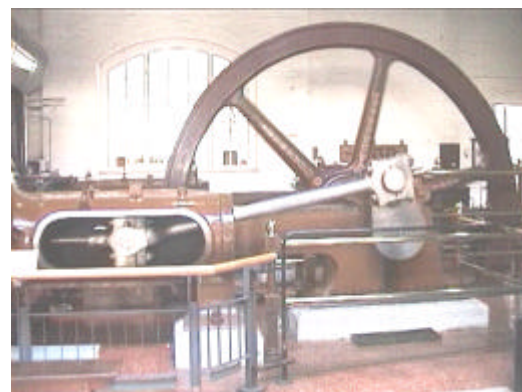
While Bryan Clements re-proofed the exterior of the club, twenty or so people continued the job of clearing the river bank just beyond the overflow where the Lasers are berthed. The mountains of dead brambles made this highly labour intensive and very prickly work but, by the end of the afternoon, the team were on top of things and a large bonfire took care of the rest.

Diana and Pat ensured that the workers were kept supplied with tea and coffee and a very tasty sausage casserole and rice at lunchtime.

There was even time to drag the safety boat out on the lower slip and pressure wash the hull. All-in-all a good days work. That's not to say there isn't still plenty to do but that can wait until next time. The safety boat engine has already had its annual service and the immediate priority is to get the upper slip gratings replaced before the start of sailing on 26 March.

17 March 2006 - Nigel had been up to merchants in Bow and purchased, on the club's behalf, four large sheets of steel walkway grating. He then brought them to the club on the 17th and Bodgit & Son set to work cutting the gratings to the right width and welding the sections together to form the launching ramps that have now been fitted. I have to say that the river water was a tad cold that day for this kind of work but it had to be done before the 26th. The bottom and top sections still have to be constructed and laid but we have all the material we need.

Mike (Scratches healing nicely)
Baker



2006 RYA Dinghy Show

I had a quick count up and I think this was my 13th dinghy show as SigneT stand manager. This year's show was again at Alexandra Palace and followed a well established pattern. Set up on Friday afternoon with Steve Leeding went pretty well. Steve's 919 boat was on the stand resplendent with an all varnished hull and new sails. Although the electrics weren't connected by the time we left we did manage to beat the worst of the traffic getting home.

I thought Saturday was quiet with attendance seemingly down on last year. Keith & Madeline Hatton, Roy Melsom, Steve & Jonathan Leeding and Richard Cannon helped man the stand which was much appreciated.

Highlight of the day had to be a lady coming on to the stand and as she stood admiring ST919 Madeline went up to her and asked if she knew anything about SigneT's. She smiled and said "just a little", introducing herself as Jenny Proctor, Ian Proctor's daughter! Madeline's face was a picture. Jenny explained that she was trying to organise a regatta, probably in the West Country, sometime in 2007-2008 for all the classes that her father had designed over the years. Should be interesting!

One change, exhibited at the show, concerned a similar vintage boat to the SigneT, namely the Mirror dinghy. In it's latest manifestation its lost it's familiar Gunter rig and has adopted a Bermudan rig; but its still sports its in-elegant chopped off bow.

Sunday was a little livelier. By mid-day we'd had more people on the stand than during the whole of Saturday. Pat, Jenny and Michael Overs, Chris and Stephen Whiteside and Madeline Hatton all helped out, ably assisted by Cate Whiteside and John Pryor. My thanks to Jenny, Pat and the team who during the afternoon presented me with a subscription to the 'Dinghy' magazine as a birthday present.

Once the show closed our well drilled team swung into action, everything went into the boat and we were out of the place lickety-split! And within an hour had the cars loaded and ST919 on her road trailer and away.

Several other exhibitors that I spoke to were unhappy about the cost of the dinghy show but all felt that to stop would be to the detriment of their respective classes (nearly £500 total, £411 to the RYA for the stand. In year 2000 it was only £232 and £167.).

Alexandra Palace has recently changed hands. Haringey Borough Council has sold a 125 year fully repair-

ing lease to The Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust. This was done to remove financial reliance on the local council taxpayer and enable the trust to generate income from commercial use. This will include bringing in external partners to invest in the building in exchange for long leases.

