



Autumn 2009 Edition

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Christmas Greetings

Richard and I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We hope you enjoy your club newsletters as we try to make them informative, amusing and above all interesting. We are both very happy that this issue contains a good number of stories submitted by members and especially some from some of our younger sailors. If these inspire you to put pen to paper or to fire up your word processor in 2010 Richard and I would be more than pleased to publish your stories in the coming issues of 'The Mainsheet'. Richard & Mike

Commodores's Report - Tony Hopkins

Well the Sailing season for us is nearly over this year but there are still a lot of social activities planned leading up to Christmas. The reach has had its first Autumn working party, I say first because we plan a second to sort out the trailer park which is now jammed full with trailers and more than a few dinghies, cruisers and catamarans, it is now difficult to retrieve trailers, also the drive and car park require de-weeding. If you have an old trailer in the trailer park that is no longer used please dispose of it or let me know as someone else maybe in need of a trailer. With the nights drawing in it means the reach is in darkness for longer and we have had more than our share of unwanted visitors along the bank and around the clubhouse, if you have a wet berth please do make sure it is chained

and padlocked to the bank and there are no valuables on board! Also that dinghies are secured and not left sailable! So please do remove centre boards, rudders and tillers and sails if possible. With the festive season rapidly closing in on us and the sailing season coming to an end (for Aquarius) thoughts tend to turn away from the club but there are always jobs need doing on dinghies, its best to get those repairs done sooner rather than remember when afloat next season and you are left floundering downstream. Don't forget to lookout for the Aquarius social activities that tend to happen between now and next season. Weather permitting, as usual, the sailing season will be extended as long as possible.

Website 10th Anniversary - Richard Cannon

I can't find when the website first went live. The earliest I have found is the AQSC Regatta on 4 June 99. And I uploaded web pages on 25 May 99. There was nothing in the Spring 1999 newsletter published March 1999 and it was announced in the Summer newsletter published 9 July 1999; so between April to June 1999 seems likely. I used my free UkGateway web space to create http://www.aquarius.sc.ukgateway.net.

It is still hosted there although ownership changed to Tiscali and now TalkTalk provide the excellent service. Our domain sailaquarius.org.uk was registered on 16Aug02. In those days web access speed was very different; I had recently upgraded my 9.6 kbs modem to the latest 56kbp modem at a cost of £180; 40 times slower than the slowest you are likely to get today. I hope you find the website useful for finding current and historical information like newsletters and race results.

Joan Bray Welcomes

We give a warm welcome to: Kerrigan, Eman, Mariam, Tariq, Sam and Farris Wild. And also to Elizabeth Seward and her sons William and Ralph who have re-joined Aquarius after a long absence wishing them all a long and happy membership of Aquarius.

Newsletter Printing

The printing and paper costs of this Newsletter were met in full by JDC Independent Financial Advisers 69 The Green Twickenham 020 8755 5577 We thank Frank Rainsborough for setting this up. Apart from the cost saving, it is good to have this task delegated.

## Trouble With Over Easy

Over Easy, ST369 that is, not yours truly became forty-one years old this year. That's a good age for an amateur built plywood dinghy of any class. The trouble is that dinghies of that age were usually constructed using an adhesive called Aerolite 306.

A306 was made by Ciba-Geigy and was a synthetic powder resin which you mixed with water; this was applied to one half of a joint. The Formic Acid hardener was then painted onto the mating surface(s) and the joint clamped up. Three hours later you had a bond that could be handled although it took several days to achieve full waterproof strength. Although not known then it is now commonly accepted that this product, albeit the best of its era, had a life of about 35-40 years.

Over Easy was constructed using A306 and around about regatta time I began to notice rather large amounts of water appearing in the boat. At first I thought that a self bailer seal had gone, Oh! That it had been that easy. Further investigation revealed that the port side floor was dropping away from the port side tank walls. The A306 had finally let go. The joint in question is where the floor meets a curved pine section that runs the length of the boat and secures together the inner and outer side tank walls and the floor. The break seemed to run aft from the thwart support on the port side.

Nigel kindly hauled Over Easy to Epsom for me. I'd just replaced my car and it didn't have a tow bar fitted. I removed all the deck fittings and got it upside down on trestles in the drive and left it to dry out for a while.

Next Richard looked in and over several coffees we discussed the best repair strategy. Richard has ST368 which was built alongside ST369 in the Hawker SC boathouse at Ham, so I guess he had a vested interest in what had gone wrong. We concluded that water had been getting in for some time and the marine ply in the immediate area has begun to delaminate. For better or worse all this rotten timber would have to be cut out to get back to sound wood.

We cut out a 6" section of the floor from the chine inboard and about 30" long before we got to sound timber. This also entailed removing a section of the reinforcing strap that runs across the floor under the thwart. Later I removed a section of the inner tank wall which was also rotten. Luckily however the

bottom pine beam and the outer tank wall were sound. I also removed the P & S self bailers.

