



Neptune's Staircase – Caledonian Canal

Committee 2003/2004

The AGM was held on 25 November. A full report appears overleaf, but here is the new committee:-

- Commodore : Mark Raffle
- Vice Commodore : Malcolm Lord
- Race Secretary : Andrew Grant
- Treasurer : Nicky Pearson
- Secretary : Vacant
- Training Secretary : Vacant
- Parent representatives : Alan Scott, Derek Thomson
- Junior representatives : Glen Foster, David Scott, Alan Thomson
- Committee members : Jim Kelly
Kath Lewis
Guy Newson
One vacant position

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Child protection designated officers : Jim Kelly, Connie Ryan.  
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Members will note that the committee is 3 short of its official complement, under current constitutional rules.

Dates for your diary

Returning to sailing If you haven't sailed for a few years, and would like some help returning to the water, contact Malcolm Lord (Tel 896885) or vicecommodore@pfyc.org.uk to register interest for a returners session.

*****NEW*** Sunday 25 January 2003 – Scalextric night – Thurso Club.**

Start 1930. Small entrance fee, including competition entry. Bar.

*****NEW*** Annual Dinner Dance & prize-giving**

Date and venue to be confirmed, but probably late February/early March as normal.

*****Date change*** Sunday 7 March 2004 – Curling at Brora – Was previously Saturday 20 March**

*****Places still available***** Curling will be 1430 – 1630, followed by a meal afterwards. It is proposed, given the finishing time, that soup and sandwiches would be appropriate. The cost of this, including the curling is £12/person. The hotel requires a £5/person booking deposit, which the Club will wish to collect from participants before making the booking. A discount on the normal room rate is available for anyone wishing to stay at the hotel on the Saturday night after participating in curling. Anyone interested in curling, please contact Mark Raffle (01847 894132) or commodore@pfyc.org.uk. Please also advise if you are prepared to drive down and have free space in your car.

Date to be arranged– Paintball near Dingwall

Following a successful and enjoyable trip to try this – see article in September newsletter – we are already planning a repeat trip. So, if you like crawling around on the ground, and don't mind a

bit of pain and a few bruises, this could be for you. Minimum age is 14 years.

Saturday/Sunday 19/20 June 2004 - Midsummer regatta. As well as our normal racing, we also hope to be joined by RS300 and Fireball traveller events. It is planned to have 3 races back to back each day, as at last year's End of Season Regatta.

*****NEW*** Saturday/Sunday 25/26 September – End of Season Regatta**

Other social events – Please let us know if there is anything else you would like to see organised as social events.

Contacts

E-mail addresses – To receive rapid communications, please send yours to commodore@pfyc.org.uk

Newsletter contributions – Send to Mark Raffle by the means of your choice, but preferably by e-mail to commodore@pfyc.org.uk.

I'd be pleased to receive comments on anything else you'd like to see in the newsletter. Contributions always welcome.

Viv Sinclair trophy – last chance

Just a reminder of a section which first appeared in the January 2003 newsletter. The trophy will be awarded this year for the best narrative log submitted for a cruise carried out during 2003. Logs should be submitted to the Commodore by **Saturday 10 January 2004** at the latest, and may include text, charts, photographs – or anything else you care to add. I hope a year's advance notice is enough for anyone who wants to participate!

First Aid

If anyone needs a new first aid certificate before the start of next season, please contact Mark Raffle (01847 894132) or commodore@pfyc.org.uk. We may be able to get a few places on courses the Scouts are running, otherwise we will organize Red Cross training.

Red Cross has also offered to do some refresher scenarios for us before the start of the next season for those who already have a valid first aid certificate. Those who participated in April this year will remember that this was a very realistic way of training, with the Red Cross volunteers being excellent casualty actors.

Curling

Another enjoyable trip to the curling rink at Brora took place on the afternoon of Saturday 29 November. Four teams were made from the 11 people attending, some curling for the first time. The winners, by a good margin, were "Littles and Large" (Andrew Grant, Nicola Miller and Connie Ryan). Owing to a change in the Curling Club's end of season arrangements, the next trip originally planned for Saturday 20 March has now had to be rearranged to Sunday 7 March. This also lets some of our junior members with Saturday jobs attend!

AGM report

This year's Annual General Meeting was held in the Thurso Club at 1930 on Tuesday 25 November 2003, with 15 members attending. A summary report is provided below.

Treasurer's report (Jim Kelly)

The audited accounts for the year were distributed. These showed an excess of expenditure over income of £236, with an income of £7509 – significantly up from last year's income. There had been a number of abnormal items of expenditure – in particular the refurbishment of the clubhouse. A loss had been made on the 50th Anniversary dinner dance (as expected) as a result of inviting the former Commodores as guests of the Club. Membership income was slightly down from the previous year, but income from regattas, socials and dances was significantly up. A sum of £5500 remains set aside for eventual replacement of the guard boat.