Restoration of the buildings may well include construction of a Hotel, Casino etc. while existing facilities will continue to honour all current contracts. The trust must also continue to meeting its charitable objectives and continue to make 'the palace' accessible to the general public.

The 2007 Dinghy Show is scheduled for Alexandra Palace as the last of a three year deal. I spoke to Jenny Curry one of the shows organisers and she said she believed that the RYA would try to keep the show at the current venue for the foreseeable future.

P.S. Cat Ferguson, the show co-coordinator, reports that 11,567 persons visited the show which was 7.2% up on last year. The box office saw a 9% rise in visitors buying tickets on the door and Sunday saw 1,427 children visiting the show, nearly doubling last year's figure. Attendance figures have now risen by 13% in the past three years.

Mike (SigneT Stand Manager) Baker

Visit to Kew Gardens - Saturday, 8th April 2006 - Anne Bond

When agreeing to write about the Kew Gardens visit, our Hon. Publicity Officer quipped - I expect you'll start the article "We came, we saw, we Kewed". As it was so awful - I thought I really ought to share it with you all! Thanks Mike, what would we do without you! (Actually though we didn't have to queue at all, even though it was a perfect Spring day and there were hoards of people with the same idea as the AQSC contingent.)

On the day, 13 of us met up for lunch at the Rose & Crown on Kew Green (which I can warmly recommend to anyone finding themselves in the vicinity thereof with a healthy appetite) and then decided whether their preference was for the gardens or the steam museum. The majority of us chose the gardens and had a terrific time (as I believe did the steam enthusiasts - about which Mike will regale you more fully).

Since Leo and I hadn't visited Kew for over 25 years, we knew we were in for a real treat and we certainly weren't disappointed. We walked and walked (and talked and talked!) - and managed to fit in a good percentage of the available treats, whilst leaving many more for a time when our feet were less weary.

We started off by meandering through the grounds in loose groups, taking in the beautiful displays of spring flowers, shrubs and trees en route to the new Davies Alpine House - as featured on Gardeners World.. This is a magnificent piece of engineering but as alpine plants don't excite us greatly, we didn't linger too long..

Next on our list was the Princess of Wales Conservatory, where in addition to seeing some truly memorable plants, two of our number were fortunate enough to meet a rather handsome, large green water dragon in amongst the aquatic displays.

Then, on to the Waterlily House (not a huge amount out at present unfortunately) and the Palm House (totally awe inspiring in both the scale and variety of plants and trees).

An added bonus was the aquarium where fascinating fish abounded in glorious colours and made for some pretty pictures. We then walked to the Japanese Minka House (interesting - not a nail or screw used throughout its construction) and through the Rhododendron Dale (where some of us saw a golden pheasant plus a group of 9 Guineafowl).

We ended up with a reviving drink (non-alcoholic!) at White Peaks before gathering the strength to totter off to the car park and thence home - tired but happy.

PS: We would all like to thank Nigel and Anne for generously sharing their free day passes with us so that we were able to have a truly memorable day out for a mere £3.50 per head.

Start of Season Party

This year's party was held on Saturday 18 March. It was organised by Rodger and the entertainment was supplied by Le Sextet de l'Hot Club d'Aquarius. Dress was optional but French attire was encouraged to add a little appropriate atmosphere. The Italian decorations from the Venetian evening had been retained, somewhat confusing for a French themed evening ... but what the heck! It certainly was very continental.

The sextet was amazing and was comprised of Pat Halling on violin, Mike Leigh on keyboards, Dave Richmond on bass, Judd Proctor on guitar and Tony Kinsey on drums. Additionally Mandy Leigh was the vocalist. This was the largest musical ensemble ever put together at the club and I have to say probably the best. The first set began at approximately 8:30pm and it soon became obvious that this was going to be a very laid back affair with a lot of friendly banter between the musicians and the audience. Each member of the sextet, as well as contributing to the 'whole' had featured solo's which gave them the opportunity to put a personal spin on the piece being played. Mandy's numbers were a great addition and she's sure to be asked to sing at the club again.

