



Minima News Spring 2011



Middlesex Landing Stage, Regatta 2010

CONTENTS

The Commodores Column	2
Treasurers Report	4
Crew's Tribute	5
Hon Sec's Corner	6
Social Scene	7
Social Diary Dates	8
Dinghy Park - RubbishTip or Larder?	9
Boatswain's Corner	9
Sailing Notes & Class Reports	10
Trailer Sailing Pt II	15
Sailing Diary	17

Editors Note: My apologies for omitting to credit Peter Halligan with many of the great photos in the last edition. In this edition where photos are accredited the photographers are as follows:

PH: Peter Halligan
GM: Graham Morley
DN: Denise Norman

Their and others efforts in recording the life of the club are much appreciated. Graham also took this edition's cover shot.

THE COMMODORES COLUMN



2010 was a momentous year for Minima. Members of the General Committee have been kept busy, way beyond the call of duty.

We are indeed fortunate that they have given so much time and expertise, saving the club hundreds of pounds in the process. This would have been more obvious had we had to pay their professional fees. At the Special General Meeting called in November, agreement was reached that MYC could become a

Company Limited by Guarantee if, and when, the General Committee deemed it necessary. We are now in the final stages of our negotiations with the Royal Borough of Kingston. Such progress would have been inconceivable without so many members agreeing to participate in the £1,000 Bond scheme.

We are indebted to Eileen for legal advice, to Denise and Laurence for negotiating with RBK and to Paul, Warren, David and Andy for all the financial input.

The Sailing Committee, with Ben as Chairman and Philip as Sailing Secretary have steered us through another successful year. Much has happened on the waterfront - Class and Pursuit racing continued apace, together with special events, such as RNLI fundraising and providing facilities for a charity swim to raise money for Water Aid and manning static displays for RBK Sport.

The Vintage Merlin was well supported with the trophy going to Tamesis. This was followed by a cheese and wine party whilst a TV on the balcony enabled football followers to watch England playing in the World Cup. The Firkin Trophy was held at Twickenham Yacht Club but we had to leave the trophy behind. Fraternisation between local clubs is important. This year we were pleased to welcome Thames SC who joined us in our winter series. Some members participated in outside events - Steve sailed his Wayfarer at both Shoreham and the Medway and enabled Minima to win the Enterprise event at TYC. Ben also sailed further afield with the Vintage Merlins De May series which included Queen Mary Club and the Norfolk Broads. He won the Merlin event at the Tamesis regatta.

John, our Bosun, masterminded the rebuilding of the landing stage and a major clearance of the dinghy park. At least there was some benefit from a river closure. Due to Ron's diligence we can rely on our launches.

The canoe section did a deal of paddling to pastures new under the auspices of Kathy.

A new and highly successful innovation was the Fun Day which was exactly that. Many thanks to those who put so much effort into it - lots of Oppies and canoes were afloat, together with some who loaned their dinghies. The weather was superb and the balcony became packed with the DIY BBQ proving very popular. This was followed by a series of fun sailing and canoeing for the cadets masterminded by Peter and Erica. The young members are the club's future and it is important that we do all we can to encourage them.

We had bosun and race officer trainings, again run by Peter and Erica, although regrettably those who would have benefitted the most did not attend.

On the Social side we have had what has become the expected schedule of events, such as the Fitting Out Supper, Over 40's, Barn Dance, Summer Party, Regatta and BBQ and the Christmas Party. All these events need a dedicated team and detailed preparation and were efficiently organised by Andy as Chairman of the Social Committee and Pat our indefatigable secretary. The team includes cooks par excellence. And we must not forget Kathy's monthly summer kitchen.

This Christmas we had our very own DJ with the amplification made possible by Geoff managing to extend our delicate electrics without losing the heating. Alan has succeeded in making a profit on the bar annual bar takings, doubtless helped by the drinking fraternity.

Graham has kept our Website up to date with Peter and John supplying some excellent photographs. This has resulted in an increase in membership.

Yet again we were able to welcome the Mayor at both the May Merrie event and the Annual Regatta.

My thanks to all who have helped the club through another successful year. In spite of being in warmer climes Susie has agreed to do another newsletter.

In accordance with the new rules agreed at last year's AGM we will have a slightly reduced General Committee. Standing down are Sylvie, Warren, Graham, Peter and Les.

I have been pleased to present the Commodore's Bowl to Les Rowlandson for exceptional service to Minima over many years - our perpetual factotum, past Flag Officer, who helped in the building of the club when it moved from the Gazebo. He has served for some 30 years on the General Committee and, together with Mike, still launches his Enterprise as he sails into his 90th year!

Your enthusiasm and support has secured the future of Minima as we venture into 2011 and the years beyond. Good Sailing and let us make sure not too many dinghies stay in the dinghy park.

THANK YOU ALL

**Vera Corner-Halligan MBE,
Commodore**



Raters at the 2010 Regatta (GM)

TREASURERS REPORT



The accounts for year ending 31 October 2010 show that the club's financial position remains strong. Income from membership fees, bar, social and catering events was £31,000, an increase of 7% over 2009. Expenditure

on rent, rates, insurance, electricity and other costs rose to £26,500, an increase of 19%. This gave a surplus of income over expenditure of £4,500 for the year. This has been allocated to improving the electricity and plumbing services to the club.

Subscriptions for 2011 are due now

Fees for 2011:

Subscriptions: Ordinary £138; Family £185; Junior (18 to 21) £79; Cadet (up to 18) £52. Social Membership: Ordinary £79; Family £106.

