

Bala Sailing Club Newsletter June 2010

Commodore's Report

Sailability

The club is planning a Sailability day on Saturday 21 August. This is basically a taster session in suitable boats for people with a range of disabilities. This is being organised in conjunction with Disability Sports Wales and, if it goes well, we hope to make it an annual event. If you would like to help out, please let either Phil Smith or myself know.

Lake Licence

Our Lake Licence has now been renewed, the main difference is that the new licence is ongoing, and does not have to be renegotiated every 7 years. Our licence fee is however linked to the retail price index so going forward we should expect club fees to at least keep pace with this.

Volvo

Since the last newsletter, the club was formally awarded Volvo Champion Club status by the General Manager of Slaters of Abergele on 11 April following the CYRC prize giving. The award was presented to Phil Smith, Dave Eccles and Kevin Guinan, recognising the exceptional work they have been doing in promoting youth sailing.

Jetties

We have now received offers of funding from the Environment Agency (Splash Fund) of £19500, and a further £7000 from Sports Wales towards the cost of two new jetties. Orders are now being placed and we should hopefully see them installed within the next 8 weeks.

Non Racing Safety cover

Not all of our members want to race, some prefer to just free sail and enjoy what Bala Lake has to offer. Our safety cover, however, tends to be organised around the racing and we can on occasions forget about those free sailing. I believe the only way we are going to improve this situation is by better communication between the duty team and free sailors to ensure the safety of all. Later in this newsletter you will find an article written by Hugh Carter, a regular free sailor, on this subject.

Duty Credit

Following the Open Forum Meeting, it was proposed that we drop the duty credit system, unless we received a groundswell of objection from members. No responses have been forthcoming, so the duty credit system will not be operating this year.

Bala SC History

You will also see in this newsletter an article written by Owen Shaw who was the Hon Secretary of Bala Sailing Club for most of its history. Owen's daughter Stella is still an active member of the club and runs Bala Backpackers. Just to update Owen's

comments, we do now get relief from Rates, which was obviously something that used to bug him.

Sailing Captain's Report

Duties

Thanks to all those who have completed their duties so far. It has been good to see that the Dos on Sundays are using the Committee Boats to manage racing. Just to say that their use facilitates good start lines and course setting. It also frees the DO from possible distractions from others on the shore. The rescue crews have also been noticeably better equipped and very professional in their approach to their duties. The Dutyman program has been used and, to some extent eased the pressure on our Duty Rota Sec, Wendy Hitchman.

Committee Boats

Both Committee Boats have been refurbished, most of the work being carried out on Berwyn which needed a new oak keel, provided and fitted by Ken Hull. The electrics were overhauled by Mike Davidson. Both boats have plug-in facilities for Mike's autotimers. Our Friday team of Ken Hull, John Saunders, Alan Williams, Steve Williams, Mike Davidson and myself have worked through some appalling weather to get Berwyn fitted out and painted in time for the Whit Regatta. Both boats were checked mechanically and launched by our Bosun, Chris Smith.

Moorings

George Billington, Alan Williams and Peter Watkins and combined their experience and expertise to assist other moored cruising members in constructing and laying more substantial moorings for their cruisers.

Juniors

The juniors have been more active in recent weeks with a good Topper turnout for the Owen Shaw Shield. Our Vice-Commodore, Paul Plested, has introduced a modified Saturday sailing programme to encourage the juniors in Toppers to experience Topper class racing. I hope we get a good regular turn out for this series.

Regattas

The Fun Regatta had 22 entrants despite the unfavourable weather. However, the Whit Regatta attendance was disappointingly low. Of course, the predicted bad weather and terrible wind directions may have contributed to the low turnout. We will be considering any suggestions that may make this event more attractive. I think that we must try to encourage our club sailors to participate and make the event less intimidating for the inexperienced. We could more actively encourage class open events for this weekend. For example, the Solutions attracted a 15 boat entry.

