



Dates for your diary

Friday 28 February, 7:30 for 8pm – Thurso Club - Annual Dinner Dance and Prize giving. Disco, Bar. All members and their guests most welcome. Tickets will be the same price as last year - £16 Adults and £14 Juniors, for a 3 course meal, exclusive of drinks. A committee member will be in touch to see if you would like tickets, or if you wish you may contact Jim Kelly (Tel 01847 895698). **You could win a free ticket.** All tickets paid for before 14 February will have their numbers entered in a draw on the night of the dinner. The winner will have the cost of the ticket refunded. To avoid uncertainty in the number to be catered for, no tickets will be either allocated or refunded after the deadline of 21 February, and we respectfully request that all payments are received by this date.

Saturday/Sunday 28/29 June – Midsummer Regatta

Come and help to achieve our aim – 50 boats on the water for the 50th Anniversary. There are enough boats – we just need people to sail them all.

Saturday/Sunday 13/14 September – End of Season Regatta

Friday 3 October – 50th Anniversary Dinner Dance – An extra one this year to celebrate as close as we can to the 50th anniversary of the Club's formation – 9 October 1953.

Donnie says thanks

In the December newsletter we reported that a gift and card were to be sent to Donnie Meldrum to mark his retirement after many years of Topper coaching in Scotland. These were given to Donnie at his retirement presentation at Loch Morlich along with other gifts and cards from the many clubs he has helped. Donnie is retiring reluctantly for personal reasons, and is confident that the work he was doing remains in good hands. He sent Christmas greetings and this message of thanks to everyone who contributed: -

“I must take this opportunity to properly thank all who contributed to my presentation. It is not often I am stuck for words or get too emotional to speak but the presentation at LYC was one of these times. It has been a great 10 years and an enormous privilege to have the opportunity to work with so many great kids, the parents were OK too. I will always cherish the card, despite the references to 'old', 'grey haired', 'shouting' and 'grumpy'. Thank you all and long may you all enjoy the best sport in the world.

Donnie”

Training

The following are the training courses currently under active consideration. Others may be added, which will be advertised later.

First Aid – We will be organising one or more one-day First Aid courses, dates to be confirmed. It is mandatory for all instructors to maintain a valid first aid qualification. It would be beneficial for guard boat crews to be first aid qualified, and any interested club member would be welcome. Anyone interested please contact Malcolm Lord (Tel 01847 896885) or vicecommodore@pfyc.org.uk

Dinghy course – We aim to run a Level 2 dinghy course again this year, particularly as we were unable to do so last year. Anyone interested in this course, or if you know someone else who may be interested, please contact Roy Donn (Tel 01847 895646) or training@pfyc.org.uk

Other training - The following training could be made available, if enough people are interested. The instructor offering the training will only be available until the summer, so these offers are unlikely to be repeated in the near future. Additional RYA recognition would be required for the latter 2 courses, which is only worth applying for if there is sufficient interest. To express interest or obtain further information, please contact Mark Raffle (Tel 01847 894132) or commodore@pfyc.org.uk

Keelboat – Seamanship - Last year the club ran a Level 2 keelboat course. It is planned to progress to one of the next available stages - “Seamanship” - for keelboats this year. This is a 2 day course, but the time could be split in different ways to suit participants and instructors. The course would be suitable for those people who have completed Level 2 keelboat or have similar experience, or those with Level 2 dinghy wishing to obtain some keelboat experience and qualification. On completion of the course, the successful sailor will be capable of manoeuvring a keelboat in a seamanlike manner and making seamanship decisions in moderate conditions.

VHF to Short Range Certificate conversion - Since 1999 commercial vessels have not been required to monitor VHF channel 16 and from 2005 the Coastguard will no longer maintain a dedicated headset watch on VHF channel 16. In cases of Distress, Urgency or Safety, the only way to guarantee a response will be to use Digital Selective Calling (DSC). Holders of “VHF Only” licences are not permitted to operate DSC equipment. This 3 hour continually assessed course (no exam!) will upgrade existing VHF licences to the Short Range Certificate, permitting the use of the DSC equipment, with which the Club will replace existing radios at an appropriate time. The course is aimed at those already holding a VHF Only licence, and not those who have no VHF qualification. It would be of benefit to the Club to have Guard Boat crew qualified in this way, so all existing holders of VHF licences are urged to consider this short upgrade.

Day Skipper test - This is intended to allow those who already have sufficient experience, but no formal qualification, to obtain certification. It is not a Day Skipper course, but a day's assessment. A Day Skipper is able to skipper a small yacht in familiar waters by day.

Scalextric Night

The evening of Sunday 12 January saw the Thurso Club Hall turned into a racetrack as Scalextric racing made a welcome return to our social calendar. About 30 people attended, some as spectators rather than competitors. The competition was a knockout, with teams of 2 – a driver and mechanic – having 4 races of 5 laps in each round. The winning team was Glen Foster and Iain Thomson, with Mark Hughes and Alisdair Chalmers as runners-up. Thanks to Roy Donn who led the organisation of this event, as well as supplying the equipment.