Boat Park Annual fee: £158 payable on booking a berth; Cadets £52 (any class of boat). Canoe £54. Full members pay 50% for second boat.

Members have been sent information about the proposal to buy a 50 years lease on the club premises from the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames for £150,000. The aim is to secure the long-term future of the club and to remove the 5 yearly rent reviews that are a significant inflationary cost. If you can help by subscribing to a loan, in the form of repayable bonds with 2% interest, please contact the Treasurer, Andy Banks. Members have so far lent £67,000 out of the target of £80,000. The balance of the cost will be met with £20,000 from club funds and £50,000 from a Barclays Bank loan.

Andy Banks
Hon. Treasurer



John Kemp received the Solo Cup at the Annual Prizegiving in January (DN)

A CREW'S TRIBUTE

This anonymous Scottish poem (slightly amended) preaches the practical benefits of positive thinking as we grow old. Mike King dedicated it to his helm Les Rowlandson (90 next October) at the recent Burns Night Supper reminding the assembly that this season the combined ages of Frolic's crew will be 172 years.

Are they the oldest dinghy crew in UK?

"I'm Fine Thank You"

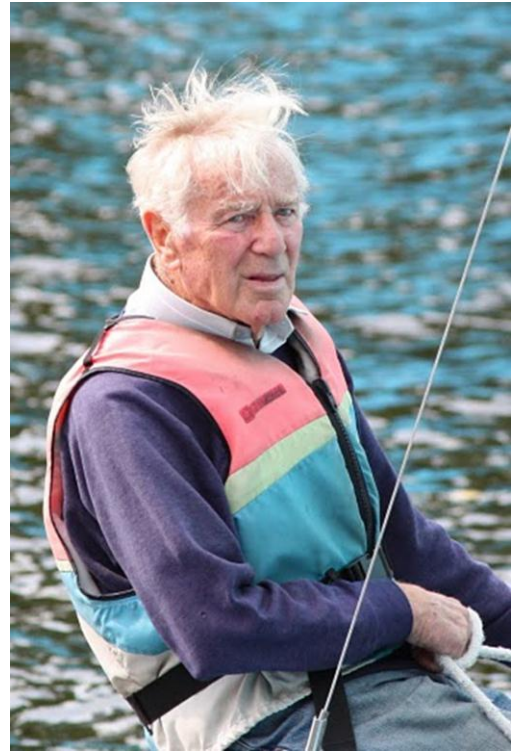
There is nothing the matter with me
I'm as healthy as can be
I have arthritis in both knees
And when I talk, I talk with a wheeze,
My pulse is weak and my blood is thin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

Arch supports I have for my feet,
Or I wouldn't be able to go on the street.
Sleep is denied me night after night,
But every morning I find I'm all right,
My memory is failing, my head's in a spin
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

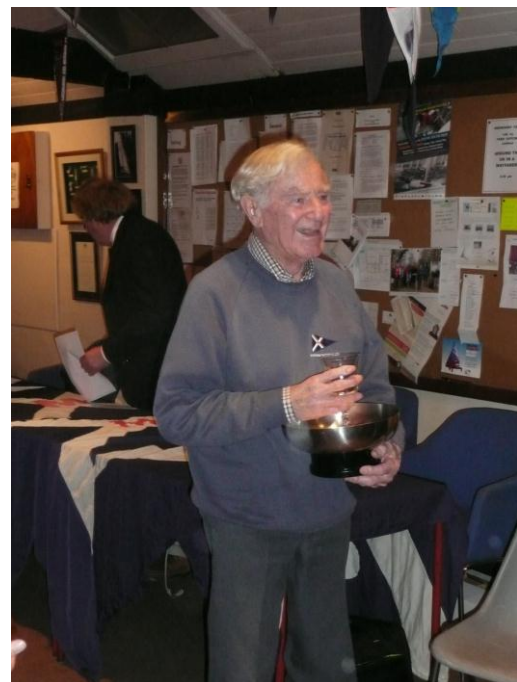
The moral is this - as my tale I unfold.
It's better to say, "I'm fine" with a grin,
Than to let folks know the shape we're in.
How do I know my youth is all spent?
Well my 'get up and go ' has got up and went.
But i don't really mind when I think with a grin,
Of all the grand places 'my get up' has been.

Old age is golden, I've heard it said,
But sometimes I wonder as I get into bed,
With my ears in the drawer, my teeth in the cup,
My eyes on the table until I wake up.
Ere sleep overtakes me, I think to myself
Is there anything else I could lay on the shelf?

So I get up each day and dust off my wits,
And pick up the paper and read the 'obits'.
If my name is still missing, I know I'm not dead.
So I have a good breakfast and could go back to bed.
But no! Off instead to the club on the river,
Launch Frolic and away , muttering "It's good for the liver."



Les helming in the 2010 Regatta (GM)



Les received the Commodores Bowl (DN)

HON SEC'S CORNER



2010 was an exceptionally busy year at Minima YC. Apart from all the normal sailing, canoeing and socialising,

considerable effort was made to attract and welcome new members. There are new faces in the Clubhouse and more boats in the dinghy park whilst many potential members visited and went for a sail or a paddle. We have email addresses and phone numbers for more than 100 people that have also shown an interest and plan to invite them to an "At Home" day on Sunday April 10th. This will be a separate event to the annual Open Day which is planned for a little later in the Spring.

The website www.minimayc.co.uk continues to bring in a lot of interest and most of the above contacts came via the site. Graham Morley, our Web Master, will continue with its development and maintenance but has stepped down as a member of the General Committee and as Canoe Captain due to both work and personal commitments. Debbie Cass is now Canoe Captain.