The whole area was then cleaned up and 'pickled' with wood preserver and wood hardener. I next made up some cardboard patterns which I used to cut the new marine ply; but nothing's straightforward and at this point I realised that the floor was 6mm ply and the tank walls 4mm ply. I only had 6mm. Richard solved the problem and routed down a section of the thicker material to 4mm, what a star! The fitting of the new wood was fairly trouble free although cutting 1" scarf joints is very time consuming and requires very sharp planes and chisels <Photos available> Any inconsistencies were taken up by copious amounts of epoxy resin thickened with colloidal silica.

West & SP epoxies are the modern day versions of A306 but they are toxic and require VERY careful handling. You can get sensitized to the stuff and the results are not very pleasant. Colloidal silica should not be used without a mask; its carcinogenic and you do not want to inhale any of it. I also took the opportunity to seal up the opening where the port bailer used to live and increase the starboard bailer opening to take a new slightly larger Evestrom bailer.

The next job, while the dinghy was upside down, was to strip the P & S chines back to bare wood and cover over with 50mm fibreglass tape. Hopefully strengthening the chines and the repaired section and ensuring an external waterproof seal around the boat.

Once cured all that remained was to clean down the bottom and sides, mask off, prime, undercoat and top coat. However nothings that easy and I spent several frustrating days dashing in and



out between the showers before everything was finished including the installation of the new larger bailer in the starboard side floor.

Finally I was able to turn the dinghy over and start on the inside. The new inner tank wall and floor required some dressing and the section of the reinforcing strap that had been cut out had to be replaced together with a patch over the old port bailer aperture. The rest was straightforward and required applying a fillet to the inner tank wall floor joint, staining and varnishing the tank walls and painting the floor with non slip deck paint.

By now I'd just about had enough but the decking still had to be rubbed down and re-varnished. Finally on Saturday 31 July the sun came out and I was able to get two good coats of varnish on. A couple of days later I got the final satin coats applied and the deck fittings reinstalled. Over Easy is back in business, although I admit I'm being very unfaithful to her at the moment with Laser called Peanuts.

I have to say that the maintenance overhead, let alone the skills required to do something like the above is why nowadays nobody wants a wooden dinghy anymore. Having said that I've watched Bryan Clements repairing fibreglass Lasers at the club and that no easy task either. I guess any kind of boat will, eventually, require some kind of work ... but please don't come to me; much as I love Over Easy I've had all the repair fun I need for one year.

*Mike (Hopefully nice and dry) Baker*

### Lasers Named

As you may know Aquarius owns three Lasers but only one of them has ever had a name. 'Peanuts' is has now been joined by 'Bob' named after Bob Sumner, and 'Mac' named after Mac Mackenzie the founder and first President of AQSC.

Another new Laser sail has also been purchased, so we now have two new standard size Laser sails plus a Laser redial rig. The purchase of a new weather cover has also been agreed for the club Graduate. Our four club's Picos were overhauled prior to the recent youth sailing training programme so are also in good order.

The Topper is still in use although beginning to show its age a little.

*Mike (Over Easy) Baker*

## Skittles Evening 12 September

Despite its past popularity and extensive advertising, this year's skittles night barely made the minimum number required to even hold the event. The venue, The Grantley Arms at Wonersh, just the other side of Guildford, is an old coaching inn. Many of Wonersh village buildings are very old and were built when the village was the centre of Surrey's cloth industry which flourished for more than 400 years from the 13th to 17th centuries.

Aquarius SC and Lyn's Embercourt Badminton Club (EBC) have used its skittles alley for several years to hold our annual match. Having 'lent' Lyn's team a few of our people to even up the sides the first game started at 7.00i'sh. For some people this was their first go at traditional skittles and the tendency to treat it like tenpin bowling was in early evidence. Gnasher, Don and Helen's dog, watched events through the French doors and seemed very bemused by the entire goings on.

Supper, consisting of Beef Bourguignon, Cajun Chicken and Veggie Chilli, was served at 8:00i'sh. Afterwards we managed two more games before Lyn started working out the results.

This year EBC won the team prize with 185 points to AQSC's 160. Carole Money was the highest placed lady and the highest placed man, after a tie breaker between Stuart Schaffer and John Eveleigh (EBC) went to John Eveleigh. It was a good evening and our first timers, Don & Helen, Joan Walkden and Stuart, seemed to enjoy themselves (I'm not sure about Gnasher).

*Mike (Over Easy) Baker*

## A Pat on the Back for Janet

Well done Janet Edwards for raising £955, which includes a donation from Aquarius, for the Prostate Cancer Research Centre (UK) in memory of Bob Sumner, who was our Bosun for many years. Janet hopes to make this £1000 with the help of a planned coffee morning.

