

SCUTTLEBUTT

SUSSEX POLICE OFFSHORE SAILING CLUB



NEWSLETTER

Come Sailing

A sailing opportunity - plus the 2019 AGM minutes and Commodores comment

Pages 2 to 4

SPOSC & the Future

Views and news from the Vice Commodore & Treasurer, Alwyn Evans

Pages 5 to 7

Dinghy Section

2019 Nationals and the 2019 Club AGM Notice with the minutes from 2018

Pages 8 to 11

A bit of History

Graham Castell reports, plus the exciting final edition from Scuttlebutt no. 1, 1993

Pages 12 to 14

INTO SPRING 2019

As I write this article it seems that spring has arrived already. Our pond is full of frog spawn, the bees are active and seagulls are nesting on our roof. I do hope this bodes well for the forthcoming season and the many sailing ventures the Club have planned. The year has already started well with the AGM being held once again at the Sussex Yacht Club, Shoreham. Despite a low turnout, a good time was had by those that attended and as always the SYC looked after us in fine style. The picture below shows the gathering with trophy winners, left to right, yours truly Terry Clothier (editor) clutching the Commodore's Trophy awarded for continuing to produce this publication. My thanks to the Committee for giving me this prestigious award. Centre is Cathryn Pederson with the Scuttlebutt Trophy, awarded to her for writing two fine articles during 2018. Last but not least, Vice Commodore and Treasurer Alwyn Evans, holding the Roger Dice Trophy for his sterling work as Treasurer.

The Club programme is underway with the Frostbite sail organised, I believe the largest ever flotilla for that event. Solent trips in May and June, a West Country passage in August is planned and excitingly we are, hopefully, entering a race boat in the reinstated PSUK this September. If you are interested in sailing with the Sussex Police Offshore Sailing Club, it matters not how much or how little experience you may have, contact any of the Committee



or Divisional Reps and let them know. Their details will be found in the AGM minutes attached to this Scuttlebutt. Sailing is a great sport, a fun pastime and through the Club a fine way of meeting interesting characters and making new friends. I wish you all happy sailing in 2019

Terry Clothier

(Editor)



Editorial Note

Please remember that this is your magazine and should reflect your views and experiences for the benefit of other members. If you have any comment, articles or photographs you feel are appropriate for inclusion then please forward them to me, terryclothier@hotmail.com for publication.

The opinions expressed in articles within Scuttlebutt are those of the individual only and not necessarily those of the Sussex Police Offshore Sailing Club. No responsibility can be accepted for any inaccuracies or omissions.



SCUTTLEBUTT

SPOSC 2019 AGM Minutes



Welcome members to another fantastic edition of Scuttlebutt.

The AGM has been and gone, thank you to those members who made the effort to attend, it was a really appreciated, especially our new members. I think everyone enjoyed the meeting, the discussions and the social that followed. It may have just been me but I sensed a buzz of excitement about the coming season's trips.

The organisation of a Frostbite is well under way and already looks like it will be a great trip.

The dinghy season gets going properly at the end of this month, the new RYA courses start at the clubs so sign up and get out on the water if you want to learn.

If anyone went to the RYA Dinghy Show may be send a review to Terry for the next edition.

I hope many of you will dust down your foulies and get out on the water this month.

Check out the excellent SPOSC and SPDSC websites managed by Dusty Miller for all the latest information between editions of Scuttlebutt.

Owen Poppett
Commodore

'Introduction to Sailing'

SPOSC are running an 'Introduction to Sailing' to encourage all Police Staff to come sailing with the Club for a day.

This 'advert' is an early notification. The event will be over two days, Monday to Thursday, between 3rd and 6th June 2019.

We are collecting names and have five interested already, we will confirm the date in due course.

You will join the yacht at Gunwharf Quay, Portsmouth Harbour about 0930 until about 1500. After a safety briefing you will have a day out on the Solent. Even experience being at the 'helm' and sailing the yacht.

The event is open to all police staff but you do have to be a member of the Sussex Police Sports Association.

If you know a work colleague may be interested please have them forward their name and dates available to; cathryn.pederson@sussex.pnn.police.uk who is collating all names. As a member please feel free to circulate Scuttlebutt to other work colleagues who may be interested in the event.

