

Pentland Firth Yacht Club



Newsletter

January 2006

Website: www.pfyc.org.uk



Thurso Lifeboat

Newsletter

First of all an apology for the lack of newsletters over the last few months. Other things have kept me busy.

New Committee

At the AGM on 15 November 2005, the following committee was elected:

Commodore – Mark Raffle
Vice Commodore – Malcolm Lord
Treasurer – David Lord
Secretary – Vacant
Race Secretary – Vacant
Training Secretary – Vacant
Junior Rep – Vacant
Members – Phil Galvin,
Andrew Grant,
Jayne Henderson,
Jim Kelly,
Steve Mowat,
Bob Silverwood.

Members will observe that there are 4 posts vacant. Any volunteers to fill these or otherwise assist would be most welcome.

At the AGM the Commodore also indicated that this will be his last year in the post. Members are asked to think about a successor.

Dates for your diary

Friday 24 February 2006 – Annual dinner & prizegiving

This year will be held in the Station Hotel, Thurso. Following the last few years, when the dancing part did not appear popular, we have decided to dispense with a disco or band this year for a change. Hopefully this will make socialising a little easier. There will be a quiz during the evening. Tickets will be £18 for adults, £16 for under-16s for a three course meal. Numbers are limited by the size of the venue to 50. Tickets will be allocated first come - first served, and will be available from committee members. For certainty of numbers, we request that all tickets are paid for by Friday 17 February 2006. All members and guests welcome.

Sunday 5 March 2006 – Sea Safety Day

This is being organised by Gaidhealtachd Sailing at RAF Lossiemouth 1000 – 1630, £12/head including lunch. Anyone interested should contact the organiser – Richard Jenner on 01463 811080. Note that a completed application form must be received by 5 February 2006 to meet RAF security requirements.

Sunday 26 March 2006 – First Aid course

This is being organised by the Caithness District Sports Council, £20/head. Preference will be given to instructors (who require this to maintain their qualification), but anyone else interested please contact Malcolm Lord on 01847 896885 or vicecommodore@pfyc.org.uk.

Sat/Sun 22/23 July 2006 – Midsummer Regatta

Three races each day with a social on the Saturday evening. This is later than usual so that it can coincide with a Laser Traveller event we have been asked to host.

Sat/Sun 2/3 September 2006 – End of season regatta

A little earlier in the hope of decent weather and also before some of our younger members return to university.

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.

Lost something?

Clubhouse key found mid-December. Please contact Malcolm Lord on 01847 896885 or vicecommodore@pfyc.org.uk.

Thank you

During the severe storm in December, a few boats in the compound were blown around. Thanks to Steve Foster for sorting them out on the day. Please make sure your boats are properly tied down.



Lifeboats

As you probably know, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution operates entirely on donations, and the lifeboat crews themselves are unpaid volunteers. On average, they rescue more than 20 people every day. As sailors, any of us may need the lifeboat one day. If you don't already regularly support the lifeboat you may like to think about this. Various memberships are available starting at only £24/year (£7.50 for juniors), or just give a donation. Further information available on the RNLI website www.rnli.org.uk or phone 0845 122 6999. There is also plenty of safety advice available on the website or from RNLI aimed at preventing you becoming an RNLI statistic.

Insurance

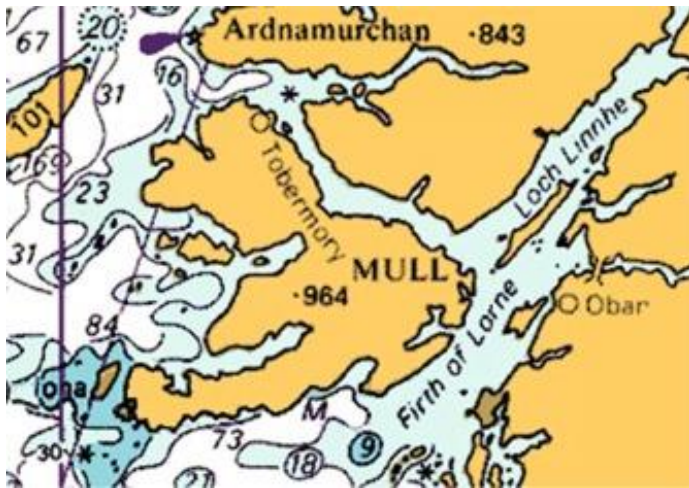
Although there are plenty of insurance companies around, we have recently received contact from Giles Insurance Brokers, based in Irvine, specialising in marine insurance. They can be contacted on 01294 274629, or www.thebroker.co.uk.