The negotiations with Royal Borough of Kingston Council on securing Minima YC's long term future continued throughout 2010. There were various ups and downs and quite a lot of lobbying with local Councillors. Eventually, in January 2011 agreement was reached, subject to contract, on the 50 year lease. The premium has been discounted by a useful sum to enable some refurbishment work. In return for this RBK Council will have free use of the clubhouse – at times to suit us during the week when we do not use the building at all – for half or full day meetings. A Management Agreement, setting out the precise terms and conditions is being prepared.

The sale of Minima YC Bonds to pay for the lease is going well and, with the Club funds put aside and a loan negotiated, we are ready to move forward to contract. The 2% interest on Bonds will be paid in March 2012 and it is proposed that some bonds will be repaid at the Fitting Out Supper each year. Bonds are still available as the more we sell the lower the loan required.

With the future secured and a budget available, the discussions on refurbishment are going apace. While some earlier plans involving moving support pillars were dropped due to high cost, other simpler and more practical solutions have evolved. The aim is to install 3-phase electricity and an increased water supply – as well as reconfiguring, upgrading and modernising the changing rooms and toilets.

Part of the work will be to install the disabled toilet and shower facility for which we have a generous grant from the London Marathon Charitable Trust.

There will obviously be some disruption but the aim is to keep this to a minimum and a Building Committee will be ensuring everything is planned and runs as smoothly as possible.

The 50 year lease – also mirrored by a similar period for the dinghy park with Hampton Court Palace – ensures that Minima YC is firmly in place for future development. Very little change is planned on the club room/bar level though we intend to seek grants for better disabled access. A fair amount of Spring Cleaning is also planned with help from everyone being most welcome.

Denise Norman
Hon. Secretary

OBITUARY – CLIFF CHAMPION

In an earlier Newsletter Mike King recounted a Solent rescue when the Shrimper he crewed lost its rudder. Sadly Mike's skipper Cliff Champion died on January 15 aged 82. Several Minima members have met him. Cliff and Mike met in 1939 when, as 12-year-olds, they joined Rutlish School in Merton. They first sailed together with their young families in a home-made motor cruiser on the River Wey Navigation. Later they sailed a Hornet, a Dabber and then the Shrimper. Cliff was a member of Royal Thames and City Livery sailing clubs and an active fund-raiser for the RNLI

Mike King

MINIMA SOCIAL SCENE

Casting my mind back through the murk of the last few dismal Winter months, I recall that we had a fantastic Regatta in 2010 - the attendance was up on previous years and the Barbecue and evening entertainment was up to its usual high standard. Incidentally, Graham Wiseman, together with his Jazz Band, has been playing for us at the Regatta for the past twenty years - maybe we should be thinking about making him an Honorary Member!

In October the Enterprise, Solo and Handicap classes once again provided us with a succulent dinner of Roast Beef. However, it must be recorded that Richard Shillito, together with his fantastic singers, was sorely missed on the entertainment front. The Quiz Night was enjoyed by the small number who attended; it was followed by a Pot Luck Supper which again surprised us all by its versatility. I suppose it just goes to show that people would rather eat than exercise their brains!



Andy Banks, Prize Giving 2010

24 people went to Richmond Hill Hotel for our annual Dinner Dance (incorporated in their "Come Dancing" evening), and this was followed by the Xmas Party for which this year we had our own DJ Paul Seamen. Newer members were introduced to the weird and wonderful Frog Race, which was won by champion Frogmaster - Erica.

Last on the 2010 social calendar was a Chinese lunch which was preceded by the Xmas Fun (Duck) Race which really wasn't too much fun considering the weather - very cold and very little wind! John Metzner was a very worthy winner of the beautiful Duck which was provided by June Carter.

Alan's New Year Walk was enjoyed by 13 intrepid hikers who were joined by five car joy riders for an excellent lunch at "The Woodman" at Ashstead. Two for the price of one - exceptional value. Needless to say we all took advantage of the Offer!

Once again we had a Burns Night celebration party and a good time was had by all - so good, in fact, we have already booked the Piper and the Caller for next year!



Merlin Rocket winners:
Dennis Lockwood and Erica Bishop

There were two very enjoyable talks during February - the first was by Fran Gifford entitled "Around the UK in a Wayfarer" which gave an exciting account of her trials and triumphs on her voyage with a succession of willing crews, and the second one was entitled "Rubbish Tip or Hidden Larder" given by Deborah Bishop, who made Minima's dinghy park sound a very interesting place indeed!

Also during February Les Rowlandson organised the annual Cribbage evening - attended this year by a few new "addicts". I know Cards are not everyone's "cup of tea", but apart from the Cribbage evening we have a Bridge session every Tuesday evening from May until Sept. Newcomers to the game are made very welcome and Minima members are charged half price - so there's an incentive.

Since the AGM the new Social Committee has been busy planning a varied and interesting programme for the coming year, which are set out below for you to put in your diaries.

Some personal items of news in September were:

- Peter and Vicky Halligan celebrated the birth of their son Leo, a brother for Zara

- Mike and Pat King celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary

Although sailing will not recommence until mid-March, the Club continues to be open every Wed from 8.00pm and every Sunday evening from 5.30 until 7.30, so don't hibernate during the Winter months however much the warm fireside beckons, when you could be enjoying a drink and friendly company at the Bar.