Further information can be obtained by e-mailing; alwynevanuk@yahoo.com
SPOSC Vice Commodore & Treasurer



SCUTTLEBUTT



**Sussex Police Offshore Sailing Club
Annual General Meeting
19.00hrs Tuesday 12th February 2019
1st Floor Function Room, Sussex Yacht Club,
85-89 Brighton Road, Shoreham-by-sea, West Sussex, BN43 6RF**

Minutes

1. Apologies for absence. – Kevin Claxton, Julie Claxton, Paul Miller, Steve Fairmainer, Phil Russell, Peter Kennett, Donna Powell, Frank Hooper, Claire Trevis, Lee Floyd, Martyn Meekums, Phil Mears, Christine Novel, Lenny Wheeler.

Attended: Roy Jackson, Terry Clothier, Peter Ewen, Alwyn Evans, Anne Darling, Alan Haffenden, Cathryn Pedersen, Erika Owen, Graham Castell, Owen Poplett.
2. Minutes of previous AGM agreed. Proposed by Graham Castel, Seconded by Anne Darling and unanimously passed.
3. Matters arising from minutes. none
4. Commodore's report.
5. Secretary's report.

SCUTTLEBUTT

6. Treasurer's report – accepted. Proposed by Cathryn Pedersen, Seconded by Terry Clothier and unanimously passed.
7. Amendment to SPOSC Rule 3.X – Discussed and proposed by Alan Haffenden, Seconded by Erika Owen and unanimously passed.
8. Election of Committee
 1. Commodore – Owen Poplett. – No Nominations
 2. Assistant Secretary – Peter Ewen. – No Nominations
 3. Treasurer – Alwyn Evans. – No Nominations
9. AOB – None notified to the Commodore by 12th January 2019.

There was a discussion about how to encourage younger officers and staff to join the club with members making various suggestions and pointing out that it is an age old problem.

Due to SPSA funds not being as healthy as they used to be, there was a discussion about membership of SPOSC when members are not contributing to the SPSA. It was pointed out that if a member wanted to go on one of the club charters then they did have to pay the SPSA membership fee. Retired members will be encouraged to sign up for the force lottery which helps fund the SPSA.

The possibility of day sails was also discussed but it was accepted that there are financial and practical issues.

10. Close of official business and opening of buffet.

11. Presentation of Trophies.

Commodores Shield Terry Clothier

Roger Dice Trophy Alwyn Evans

Scuttlebutt Trophy Cathryn Pedersen

Portobello Cup Not awarded.

12. Opening of crew lists for future events.

SCUTTLEBUTT



The Sussex Yacht Club was established in 1892 by a group of yachting enthusiasts in order to further the sport of yachting and cruising (Much like SPOSC I suppose!)...



Roger Dice aboard his much loved yacht 'Carauliane of Brighton'.



SPOSC racing team date unknown!

Vice Commodore & Treasurer Alwyn Evans gives his views on SPOSC and the future!

Whether you are a SPOSC old salty sea dog, (numbers are diminishing!) occasional member, or not a member at all but somehow reading this and thinking of joining the Club, hopefully the below ramblings may encourage or inspire you to come and sail with the club just a little more often or even for the first time.

On Tuesday 12th February 2019 the Club AGM was held at Sussex Yacht Club, Shoreham-by-Sea, an excellent historical maritime venue. Following the AGM members enjoyed a generous buffet, great social chat and a formidable 60 piece band in the bar! (Honestly!) Just a shame we didn't have more Club members in attendance. Put the date February 2020 in your diary for next year, it will be there or thereabouts.

The Sussex Yacht Club was established in 1892 by a group of yachting enthusiasts in order to further the sport of yachting and cruising (Much like SPOSC I suppose!)...

For me, a personal thank you to those who attended and supported the club. Also my thanks to those that nominated and presented me with the 'Roger Dice trophy for services to the club.' (Roger Dice was one the founders of SPOSC)

Having been a member of the Club since 1985, ('press ganged' by current member Len Wheeler, thank you Len!) Treasurer since about 1993 (Outgoing Treasurer Frank Hooper may correct date) and latterly Vice Commodore, I was honoured to receive the award. Hopefully

'Rog' would have also supported the nomination!

So what's the purpose of this article? A few things really. Registering my thanks for the award, how we are doing as a Club and importantly a plea to all members and skippers to take an active part in charters to keep the club 'buoyant' and operating for the future.



The Committee are always receptive to new ideas. Suggestions have been put forward on changing how we should operate., amalgamating with other sailing sections or Police Services, system we have for chartering and yacht ownership, which would incur maintenance, insurance and devaluing capital costs.