One of our club Lasers has been named "Bob" in honour of his memory. Another club Laser has been being named "Mac" in memory of R.F.(Mac) McCoy who was a founder member, Commodore and President of Aquarius until his retirement in 1983. George and I still miss them both and remember them with great affection.

*Joan Bray*

## Bosun Open Regatta 3 & 4 October

The weather forecast for Saturday was 19 gusting 40. On arriving at Whale Island the wind was very strong and flags on HMS Bristol were completely horizontal.

At the race briefing we were told it was doubtful that sailing would take place on Saturday but the forecast was for lighter winds on Sunday.

So we were to rig our dinghies with furled jibs and mains wrapped around the boom and everything made secure ready for Sunday sailing. We reconvened and it was confirmed that no sail would take place on Saturday so off we went to amuse ourselves around Portsmouth for the rest of the day.

I made my way to my hotel and booked in and went for a windy stroll along the promenade only to be accosted by Frank Rainsborough and his helm, Jim Lowden. We decided to take a look at the HMS Victory and other Portsmouth dock history. We wandered around for about an hour and a half then had tea and Ice cream.

Sunday dawned a lot less windy with the wind strength around 8 gusting to about 12, sailing was on! The plan for the weekend had been 4 races Saturday and 2 on Sunday. Now we were hoping to get 4 in on Sunday, all short races back to back for 2 races then change boats and then another 2 races. The course was a port triangle crossing through the start on each lap.

We came in after 4 races to be told that we could squeeze in another 2 races!. I was sailing solo along with another boat, who did get a crew after 1 race. There were 11 Bosun's in the fleet and the racing was hectic as the course was about 100 metres plus between marks. I had some good racing and tussles amongst the back of the fleet. Hitting the mark in one race I did my 360 putting me last but still I managed to catch up to finish 10th.

Frank and Jim fared very well actually winning one race outright with a second and a couple of thirds putting them on equal points for 3rd position but tiebroken to 4th overall, so not on the podium, but a prize anyway for being the top placed civilian team.

I managed 2 8's, 3 9's and a 10 to finish 10th overall.

It was a great days sailing with all the dinghies having brand new sails. I will most certainly be back next year.

*Tony Hopkins*

## HMS Bristol At The Royal Navy Establishment Whale Island

A mention of this ship is made elsewhere in this Newsletter, this extra article is to tell you a little bit about HMS Bristol, and the circumstances in which our Commodore Tony Hopkins wanted to lay claim to it.

We were at Whale Island to compete in the Royal Navy Sailing Centre Bosun Open Meeting. The briefing was held in the Centre's Clubhouse which, as you would expect, is near the waters edge and when looking out of the Clubhouse window, dominating the view is a warship, HMS Bristol, dark and brooding in its painted battleship grey colour, and complete with some rather menacing armaments.

But we needed to pay attention to the briefing for the impending competition, so had to avert our gaze from this impressive piece of power. At one point in the briefing it was explained that 'on the table over there is a register in which you are to list the name of the Establishment that you are representing, and the names of the helm and the the crew who will be competing'.

The instruction continued 'On each line there is a number, this is the number of the boat to which you are initially allocated, so you can pick any line, in other words, it's a first come first served basis for you to pick any boat'.

To which Tony loudly announced to the assembled competitors, that he 'would have that one out there, the big grey one with the guns!' Answered with peals of laughter, it was a cracking good joke, Well Done Tony!



But not only did HMS Bristol dominate the view from the window, when racing, it was also the dominating view when approaching the windward mark in that that mark was but a few boat lengths from this warship's 35'ish feet of vertical steel port side. A quite unusual point of reference to be heading to!

*Frank Rainsborough*

## Casino Royale - 17 October

The advertising info for this event began distribution on 13 September; but by 23 September the evening was totally oversubscribed and Rodger Wheeler, the organiser, had to stop taking bookings; he thought only 40 could be accommodated but we had 52 booked. This was the first time this had ever happened but there's a limit to the number that can be seated and catered for in the clubhouse and we had reached that number unexpectedly quickly.

On the prior Friday Bodgit & Son had just about finished the new 'conservatory' extension. This structure was designed and manufactured so that it can be simply be removed and stored when not required but can easily be put in place in an afternoon. It was to be used as a cocktail lounge on the night.

The clubhouse was then decorated and lights and sound system installed. A separate crew then arrived on Saturday to prepare the food, lay-up the tables and finish the hundred and one things that had to be done.

When Keith, Madeline, Lyn and I arrived on Saturday night it rapidly became obvious that something was very wrong. The clubhouse was in darkness and several people were wandering about looking very worried. It transpired that all power to the club was out and had been for a couple of hours; the peak preparation and cooking period. Some working lights had been rigged up from a generator on Don's cruiser but all was far from well.