Midway through the evening Diana, Janet and Linda served supper and I have to say I have never seen soup go so far; mostly down people's fronts, which was novel! This was followed by a great selection of cheese, cold meats, breads etc. To finish there were a variety of deserts and Pete's excellent coffee.

The second set got underway but amusingly became a bit chaotic as the musical scores either got out of order or were lost. It actually made little difference because those guys could have played without sheet music. The musical part of the evening ended with a vote of thanks to the sextet by both Pat and Nigel.

Janet and Bob then organised the raffle which helped to offset the cost of the musicians. Thanks to everybody who contributed the raffle prizes, much appreciated. All-in-all a very enjoyable evening and a unique opportunity to be so close to some very talented musicians led by our own Pat (Grapelli) Halling.

Mike (Tone Deaf) Baker

AQSC Open Weekend

Another year, another open weekend! Why do we do these things I ask myself? Why don't we just lock the gates, batten down the hatches and enjoy our sailing. The answer to that is that course of action would ultimately spell the demise of the club.

Our membership is not as young as it once was, nor is our active sailing contingent as large as the membership. These things conspire towards stagnation and diminishing income. We have to advertise, train and encourage a new and younger membership to ensure a future for Aquarius.

Perhaps a once a year event is not enough, perhaps we need several. We certainly need to involve general membership more in recruitment activities. Everybody at the club must have friends, neighbours or relatives that might like to come down and try sailing. The broader this net the more people are reached to a point when it can become self perpetuating. Hampton SC has actually reached this point and Littleton SC has a waiting list.

Apathy is a killer. Leaving it to someone else is not an option. At every opportunity, not just for the Open Weekend, everybody needs to promote the club and encourage people to come sailing. If you don't this club has no future and despite its history and longevity it will die.

The number of people that we can get to an Annual Dinner or a Ladies Night should not be interpreted as 'active membership'. It is a reflection of our membership's preference, i.e. social over sailing, born out by the number of disused boats lying on the clubs moorings.

Advertising started well in advance and covered handouts, posters, Council websites & notice boards, schools, shops, radio stations and newspapers.

This year's open weekend, held over the 6th and 7th of May, was one of the best attended that we have had even though the weather on both days was not particularly good. The majority of Saturday was still and overcast. Mid afternoon it suddenly blew and for half an hour the sailing was good, then the wind dropped and the rain started. Game over. Fortunately visitors started arriving as soon as the gates opened at 10:30.

Sunday was also a still, warm, day but at least it didn't rain until the very end when we were packing up. BUT by lunch time only a couple of visitors had arrived and it seemed as if we were going to have a terrible day. Then after lunch the flood gates opened and we were extremely busy.

On Saturday we had 10 groups totaling 22 people and on Sunday 22 groups totaling 45 people; probably our busiest day ever, helped by several large family groups. The total number of visitors even exceeded those we had to the Big Blue promotion in 1999. On both days we had quite a number of youngsters and a lot of interest. It's always difficult to project the 'take-up' but there was quite a lot of genuine interest and I think the weekend team were fairly optimistic that the percentage would be good.

Many thanks to the whole team, at least 21 members with 9 boats, who worked really hard over the weekend to make the event a success. These included Pat Irving, Mike Baker, Richard Cannon, Keith & Madeline Hatton, George & Joan Bray, Bryan Clements, Graham Thompson, Rodger & Linda Wheeler, Laurie Bridges, Eric Bridgewater, Diana & Peter Carpenter, Liz Archer, Charles & Mary Dennis, John Botterill, Leo & Anne Bond. My apologies to anyone I've forgotten.