Things have been more than a little unsettled over the past months with discussions over rent rises, building plans and uncertainty of the lease etc. etc. but here's hoping our warm, friendly, delightful and ever resourceful Minima Yacht Club can surmount all the difficulties thrown at it, and continue to thrive during the coming year and for many more to come. I guess you could say I'm a BIG fan of Minima!!

Happy boating and socialising.

Pat Rowlandson
Hon Social Secretary

OBITUARY – MAURICE RHATIGAN

Many of you will have heard by now the sad news that Maurice died earlier this month. Over ninety years old, he had been living with his daughter Pam for the past few weeks and was very frail indeed.

Maurice was a long standing member of Minima - forty years or more - and was a good sailor in his heyday. Until two years ago he regularly made his way to the Club, with great difficulty, and was a familiar figure enjoying his Sunday tea.

Pat Rowlandson

SOCIAL DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sat 12 Mar - Fitting Out Supper

Sat 16 Apr - Irish Evening - a quiz, an Irish Supper and music

Sat 14 May - Curry Party

Fri 17 Jun - Social Sail/Paddle to Thames Ditton for supper

Sun 19 Jun - Over 40s' Race followed by Fish & Chips

Sat 9 Jul - Summer Party

Fri 15 Jul - Social Sail/Paddle to Thames Ditton for supper

Fri 12 Aug - Social Sail/Paddle To Thames Ditton for supper

Sat 3 Sep - Regatta Bbq With Jazz Band

Sat 29 Oct - Halloween Party and Roast Beef Dinner hosted by Ent, Solo And H'cap Fleets

Sat 12 Nov - Games Evening with Pot Luck Supper

Sat 10 Dec - Christmas Event

Wed 14 Dec - Carols And Mince Pies

Tues 27 Dec - Fun Race and Lunch

THE DINGHY PARK – RUBBISH TIP OR HIDDEN LARDER?

It has long been known that the Minima YC dinghy park – on the Hampton Court side of the river – was once a rubbish tip. To this day, there are problems with “collectors” digging holes to try and find “treasure”.

Deborah Bishop gave an interesting Wednesday evening talk on this subject and other aspects of the dinghy park. She brought a glass Camp coffee bottle, Dundee marmalade jar and assorted medicine bottles – which are apparently still easy to find.



What was more fascinating is the range of other items within the dinghy park – way beyond boats and canoes. Rabbits, bindweed, dandelion, ground ivy and blackberries – were all explained along with their culinary uses. There is also Elderberry and Lichens, Japanese Knotweed and Nettles....the latter having various medical uses. Then there is Alkanet – used as a wood stain and as a henna substitute. Finally, Horse Radish.....and Rose Hips.....as some members have occasionally planted roses.

Of course, some parts of the dinghy park are still in need of tidying up and sorting – mostly the boat and canoe areas. Tremendous efforts have been made to clear the weeds and now it is up to Members to tidy up everything else.

Denise Norman

BOATSWAIN'S CORNER

A big “thank you” to all those who continue to do bits and pieces of club maintenance throughout the club premises, in the Boat Park and on the boats.

We were recently given enough timber to renew one bow rest and I have decided the first one in the Boat Park on the right is a priority. Anyone who has a spare hour to start loosening the bolts, go ahead. The canoe rack still needs rearranging or rebuilding. The club Oppies need new mast collars or complete thwarts.

In the Dinghy Park the weeds need to be kept under control continually and from now as lots of flowers and weeds thought Spring had sprung in February! Do remember to maintain your boat trailers and trollies so that they may be moved if and when necessary.

The existing RBK lease for the club premises requires us to paint the internal and external parts about every two years. For years this has been carried out by a regular team, free of charge to the club. Well, the regulars are getting older and fewer so the rest of us must step up to the plate. Paying outsiders to do it is not an option. The Wednesday work party tradition will continue for those that can make it and then stay on to watch or sail in the evening. These will start 30th March but of course other work will by necessity be carried out at weekends

Now that we have agreed to buy the lease from RBK and carry out a less ambitious development on the ground floor, quite a few of us think that some of the development work could be carried out by club members. That would mean that we could save on cost and or get more done for the money. So look out for pleas for help requiring special skills or just fit muscles.

Good housekeeping is a requirement of any well run club so please do your part in assisting us in the overall appearance of the club and in keeping it clean and tidy. It should not be tidy just for special occasions.

John Wilkey
Hon Club Boatswain
E: John.Wilkey@Virgin.net

SAILING NOTES

2010 REGATTA

The east wind visits Minima occasionally on Regatta days, and has its own special challenges. It's hard on centreboards, as the general principle is to sneak along the Middlesex bank as long as possible without tacking, but the gravel punting ledge runs a couple of yards out, and just when you think you can squeeze along another few feet then crunch goes the plate. If you are not careful you are on a lee shore with your mast stuck in a tree and the main sheet woven into a bramble bush. Sometimes the only solution is to send the crew overboard to shove off. Ah, the joys of river sailing.

And you can have difficulties with anglers. The first weekend of September, is a popular weekend for the last events of summer, and most years they sit in silent and solitary competition, but when the easterly drives sailors within range then those who stray over the lines listen nervously for the patter of maggots on the mainsail.

It was a fluky wind at the weekend, would have been blustery if it had the strength, so one minute boats were running, then a quick gybe and they were heading upwind in a maddening sequence that the best helms were able to read and anticipate, but from time to time most of us were stuck in irons watching the burgee spinning round.