Eventually the Thames Water duty site electrician was contacted. He traced the fault which was in a high voltage area that required two persons to be present to enter. There was another wait until another 'sparks' could arrive. They then traced the problem to a blown 60amp fuse in the supply line and fixed it, restoring light and power, much to Rodgers relief. The electricians were greeted down at the club like heros and appeared highly embarrassed by the whole thing.



Pat Halling

Mandy Lee

The evening then got underway, albeit a tad late because of the cooking delay. Cocktails were served and the old place looked very up market with many of the gentlemen in DJ's and the Ladies resplendent in evening dresses and bling. The theme was Casino Royale as in Ian Fleming's books and John Money out did himself in a dress, a.k.a. Miss Moneypenny while John Neale dyed his hair, looking very suave as James Bond himself.

As everybody took their seats the trio of Pat Halling (violin), Chris Le'bon (cello) and Mike Lee (piano) started the entertainment. Between the first two courses they played a selection of Bond film themes and were joined by vocalist Mandy Lee. Mandy has a lovely voice and it was very good of her to sing like that in such close proximity to her audience. The main course was a triumph despite worries about cooking times thrown out by the earlier loss of power.

After dessert the trio played a number of other pieces and at one point Rodger was invited to 'sit in' and play violin with them. If he looked nervous before it was nothing to the way he looked then, but he shouldn't have worried, it was great. Pat ended the music with his own version of Last Night of the Proms and had the whole audience singing Land of Hope and Glory. It was brilliant. Over cheese and coffee the evening began to wind down and it was well past 2:00a.m. by the time our party arrived home.

All our thanks go to Rodger for masterminding and organising the event; Also to everybody who helped prior to the event and on the day preparing and serving the dinner. To the musicians for the entertainment and to everybody who turned up on Sunday morning to help clear up. It was a classic Aquarius evening enjoyed by a record attendance.  
*Mike (The one in a top hat) Baker*



## Laying-Up At The End Of Season

This is a reminder that our official sailing season finishes at the end of October. Here's a laying-up check list:-

1. Clear your berth of undergrowth and overhanging branches.
2. Ensure your boat cover and its ties are in good condition (many are not) and that your launch trolley tyres are pumped up. A winter spent on a flat tyre will not only ruin the tyre but encourage water to lie in the hull because it's not level.
3. Remove the sails, bungs and hatches from your dinghy along with paddles, rudders etc. Open the self bailers if you have them.
4. Ensure your dinghy is stored at an angle to enable it to drain. If trapped water freezes it can seriously damage your boat.
5. Ensure your dinghy is well picketed so it can't roll or float away, in the case of flood.
6. During the closed season, don't just forget your dinghy or rely on the Bosun/Harbourmaster, check it occasionally, especially for any water trapped inside.

All the above only takes a few minutes but it could save you a lot of time and money in putting things right before the start of the 2010 season.

*Mike (Over Easy) Baker*

## Use of Club Dinghies

Aquarius owns a number of dinghies for the use of its members. These include Lasers, Picos, Graduate, Bosun and Topper. They are maintained by the club and no charge is made for their use. However, members are reminded that there are conditions and responsibilities associated with their use. These are clearly laid out in the AQSC Rules and By-laws (Section 8.7). This applies to both use at Aquarius and when they are taken away to external events.

Loss or damage to dinghies and their equipment must be reported to the club and members may be held liable for loss or damage if, in the opinion of the committee, such damage or loss was caused by negligent use. Club dinghies must always be put away, secured and all their equipment accounted for and returned to the storeroom before the user leaves the club.

*AQSC Management Committee*

## Work Party On 10 October

We have two or three of these events every year aimed at staying on top of the hundred and one jobs that need doing at Aquarius. Generally clearing up the water front was high on the agenda this time around. So, while Bodgit & Son got on with starting the construction of a covered area on the quarter-deck and Rodger checked out a fault on the main gate intercom, those members who had kindly given up their Saturday got stuck into clearing weeds, brambles and cutting grass.

The day was sunny and warm and while the work was going on Diana and her team kept tea and coffee on the brew and set about preparing a sausage casserole lunch for the workers, while at the same time putting all our crocks and cutlery through the dish washer in preparation for the 'Casino Royale' night. Some twenty-five members sat down to lunch in quite high spirits. The weather obviously agreed with them. Work then resumed and some people were still going strong at 6:00pm. A great effort guys!

The Committee's grateful thanks go to everybody who turned out on Saturday. We know it's not glamorous or exciting but it is essential to stay on top of these mundane jobs, especially just before the end of the season and the onset of winter. Thanks once again.

*AQSC Management Committee*

## Security At Aquarius SC

You will no doubt be aware that this summer we have had several night time visits from miscreants. We have taken steps to secure the upstream end of the club land and installed an improved clubhouse security system but they still seem to be getting in by climbing the Thames Water fencing and walking around the Sunnyside reservoir. Damage and theft has occurred on a number of the wet berth craft and dinghy's have been removed from their moorings and used to cross the river.