Mike (Over Easy) Baker

First Race of 2006 Season

The fourth Sunday in Lent, Mothering Sunday, Start of British Summer Time, clocks go forward ... and the start of the Aquarius Sailing Season. Now that's a significant Sunday! Unfortunately it could also be the reason that not many people turned up to get the club sailing season off to a flying start. Of course the regulars were there (i.e. Mike, Charles, Pat, Bryan, Graham and Pete) presided over by Richard in the box, and they just resumed the friendly rivalry, temporarily suspended over the

winter. The weather was blustery and cold but the river conditions were fair. Charles distinguished himself by arriving late and then complained that the race was starting early without him ... Richard took great delight in pointing out that there's always one who forgets the start of BST! But he did delay the start so that a red faced Charles could rig and get on the water. The results are on the website.

Mike (Over Easy) Baker

Mid-Thames Trophy at Littleton SC Alex Seaman

Saturday 29th April, the day of the Mid Thames Trophy started well. Lightweight crew (28lbs and been sailing since Summer 2003) was up and bouncing around at a decidedly uncivilised hour unlike her brother who was still down with chickenpox.

Richard Cannon having appealed for volunteers earlier in the week, things moved more rapidly than normal on the Saturday morning in two households not far from Littleton S.C. Before too long the one-time crew of ST 654 (anybody remember the ST Nationals at Parkstone in 1993?) arrived with his daughter, lightweight crew's friend Fiona. Armed with lunch and the chickenpox sufferer's life jacket (plus a fishing net and jam jar) a car-load arrived at Littleton to find that Richard was well into his time-honoured routine and putting in a very good performance in the first race. Completing the race in some style Richard's crew, Peter Carpenter volunteered to take a turn ashore and lightweight crew slotted herself back into the front of ST368, was reminded that she had already crewed in the boat and sent out for her first race. Dad retreated to a safe distance with one eye on the racing whilst the fishing net and jam jar were deployed by Fiona to the consternation of the local invertebrates.

After the allotted time ST 368 completed the course, "only" 9th out of some 48 entrants. Lightweight crew had apparently chatted all the way round so perhaps Richard had been a little dis-

tracted... Over lunch, with Richard ashore, ST 368 was back on the water with Dad taking lightweight crew's friend out for her first sail in the sunshine and a pleasant 2-3, enough to bring smiles to the faces at both ends of the boat.

For the third race Richard was re-joined by Peter and the two girls were unleashed with the fishing net and jam jar around the edge of the lake, to the surprise of at least one local angler. Not sure how the racing went but two Dads had a lot of fun with two daughters paddling about, examining just about anything that moved (and quite a few things that didn't) in the warm clear shallow water on a beautiful sunny afternoon.

And the feedback on the sailing, was it enjoyed? Lightweight crew expressed a desire to sail with her father next time - now to persuade her to repeat that in earshot of her Mother! We're still non-committal on whether we really enjoy racing but plenty of time for that later. For now thank you very much indeed Richard and Peter Carpenter for the invitation and Littleton for the venue. Thanks also to the other Aquarius members (Graham Thompson and Rodger Wheeler in Graduate 2455, Nigel Knowles in Laser 35434 and Bryan Clements in Topper 20980) for taking part. Now how do we explain to the back seat that Starboard isn't an appropriate call when heading West on the M4 and another car approaches a little rapidly?

The Baby Boomers Rock On

There have seemed to be a lot of 60th birthdays just recently. I guess the Baby Boomer generation is coming of age.

With this age comes a time for reflection, not least of which is that you're only as old as you feel! They say that youth is wasted on the young but another view is that youth is a gift, but age is a work of art!

Growing old is mandatory but growing up is optional! Age also means that you probably remember the Dead Sea when it was just sick!

The good news is that nobody tells you to slow down but the bad news is that you and your teeth don't sleep together anymore! Actually the secret of staying young is to live honest, arrange your hair instead of combing it, eat

slowly ... and lie about your age!

An interesting aspect of age is to see your childhood in a toy museum and, in the end, it's not the years in your life that count it's the life in your years.

Old age isn't so bad when you consider the alternative and besides, age is something that doesn't matter, unless you're wine or cheese! You still have a full deck, you just shuffle slower and recently you might have been amazed at how young your doctor seems.

Having read all the above, now try to find one that doesn't apply to you! And a final thought ... there's nothing left to learn the hard way!