The participation of our sailors in other open events flies the flag for Bala and has a reciprocal effect in attracting those class members from other clubs to Bala. For example, in recent weeks, Aled and James sailed the Topper Inlands; Fran and Rob Jones, Paul and Sharon Plested and Andy and Gez Jones travelled to Notts County. Dave and Kate Eccles, Will and Wendy Hitchman in their Laser 2000s and Ken Hull and

Tim Heaton in their Blazes have also regularly travelled away. As a result of this, we have secured the Laser 2000 and Blaze Inland Nationals. These attract good revenues and help to control the level of fees to members.

Thanks

I know that club members appreciate and wish to thank Ken Hull for securing the funding grants for two new jetties and also for taking the project through the complex planning and design stages.

Reminder

Don't forget everyone is welcome to join the next coaching session provided by our Senior Coach, Dave Eccles, on 19th June: Tactics and Covering the Opposition. Book your place with Dave in good time at sailfaster@kdx.org.uk or Tel:07748118872

Gwil James

Bala Training Days

If you weren't there you don't know what you've missed!

Since the start of the season, training has taken place on various Saturdays led mainly by Dave Eccles and John Saunders with help from Ken Hull and Kevin Guinan.

Andy and I started sailing in 2005 with RYA courses on holidays but have since learnt by trial and error on the water, racing with the big boys. It was a daunting prospect at the start but we are getting used to more of the rules as we go along.

The Saturday courses have been pitched just right (we know a bit but not enough) so they have helped to bring us on with boat handling (really taxing without a rudder- and wet!), the perfect start (may need to do that one again?) and upwind and downwind sailing. The 5th and last of this set is Tactics and Covering the Opposition coming up on 19th June and eagerly awaited.

For those of you who missed out on this very informative, fun, have-a-go set of training sessions, the whole set are being repeated commencing in July.
Thanks Dave and team.

Andy & Gez Jones RS200

Safety Cover for All

At Bala we have a mix of racing dinghies, free sailing dinghies, cruisers, windsurfers and kayaks. Often all are out on the water at the same time and the duty team has the difficult job of looking after everyone.

It is important that we all let the Officer of the Day and the duty team know that we are on the water. For racers, signing on to the race does this. Freesailors, cruisers, windsurfers and kayakers must remember to also sign on in the bridge. This way safety cover can be organised so that everyone receives assistance if they need it.

Often non-racers hit the water after racing has started in which case the duty team needs to be told that you are on the water. It is important that you advise the OOD either in the Bridge or by radio if the OOD and ARO are on the committee boat. If you are not sure how to use the VHF radios in the Bridge there is usually a committee member about happy to help you.

The team needs to know what craft you are in and how many crew are on board. If you are planning a trip down the lake where you will be out of view tell the OOD, and don't forget to advise him when you are back on shore.

If you are part of the duty team you must remember that the safety cover is there equally for the racing fleet and non-racing boats. Please watch everyone and please manage cover during lunch. If the safety boats have to be taken off the water the safety crew should go up to any boats still sailing and let them know in sufficient time for those boats to return to shore before the safety boats. The OOD will agree the time that safety cover will be withdrawn at the end of the day and this will not necessarily be straight after the last race. On busy race days the free sailors often sail between races and after the last race to avoid obstructing the race-course and the safety boats need to remain on the water for them.

After the Kielder incident we all know that a capsize can very quickly develop into a tragedy and it is vital that every capsized boat is attended by the safety crew quickly and safely. Positioning the safety boats for optimum cover of all boats on the water is a skill and requires communication between safety crews, OOD and ARO. The club organises excellent training and if you would like to brush up your skills, talk to Phil Smith.

Hugh Carter

Youth News

Easter Regatta

Easter seems a long time ago but our juniors put in a strong performance against adults in the slow handicap fleet with only the juniors racing on Monday! A well deserved first for Aled.

Sailing for Wales!

Well done to Aled Goddard for being selected to represent Welsh Sailing at the Eric Twiname Championships at Rutland. This was the same weekend as the 2nd CYRC at Port Dinorwic and it was a glorious day on the Menai straits. Josh Williams sailed well in the testing tidal stream. The Topper Gold fleet was won by James Guinan.