Generally east and evil, the wind was wicked in a good way when it strengthened in the last race on Sunday providing particular excitement for the Enterprises and Solos, who were sailing short and increasingly hectic laps in front of the club house. The Raters and Merlins were on a longer course, coinciding with the others at the bottom mark, where clumps of boats occasionally accumulated shouting at each other and

watching their competitors going round them.



The Merlins seemed to have the least fun, sailing long tricky laps without ever having a steady enough breeze to keep the spinnaker flying. Minima was well supported by friends from Thames, Twickenham and Tamesis, with 30 boats on the river. Thames of course supplied the Raters and a bonus Merlin, Twickenham taking the handicap honours with two neat-looking National 12s, and Tamesis as usual supplying Ken Duffell and Brian Corcking to take the Merlin prize.

The barbecue on Saturday night was sold out, Minima hospitality at its best with the jazz floating out over the balcony and reasonable weather. With customary generosity TWM solicitors, sponsors for the 4th year running, provided champagne for the winners. Ever stylish, the Thames crew actually finished their bottle before heading home up the river. Skipper Martin Hunter was probably drowning his sorrows – weather conditions were 'terrible' he said, but like the rest of us, he'd had a good time.

Results (Minima Yacht Club unless stated):

A Rater (all Thames SC)

Martin Hunter, Sue Williams, Roger Stafford
Chris Martin, Matthew Jones, Peter Cuckow



2010 Regatta Panorama (PH)

Merlin

Ken Duffell, Brian Corking (Tamesis)
Ben Marshall, Matt Alan
Dennis Lockwood, Debbie Cass

Enterprise

Alan Jales, Brian Cheetham
Les Rowlandson, Mike King
John Forbes, Andy Cowan

Solo

John Metzner
John Kemp

Handicap

Alastair Edwards, Amy McElroy (Twickenham)
Tom Hill, Julie Hill (Twickenham)

John Forbes



AUTUMN LONG DISTANCE

Apologies, but my regular emailed report on this open meeting did not happen due to pressure of work, so here is a brief summary of events.

With high winds forecast close to the autumn equinox and its associated gales, it was a plucky bunch of 9 boats who assembled on the start line, and, following a collision in the gusty conditions one Enterprise decided to go no further at that early stage. Up past Turks conditions were averagely horrible, but where the banks open out above the church there were some slamming gusts. It was somewhere in this area that the visiting Merlin from Thames was over and out.

The situation was compounded because as well as a challenging wind there was a strong current, and the combination was too much for Andy Banks, for instance, who retired his Ent just above the Ait. He was keeping the boat the right way up OK, but it was simply impossible to make headway as well,

particularly as the south-westerly funnelled down the long wall by the filter beds up to the Thames Marina. Ben Marshall got a bit further, but retired half way up the wall. I'm not sure if he capsized or something broke.

I must confess to a secret longing to actually see a Thames Rater go over, not in a bad way you understand, but did see the quite inspiring righting moment, after Wings bowed out near the marina. Word was she started 'submarining' when they tried to sail back to Thames, which sounds like a bad thing for a boat to do if it isn't a submarine. Normally Cora is on hand with a mighty pump to empty the Raters out, but she was otherwise engaged, possibly towing the Merlin home. From this point, perhaps less than an hour into the race the wind began to fall away, to the point where as often happens in the Long Distance, it eventually became extremely difficult to fetch the top mark.

Spindrift and Osprey, the two Raters who stayed upright zoomed up and back, and Dennis Lockwood and Erica also rode their luck in pretty good time. Paul Seaman was close to Dennis up to the wall, but as the wind fell the stream didn't and the corners round Thames Ditton island became harder and harder to negotiate, and the advantage went to the leaders.

Having spent what felt like an hour in the launch watching Paul strive and strive to sail the last couple of hundred yards to the top mark (apparently the Long Distance have something like a three-hour time limit), it was most distressing to see him surprised by no more than a puff, and capsize on top of a dead swan in the bushes not far below Hampton Court. It was a hard sail. Said Paul: 'We were just knackered, basically.' So that left just three boats to finish, all of them deservedly to win prizes.

Results:

Kingston Trophy (Raters): Spindrift, helm Martin Hunter. 2 Osprey, helm Stuart Gurney.

Coronation Cup: Bow Belle, Dennis Lockwood, Erica Bishop.

John Forbes

HANDICAP CLASS



The autumn series was a quiet one for the handicap fleet as Ali was back at university and only Joe and Erica put in the occasional sail in the series. 2011 will hopefully have a new and active sailor in the form of Edward who will be bringing his new Topper down to boost the fleet (and give us a run for our money!). The cadet sessions which we ran in summer 2010 proved to be very popular and will hopefully be running again in 2011; any offers of assistance will be gratefully received. In 2011 I would also like to see another ladies race and a cadet race at some point, both have been sadly lacking in the last couple of years, so if there are any potential helms out there who are feeling they need a little practise before competing come and make use of the fleet of club Toppers and Oppies, they are good basic (and forgiving) boats, great for gaining confidence on the water.

Erica Bishop
Handicap Class Captain

THE PADDLERS

We're planning lots of fun paddling events this year and hoping to generate more interest from both new and existing members.

We have a variety of craft to try out, some nice, stable starter boats, open cockpit doubles and many white kayaks. It's easy to get involved, our existing paddlers are happy to provide supervision for trials, so just ask.

Wednesday evenings will continue to be our regular meeting time, but if you're competent and have your own canoe or Kayak, you can venture out whenever you like. Events are all in the calendar on the web site this year and we'll highlight dates as they come around.

