

Commodore's Comments – Hello to Everyone

It's been a slow and steady climb out of lockdown over the past few months, and we have been succeeding in re-establishing some semblance of normality. Many of you have taken advantage of wind and good weather over the summer to go down to the Club and sail. It's been a useful place to escape the spectre of Covid, and many of you have enjoyed some valuable family time on the water, using the Club as an oasis of calm to maintain your sanity. Some family bubbles have been training youngsters and grandparents have been passing on their wisdom to their progeny. A few of the members have been using kayaks and stand-up-paddleboards as a diversion. The Club continues to grow, and Chrissy has signed up a steady stream of new members, primarily with sailing experience and their own boats.

Over the past couple of months, under the watchful eye of Tim Harper, racing recommenced on Thursday evenings, and is now running on Saturdays. In the Saturday galley, Kate Grace and her team have been serving toasties to hungry sailors. Led by Rob and Mike Pickering the 24Hr team ran an e-sailing version of the 24Hr race, on 19th/20th September. As in the real race it ran throughout the night, with 73 individual races, and proved very successful. Results were:



Hollingworth Lake SC 1st, West Lancs YC 2nd, Leigh and Lowton SC 3rd. Our grateful thanks to Rob, Mike, and all the team for keeping the spirit of the 24Hr Race alive.

Working parties of volunteers has been busy over the summer months, enthusiastically led by Yvonne and Omar, and Chrissy, engaged on a programme of clean-up and repair activities at the Club, in preparation for the winter to come. All exterior walls and fences have been cleaned and stained, benches sanded, repaired and painted, and areas inside the Club have been repainted. The kitchen equipment has had a complete overhaul and our new weekly cleaning contractors have made a tremendous difference. The galley lock-up

and freezers have been emptied, cleaned and tidied - a mammoth task and job well done. A big thanks goes to all the helpers – Kath Hall, Bear and his dog Daisy, Judith Hawkins, Kit & Kathy Robinson, Jim & Carol Gummerson, Stella and Mark Pettifer, and Kate Grace. Steve Dawson and his team have had a great time with a chainsaw, cutting up and disposing of old boats in the boat park. All of this effort has revived the Club from the doldrums of March and April, and brought a gleam to the place. The Club upkeep costs an awful lot but, with the help of volunteers, big savings have been made, and I'm sure you'll agree the Club looks a lot smarter.

And so to the present. Unfortunately, we are entering a downturn as we return to new lockdown arrangements. It has been announced this week that Sefton, as part of Merseyside, is to be categorised as a 'Very High Risk' area and new regulations are being imposed on us. As I write, we are waiting to understand the new rules, and I will be sending out an email and Facebook message in the next few days to clarify the new operating procedures for the Club. In the meantime, enjoy the autumn and take advantage of any good weather to get out on the water.

Dr Richard Stubbs – Commodore WLYC

WHITEHEAD BOWL - GOLF

Bob Willetts wins the Whitehead Bowl golf competition – again held at Formby Ladies Golf Club



It was an enjoyable day on the greens; just seven of us out this time. It is a great course at Formby Ladies, but very tight. To win you have to be straight (down the middle?). Ted's wheel came off his trolley on the 6th, which put him at a disadvantage. 1st overall Bob Willetts – again, 2nd Karen Thoroughood, nearest the pin on the 14th Bob Willetts, nearest the pin on the 16th Linda Callaghan. Due to Covid restrictions we couldn't enjoy the usual social dinner after play, but Formby Ladies Golf Club very kindly provided us with bacon baps and coffee. Bob has arranged the match at Formby Ladies again next year, on Friday 3rd September 2021, and would hope we have more competitors.

Head of Sailing -

The Monkhouse Cup will still be held on Saturday 24th October, starting at 14:30. eRacing is back on Thursday evenings. 3 eRaces back-to-back as part of an October series on Virtual Regatta Inshore. First eRace starts at 19:15. Contact Rob Pickering for more information – see Club handbook.

RC sailors hold their end of season racing on Sunday 25th October, start 11.00. It is proposed to sail the Laser and DF fleets as two totally separate events, so numbers can be maximised (2 x 6 boats) for those who can attend.



End of an era ... For those of you that remember Yellow Peril, either from sitting in it to do your OD duty, or being rescued by it on a windy day, it is no more.

Following our successful grant application for a new power boat we, have had to make room and, after its long service, sadly, Yellow Peril had to go.