Although the Police and neighbouring clubs have been informed about these incidents, no one has ever been apprehended. It is therefore vital that each of us do whatever we can to minimize risk at Aquarius and this includes taking personal responsibility for the security of your own property.

The AQSC Management Committee advice is to secure your dinghy in much

## Our First Youth Input To 'The Mainsheet'

Not to be outdone by John Panting's excellent input I also received the following contributions from Edmund and Imogen Morris. Not only are these two first-class sailors they obviously have a way with words too. Enjoy ...

### Sailing Course Review

After the Youth Sailing Programme, this summer at Aquarius, Edmund and I thought we'd like to learn more about sailing. So, this August, we went on an RYA Stage 3 course at Thames Young Mariners.

The course was done in Magnos, two person dinghies made by Topper.

On the first day we learned how to rig a Magno and sail it. The wind was about force 3 on the Beaufort scale so we had quite good conditions. Over the next few days we learnt about stopping at buoys, pontoons and how to pick up a man overboard. We also did capsizing drills and were taught basic knots. The wind was much less on these days and the sailing slower.

On the fourth day it was forces 1 and 2. We were told how to get the boat moving in low wind then left alone for the rest of the morning. In the afternoon, we were taught about tides and buoys. Later, we were moved into single handers and did fun and games with the stage 1 and 2 children.

The last day's highlight was two races. The wind had picked up again and one boat capsized. After the races there was cake and then the Magnos were put away. Everyone received a certificate, which our instructor said did not happen often.

Edmund and I enjoyed this course very much. We were surprised to find we had already been taught quite a bit of it by Mike, Richard, Roger, Bryan and others at Aquarius. I would recommend this course to any novices wishing to learn more about basic sailing.

*Imogen Morris*

the same way we have secured the club dinghies. Locking your craft to a strong point with a length of chain or cable and a good padlock or combination lock is usually enough to deter anyone from interfering with the boats. They will simply move on and find an easier target. The same applies to equipment left in the trailer park. This should be

## Sailing At Loch Insh, Kincaig, Nr. Aviemore, Highlands Of Scotland

During the summer holidays our whole family went to visit our grandparents in the Highlands of Scotland. They live within walking distance of a small Loch with its own water sports centre.

One morning we decided to spend a day sailing there. Unfortunately the wind was too light for a good sail in the morning. So it was decided that the adults would take out Canadian canoes and Imogen and I would take out kayaks. Loch Insh is actually part of a river. When it is not too overgrown you can canoe or kayak up the creek leading into the river. Our Gran says that it is something out of Swallows and Amazons. There is an island when the water is high, which you can kayak or canoe around.

In the afternoon the wind picked up. We took two Picos out which were beached near the water sports centre with their dagger boards and rudders up. We paddled out from the shallow waters. There was hardly any traffic on the water, apart from wind-surfers. On the water we could continue for a good length of time in almost any direction. I sailed with (and ahead of because I was so much faster) my Auntie Carol - who was in a kayak.

Sailing with the quiet ripples and the gently swaying trees was very different from the hustle and bustle of the Thames, though less challenging.

If you ever get a chance to visit, Loch Insh Water-sports Centre has accommodation, a nice cafe and a good shop selling sailing equipment and gifts. There are also buoyancy aids and everything you need for hire. My mother recommends the Canadian canoes to anyone who doesn't like to get wet. Don't forget to visit the Highland Wildlife Park with its wolves and bears or the Strathspey Steam railway - because our granddad is a train guard on it.

*Edmund Morris*

clearly and indelibly marked with the owner's name and secured with suitable locks.

Personal property left at Aquarius SC is your responsibility. Don't assume it won't happen to you, do something now to ensure your boat and equipment is as secure as you can make it.

*AQSC Management Committee*

## My First Stories For 'The Main Sheet'

The following are some stories written by one of our newest members John Panting. He's written, with much candour, about building his first boat and his feelings as he did it. I have undertaken a little editing but I trust I have retained the essence of what John wrote ... enjoy!

### Chapter 1 Before You Can Finish First First You Must Finish

It was my birthday on the 5th of December and I was 60 years young. My present, courtesy of my wife Brenda was a sailing dinghy. Well, not quite it was actually a sailing dinghy self assembly kit. Now don't get me wrong, I have dreamed of building my own dinghy since I was 21 years old. It's just that I was so unprepared. What does it mean? I have to have somewhere to build it; maybe in the garage?

The garage is full dear Liza dear Liza,  
The garage is full dear Liza dear Liza, it's full!  
Then empty it dear Henry dear Henry dear Henry,  
Then empty it dear Henry, dear Henry empty it!  
Where shall I empty it dear Brenda dear Brenda,  
Where shall I empty it dear Brenda, where?  
A shed Dear John Dear John, Dear John  
A shed Dear John Dear John, a shed.