Mike (60 years young) Baker

AQSC Quiz Night

If there's one thing members seem to like it's a quiz night. The latest one was held at the club on Saturday 22 April and was set by Joan and George Bray. The miscellaneous questions were in three groups plus a fourth group made up of anagrams of London underground stations. The evening consisted of two sessions, divided by an excellent fish and chip supper. Thanks must go to Diana Carpenter and Richard Cannon for taking the orders, collecting the food and serving it up back at the club.

Four teams contested the evening. These were:-

Team A (Mick Rodgers, Linda Rowley, Richard Cannon, Diana Carpenter and Bryan Clements)

Team B (Mike & Lyn Baker and John & Annie Neale)

Team C (Arthur & Joan Sykes, Don, Pat Shore)

Team D (Leo & Anne Bond, Liz Archer and Rodger Wheeler)

When George finally announced the results they were very close. Team A got 96, Team C got 98, Team D got 101 and Team B won with 104.

Thanks to Joan & George for setting a very frustrating, but enjoyable quiz. The next one will be on the evening of 14 October, I'm organising it and food will hopefully be an Indian takeaway. I promise to make it a little easier than the dreaded 'China Quiz' which seems to have developed a bit of a reputation!

kiem (rove seay) kreab

Bar License

Wednesday 28 June 2006 was an unremarkable day except for one thing. AQSC finally got its long awaited new bar license.

Since the licensing laws were changed and we started hearing about what it would take, and cost, to apply for a new license, it has taken the best part of two years.

Even after submission we were promised 'the certificate' by August 2005. That slipped to October 2005 and even then we only received a preliminary certificate. No mention of that in the application instructions.

Eight months and three telephone calls later it arrived, five pages of it, all of which have to be displayed in the club house. I'm currently shopping for cheap certificate frames. You never know I might even get them hung up by the end of the year.

Mike (Am I bothered) Baker

Bewl - Spring Bank Holiday - Nigel Knowles

I suppose the auguries were not good. Richard had hurt his foot badly, Rodger's wisdom tooth was playing up, Mike was at the Monaco Grand Prix and most of the other "regulars" were otherwise engaged. It was left to Bryan Clements and me to defend the honour of Aquarius at the Bewl Valley S C's Spring Regatta.

Now, once upon a time, in less pressured times, this was a splendid 3 day affair. Aquarius visitors were able to camp in the adjacent field, use the Club's facilities during the day and sample the fare of local hostelry in the evening. Nowadays it is still a splendid affair but most people go for only one day, either Sunday (handicap racing) or Monday (pursuit racing) and sleep in their own beds (Richard has been known to buck the trend and sleep in his car - presumably in a pub car park?). Bryan and I elected to go on the Monday and duly set off with the Club Topper piggy-back on my Laser.

We arrived in good time for a 10.30 briefing. The sky was clear, the sun was shining and the surface of the water was like a mirror! Actually not quite a perfect mirror - there were some disturbances evident - but these were attributable to oarsmen or fishermen and certainly not wind! Undeterred we rigged the boats.

Of course the idea of pursuit racing is that the slowest boats start first followed by progressively faster ones at intervals according to their handicap such that in theory, other things being equal, they all finish together after 1 hour sailing. Fortunately for the race officials, other things are usually not equal, so the fleet is usually well spread out at the finish - and so it proved!

Anyway Bryan in the Topper was sailing the slowest boat and therefore was supposed to start first. Unfortunately in the near flat calm conditions he failed to make his allotted start time so started late. The gods were not smiling on Bryan - no sooner had he crossed the line than the wind started to pick up and to change direction such that by the time the Lasers started we had a gentle force 1-2 for an easy beat to the first windward mark whereas Bryan had had to put in an extra tack and was struggling to make the mark as the faster boats passed him.

Rounding this first mark I looked back to note some ominous looking cumulo-nimbus on the horizon (i.e big black clouds!) but thought nothing of it as I set off on a broad reach chasing after couple of Laser Radials ahead. Suddenly it went quite dark and glancing back I saw a rain shower approaching. A squall hit me a few seconds later. The good news was that the wind in the squall was from essentially the same direction... the bad news was that it increased to frightening force, blew away my hat and started to hurl hail stones onto my follicly challenged head while I struggled to keep control as the boat took off on a plane at seemingly suicidal speed!