Topper Inlands

Aled Goddard and James Guinan entered the Topper Inlands and were 135th and 108th out of 258 entries. Very creditable performances.

The conditions were horrendous. The sailors launched at 10am and remained on the water until 3pm as the races were back to back. The beats were massive given the conditions and they had a triple beat for the first race!

Owen Shaw Shield

Well done to Jake and Stephen for entering and doing very well, having only just done their Learn to Sail course! Again very close racing with 1st/2nd and 3rd/4th place being decided on “count back”.

Whit Regatta

The Bala Topper sailors were joined by a regional squad colleague from Brenig for three days of close racing in fluky winds.

The highlight of the event, however, was the impromptu Ice Cream trip after racing had finished on Monday. Also thanks to Steve Williams for allowing his Vareo to be used by certain enthusiastic juniors.

Next Youth Squad

Is 12th June and is a trip to the seaside to take part in the CYRC at Penmaenmawr Sailing Club. I'll be taking a RIB to help with coaching. Hope to see you all there!

Next Club Trophy

Is the two day Pugwash Cup on 3/4th July.

Kevin Guinan
Youth Squad Coordinator

Attention all Saturday Race Officers and Juniors

1. The following guidelines have been drawn up for Saturday Junior racing in consultation with Kevin Guinan and Gwil James.
2. If more than one Junior Topper (or similar slow junior class) signs on to sail on a Saturday, then they are treated as a Junior Fleet and they get their own separate start and, if required, separate course. The race must be timed unless all are sailing the same class (NOTE: - Different Topper rigs are different classes and must be timed).
3. Where Juniors sign on to sail faster class boats (Laser, Laser Radial, Laser2000, etc), they are included in the main Saturday series and will start in Personal Pursuit and Personal Handicap races. They will be recorded as competing in those events i.e. they do not count towards the junior series.

4. Where there is only one Topper (or slow junior class) entered the helm will race within the main Saturday Series and they will be recorded as competing in those events.
5. Where juniors are racing in the main series they will need a personal handicap (most already allocated).
6. For Pursuit Starts, Toppers will commence on 0 (or later if their individual personal handicap dictates).

**7. Paul Plested
Vice-Commodore**

Bar Banter

Beer Sales

Following the committee's suggestion/request, I have now only been selling cans or bottled beer in the bar for the Easter and Spring bank holiday regattas. We seem to have managed but sales at both events were considerably down on last year due to poor attendances. In fact, the total sale of beers this year for both regattas was less than that taken at Easter alone last year. On average our sales for the two events this year are less than 60% of the last year's sales.

Thanks go to Tony for his continued help behind the bar.

Jetty Fund

Last year I banked £1230 towards the jetty fund. So far this year I have banked £804 towards the jetty fund. Some of that money was from the galley takings prior to and including the Massacre event. I have also banked money given to me by Dave Eccles from his coaching sessions. One member has also made a considerable donation. As a result of the hard work put in by Ken Hull, backed up by Phil Smith and Dave Eccles, I understand that we have now been offered grants for a total of £26500. We still have a long way to go, so keep the money rolling into the **JETTY FUND** at the bar.

Lost Property

This year there seems to be a lot of lost property behind the bar. Just last weekend a Canon camera that had been handed in has been claimed. We thought that we knew who the owner was, sent them an email and they have just reclaimed it. Found items now behind the bar include:

- 1 small padlock key
- 2 small padlock keys
- Yellow safety knife
- Stainless steel sailors knife on lanyard
- Pair of sunglasses
- Large combination padlock

Trailer jockey wheel clamp
Set of 3 battens for a laser?
Black digital watch

Please reclaim your property.

Solo and Supernova Open

Following their request to hold an open again at Bala in 2010 the club has agreed that a Solo and Supernova open will take place at Bala on Sunday 18th July. This date is a week later than usual at the request of the Supernova fleet and they are hoping to get an even better turnout this year. Last year for a first time event at Bala and only a week after their nationals in Plymouth ten boats here was a pretty good turnout. This year the Supernova championships are at Llandudno at the beginning of July.