I think you have the 'drift' or do I mean 'set'.

Next I have to buy a shed to put all the garage stuff in. Then there is the epoxy. It takes forever to set if below about 16C (62F). So I needed to insulate the garage and find an electric heater. While the garage is empty I might as well paint the concrete floor. I have been meaning to get round to that since 1976. I will also need more lights.

Ok, now I am ready to open the box; but before that you must be wondering what about the mast, the boom, a trailer, boat cover, paint, the rigging not to mention the sails? Where shall I sail her? Should I enter races? Where do I get a sail number from? When should I insure? Who will crew for me?

Then there are trestles, a carpenter's square that actually is square and a dozen or so clamps. Best learn the language first I thought. Scarf, Chine, Carlins, Knees, what are they? The box of bits arrived on Tuesday 16th December 08. The Shed arrived on Wednesday 17th December 08.

It's a Signet, 12' 5" overall & 5' 0" at the beam. Oh crikey! what name shall I give her? Luckily we are going away over Christmas, else I would have no time to open my presents.



## Chapter 2 - Birth Of A Signet

Christmas and New Year have come and gone. Nights are long and days are short. There has been snow and rainbows but it's stayed warm and bright within my garage (now known to all as 'The Boat Yard').

A couple of tricky dimensional problems caused much stress for a while but all in all, it's a challenge I have embraced, all be it, with more hope than experience. She's not much to look at the moment even though two months have slipped by since I started to build.

The slow curing epoxy is second only to watching grass grow but messier to work with. However, she has developed a presence. Currently she is not seaworthy and the Jumblies may well be better advised to stick with their sieve, for the time being at least.

Reluctantly, I confess that I have been speaking to her on occasions and yes I have kissed her curving form three times now. Some would put this down to the fumes from the epoxy but those with a more sensitive and understanding soul will realise we have already started a shared trust.

You just can't have too many clamps!!!!



## Chapter 3 - Sailing In SunseT

It's August 09, eight months since my 60th birthday present, a Signet dinghy. Time is a non reusable resource but it still slips through my fingers. The dinghy is still in the garage (renamed the 'boatyard'). Things have moved forward or do I mean topsides down.

Before epoxying the decks, which would then have been vulnerable to damage, I decided to flip her over and pay attention to her bottom. This involved a block and tackle secured through her centre board slot and a reluctant and nervous wife Brenda. With lots of 'safety foam' on the floor over she went without a hitch, the boat not Brenda.

Once the work on her undersides was completed we flipped her back. (I do hope this is the last time I see her topsy-turvy). Now I could put the side and aft decks on the night before I went on holiday. Bit of a stressful rush but it was done and I left her with all sorts of weights spread over her side decks to hold them down.

We were in Spain for ten days. Every day I had a vision of the boat bending in the middle under the weights. We returned home and up went the 'boatyard' door before the front door was opened. There she was laden with undisturbed curves. Relief!

Now I needed to order the spars (mast and boom). These I am due to pick up from Plymouth (Queen Anne's Battery) on the 14th. The mast is 20ft (6.5m) but I have a roof rack and a 12ft (3m) ladder to act as support and I will try and avoid the pot holes. Next I need some sails, 1 main, 1 headsail and a Spinnaker in case Richard or Mike ever sails in her. The sails can be cut from 3 different types of cloth and you guessed it with three different price ranges. The sails are due mid September.

Oh yes! I have her sail number ST924 and yes I have named my SigneT She is SunseT. So I hope to be 'Sailing in Sunset' before my 61st Birthday.

*By John S Panting*

## Aquarius At Bewl Water - Mike Hendra

The late summer holiday crept closer with varying reports about the weather raising all the doubts that sailors have about forecast accuracy. However, last year the Bewl weather was threatening but the strong wind resulted in some exciting sailing and although the sky scowled darkly the rain stayed away. So here we were on an overcast Monday, silly enough to be contemplating a trip almost to Hastings on a bank holiday.

I don't sail much at Aquarius but I always feel guilty about the few who do the work when I do not help and once again I had not assisted with loading the boats and equipment. Richard and Co had organised the event, loaded the gear and trailed the boats to the lake. Even though I had not helped I felt the endeavour needed support and to go to Bewl was at least a show of appreciation for the efforts of the willing horses.

Jean was not well during Saturday night and so Sunday began as a slow start with us only leaving shortly after 10 am. The early part of the journey was easy with light traffic and apart from noise that sounded like an escaping hub cap, our trip to Tunbridge Wells was quick and trouble free. Just before reaching the TW bypass, hazard lights flashed ahead and soon all progress stopped. Slowly the car inched ahead but the average speed dropped from 60 to 6 and Bewl looked to be another 45 minutes away.