All these ideas have been discussed but with a decision to maintain the original club set up to ensure that we are able to charter as much and where we want to.

We owe a great thanks to those that set the Club up in the 1980's, Roger Dice, Frank Hooper, Geoff Randle to mention but a few and many thanks to others who contributed to the Club in those early days and still do today. Truly this continued way of operating has stood the test of time ensuring we operate as successfully.

As well as the ubiquitous Solent charters, we have chartered in Scotland and West Country and members have raced as part of International Police teams in Holland, Croatia and Slovenia. Frostbite Charters originated in the early 90's and this year has twenty members and 3 yachts out for the week. We do other Solent trips, Channel crossings to France, Channel Islands and annually enter a team for the UK Law Enforcement Racing Regattas. So whether you are a skipper or a crew member, with some or very little

SCUTTLEBUTT

experience, please step forward and join in with the events. You don't have to take advantage of any onboard tuition. Perhaps you may, but as a member you will always be welcome in whatever capacity/role you choose to sail with the Club.



2017 SPOSC Crew returning from Dartmouth

The Club offers generous subsidies for RYA training including, Navigation, Practical Courses, Sea Survival Safety, VHF Radio Course and Diesel Engine for members to develop their practical and safety skills. Socially, generally most, if not all evenings on a SPOSC event are a great gathering, dinner on board or ashore, social chats and perhaps the odd beer! Now more than ever we have greater accountability to Sussex Police Sports Association of which we are one of many sports sections. The SPSA allocate us our annual grant to charter yachts and offer RYA training. All members make a daily contribution to supplement charter costs, currently £20. The Club also raises about £150 annually for the RNLI through our £1 per day donation. As part of our SPSA grant application they require increasing information on payments by associate/retired members, Club charters, activities and what we do to encourage police staff to join the SPSA and SPOSC. The

number of staff joining the SPSA decreases each year resulting in lower grants. Police and support staff struggle to get time off, both parents can be working, this challenges the Committee to encourage people to join or come sailing. Coincidentally, private sailing clubs are suffering similar issues.

The Committee needs to ensure we undertake and conduct risk assessments, our skippers are properly trained and that as a 'Police Club' our standards of seamanship by skippers and crew are of the highest standard both on and off the water.

I take this opportunity to thank the Committee for all their time they freely donate to both Committee meetings and the work they do in their own time at home to enable the Club to operate. Commodore, Owen Poplett, Secretary Kevin Claxton, Assistant Secretary Pete Ewen. Divisional Reps, HQ, Cathryn Pederson, West, Caroline Lambert, East, Owen Poplett, Brighton and Hove, Richard Bates and my assistant Treasurer Anne Darling. I sometimes think we spend more time doing these administrative chores than sailing. A big thank you for the tireless efforts of Terry Clothier who produces this Scuttlebutt and has done for many years. The envy of many other SPSA sections, very unique and a most valuable way of contacting members and letting them know what's going on in SPOSC. Please send any articles or photographs of interest and worthy of publication to Terry. He is always after material to include in Scuttlebutt. Thank you Terry and keep it going. As a member, please encourage membership by circulating the

Scuttlebutt to any work colleagues who maybe interested in sailing and joining SPOSC.

As a Committee, we try and plan an annual sailing calendar that encourages all members to come and sail with the club. If we are not achieving this, then please email me with any suggestions for other Charters, venues or durations of sailing times.

(alwynevensuk@yahoo.com) In fact if you have any club matter you wish to talk about then please phone or email me.

To all members, it's your club, so please tell us what you want so we can keep the Club active and encourage all members to participate on one or more occasions a year.

All chartering depends on the availability of skippers. So a special plea to Skippers. Please step or swim, or take many steps forward and offer to skipper existing charters or suggest one of your own together with another skipper. This will always receive a favourable reception and support.

Whether existing/new member, or not sailed with us on too many occasions, perhaps bring a work colleague along and introduce them to the club and have a 'buddy' with you. Forget about whether you have sailed before or not or have little experience, it makes no difference. You will sail with experienced members



SCUTTLEBUTT



and I guarantee you will immediately feel part of the club.

If we are going to survive as a Club and continue to receive grants from the SPSA, we need to ensure we arrange an active sailing calendar, members participate as often as possible, support club events, including the AGM, encourage new members to join and develop crew and skipper skills/experience so that we do have the skippers and members to ensure the longevity of SPOSC.