Improve your technique

Last year's training sessions were very successful and so we plan to expand on this. An instructor (or two, depending on demand) will run a four-week training course at Minima, on consecutive Wednesday evenings in June (8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th). It's a great way to improve your technique and make paddling more fun.

This course is great value and costs only £25 for four, two-hour sessions, including a day trip at the end of the course, probably on Sat 9th July (tbc), when the river is closed at Kingston for the Rowing Regatta. The course will need to be booked and paid-for in advance, so get in touch with Erica or myself if you're interested. I for one, will be taking part. Debbie@two-design.co.uk or BishopErica@hotmail.com.



Canoe Adventures

We plan to run monthly Canoe Adventures on Saturdays, where we'll venture further than Kingston, to accessible places such as Walton and Richmond. These will be relaxed trips where we can chat and explore the local Thames. Depending on the river conditions and the experience of the group, we'll adjust our plans to suit, so no one should feel out of their depth.

You'll have a chance to practice your skills and we'll stop somewhere for lunch before returning.

Depending on numbers, we may hire a vehicle, in which case there may be a small charge of around £5 to cover costs. Details will be published on the website with plenty of notice and this year, we'll ask those who are interested to book a week or two in advance.

Erica also kindly agreed to investigate the possibility of a reciprocal visit to another paddling club, at some point in the season.

Social Sails

Paddlers are welcome to join in with the regular social sails to a local pub for a beer and some dinner (dates in the calendar). Paddlers can set off later or go there and back and there again if you want the exercise, and still be in the bar before the sailors.

Fun Day

Paddlers will again be involved in the Fun Day scheduled for 22nd May, which was a hit last year. Let's hope for the same hot weather! Fun events such

as the Fit-Ball Fight and other team games will be repeated. If anyone has suggestions for other silly things to do, just get in touch.

Work to do

We also plan to clear and move the canoe racks to the other side of the park soon. We're going to build a new rack to free up the trailer, so we'll be asking for willing hands to help with the work.

Debbie Cass
Canoe Class Captain

SOLO NEWS



At this time of the year there is not much to report on the Solo sailing front. I note that Solo's will be first

off in Class Racing in 2011. I have put in a plea at the last Sailing Committee meeting that the order of classes be cycled so that Solos being first off is not cast in stone.



John Kemp & John Metzner – Regatta 2010 (PH)

I might mention that last month your Solo Class Captain and Morene (in a ship with 1100 crew members) on a tour of South America, called in at the Falkland Islands to be given a tour round by Nigel Bishop. He has been there for fifteen years. How time flies! He was in very good spirits and obviously enjoying himself in spite of the climate. We arrived in brilliant sunshine but by lunchtime it was raining, which is probably why the photos that Morene took of Nigel and I in the rain came out blurred.

Looking forward to seeing plenty of Solos out in 2011. We shall be hosting the joint Minima/Twickenham Solo open as part of the Thames Valley Circuit. For

those that want to sail single handed it is continues to be a very popular class with of the order of 100 new Solos being built each year.

John Metzner
Solo Class Captain

MERLIN ROCKETS



The tension is mounting as we approach the start of the season, the long winter nights are drawing to a close and we can't wait to get back on the water in our beloved Merlins.

The months of buffing and polishing, fixing and tweaking are nearly over. It's almost a shame to get the polish wet. All the swotting over racing tactics and interpreting how to take advantage of the rules is nearly over.



Debbie Cass crewing, 2010 Regatta (GM)

We are all hoping that the hours of endurance training that each helm and crew have gone through to be at the peak of their physical condition will pay dividends as the racing commences. Many of the class members have put in an impressive effort honing their right arm muscles at the Minima bar. And I can't understand how that has had such a loosening effect on my stomach muscles. Anyway we are all looking forward to seeing some new boats and faces on the water this year.

For anyone in their first season sailing my tip is to try not to be too impatient if you don't get to the front of the fleet first time out. Sailing is a sport that you never

really master. Just when you think you have it cracked the boat, weather and opposition will catch you out. It is, as they say, a continuous learning process. If it was too easy it would not be fun.

My boat Warrior will be looking a little different this year when I get it back from the magic hands of Laurie Smart, top of the class when it comes to working with anything made from wood. Sadly the varnish may still be drying for the first race, but I can't wait to see it without its usual dents and scars.

A date for your dairies: Saturday June 11th, Merlin Vintage Open. It would be great to see all the boats that are eligible out on the water. In the evening the Merlin class will be hosting an event for all Minima members and friends, any suggestions as to what we can do are welcome.

The event coincides with a national RYA event called 'Go For Gold' to raise awareness of Sailing Team GB's excellence on the run up to the 2012 Olympics. Sadly I don't think there's much chance of Merlins making it as a last minute Olympic class but you never know. We stand ready just in case. So perhaps an Olympics themed evening?

Just a reminder DONT FORGET TO GET YOUR RIVER LICENCE, if you don't have one it could cost you £1000 in fines, and also you will not score any points if you haven't had your buoyancy tested and your card signed off. Let's not forget this is done for the safety of both helm and crew.

So to all in the Merlin class I wish you a splendid season and fair winds. Anyone who wants a try out in the top class, (only slightly biased) please get in touch.

From the pointy hat brigade

Paul Seamen
Merlin Class Captain

ENTERPRISE NEWS

Get off your trolley!

Week in week out three or even four Ents plough our wakes up and down and side to side. We're what teachers call a mixed ability class. We sail for fun, always trying our best of course, but sometimes with our tongues in our cheeks.