My laser normally whines when it planes fast (there's a nick in the leading edge of the centreboard) but at this speed it was screaming and doing nothing for my feeling of well being! My main concern (apart from not really being in control!) was not being able to see more than about 10 yards ahead and knowing that, not too far in front, there was a concrete dam across my path. How could I get off the plane and back in control?..(Richard and Mike don't cover this in AQSC's sail training manual!)...Any attempt to turn upwind at this speed was likely to result in broaching and rolling the boat and I've broken too many spars and bruised too many limbs in the past to want to do this deliberately! On the other hand if I stayed on the same course I would hit the dam with a mighty whack which was even less appealing! Should I just jump off the back and abandon the boat?....

I'm not sure quite what did happen, except that somehow I did come off the plane without capsizing, turned into wind and promptly got into irons, with the boom thrashing violently from one side to another and waves washing over the cockpit. This wasn't much fun! but I didn't really have time to reflect on this, before the wind caught me on the other tack and I took off on the plane again... fortunately away from the dam and vaguely in the right direction for the race!

By this time the gods were making signs of peace, ...the hail had given way to rain and visibility improved so I could see where I was going. Just as well really, because it was a real disaster area! Overturned boats littered the course and the safety boats were really struggling to cope with a number of crews in evident distress and it was quite tricky avoiding the debris! Conditions continued to improve and I made the next mark, still on the plane, feeling quite exhilarated!

The wind continued to decrease, and settled for a gentle 1-2; the sun came out, we dried out and warmed up and finished the race with no further drama. I came ashore to find that Bryan, wisely had retired and moreover, having got his new boots wet had decided to reef his Topper in readiness for the afternoon race. Of the 23 boats that started, only 7 finished. It was reported that the wind speed on the committee boat was measured at 55kts. (Question:.. Why were they measuring wind speed in those conditions? Would you have such presence of mind when all around you boats are capsizing?)

Bewl has an excellent Clubhouse and provides some excellent catering facilities. After a welcome lunch we took to the water again for the afternoon race, better prepared this time for what the gods had for us. However after the morning's drama, sailing was relatively uneventful in the variable force 1-2 winds. Bryan, in the reefed Topper, was frustratingly uncompetitive and finished 21. I had a good sail, but failed to keep up with the serious Laser sailors and finished 11.

All in all an exhilarating day and a great change from river sailing! My thanks to Bewl SC who, as always, make us feel so welcome.



Getting wet with Laser fun and games

AQSC Regatta & BBQ - 17 June

There are at least two occasions during the Aquarius sailing season when you can guarantee the weather will play up. One is the Open Weekend and the other is the Regatta. 2006 has proved no different. On both occasions we have been treated to relative 'drifters' albeit that some people don't mind these kind of conditions. The writer, obviously, does.

The first race on Saturday was a 'Fun Race' scheduled for 11:30 but it was gone midday before it got away. Because of the wind conditions (East 0-1) a simple starboard hand oval course with an upstream start was set by George Bray for the 7 boats that took part. (Note: This turned out to be the only viable course and was used throughout the weekend).

The second race on Saturday was 'Regatta Trophy Race 1' and started at 14:00. Again the conditions were very variable (East 0-1) and there were 11 entries. Notably Mike Baker & Bryan Clements retired frustrated by the lack of wind and Nigel Knowles managed to capsized.

Following tea the third race on Saturday was a 'Fun Race' and started at 15:45. Conditions were as before and there were 9 entries. Again Mike Baker retired and again Nigel Knowles capsized. Boredom was blamed for both events.

On Saturday evening the annual BBQ and Jazz Night was held. This attracted 70 members and guests; one of the best attendance we have had. The BBQ got underway at about 19:30 and the band played from 20:00 to 23:00.