Subject to skippers undertaking 2019 Charters the Committee has arranged charters for May and June in the Solent. I will be doing a coastal trip to the West Country in August and a Law Enforcement Race Regatta in September.....

.....If we have enough interest from members then we will also run a support boat alongside the Regatta. If you are interested in any of these events then please send me an email.

Thank you for reading this article and hope it may of been interest to you. Do sign up and come along on one or more of our charters. I look forward to sailing with you in 2019 and future years.

Vice Commodore & Treasurer
Alwyn Evans

Proposed Ventures;

- Solent Charter - May 2019
- Solent Charter - June 2019 (3rd - 6th) (5 interested so far)
- West Country Trip - August 2019



The PSUK Offshore Sailing Nationals 2019 will be incorporated into the NCA Regatta on 23rd to 27th September 2019. The regatta will use matched fleet asymmetric boats from Fairview on the Hamble with the regatta based in Corwes during the week.

Last year the PSUK Nationals was resurrected by incorporating it into the NCA Regatta and worked very well, apparently everyone had a great time. if you want to take part please put the date in your diaries.



SCUTTLEBUTT

Dinghy Sailors please note!

Hi All,



Please see this from Jeff Stratford.

Police Sailing seems to be suffering from lack of numbers across the board so it is important to try to support the Police Nationals.

You don't need to be Ben Ainslie to take part in the Police Dinghy Nationals, there are some extremely good sailors who enter but equally there are entrants from people new to sailing. The whole event is well organised with good evening activities and camping.

SPDSC has two laser 2000's that can be used by members and one road trailer.

Please put the date in your diaries and give some thought to taking part.

Cheers

Owen Poplett

Surrey & Sussex Crime Review Team
Specialist Crime Operations
Mobile: 07901670721



Police Dinghy Sailing Nationals 2019

From Jeff Stratford, Avon & Somerset



CHEW VALLEY LAKE SAILING CLUB

Hello everyone.

I am contacting you to seek your support, I have got your email from my own contacts list or the Police Sailing website which I am aware is probably not current, if you are no longer the contact point if possible can you pass my request to the right person or your force Club.

In recent years it is no secret that Police Dinghy Sailing has been in decline, last year's Nationals hosted by Hampshire at Netley saw less than 20 boats competing and it became obvious that unless someone volunteered to host the 2019 event that it was going to be the last one.

We volunteered to host the event in 2019 at Chew Valley Lake Sailing Club on the 12th and 13th June. If it is not going to disappear we need your support.

Please put the date in your diary, camper vans are now allowed on site and we are hoping to sort out camping. On the Wednesday after sailing there will be a meal and the bar will be open. Most of you will know what a lovely location it is.

We have yet to put full details on the Police sailing website but will do as soon as possible, if you are able to support us at this time just let me know and please try to drum up support. Let me know if there is anyone else I can contact.

We need to make this year's event a success or it will undoubtedly be the last National Dinghy event.

Thank you for your time and support.

Jeff Stratford.



SCUTTLEBUTT

Sussex Police Dinghy Sailing Club

Annual General Meeting 7.30pm Wednesday 27th March 2019

At The Cricketers Arms, The Village, Berwick, BN26 6SP.

Agenda

1. Declare meeting open and Apologies.
2. To agree & sign Minutes of last AGM and matters arising.
3.
 - a. Report from Chairman
 - b. Report from Treasurer
 - c. Report from Membership Sec
 - d. Report from Fleet Capt. Pevensey
 - e. Report from Fleet Capt. Lancing
4. Election of Officers and Committee
 - Chair - current Rich Bates - Other Nominations &/or election of post holder
 - Vice Chair - current Andy Jackson - Other Nominations &/or election of post holder
 - Treasurer - current Phil Mears - Other Nominations &/or election of post holder
 - Secretary - current Owen Poplett - Other Nominations &/or election of post holder
 - Membership Secretary - Vacant - Other Nominations &/or election of post holder
 - Web-author - current Dusty Miller - Other Nominations &/or election of post holder
 - Lancing SC Rep - current Bob Trevis - Other Nominations &/or election of post holder
 - Pevensey Bay SC Rep - current Owen Poplett - Other Nominations &/or election of post holder
5. Fleet locations and maintenance.
6. Sailing dates in 2019.

