

## Spring 2008 Newsletter.

### Commodore's Report.

The Chair of Racing tells me that his garlic is sprouting and when that happens a sailor's thoughts should turn to sandpaper and varnish ! What Heather has to say about that, I don't know, but in my garden only the moles and squirrels are moving as they refuse to lie down in their Winter Quarters.

Personally, I am still relishing the few frosty mornings with which we are favoured now-a-days and listening to the song of the migrant swans as they continue to fly south overhead. I enjoy the white carpets of snowdrops and ignore reports of daffodils in full bloom.

As I write this, it is still only January for goodness sake; Geoff's garlic clock is definitely on Continental time !

But as we sit with our feet up the chimney and our sporting enthusiasms concentrating on the downhill ski slopes and forthcoming 6 Nations rugby football, time doesn't stand still and, as always, things are definitely moving behind closed doors in the busy world of the NBYC Secretary's office as they have been this last three months.

Keith and Jo, thanks to the new double glazed windows and door, no longer kitted out in thermals and life jackets (what a vision!), trimming the sails of the White Card for this year's programme of sailing and social events, see attached, and setting out their stall for our enjoyment of the Season ahead. So Spring must be in the offing, if not yet on the doorstep.

Around the grounds, Jim's team has been busy as evidenced by new quay heading and boardwalk in the Goose Green area and the Cruiser mooring basin, and more improvements to come elsewhere, notably the new short jetty with anti-slip walkway.

A start is being made on some alterations and modest improvements to the Cadet shed / Training Room to better accommodate Gilly's youngsters in separate groups within the existing building and improved storage for the Topper dingy sails in a covered area outside.

In recognition of the original Mackintosh gift to the club, Kingsley Farrington has refurbished the interior of 'Teal' and painted the hull in her first major refit for about 24 years or more and extending her active life much further. Not a bad record for such a versatile craft which serves as a workboat for much of the time then elevated to Flag Officer and Committee Boat status on 'high days and holidays'. She should certainly compliment the enlarged basin in front of the clubhouse when the new jetty is constructed.

Look out for the family groups on Thursday and Friday evenings where emphasis will be on encouraging beginners onto the water for sailing, not racing, in the hope that they will be encouraged to continue their participation at the club and not be daunted or discouraged by too early exposure to the competitive elements of the sport.

Also, we want to see more two-man boats at this level so that those who do not always wish to helm, can still enjoy the sailing experience as crew.

The Broads Bill continues to work its way along a tortuous path, not having confined itself to the original Boat Safety and Insurance issues with which the club and others were in general agreement. There are some points that still need addressing, or at least clarifying, and we are in correspondence with the Broads Authority on these matters with a view to making such representation as is necessary to protect the interests of NBYC and the members.

On the social side, we are following a broadly similar programme as in previous years and Lyndon has proved to be his usual enthusiastic self in helping to plan various events which involve his skills. Rest assured that the catering side of your sailing season is looking as palatable as ever.

A particular mention here of the end of Wroxham Week Regatta Event which is to have an 'extravaganza' theme to it. In recent years, numbers have declined for the traditional Wroxham Week Ball, but there seems to be clear demand for a special event to conclude the Regatta week. There will be a marquee, food, dancing, and a party atmosphere to suit all age groups (over 18) and I really hope that you will join with a group of friends to make it a special occasion.

Whilst talking of Wroxham week, the Gold Cup no doubt will be discussed at times in many corners of the club. Thank you Geoff for setting out so clearly the recent background to this race and the current situation we have with regard to the number of entrants. The dilemma we face was clearly exposed in the genuine views expressed in the committee discussions. I can only repeat the request of the Chair of Racing, which is to give your support to a trial for this year and join in the debate we shall have after Wroxham week to decide how to go forward in the future.

Geoff refers to Tolkien. Even if global warming continues apace, I doubt that we shall see Wroxham Broad become a fiery volcano and the Cup consumed in the flames, but who can tell.....!!

In the meantime, I will look out for you all on my early morning run, working off the Christmas pudding and getting fit for the new season with great enthusiasm.

With Easter so early, Mothering Sunday is fast approaching and the Fitting-Out supper soon after. Despite my early comments, it really may be time to be thinking about paintwork and varnish (and garlic even) and I look forward to seeing you all on the water sooner, if you can make it rather than later, for the Early Bird Trophy.

Good sailing to us all,

Hugh Ferrier.

Commodore.

## **The Gold Cup Background and verdict for 2008**

It is the responsibility of the Racing Committee to do all they can to ensure that our race management offers fair and equal opportunities to all competitors whenever possible. Over the last seven years, I have assumed the responsibility of acting as Race Officer for the Gold Cup race held as the final event of Wroxham Week. I have taken the line, not because I am the best qualified, but more that it is for the Chair of Racing to be ultimately responsible. Over these years I have seen the interest in the race rise significantly, partly due to the great increase in the number of boats eligible to enter as, at the last count, there are 94 such boats registered with the Club.

Two years ago, the winner mentioned the increase in the numbers of boats on the starting line as being a potential hazard and, in addition, representations were received from senior members regarding both the safety and the fairness of unrestricted entry. Most, if not all, agreed that the time had come to limit the numbers coming to the line. That was the easy part, the “how to achieve it” much less so!

Last years trial of heats was opposed by both fleets, but apart from the unforeseen protest, would have delivered a manageable number in the final. It was clear that, if we were to continue to use this method, the heats would have to be held earlier and on a different day if total disruption of the sailing programme was to be avoided.

At the end of last season, both fleets were given the opportunity to make a presentation to the Racing Committee, who then debated, at considerable length, the way forward. Two views dominated the discussion. These were, separate races for the classes or heats held during the Regatta Week, which in reality came down to the Saturday preceding the race. After two tied votes, the latter was passed by a single vote, and put to the Management Committee for ratification. The Classes concerned were invited to make a further written representation to inform the full Management Committee. Again, debate was wide, with strong views honestly held by all contributors. The outcome was a decision to hold two races for separate trophies, with the names of the winners of both races to be entered onto the Gold Cup. This is to be tried for 2008, and will then be subjected to further review.

It seems to me that several points are of relevance:

- The safe and fair number of starters, even on the perfect day, is significantly less than the number of boats eligible to enter, currently 94.
- Massed start races may be good for spectators but cannot be justified on the grounds of our commitment, under the RYA Racing Charter, to both fairness and safety.
- In any qualification system used, such as heats, more boats may end up being excluded than are included.
- The point at which a reef is to be called for by the Race Officer is different for the two classes.
- The trophy has assumed a status of “Tolkienian” proportions.

The NBYC is nothing if not “traditional”, and this is to be both respected and retained wherever possible. However, clearly some changes are needed to enable this race to be managed properly, and the importance of the trophy kept in perspective. Whilst the decision about the format of this year’s race may not be to everyone’s liking, it is a further attempt to get to grips with a difficult problem and as such, I ask you to support the Management Committee’s decision to give it a trial for this year and to contribute to the post Wroxham Week debate.

**Geoff Evans**

Chair of Racing