Turkish delight

Want to sail somewhere warmer than Scrabster at the end of the season? Want to try some different boats? Here's your chance. A number of Club members are planning a holiday to a Sunsail Club in Turkey in October this year. If you would like to join them, or for further information, please contact Guy or Barbara Newson (Tel 01847 821285).

Snail-mail or e-mail

If you would like to get your newsletter and other PFYC information by e-mail, please let us have your email address. Do it now – before you forget! This will help us greatly in improving communications, as promised at the AGM. You can do this on the latest membership forms, or direct to commodore@pfyc.org.uk Please don't give us work e-mail addresses if this could get you, or us, into trouble.

Newsletter contributions

Any contributions for the newsletter would be gratefully received from anyone, at any time, in any form, but the preference is for email to commodore@pfyc.org.uk Alternatively, they can be passed to Mark Raffle. So far, the few stories lined up come from the cruising side, so tales from the dinghy sailors would be particularly welcome.

50th Anniversary calendar

Nicola Pearson, Malcolm Lord and Andrew Grant would still be pleased to receive a selection from your photographs of PFYC sailing. Your photographs will be returned. There will be a small prize for the photograph judged as being the best submitted.

Viv Sinclair cruising cup

Our intention is to base the award of this trophy next year on a competition. The trophy will be awarded for the best log submitted for a cruise carried out during 2003. Anyone cruising this year may like to know this before they set off. Further details will be given later. This method has been used before, and has produced a number of interesting logs.

Garage bookings

If you would like to use the clubhouse garage to work on your boat, you can book in weekly blocks by contacting Mark Raffle. There is a small weekly charge to cover use of power and light.

Garage clear out

As part of the preparations for this season we would like to have a good tidy out of the Clubhouse garage. If you have equipment, tools, or other materials in there, we will be asking for this to be removed in the near future.

Many hands . . .

To spruce up the Clubhouse for the 50th Anniversary year, we would like to redecorate, inside and out, and make a number of other small improvements. The work will be done in the spring, when the weather becomes more suitable. While each task will have a designated leader, they will all be looking for support – please help if you are able to do so. Those involved in the big squads that first decorated the Clubhouse after construction will remember that, far from seeming a chore, a real party atmosphere prevailed. Was it really 10 years ago?

Scuttlebutt

Look out for: - Malcolm Lord sailing a Fireball this season; Barbara Newson's sailing website – this is coming soon and will be linked to the PFYC site.

Orkney cruise 2002

Ishbel Raffle

Last summer we crossed the infamous Pentland Firth on the first leg of our two week cruise to Orkney - the sun shone, puffins and terns splashed around us and we encountered barely a ripple as we motor-sailed in light winds over to St Margaret's Hope for our first night at anchor.

Next morning, in stronger winds, we tacked across Scapa Flow to berth at Lyness Pier. This quay was built for battleships and so the ladders and bollards seemed to be miles apart! We visited the Naval Museum and then were whisked off by car to visit friends at Melsetter.

The next couple of nights were spent on the new lifeboat pontoon at Longhope, which was not yet in official use. Much better than climbing up and down slimy ladders! A neighbouring fishing boat gave us a bucket of scallops - still snapping – that were served for breakfast and lunch. While there we visited the old lifeboat 'Thomas Mccunn' which was brought up from Portsmouth to its original home by local enthusiasts and displayed in the old lifeboat shed at Brims.



Naval Museum, Lyness

Stromness Shopping Week beckoned but after a couple of nights of live music at the pier head we were happy to move on, stopping at Widewall Bay for an early start to go round South Ronaldsay. It took about 12 hours to sail first to Kirk Sound, by the Italian Chapel, then round to Deer Sound on the East Mainland, where it was a beautiful calm evening with a gorgeous sunset.

Our next stop was Sanday where we were fog bound for a day. Whitehall village was very quiet - the only life seemed to be the monks in their black habits appearing out of the mist.

Westray was our farthest port of call, and passing out of Eday Sound we passed through a roost that saw us lurching around in some big waves. James was in his bunk below, muttering that he was never going on holiday ever again! However we were soon tied up at Pierowall (pontoons again, great!). The Harbour Master told us we'd just missed Shooting Star, Barbara and Guy's boat.

The weather had been sunny with a nice breeze for sailing, but the night before setting off south from Rapness on Westray, we lay in our bunks listening to the wind whistling in the rigging - getting stronger and stronger. Although the anchor didn't drag, it sounded as though it was – all night. Eventually we could stand it no longer, and got up at 4.30am to listen to the



Pierowall, Westray

early shipping forecast. It didn't seem too bad so we pulled on our waterproof gear and set off. The crossing to the Brough of Birsay was quite exposed to the North so we had to put up with a couple of hours of rolling through fair sized waves, but once round the corner of the Mainland things settled down and we reached Stromness in time for a late lunch.

Our last day was calm and after we had left the cliffs of Hoy behind us the mist closed in - a good chance to practice with the radar and the GPS. We motored home as a school of dolphins put on a display for us - leaping out of the water and crashing back down - a great finale for our first cruise in our own boat.

We're already planning next year's cruise, which we hope to spend on the West Coast.