Avon & Somerset Regatta incorporating PSUK Nationals at Chew Valley Lakes
12th & 13th June 2019.
7. AOB (at the discretion of the Chair)

SCUTTLEBUTT

Sussex Police Dinghy Sailing Club
Minutes of Annual General Meeting
19.30hrs Monday 8th January 2018
The Cricketers Berwick.

Present: Richard Bates (Chair), Owen Poppett (Vice Chair), Phil Mears (Treasurer), Dusty Miller (Webmaster), Steve Fairmainer.

Apologies: Andy Jackson (Secretary), Bob Trevis (Lancing Capt.), Anne Darling, Mick Scrivener, Ellie Ratusniak and Guy Reynolds.

1. 19.30 Rich opened the meeting and thanked those present for attending.
2. The minutes of the previous AGM were read and agreed, proposed by Dusty and seconded by Phil.
3. Chairs Report: Rich stated it had been a quiet year for the club. Bob and Richard attended the Nationals but there was no wind, it was still a good social event and an opportunity to chat with members of the other forces. Bob was the only member to sail at the Sussex Police Open at Lancing, Dusty was due to but a van demolished his boat on the way to the event.

Treasurers Report: Phil stated the account was now all set up with Lloyds Bank and the internet banking was in place. It was agreed that Only Phil would be able to manage the account online. The club currently held £1,140.16 in balance of which £800 was the 2017 grant. In the grant application reference had been made to purchasing a new mast for the Pevensey Laser 2000 and it was agreed that a new mast would be purchased at a cost of about £850.

Pevensey Fleet: Owen stated that the Laser 2000 had been used during 2017 but due to weather and members being on PBSC courses not as much as in previous years, new members had now passed their RYA courses so should be using it more in 2018. The Laser 1 was moved from Lancing to Pevensey during the summer of 2017 but was found to have structural damage which needs to be prepared. It is hoped this will be completed before the start of the new season.

Lancing Fleet: Rich stated that the Lancing Laser 2000 had not been used a great deal but that there were new members at Lancing who would be likely to use it during 2018.

4. Election of Officers.

Chair Owen proposed and Dusty seconded Rich remain as Chair. Carried

Vice Chair Rich proposed and Dusty seconded Andy as Vice. Carried

Secretary Steve proposed and Phil seconded Owen as Secretary. Carried

Membership Secretary to be merged with Secretary for a year to see how it works.

Web Author remains with Dusty

Lancing Fleet remains with Bob

Pevensey Fleet remains with Owen.

SCUTTLEBUTT

5. Lancing the Laser 2000 is in good condition.

Pevensey the Laser 2000 boat is in good condition but the sails are worn out and the mast is still bent as it was when moved to Pevensey. The Laser 1 is still awaiting repair and can't be used until completed.

Damage to boats must be reported to the fleet captains when it occurs or is discovered and the boats are not to be used until the fleet captain has assessed the damage. If reported at the time an insurance claim for the damage can be made.

Rich asked that the club considered the purchase of another Laser 1 for use at Lancing. It was agreed that club would wait a year to see how much use the Laser 1 at Pevensey got during 2018, if there was more call for it at Lancing then it could be returned to Lancing.

6. Sailing dates.

The only sailing date so far was a provisional date of 5th September 2018 for the Avon & Somerset open at Chew Valley.

There would not be a Sussex Open in 2018 as none of the clubs were keen to host it.

7. AOB. There was no AOB

8. Rich closed the meeting at 20.40hrs.



SCUTTLEBUTT

Allchorn Boats by Graham Castell



The Southern Queen

If you grew up or holidayed in Eastbourne, Sussex from the 50s right through till the 80s one of the most regular summertime sights would be the Allchorn boats moored up just off the seafront or operating from the beach.

The Allchorn family operated two boats, the William Allchorn and the Southern Queen, both built in the early 50s, from right off the beach just to the west of the Pier. There was an adjustable pontoon arrangement for customers to walk out to the moored boats that lay alongside a floating pontoon. There was even an ex military DUKW landing craft, commonly known as a DUCK, used to run passengers out to the vessels at very low tides. This was particularly exciting for small boys – The writer well remembers the experience!