Tim Harper - Head of Sailing

The Generation Game

Last year we welcomed into the Club membership our first family with a fourth generation of West Lancs sailors. Andrew Read, son of Bill Read, brought his antique Seabird Half Rater, 'Cormorant', to the 125th Anniversary celebrations. His daughter Fiona has re-joined with husband Greg and children William and Hettie sailing a Mirror dinghy.

This year we are delighted to have our second family of fourth generation sailors, with Richard Thorougood's wife Lorna and daughter Sophie, (granddaughter to Karen and the late John, and great-granddaughter to Norris Thorougood) – another new Optimist to the fleet.

WLYC has had great success with third generation sailors. Cyril Porter has just celebrated his 90th birthday, father to sailing legends Clive and David and grandfather to Jordan who last year was Commodore of Lancaster University Sailing Club. High seas sailor Ron Harper, who sadly lost his wife Anne earlier this year, is father to World Champion Tim Harper, and grandfather to Gabe and Ben, an inimitable racing duo. Ken Cooper, now a dedicated RC sailor, with racing son Martin supporting Charlotte and Sam, who is a National Champion. Over the summer you may have spotted Jonny Sinclair coaching his son William (grandson to Stuart and hence another third generation Club member) in his new Oppie. Kath and Nigel Hall have had a whale of a summer teaching their grandchildren (who have joined the Club this year with their parents). They are in and out of Kath's GP14, and enjoying the Club kayak – kindly donated by Mal Postance. These are just a few of the recent WLYC family dynasties of which I am aware; my apologies to any I have missed.



There have been many "family bubbles" replacing the usual Junior Training on a Saturday afternoon. Passing on the joy of sailing has prevailed against the Covid odds, and it has been wonderful to see parents and grandparents picnicking by the lake and sharing their hobbies and passions across the generations. Long may we all continue sharing our love and passion for sailing, and pass it on along the generations.

Christine Howorth – Head of Membership

Will you be shopping online for Christmas? Please use Easyfundraising to help raise funds for West Lancs Yacht Club. We want to raise as much as possible, so please visit our easyfundraising page at: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/westlancsyc/> and click 'support us'. Thank you to those who have already helped raise £183.26 so far



West Lancashire Yacht Club 24 Hour eRace



Having considered all the options in early May West Lancashire Yacht Club made the difficult but, as it turned out, correct decision to cancel this year's WLYC 24 Hour Race on the Marine Lake, Southport. We were determined to be positive and forward looking to find something that would enable us to continue the spirit of a challenging endurance event that could draw together Clubs and their members. Mike Pickering came up with the concept of converting the event to run on Virtual Regatta Inshore (VRI) software. He went on to develop the idea by planning 73 eRaces concurrent with 8 Special Trophy Events each consisting of a series of 9 eRaces. The lack of discards in the main event, and, in the Special Trophy Events, the requirement to complete 8 out of 9 eRaces to "qualify", certainly bought home the endurance element of the objective. Also, to keep the challenging element for each eRace we always selected 'venues' that had strong winds. As a result, many found some of the wind shifts "brutal" at those venues. But at least no competitors felt the cold or wet when capsizing in a brief squall at 2am!

We were unable to provide our Marine Lake as a virtual setting, so instead we completed a tour of many of the worlds renowned venues: Cowes; Keil; Copenhagen; Auckland; Sydney; San Francisco to name just a few. Each of the eRaces in any one Special Trophy Event was eSailed with the same class of boat; therefore, handicaps were not a consideration. The VRI boats included: Star, Barcolana, 49er, J70, "Ocean Racer", Nacra 17 and Formula 18. All sailed on a similar style of courses, but the race course lengths were varied to provide 6 – 10 minutes of sailing per eRace. The race schedule was based on a new race Warning Signal sounding every 20 minutes, ie on the hour, hour + 20 mins and hour +40 mins. The first race started at Noon on Saturday 19th September and the last race started at noon on Sunday 20th September. Because of the way VRI software works, if a boat was not on the course at the sounding of the Warning Signal they were scored as not competing in that eRace (DNC); further, the Race Management team always started on time, whether or not all the teams were on the Race course area. This was all part of the strategy of providing a challenging endurance race; after all, in the real 24 Hour Race if a boat requires maintenance and has to withdraw temporarily from the race, they simply lose distance sailed on the water. In our 24 Hour eRace if your computer "glitched" or your WiFi "dropped out" that was the same as having retired for repairs, or your replacement helm was not ready – hard rules!