We have our ups and downs, but currently there's a bit of an up. One beige boat has been adjusting the rake of its mast, producing definite improvements in performance, and increasingly often getting up amongst the leaders. And the class is growing, with a couple of new, well different, Ents appearing in the dinghy park. The immediate challenge is to get them off their trolleys, as we say, and into the water.

Your captain stands ready to help. He has been patching up the Bald Eagle for years, and is therefore familiar with many of the black arts of fibreglass repair. So don't hold back in asking for a hand – there's nothing Minima people like better than letting their fellow members have the benefit of their wisdom and experience, and sometimes the advice is actually useful.

This may be needed sooner than you think, as with the backing of the sailing committee the pressure to have your buoyancy in date is not going to go away this year. There is nothing more embarrassing to a class captain, or a helm for that matter, than to see his boat half awash drifting down the river after a capsize in a summer squall.



Enterprises at the 2010 Regatta (GM)

Apart from physically sorting out your boat, the other perennial problem (and pleasure) for two-handers is staff, or crew as we call them. The secret here is to make yourself available. If you are down at the club regularly then anyone who turns up looking for a bit of sailing will immediately get snapped up and who knows, you may find yourself with a winning team. If you can't get a crew, be one yourself: it's educational, and what goes around comes around.

So let's get out there!

John Forbes
Enterprise Class Captain

TRAILER SAILING: TURNING VISION INTO REALITY (PT II)

Steve Collins

In the previous edition of this newsletter (Summer 2010) I wrote about my promise to provide Kathy with a 'floating balcony' on the River Thames and my desire to buy a cruiser to go sailing on the South Coast. The solution was our Jeanneau Sun 2000 'Concorde' trailer sailer which we could use for both purposes. My article finished with a successful launch at Cobbs Quay Marina in Poole Harbour. The story continues.....

After a few days pottering in Poole Harbour and getting used to the boat; it was time to come home, as Kathy had to go back to work. We took our time getting the boat out the water, de-rigged and lowered the mast carefully using the mast raising kit. No problem, and the journey back to Kingston from the South Coast also went smoothly. We hit our first snag when I tried to reverse both the car and boat into the Minima dinghy park.

I had measured the width of the gate and checked this against the width of the boat on the trailer in advance, so I was confident that it would fit, but I had overlooked the fact that the turning circle on the Barge Walk is restricted due to the presence of the river – it was simply too tight to back the boat in. So we had to leave Concorde parked overnight outside the dinghy park. Fortunately, the next day was a sailing night, and we were able to press gang a group of club members to manhandle the boat into the dinghy park. The press gang was slightly the worse for wear due to drink and the first attempt nearly demolished the fence, but we were successful on the second try.

The next stage of the experiment was to test the 'floating balcony' concept. So a couple of weeks later, we stored the mast and towed the boat via road to Penton Hook Marina, Chertsey where I knew that there was a good slipway for launching (unfortunately, all the slipways on our reach of the river are all very badly maintained). There was no mast raising to worry about and launching went without a hitch. We then had a very pleasant afternoon motoring down river to Hart's Boatyard where we had booked a pontoon mooring with Ossie Stuart.

It cost us £120 to keep Concorde at Hart's Boatyard for the whole of June and the first two weeks of July and

the Environment Agency Licence fee cost almost as much again. But the weather was good and the floating balcony concept worked perfectly. Kathy and I regularly took a bottle of chilled white wine and picnic over the road to the boat after work and we had two very successful dinner parties on board. We tied up at Hampton Court for one party and at Desborough Sailing Club in Shepperton for another. Catering was provided by 'Kathy's Kitchen' which was as excellent as ever. The only downside was having put up with numerous comments from bystanders when going through a lock: "Oy mate, you've forgotten your mast!".

I had been mulling over the problem of how to manoeuvre Concorde into the dinghy park in my mind, but then the solution appeared in an advert in 'Practical Boat Owner' for front tow-bars from Watling Engineers, near St Albans. I checked out their website which includes a very impressive three minute video demonstrating how much easier it is to manoeuvre a trailer with a front tow bar rather than a conventional rear tow bar. I sent off for a tow bar and arranged for



Concorde on the Thames

Tam Leisure in New Malden to fit it. We had another nice river trip from Surbiton to Penton Hook Marina to take the boat out of the water and the front tow bar worked perfectly, when it came to putting Concorde back into the dinghy park.

Next on the agenda was our first proper summer cruise in Concorde. I decided that we would go back to Portland where son Peter and I had competed in the Wayfarer International Championships and where I had noticed the superb facilities in the new marina (built specially for the 2012 Olympics). The plan was to get some practice in the sheltered conditions in Portland Harbour and then take advantage of the prevailing south westerly wind to cruise to Poole and then on to Southampton.

We duly booked two weeks holiday from work and turned up in the dinghy park on a Friday evening in August to get the boat ready to trail. But Kathy and I were both tired after a long day at work and we were over-confident. We decided to take the mast down without using the mast raising kit, lost control of the mast and broke the mast-step! And as it was a Friday, there was nothing we could do about finding a replacement until Monday.

However, we did get some sailing in over the weekend. We had planned to meet up with Kevin and Susie in 'Temptress of Down' so instead of driving down with the boat we used our free weekend travel which comes with our (very expensive) SW Trains gold card season tickets to travel down to Weymouth. We had a very pleasant weekend cruising in Weymouth Bay with Kevin and Susie including a trip to Lulworth Cove and caught the train back on Sunday evening.



Evening in Weymouth

Having ordered a replacement part to be delivered to a local mast rigger in Portland we took the boat down to Portland on the Tuesday and eventually got on the water on the Thursday having spent two nights sleeping on the boat parked in the National Sailing Academy car park!