Eventually the entrance came into view and the turn was quickly affected. "Shit" I had forgotten the parking voucher, despite my efforts the gate guard was unmoved by my tears so I coughed up the £8.00 entry fee. As we swung into the parking area the sun smiled with gentle amusement from behind the clouds and the day began to offer promise.

With luck a parking spot appeared close to the club and our trusty steed was stabled between the lines. The windscreen framed a rippling lake dotted with a plethora of sailing craft. The journey down had already proved worth the effort.

Bewl Water ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bewl\\_Water](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bewl_Water)) is an impoundment, a lake created by a dam and is the largest area of fresh water in the south of England. Low ridges surround the waterway which fills the dales between the hills that slide gently beneath the surface. The terrain is both grassed and treed with walks and picnic areas offering an alternative to sailing. Activities on the lake cover all aspects of water sport but for Aquarius it offers us the chance to sail a long course uninterrupted by riverbanks.

Richard had organised a team to load and tow club boats to the site and his team (together with Liz) were there to greet our arrival. Roger trundled behind somewhere with more gear so although we had Signets and Pecos we were still short of rigging. The Jedi Knights of Aquarius, the Luniss family, were assembled and kitting-up to

attack the wind and waves with purposefulness. Jean wanted a coffee and Richard wanted bums on boats.

I kitted up and joined Mike Baker for a ride in Easy Over, his Signet. We took off in a fresh breeze with Mike at the helm which he shortly and foolishly handed over to me. I moved gingerly in the stern and nervously hardened to weather never once tacking just to avoid the bank.

We beat, reached and ran across the lake experiencing varying degrees of wind strength. We went from gunwales under to smooth sailing for about half an hour before being hit by a gust that threw us on our beam end. My faux pas, I had failed to release the mainsheet quickly enough and paid dearly with a barked shin and a shame face. Mike was kind but we still headed for the jetty, sail one over.

By now Roger and Laurie were somewhere towards the far end of the lake, the Luniss flotilla were widely spread and Richard was under the command of his Mate Liz. I was off to the club house for lunch and a coffee.

The "Aquarius wives" it's difficult to really decide if sailors are married to their boats or their women, were assembled in the club house. Coffee cups, cake crumbs and news papers (well the Daily Mirror) littered the table.

Jean was ready for lunch and knew the ropes so I paid. With plates in hand we headed for the barbeque where the lunch crew fuelled us with burgers, sausages and salad. A beer called but foolishly I resisted paying 99p for a "coffee" instead, a terrible waste of water and 99p. With the inner man satisfied it was time to challenge the waves again.

The breeze had stiffened considerably post noon making our Pecos, now Jedi free, dance and flap excitedly at the end of the jetty. Aided by Laurie I slithered aboard struggling to untangle the tiller from the main sheet horse whilst holding the painter. In the struggle I lost the painter only to be rescued by Laurie's nimble fingers.

The Pico bucked from the jetty driven by a half sheeted main and a flapping jib. Tiller, mainsheet, jib sheet, I had run out of hands and my feet were struggling to find the foot strap. The half sheeted main was left with the flapping jib demanding immediate attention. Addressing the jib made the tiller jealous and the boat slewed angrily to windward backing the jib.

The main now miffed by the lack of attention tugged at its sheet and the hull rolled threateningly to leeward. Teeth came into play as I bit the mainsheet in defiance, punched the tiller into submission and found the foot straps. We were off at a gallop, my first on a Pico. The tell-tales streamed along the jib and the boat tore away from the shore like a rocket.

I settled down for a long uninterrupted beat up the lake, no north and south banks close here. The Pico stayed hard on the

wind as it gusted and eddied over the water which giggled excitedly as it slid from under the stern.

Grass and trees fleshed by to port as we navigated past the racing-crews heading for open water. Gee this was fun! Legs held fast in the straps, back and right arm trimmed the main whilst the left kept the tiller under control.

The wind eased in the shelter of the trees so a course change was a looming option. I slid into the middle, short of hands again but although not a racing turn we took off on port tack without drama or mishap. The Pico found the wind so the left arm and back trimmed the main, the right managing the tiller with the rushing water giggling under the stern again.

We reached, ran and beat for an hour that passed in ten minutes. Thinking of the others waiting for a ride I changed course running back to the club jetty. The approach was well timed, the jib freed, the tiller up, the bow to windward we kissed the jetty and hung on for dear life with everything flapping. The end was just like the beginning except I was now stiff and aching.

A beer beckoned, the coffee was no match, so I creaked to the clubhouse to find Jean. Shirt and shorts were soaked with perspiration (the wet suit kept the spray off) so a change was required. All boats were manned and sailing far out on the lake so I was ordered home.

My satnav Rebecca was no match for Jean when it came to cross country traffic-jam avoidance so she took command. The Honda eased away from the quay under female command with me at the helm. The main road was full but moving slowly as we joined the queue.