Fast Coastguard boat, working in Oban

Coastal Skipper

Ishbel Raffle



In September 2004 Inga and I decided to brush up on our skills so we booked an RYA course with Oban Sea School. Inga was to do Day Skipper and I was doing Coastal Skipper. The course was going to be 5 days at sea on board the yacht Duet with an instructor and three other crew/trainees.

As soon as the stores were aboard I was given the helm and told to take us out of the harbour – luckily I didn't hit anything as I was pulling away from the quay. We sailed across Kerrera Sound and dropped anchor in a bay on the west side of Kerrera where we had dinner and discussed plans for the next few days.

Next day dawned with beautiful sunshine. The rest of the crew laughed at me when I appeared in full rig-out of offshore waterproof jacket and trousers, but I thought the joke would be on them when they were all cold and wet. However, I had to give in and resort to tee-shirt and shorts as the sun continued to shine, as it did for the rest of the week – giving us perfect weather for topping up our tans, but not much good for learning about heavy weather sailing. (We didn't mind!)

We sailed up the Sound of Mull where I was given the task of taking us to a certain spot using only the depth as a guide as we glided along in an imaginary fog. When I called up from the chart table to say that they should be seeing a green buoy I was delighted when they called back 'do you mean this one right beside us?' (I confess I did have quite a lot of help from our instructor with that one). That night we dropped anchor in Loch Drumbeg – an almost landlocked bay with complete shelter from all directions.

Another beautiful day dawned and we drifted gently round the north end of Mull, spotting basking sharks and porpoises along the way, finally dropping anchor in Calgary Bay.

We each took turns at being skipper for the day, while our instructor Robert coached us through anything we were unsure of. We sailed down the west coast of Mull, pulling in quite close to Fingal's Cave on the way. We touched land (intentionally) only once when we tied up at the little harbour opposite Iona to get some supplies, and on the last evening we did some night sailing, taking turns to navigate up through the Sound of Kerrera, past Oban and on to Dunstaffnage where we dropped anchor at about 2am. In the morning we did some close quarters manoeuvring in the marina there – a bit too close at one point as we collided with a pontoon and ricocheted off another yacht. Fortunately no serious damage was done and we were all awarded our RYA certificates.

After a short sail back to Oban it was time to pack up and set off home, having had a great time, learnt a lot and made some new friends into the bargain.

Summer Cruise 2004

Ishbel, Mark & James Raffle

We finished the previous instalment at Pierowall, where we were waiting for some better weather to head north for Shetland...



Race night at Pierowall

Wednesday 14 July – After spending 3 nights

at Pierowall in poor weather, with similar weather forecast for the next few days, we decided it was no longer sensible to try to get to Shetland. The prospect of spending another 10 days in Orkney was certainly not a disappointment. We left Pierowall at 1425 with the wind westerly, F5, gusting F6, giving a great reach. We soon reduced to about a third of the genoa to avoid reaching the north end of Lashy Sound too soon, when the tide would be foul. We sailed down Eday Sound, then south of the Holms of Spurness at the south of Sanday, north of the Holm of Huip, and into Whitehall on Stronsay. Our first attempt at mooring was on the east side of the east pier, assisted by a couple of people from another yacht. However, it was quite choppy there and we decided to seek a better berth. By 1900 we had squeezed into a space on the east side of the west pier, where conditions were much more comfortable. Almost as soon as we tied up, James found a young local boy to play with. Whitehall is a fairly quiet village. It has a ferry terminal, a hotel, a small shop selling all the essentials and there is a community of monks on the adjacent island of Papa Stronsay. The monks come and go on their small boat between Papa and Whitehall. We had spent 2 nights at Whitehall 2 years ago.

Thursday 15 July – We decided to spend the day and another night in Whitehall. James spent most of it playing with his new friend. We planned the next few days, which would take us to a few places we hadn't been before.

Friday 16 July – We departed Whitehall at 1100 for the 5 miles north across Sanday Sound to Kettletoft on Sanday, where we tied to the pier. On exploring the village we found 2 hotels, one of which had live jazz that night. We went there for dinner and had our second musical evening of this year's cruise.



James concentrates on steering

Saturday 17 July – Another lazy morning before leaving Kettletoft at 1140. We

motored the 6 miles to Backaland on Eday, where we tied to the pier. No jazz tonight. We filled up with water after a local showed us where to find a hose long enough, and watched the ferries coming and going at the end of the pier.

(To be continued – Next time we return to Scrabster