Concorde on the beach

The rest of the cruise went to plan. We had very pleasant day sails to Castle Cove, Ringstead Bay and Worbarrow Bay, and then on to Poole and Southampton. The boat performed well and we reached over 10 knots over the ground surfing down the waves in Christchurch Bay in a South Westerly breeze gusting to Force 5. We learnt that the Sun 2000 is a very lively boat to sail and that you need to put a reef in when the wind reaches force 4 or above. And that's without flying the large asymmetric spinnaker.

Overnight accommodation at the marinas in Portland, Cobbs Quay Marina (Poole) and Shamrock Quay (Southampton) cost us about £20 a night, but was worth it for the nice showers and toilets, and for the marina restaurant for dining out in the evening. We used our free travel to catch a train back to Portland to collect the car and trailer on the last weekend of our holiday. We were pleased to discover that we could take Concorde out of the water for free using the slipway at Crosshouse Hard in Southampton (underneath the Itchen Bridge), and it took us about three hours in total to lower the mast, de-rig the boat and take the outboard engine off. We then had a trouble-free journey back up the M3 and pushed Concorde back into the dinghy park using the front tow bar.

It's a great when a plan comes together and our first year of sailer-trailing has met all our expectations. In 2011 we plan more cruising on the river and the south coast and in 2012, we plan to take Concorde up to Scotland to cruise from Oban to Tobermory and, perhaps, on to the Isle of Coll. Then in 2013 we propose to cross the channel by the easy route (on board a Brittany Ferry) and take Concorde back to her country of origin.

Steve

2011 SAILING DIARY

Date	Day	Start	Event
13-Mar	Sun	15:00	Centenary Trophy Handicap
20-Mar	Sun	15:00	Sunday Class Racing Starts (Summer series)
30-Mar	Wed	19:15	Wednesday Evening Handicap (Series Starts)
09-Apr	Sat	14:00	Canoe Adventure
24-Apr	Sun	14:00	David Langley Commemoration Trophy Handicap (3 Races)
25-Apr	Mon	13:00	Gordon's Goblet Pursuit (2 Races)
30-Apr	Sat	18:00	Saturday Pursuit (Series Starts)
02-May	Mon	14:00	May Merrie and RNLI Round the Island Invitation Handicap
08-May	Sun	11:00	Open Day
14-May	Sat	14:00	Canoe Adventure
15-May	Sun	14:00	Spring Long Distance Race (Class and Handicap)
21-May	Sat	TBA	Warwick Smith Trophy (Ranelagh SC)
22-May	Sun	12:00	Fun Day [TBC]
28-May	Sat		No Racing
29-May	Sun	14:00	Spires Trophy Handicap (3 Races)
30-May	Mon	13:00	Flemmich Bowl Pursuit (2 races)
08-Jun	Wed	19:00	Improve your Paddling Skills (Canoe Training)
11-Jun	Sat	11:00	Chindit Trophy Vintage Merlin Rocket Open
11-Jun	Sat	14:00	Canoe Adventure
12-Jun	Sun	15:00	Sunday Class and Handicap
12-Jun	Sun	17:30	Ladies Race
15-Jun	Wed	19:00	Improve your Paddling Skills (Canoe Training)
17-Jun	Fri	18:00	Social Sail, Paddle and Cruise to Thames Ditton
19-Jun	Sun	17:00	Over 40's race
22-Jun	Wed	19:00	Improve your Paddling Skills (Canoe Training)
25-Jun	Sat	15:00	Firkin Trophy
26-Jun	Sun	11:00	Solo and Enterprise Open Meeting
29-Jun	Wed	19:00	Improve your Paddling Skills (Canoe Training)
02-Jul	Sat	14:00	Canoe Adventure
06-Jul	Wed	19:15	4th July Mug
09-Jul	Sat		No Racing Kingston Rowing Regatta
10-Jul	Sun		No Racing Kingston Rowing Regatta
16-Jul	Sat	11:00	Thames SC Regatta
17-Jul	Sun	09:00	Nokia Thames swim
17-Jul	Sun	11:00	Thames SC Regatta (no racing at MYC)
31-Jul	Sun	14:00	Barclays Bank Handicap Trophy (3 races)
12-Aug	Fri	19:00	Social Sail, Paddle and Cruise to Thames Ditton
13-Aug	Sat	14:00	Canoe Adventure
20-Aug	Sat	18:30	Saturday Pursuit (Final Race)
21-Aug	Sun	15:00	Sunday Class racing (Final Race Summer Series)
24-Aug	Wed	19:15	Wednesday Evening Handicap (Final Race)
28-Aug	Sun	14:00	Fair Commemoration Cup
29-Aug	Mon	13:00	Avon Cup Pursuit (2 races)
03-Sep	Sat	14:00	Minima Yacht Club Regatta
04-Sep	Sun	11:00	Minima Yacht Club Regatta
10-Sep	Sat	14:00	Canoe Adventure
11-Sep	Sun	15:00	Autumn Class and Handicap starts
18-Sep	Sun	14:00	Kingston Trophy and Coronation Cup Invitation Long Distance Handicap
25-Sep	Sun	11:00	Eric Archer Memorial Merlin Rocket Open
08-Oct	Sat	14:00	Canoe Adventure
23-Oct	Sun	11:00	Three Burgee Team Racing at Minima
11-Dec	Sun	14:15	Autumn Class and Handicap (Final Race)
27-Dec	Tue	11:00	Christmas Fun Race