A left at the first roundabout saw us heading through the village towards Royal Tunbridge Wells where we encountered little more than local traffic before rejoining the main road on the other side of town. The highway was moving fast when we reached it and we journeyed home without incident or unusual hold-up.

I tried to get out of the car but I was stiff, bruised and battered, firstly by a Signet then by a Pico. Why is God and exercise so unkind to old people? Helped from the car I was ordered into the shower before a snack, a medicinal red and bed. I did not lay awake long.

Jean and I, as well as several others had enjoyed a wonderful day very different from Aquarius sailing on the Thames. The day was possible thanks to Richard and many others (including Liz) who had organised, loaded and transported boats and equipment to Bewl.

I was not one of the workers so I hope this story counts as my contribution to the Bewl outing. It is my thanks to Richard and Co and I am sure expresses a sentiment shared by many who participated. Can't wait for the next encounter!

*Mike Hendra*

## Social Calendar - Dates For Your Diary

Sat 7 Nov	Kempton Park Fireworks and a social with hot food at the Club afterwards; details below.
Sat 21 Nov	AQSC Annual Dinner starting at 7:30 pm; details below.
Sun 29 Nov	Working party starting at 10:30 am. Clear weeds, sort out trailer park and nettles; BBQ lunch.
<b>Sat 5 Dec</b>	AGM, Prize Giving and End of Season Party starting at 7:30 pm; details below.
Sun 13 Dec	Cheats Christmas lunch and family games.
<b>2010</b>	
Sun 17 Jan	Lunch and pantomime.
Sun 14 Feb	Ladies Lunch.
Sun 28 Feb	Lunch 12:30 pm and frostbite cruise/scavenger hunt.
<b>Sat 20 Mar</b>	Start of Season Party
Sun 28 Mar	Start of sailing

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### Aquarius Sailing Club Annual Dinner Saturday 21 November 7:30 for 8:00

The annual dinner will be held in the Clubhouse:-

Dress; smart with a Nautical Hat Theme  
Discounted price £24 (£25 after 14 November)

Includes:-

Reception drink at 7:30

Four course meal by Professional Caterers

Table wine

Coffee/Tea and mints

Candle light, soft music, and good company

Limited to 48 members on first come first served basis

This is a very popular dinner so earliest booking is advised; **14 November** at the latest.

An amazing prize will be awarded for the best nautical theme hat worn at the annual dinner. So get your 'thinking hats' on and devise the perfect head covering for the 21st.

**Booking is essential** but due to the strikes post is not being used for booking places and sending payment. An email with a booking form has been sent to all members with an email address and bookings should be made by replying to the email. Those without an email address have been contacted and booking forms are available in the club house.

A print of your booking form, with a cheque for £24 (£25) per person, should be put in an envelope clearly marked Dinner Booking and left in the AQSC bar. The booking form is best from your email, but can be from the Clubhouse, or downloaded from the AQSC website <http://www.sailaquarius.org.uk/>. If necessary you can pay on the night but if you book and don't turn up you will still need to pay. Please let Diana know if you have left a payment in the bar, [dianamcarpenter@iscali.co.uk](mailto:dianamcarpenter@iscali.co.uk).

#### **PLEASE ORDER BY 14 NOVEMBER**

Any tickets not sold by then will be offered to guests of members. Please include (G) against guests, they will be placed on a waiting list until 14 November when any remaining tickets will be allocated.

**If anyone has items they would like to donate to the raffle would they please leave them at the club, by the 14th November, for Anne and Leo Bond to wrap.**

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### Annual General Meeting, Prize Giving And End Of Season Party Saturday 5 December At 7:30 pm For 8 pm

Your presence is requested for the Annual General Meeting, the most important meeting of the year where the future administration of the club will be decided for the coming year.

Matters for discussion include elections for Flag Officers and Committee, the club's finances and future plans.

The Annual Prize Giving and End of Season Party will follow including our traditional mulled wine, mince pies and other tasty fare.

*Joan Bray*

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### Kempton Park Fireworks Saturday 7 November Richard Cannon

It is the largest display in Greater London; afterwards we will return to the clubhouse for soup & victuals.

Richard Cannon can obtain advance tickets for members from a local shop for £6, instead of £8 and queuing on the night; please ring him on 01932 786636 by 4 November if you would like him to buy you tickets.

Members can meet and park at Richard's house, 77 Saxonbury Avenue, Lower Sunbury, by 7:00pm, for a short stroll to Kempton Park avoiding car park jams.

There is information at <http://www.kemptonfireworks.org.uk>.

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### Sailing Beyond The End of Season

The last scheduled racing for this year is on the 8 November but if the weather and river conditions are suitable for sailing then safety boat cover will be provided beyond this date. Members will be informed of intentions by e-mail.