John Hunter
Solo Rep and Bar Manager

The following article was written about 10 years ago by Owen Shaw, long-term active member of Bala SC:

“History of our lovely Club

The Clubhouse:

In about 1962-3 arrangements were made to build a Clubhouse. The Club owned a field (where the houses of Trem y Ffridd now exist) and this was sold with building permission and thus helped to finance the Clubhouse. Loans and donations from the members flowed in and a member who was an architect, G Jones, was commissioned to draw up the plans. A local builder constructed the building. When finished, it was our pride and joy!

Gone were huts with chemical closets and a hut with a tea boiler. We had showers, proper loos and a galley. What luxury!

Extension:

The Club was extended twice in approximately 1966 and 1975 to be in its existing form. Money for this came from members as loans and donations. In 1994 and with support from the 'Foundation for Sport and the Arts' the new training room, Race Control and Safety Boat Store were completed.

Racing:

The first Open Meeting Race was held on a Saturday in July when THREE visiting Merlin Rockets came from Hollingworth SC. No Bala boats entered and it was considered a success, or at least a start. The innovation of a Long Distance Race came and the photo shows the first start [not attached]. Since then Racing has been and still is the dominant theme of the Club's life and without this the Club would be dead. Also the Club's three Bank Holiday Regattas and Class Open Meetings are a special success.

The People:

Members come from far and wide. The catchment area is Shropshire, Cheshire, the Wirral and of course North Wales. At one time most people stayed the weekend camping or caravanning. Regrettably most members come for the day only now. The high cost of Petrol, Sites and a lack of Public Transport are assumed to be causes. It has always surprised me that so few Bala and district people take advantage of the wonderful scenery, facilities and sport that is available here.

Finance:

Maybe the wind is free, but to sail on the water is very costly. We own the Clubhouse and all facilities. We must pay the Gas, Electricity, Maintenance and Insurance, but the main cost is the exorbitant fee demanded by Snowdonia National Park, and also the fact that the Gwynedd Council refused to give a rate reduction to us as a sports club, although this is written within their powers to do so. Perhaps we need a member with good experience of negotiating with such bodies!

Bala Town and Lake

A popular settlement in the past with Roman remains to be found, surrounded by the Aran, Arenig and Berwyn mountain ranges, Bala became well-known during the 18th Century for its woollen production. Woollen socks were knitted by men and women alike, and were even worn by George III to help his rheumatism! This is where the first Sheepdog Trials were held. There are several famous men from Bala, who influenced religion, culture and nationalism in 18th and 19th Century Wales, amongst whom Thomas Charles responsible for establishing the Bible Society known today.

Llyn Tegid is an attraction in itself for a large number of people. It is the largest Freshwater Lake in Wales (4 miles by ¾ mile wide). There are two stories which tell how the Lake was formed. In one of them, the whole valley was flooded because the keeper of Gower's Well forgot to replace the lid one night. The other tells the story of Tegid Foel, a quasi-legendary prince who was extremely cruel to his people. He was often warned that vengeance would come but chose not to listen. When his first grandson was born, he had an enormous banquet, where a harpist provided the music. As the night went on, the harpist heard a voice saying 'Vengeance will come', and he was lead away by a small bird to the top of a nearby hill, where he slept till morning. He awoke to see nothing but a huge lake covering the place where the town once stood, and his harp floating on the waves. The lake was named after the cruel ruler who had invited the disaster.

In reality the lake was formed 26,000 to 10,000 years ago during the last Ice Age, which is also the reason why the rare Gwyniad fish can be found nowhere else in the world, but here. There are similar fish in the lake district and the Alps, but it is believed that this particular fish was imprisoned in Llyn Tegid as the glaciers melted. It feeds on plankton in the depths of the lake. Because of this fish and the presence of a number of other rare plants and animals, the lake is regarded as an ecologically important site

nationally and internationally. It is a Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a wetland Ramsar Site.

Owen Shaw written approximately in 1998-2000.