Allchorns ran traditional trips to the lighthouse, the white cliffs of Beachy Head and the South Downs or around Eastbourne bay and were very popular with residents and visitors alike. The boats were owned and operated by the families of original Eastbourne fishermen who mostly lived along the Eastbourne coast and derived their living from the sea, with fishing their main off peak occupation, when not operating the pleasure boats. This was long before the Eastbourne Sovereign Harbour came into existence so all boats including the fishing boats had to be

launched from the beaches to the east of the town, which could be a very hazardous procedure, particularly the beaching after the voyage. Such pleasure boats were a regular feature at many holiday resorts around the coast of Britain during this period. Each boat was capable of taking at least 60 passengers in safety and of course only operated in benign conditions.

Time took its toll on the boats and the owners. Then following the Marchioness disaster in the Thames in 1989 tighter regulations swiftly followed. This, coupled with the age of the owner led to the business being sold on in 1995 and very gradually and under differing ownership, the boats fell into disuse and languished for a long time on the Eastbourne beaches – a sad reminder of times past.

However all is not lost, far from it!



Not everyone likes to see the past just disappear and two local men have now got together and formed an organisation to try to re-float the boats and revive the heritage. The ambition being to see the boats on the water off Eastbourne and once again taking passengers to see the glorious views of Eastbourne. The organisation is receiving strong local support and has several volunteers working on restoring the boats to their former glory. This will be no easy task as both boats have been sorely neglected and in the case of the Southern Queen, left on the beach for sixteen years with zero maintenance or attention. Both boats were stripped right back to the hull and are needing extensive work, for example, new engines and steering gear etc need to be obtained. However, two local companies Copford Farm sawmill and Gabriel Connolly tree surgeons have been extremely generous and supported the project by

donating oak and elm timber respectively to keep the project moving forward.

The Southern Queen is housed in Net Shop 5 on Royal Parade Eastbourne and the shed is open to visitors on a regular basis. The boat shed is normally open on Mondays with volunteers working in and around the Southern Queen. Visitors are encouraged to come in and see the progress. In addition Open Days are planned at various weekends.

There is primarily an educational element to the organisation, a classroom is being developed within the boat shed for the education of school groups, tourists & locals alike, so that anybody interested can gain some understanding of the local traditions, history of Eastbourne and of course boat building with the coastal importance of our island nation. There is a free viewing gallery with photos and much memorabilia from earlier days illustrating the history of the boats themselves and the broader history of Eastbourne's sea faring families. Who knows, you may like to get involved and lend a hand! There is a particular need for marine engineering experience.

In addition to the William Allchorn and the Southern Queen there is also the Duke of Kent ex RNLI lifeboat which was the Eastbourne Lifeboat during the Eighties. Although this was in service only about 30 years ago it is interesting to see how the design has since altered when compared to the modern Eastbourne Lifeboat – Diamond Jubilee, which is moored in the Sovereign Harbour. The Duke of Kent looks to be small and ancient in comparison and one can only feel for the lifeboat crew that took it to sea in all conditions. The Duke of Kent has recently been rescued, from a quay in Tayport, Scotland where it has lain disused for several years and the intention is to restore the boat and for it to be seen off Eastbourne once more.

(Continued below)

SCUTTLEBUTT

The Duke of Kent is now lying alongside the very Launch House from which it operated all those years ago. The Launch House itself houses the RNLI Inshore Lifeboat whilst the much larger Diamond Jubilee operates from the Sovereign Harbour.

So if you are living in or visiting Eastbourne come and have a look at some proper local history, remember – the boat shed is open on Mondays.

For more info go to;

<http://www.allchornpleasureboattrust.org.uk>

Please be advised that a new ‘all-singing-all-dancing’ website is currently under construction!



The William Allchorn — the boats in their glory days!

The project's Facebook page has more current information, search: Allchorn Pleasure Boats or @williamallchorn

(Scuttlebutt No.1 May 1993)

Club Rally to St. Valery en Caux & Fecamp. 30th April - 3rd May, 1993 by Roger Dice. (PART III)

Vessel: Carauliane of Brighton

We departed St Valery en Caux at 0800 and headed out into a NW wind about F2-3. Ron was on the wheel and the sails were unfurled. “What about shaking out the reef?” enquired Ron. There was a long silence as the rest of us looked at each other in mock horror. “This is supposed to be the Offshore Sailing Club,” insisted Ron. Further silence. “I see.” Ron was disappointed. “We like engines.” Geoff spoke from the heart. The minutes ticked by. “I have a more important suggestion,” says I. They were all ears. I propose that Simon makes the bacon sarnies.” Pause. “Allthoseinfavoursayaye!” Three arms shot up and Simon went down. The sandwiches soon arrived in the cockpit, along with the sun and a cup of tea. We turned off the engine to please Ron. It was a good day.