Training report (Mark Raffle)

Two adults and 6 juniors attended the dinghy course this year. Unfortunately one of the adults was unable to complete the course, owing to an injury received while sailing, but the remaining 7 people, plus one who attended for direct assessment, all successfully completed the course and were awarded certificates. Glen Foster, Mathew Phimister, Iain Thomson and David Scott all qualified as Assistant Instructors by assisting on the course.

Thanks were expressed to Roy Donn who continues to act as Principal, to Steve Foster our other Senior Instructor, and to all the Instructors, Assistant Instructors, Guard Boat Drivers, Sea Cadets, Sea Scouts and other helpers. Kath and Pen Lewis were given special mention for organising the lunch at the end of the course.

Four people took the Keelboat Seamanship course on 14 – 15 June. All 4 were successful. Thanks were expressed to Mandie Cran for acting as Senior Instructor on this course.

Eleven people took their Basic First Aid course at the Club on 26 April. Thanks were given to Ann and David Bertram and the rest of the Red Cross team for running this course.

Ten people successfully took the 3 hour course to convert their old VHF certificates to the Short Range Certificate. Thanks to Mandie Cran for running these courses.

Mark Raffle attended an SRC Assessor course at Port Edgar at the end of November, and is now qualified to run SRC courses.

Race Secretary's report (Andrew Grant)

The Sunday afternoon format of 2 shorter races with a 5, 4, 1, Go start sequence continued successfully this year. Races have been well attended with the Fireballs being the main fleet. Some problems were experienced this year with OOD and GBD cover although this has not prevented the majority of races being held as scheduled.

Regattas were well attended, especially the Mid Summer Regatta with a number of former members returning for the event. Mixed weather was experienced, but the race committee and safety cover handled the situation well.

The Coast Guard race was successfully resurrected this year with some good close racing. Two boats entered the Castlehill race in some challenging conditions. The Topper race was successfully held over a 5 race series. There were 9 entrants and some good close racing was experienced. In the end the event was dominated by the Foster family with a resounding 1, 2, 3 in the series result.

Six Juniors journeyed to Orkney to compete in the annual intercounty challenge. Having won the event last year they were looking to retain the title, which they did in emphatic style – see earlier newsletters for details.

In July, 3 Fireballs made the trip to Shetland to compete in the European championship. Overall the club members put up a good showing, as recorded in an earlier newsletter.

Thanks were expressed to Pen Lewis for the work he put in for the first half of the season as Race Secretary. Thanks were expressed to the Sea Scouts, Sea Cadets and the Dive club for their support during the year, especially at the Regattas – without their help we would not have been able to hold these events.

This year has seen a number of the club boats attending Traveller events with Stonehaven and Chanonry being particularly well attended. Other events have seen boats travelling to Port Edgar and even further afield for the Skiff Championship.

The River Race was successfully held again this year, with some close racing, especially on the final reach back to Scrabster. This was a bit of a war of attrition with more than one boat suffering from a breakage which forced them to retire from the event.

Commodore's report (Mark Raffle)

The Commodore first thanked last year's Committee and all those who had helped with the running of the Club over the past year. Particular thanks were given to Pen and Kath Lewis for their organisation and provision of food at the Regattas/socials. Special mention was also made of Andrew Grant, who took over as Race Secretary during the year, but has also continued to perform many of the Secretary's duties.

Once again the Club had a very successful RYA inspection this year in October, with no recommendations made. Thanks were given to Roy Donn for hosting the inspection and ensuring it was a success.

The Guard boat and engine are in good condition and have generally performed well throughout the season. There was one fault on the engine which needed repair. The Toppers and Mirrors have again been checked and maintained by the juniors, for which the juniors were thanked.

An article appeared in Yachts and Yachting featuring the Club and the Midsummer Regatta, and all the comments received on that were very favourable.

Finally, under the sailing part, Alan Doull was thanked for his organisation of craning in and out for the cruisers, and acting as our competent person for lifting operations.

Scrabster Mission Fayre was held in June, and as normal the Club supported this with a stall and a display of boats. Thanks were given to Kath Lewis for organising the stall and to everyone that assisted, and to the Foster family for running the boat display and competition. The RNLI Summer Fayre held in July was assisted by the Club running the book stall.

As normal we supported the Coastguard Raft Race by providing rescue cover and hot drinks and hot showers in the clubhouse afterwards.

Thanks were expressed to Don Ryan who organised the repainting of the clubhouse, and did a lot of it; also to Alan Scott and Norman Phimister for the tiling in the changerooms

With only one sponsor, and a very expensive production cost, it is now unlikely that the planned calendar will go ahead. It is not felt prudent to make the large outlay required, when it may never be recovered.

The 50th Anniversary dinner dance was successful, despite a few hiccups. A report can be found in the October newsletter.

Barrie Cran continued his investigation into the possibility of providing pontoons, even after he left the area. Further contact will now be made by the Club with the Harbour Trust to discuss the information obtained.

Any other business

Several items were raised. However, the most contentious concerned a proposal from Bill Hercus to disband the NSYA and instead form a Moray Firth Yacht Clubs Association for cruisers. After some discussion the Commodore was actioned to write to NSYA opposing this proposal. [Note – Information has been received that the proposal was defeated at the NSYA AGM.]