On the day we had 12 teams on the virtual water with some seriously good eRacing sailors, as well as some who were trying Virtual Regatta Inshore for the first time. Chester Sailing and Canoe Club have not missed a single WLYC 24 Hour Race since the first race in 1967; they certainly weren't going to allow Covid-19 to break that record. Adam McGovern hot footed back from the GBR eSailing National Championship Finals to join his club (Hollingworth Lake SC). Leigh & Lowton SC entered 2 teams (Flash 1, plus a youth team). Not surprisingly, the youth team at times displayed their superior computer gaming skills, to teach some of their senior club members a few lessons! Woolverstone Project, who provide sailing opportunities and tuition for those with disabilities with sailing throughout the year, were really pleased to have the opportunity to try their virtual skills over 24 Hours. Racing was often very close and certainly very tactical. The majority of teams chalked up several 1st places in the 73 eRaces. But this was an endurance race where consistency was the key. With no discards in the overall 73 eRace series, any failure to start or finish (DSQ, DNS, DNC, DNF etc) was a blow hard to recover from. Just like in the "on the water" event any failure – hardware, software, Wifi, or simply human error - could create serious difficulties. Teams needed reliable equipment and facilities, with a resilient operating plan and good communications – Southport SC had a helm (Kim Pickering – no relation to Mike) in the USA, no doubt the club hoped to use time differences to reduce the night time manning / fatigue problems.

The overall results were:

- 1st Overall - Hollingworth Lake SC
- 2nd Overall - West Lancashire Yacht Club
- 3rd Overall - Leigh & Lowton SC (Flash 1)
- 1st Youth Team - Leigh & Lowton SC Youth
- 1st Masters – Delph SC



Much credit must go to Ian Brown (Commodore Delph SC) sailing as a "Master" solo, in all 73 eRaces, for his favoured charity "Sullivan's Heroes". The charity provides so much support and financial assistance for families to help them raise essential funds towards vital home adaptations for a disabled child. After 73 eRaces, Ian came 5th overall, 1st Master and won the Porter Trophy for the fastest 50th eRace. He also managed at least one first in every class of boat except the Nacra 17 (although he was 2nd twice in this challenging catamaran in the Forenoon series of eRaces).

If you want to donate any funds to his favoured charity just follow this link - <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/24hoursforthomas>

However, this event would not have been possible without the support of a relatively small team (compared to the normal 24 Hour Race). The planning at times was intensive. Working out courtesy of a team coordinating everything through Zoom meetings. Working from “a blank sheet of paper” we developed the operating strategy based on the Race Management and Scoring Team all working remotely with using a customised very flexible gaming communication software “Discord” bringing each individual (Competitors and in the race together to race on Virtual Regatta Inshore. We also had to market the event hard to encourage Clubs to join us. The Planning Team was: Myself, Mike (the Principal Race Officer), Martin Butcher (Scoring), Jules Ashworth (Marketing), Mal Postance (linking with all the Clubs who normally join us on the water), plus Clive Porter and Bryan Marshall (our wise consultants). The event itself went remarkably well with some superb helming by: Mike, Jordan, Greg, Jonny, Richard, and Martin (Blunt), plus the support team: Jules, Kit and in particular Martin (Butcher), scoring without interruption for 24 Hours (with the help of quite a few mugs of coffee!).

But this whole 4–5 month project simply would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of our prime sponsors [Marine Supplies Direct](#) and [Kraken Travel](#) – thanks to them both.

Overall, it was really important to have the opportunity to maintain the spirit of the WLYC 24 Hour Race. As Richard Catchpole (Commodore Leigh & Lowton S.C. remarked:

“It’s great to see people positively dealing with the current situation. I know it brought our club together to run two teams - a lot of fun!”

We look forward to welcoming Clubs back at WLYC next year for an “on the water” edition; **put the date in your Club Diary now – 11th-12th September 2021.**

In the meantime - Stay safe.



Hollingworth Lake SC rounds a mark



Banbury eRacing downwind



Woolverstone round a mark

Rob Pickering

Welcome to New Members

Andy Armstrong and Christine Bispham

Chris and Leanne Berks with their children Amelia, Rupert and Alexandra

Michael Burns

Mike and Marlice Coleman with their son Matthew

Phil Hall (son of Kath and Nigel) with his partner Helen Moore, their sons

Ethan and Oscar, niece Darcy Henderson and family friend Thomas Redman

Terence McQuinn with partner Rachel Britton and her daughters Emily and Harriet

Geoff Meggitt

Lorna and Sophie Thoroughood (wife and daughter of Richard)

Oliver Westlake (son of Richard)

Susanne Williams