Many thanks everybody who spent time in the local supermarkets ensuring we had everything to hand on the night and to Diana and her team for preparing and serving the food. To Roger for sterling work over the BBQ pit. Thanks also to Nigel for providing those rather spiffy gazebos, very up market! To Pete and his helpers who slaved away in the bar making sure that everybody had a full glass.

Sunday proved to be a re-run of Saturday weather-wise. The wind (and I use that word advisably, because there hardly was any) started in the W (0-1) but was highly variable throughout the day.

The first race on Sunday was 'Regatta Trophy Race 2' which started at 11:30 and for which there were 11 entries. The race notes record that Keith Hatton and Mike Baker retired in 'total frustration' ... at the conditions it should be added.

The second race on Sunday was the 'Ladies/Novice Trophies Race' which started at 13:30 for eligible but everyone could take part. There were 11 entries with 5 of those being eligible for the trophies (3 Ladies and 2 Novices). During the race M.Cordwell capsized twice, one of which was right on the line.

The third race on Sunday was the 'Regatta Trophy Race 3' which started at 14:45, again 11 boats entered for this. Once again Mike Baker dropped out because of the extremely light airs.

The overall winner of the Regatta Trophy was Pat Halling. He and Charles Dennis tied on points but Pat edged it because Charles didn't take part in the last race. 15 different helms competed in the 2006 regatta, 2 more than last year.

Following the last race Roger and Nigel organised some water based fun and games. The first consisted of two teams racing a pair of Lasers from the bank around a buoy and back to the bank to pick up another crew member. 5 or 6 crews to each boat were lined up. The second activity is a regular. How many people can you get on a Laser? Last year was 15, this year was 13. That attempt ended with the Laser capsizing everybody into the drink. Has there ever been any other outcome?

Results Saturday

Race 1 Fun

	Boat Handicap	Personal handicap
1st	Charles Dennis	Pat Halling
2nd	Pat Halling	Charles Dennis
3rd	Keith Hatton	Keith Hatton

Race 2 Regatta Trophy 1

	Boat Handicap	Personal handicap
1st	Charles Dennis	Liz Archer
2nd	Pat Halling	Pat Halling
3rd	Richard Cannon	Charles Dennis

Race 3 Fun

	Boat Handicap	Personal handicap
1st	Charles Dennis	Charles Dennis
2nd	Roger Wheeler	Roger Wheeler
3rd	Graham Thompson	Bryan Clements

Results Sunday

Race 1 Regatta Trophy 2

	Boat Handicap	Personal handicap
1st	Richard Cannon	Richard Cannon
2nd	Charles Dennis	Roger Wheeler
3rd	Roger Wheeler	Kate Valentine

Race 2 Ladies/Novice

	Boat Handicap	Personal handicap
1st	Nigel Knowles	Bryan Clements
2nd	Bryan Clements	Nigel Knowles
3rd	Keith Hatton	Kate Valentine
Ladies and Novice		Kate Valentine both Trophies

Race 3 Regatta Trophy 3

	Boat Handicap	Personal handicap
1st	Pat Halling	Pat Halling
2nd	Nigel Knowles	Mark Cordwell
3rd	Keith Hatton	Nigel Knowles

The full results are on the website and in the clubhouse

The day ended with a regatta tea with strawberries and cream. The strawberries were picked at Garson Farm by George & Joan Bray earlier in the day and were absolutely gorgeous. Many thanks to all the ladies who spent much of the afternoon preparing sandwiches and supplying a selection of cakes. The day just wouldn't be the same without a really good regatta tea!

I think the weekend was a great success, despite the weather. Much of that success was due to (a) good planning in the Management/Social Committees and (b) the commitment of individuals in preparing the club, booking the band and purchasing and preparing the food and drink needed over the whole weekend. We hope our newer members enjoyed the Regatta & BBQ but if there are any suggestions you feel might be helpful please feel free to contact a committee member.