Three hours saw us arriving at Fecamp only to find *Shady Lady* had not put in an appearance. They could not possibly have got lost again! “They have shot out for a nice sail with that big machine.” Was the general consensus. Almost as soon as we had tied up *Shady Lady* appeared and moored bow on to us. Again the day was spent resting, shopping, resting, in the Yacht Club, showering, resting..... We seem to spend all our time exhausted and cold in the cockpit or resting and drinking in harbour. It actually called into question the practice of sailing across during the night. It causes a total imbalance of thought, sleep, diet and generally screws up everything. There were mumbblings about never doing it again. A bit drastic but I do feel that a day crossing would be advantageous in many respects. Most important it allows a full nights sleep before departure. At the moment the crossings follow a full day preparing the boats, working (some actually Early Turn!) or rushing round shopping for victuals etc. The result,

especially in a small crew like *Carol* carries, is a rapid collapse of the watch system which can eventually become dangerous. The argument that it gives the crews an extra day in France is a nonsense if it is spent recovering from the night before. Having said all that I see the next crossing has got to be at night to reach Honfleur on the tide! Next year maybe!

The weather did improve slightly at Fecamp and the forecast for a NE 3-5 for a late night (!) crossing started to diminish as we sat in the “Mariner” Restaurant overlooking the harbour. The first floor of the premises had been opened up specially for us as we were such a large group. The flags round the harbour began to droop and finally stilled. We were going back on engine again. Suitably replenished we made our way back to the boats. As we slowly got into our thermals and waterproofs, scarves, balaclavas and gloves - Trevor fell into the harbour again! Due, on this occasion, to the narrowing of the pontoon just when you (he) don't (didn't) expect it.

SCUTTLEBUTT

Carol pulled away from the pontoon and cleared the harbour at 2240 hours. The sea was flat and the moon was out. It was a shade warmer than the trip over. The watch system worked well and we all got some sleep. The trip, therefore, passed quite quickly. By departing at 2300 or midnight each watch can grab some sleep before the shipping lanes (especially the skipper) and it is daylight before you know it. Having spent a lot of the day resting the crew is in a much better state than on the outward passage. The sea state also makes a lot of difference.

The return journey was uneventful and we entered Brighton Marina at - would you believe it - 1040. Exactly 12 hours. The 'navigator' had been telling me we would arrive at 1041! *Shady Lady* had followed us out and stayed astern of us for several hours until just before the Meridian Buoy, when her lights disappeared over the eastern horizon. She came into Brighton about an hour after us. They had gone off to the east to try and get some sailing out of the light NE wind which had sprung up during the latter part of the journey.

Experience gained;

1. We now know what the radar 'print' of St Valery looks like. Always useful on a future occasion when the vis is as bad or worse than this trip.
2. A Spray Hood is essential. We appreciated *Carol's* but almost took it for granted until we saw the state of the crew on *Shady Lady* which did not have one.
3. We should be disciplined in our watch keeping system even with a small crew. The benefits of knowing you could rest your eyes and mind were considerable.

4. Remember to stream the Log a.s.a.p. The 40 minutes delay was not helpful and when tired, the navigator's calculations could prove a problem.
5. Take the ensign down at night. It is of no earthly use and only makes a disturbing cracking noise in high winds. It is also wearing out.
6. With advancing years night crossings are becoming a little tiring. Try researching the tides for a daytime crossing where possible.
7. This was the first time every member of the crew wore their harnesses and lifejackets when on watch. This must be a rule of the boat.
8. You should put water in the wine when cooking mussels!

Why has it taken twenty one years of sailing for me to come up with some of these lessons?

Perhaps I am just older and wiser or perhaps just want to get older.

Roger Dice was the owner of the Westerly Ketch 'Caraulianne of Brighton', a founder member of the Sussex Police Offshore Sailing Club, Commodore of that club and the editor of 'Scuttlebutt' until his death in 2008. He was a great man and a good friend. Frank Hooper read the following words, written by John Masefield at Roger's funeral on Thursday the 8th May, 2008

*I must go down to the seas again,
to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's
way, where the wind's like a
whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from
a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet
dream when the long trick's over.*