Mike (Over Easy) Baker

Social Calendar

Dates For Your Diary

Mon 28 Aug	BEWL WATER SAILING CLUB REGATTA IN KENT Bank Holiday Pursuit racing
Sat 2 Sep	Charity dinner in support of the Homerus Project providing sailing for the blind, see separate flyer
Sat 14 Oct	Quiz Evening with Mike Baker and Indian Takeaway
Sat 5 Nov	To be confirmed. Fire Works at Kempton then soup & victuals at Club
Sat 18 Nov	AQSC Annual Dinner
Sat 2 Dec	AGM, Prize Giving and End of Season Party
2006	
Sat 10 Feb	Ladies Night
Sat 17 Mar	Start of Season Party

Hampton Regatta 2006

Charles Dennis

Aquarius sent a strong contingent to the 'Handicap' class at Hampton Regatta on 24 and 25 June. Lasers now sail in the Handicap fleet.

As usual, we received a warm welcome and great hospitality from the hosts. Teas, lunches etc. were delicious and lots of fun.

Sadly, though, most of us thought that the lack of wind was not quite as much fun! Many of Aquarius's sailors, and especially Richard, are stars in light wind - and Richard achieved a 4th in the second race. But this regatta was often 'no wind' rather than 'light' and in those conditions, the locals proved hard to beat.

My satisfaction at a 4th in the first race and 3rd in the second race was somewhat tempered by a complaint about means of propulsion. Unjustifiable in my view (but then, I would say that, wouldn't I?) Anyone less than around 12 stone needs to keep their weight well forward when sailing a Laser. And oldies sometimes find that sitting in a Laser can be very hard on the knees.

The easy solution in winds light enough not to need hiking out is to stand up well forward. Unfortunately, this leaves the bit of the boat left in the water shaped like a canoe - i.e. very unstable (as everyone who's been amused by my capsize in Force 0 will have noticed!). The result is that the boat can appear to rock, even though the motion is not applied by muscle power. Deliberate rocking is illegal if it propels the boat, so after the complaint I dutifully sat down.

Appearing to support the complaint, my results weren't as good in the next two races on Sunday - although I put that down to the effects of sailing whilst in pain! If you have a video camera, please video me if you see the 'rocking' as I'd like to assess the evidence. Does anyone know where I can get sailing kneepads?

Despite the problems, the Aquarius contingent kept going steadily, maintaining consistent results with Brian and Rodger both gaining 6th places out of a field of over a dozen. Relief came in the last race with more wind, which Richard won! In the end, I was pleased to be second Laser overall, although there was no prize for that, I'm afraid. Actually, I just missed the prizes with a 4th overall, immediately followed by Richard at 5th.

In summary, Hampton Regatta was a lot of fun despite the difficult conditions. Luckily, we managed to show strength at the end.

Results

Helm	Boat	1	2	3	4	5	Overall
Charles Dennis	Laser	4	3	5	5	3	4
Richard Cannon	Signet	7	4	6	7	1	5
Rodger Wheeler	Bosun	8	7	11	11	6	9
Bryan Clements	Grad	9	6	12	8	9	12

Wine to Support Sailing for the Blind?

Nigel Knowles

Project Homerus aims to get blind people sailing competitively. It was initiated in Italy some ten years ago and has grown to world wide scale.

The key to blind people sailing by themselves is an audible satellite navigation system called ATNA coupled with a system whereby boats and course marks emit identifying sound signals. Neither comes cheap and the project is reliant on charitable donations for its continued success.

The Club is holding a "charity dinner" on 2 September in support of the Project, details of which are in a separate flyer. Anyone unable to attend this event, but who wants to support the initiative, can do so by purchasing bottles of the Bacco di Homerus classic Lake Garda wine which is produced specially for Project Homerus.

These exclusive bottles bear images of a typical Homerus sailboat with its white and tan sails (the white and tan sails are an internationally accepted sign that the boat is crewed by visually impaired sailors) and make excellent gifts. All the sale proceeds are remitted to the Homerus Association.

The wines are a White Lugana (medium dry), a Red Classico mainly from typical local grapes and a Chiaretto Classico made from a similar mix of grapes but in this case the skins are removed after 12 hours to give a pink wine with an appealing fresh fruity taste. They are available at £5.00 per bottle and can be ordered from the Club or through any member of the bar committee.