

Commodore's Comments



Well, we are up and running, or rather sailing, again, with the first stage being the re-opening of outdoor sports. I am hoping I can still remember how to sail! It's that pointy end to the front, and mast to the sky, I think? The Clubhouse will be available as soon as the restrictions ease. With it being shut for this length of time we have had a chance to consider some improvements. Our starting point was the Club survey that many members filled in. The two main things that stood out for the building were hot showers, water pressure, and a more conscious effort to be 'green'. We have been

getting some prices for work on the plumbing, which may have to be done in a couple of stages, but hopefully ending up with hot showers, and more quickly refilling toilets. We have also been checking the lights as quite a few are not working, and updating to LED where we can. At the AGM last December, members were informed that Southport Rowing Club had approached us, with a view to merging our clubs. However, we were unable to find a mutually beneficial path forward, so a merger of the two clubs is no longer being pursued.

I hope you are all keeping well through these strange times. Getting out on the water and sailing again may be the best thing for all of us.

Tim Harper - Commodore



Sailing Matters

Club eRacing (VR Inshore). Club eRacing has continued each Thursday evening during Lockdown 3. With WLYC racing on the Marine Lake being re-introduced from Thursday 15th April, we are planning to put the VRI eRacing to one side for the time being, so the Club can concentrate on "re-discovering sailing on real water". But don't worry, VRI will be back!

Club eRacing (VR Offshore). Following the 3 month epic edition of VRO's Vendée Globe, several WLYC virtual sailors competed in the VRO edition of the "Caribbean 600" it was only 3 days long, more akin to sailing round the cans on the Marine Lake, but it was brutal! In the Caribbean 600 the sailing was far more compact with many marks and islands to round, navigation had to be far more precise and performance monitored with great care. Neal Maskrey won by several hours, and Tim Stephens was a commendable 2nd. Both Skip and Rob overslept the final mark rounding by some hours – not good if you are chasing a top placing! Over the remainder of 2021 VRO have announced a programme of Offshore Races, of varying lengths and difficulties for the remainder of the year. The following may be of interest to WLYC members:

- 9th May start (up to 20days) Concarneau (France) to St Barts (Caribbean)
- 22nd June (up to 10 days) Les Sables (France) – Horta (Azores)
- 8th August (up to 4 days) Rolex Fastnet Race
- 26th September Mini Transat
- 7th November (up to 20 days) Transat Jaques Vabre



If you have any queries or simply to express an interest, email Mike or Rob on virtual.sailor@wlyc.org.uk

Mike & Rob Pickering

Welcome to New Members

Cerys Butcher – re-joining
George and Ellie Mackarel – children of David and Sarah
Beth Porter – re-joining
Greg Thomas – re-joining

Offshore Sailing

Offshore Sailing is back; however, Covid 19 does restrict activity and there are different rules within the different UK nations, plus the continuing concerns about travel overseas. So, for the time being perhaps it is best we keep any Club offshore cruising aspirations based on "Staycations".

- West Coast of Scotland (either the Clyde Estuary or the Inner Hebrides) is always a popular cruising area; however, the Scottish government has not released a 'roadmap'; their recovery is going to be data driven. Therefore, at the moment it is not even possible to develop plans beyond aspirations.
- Cruising in Ireland (North & South) is complicated by the Brexit border issue.
- Wales are still not allowing cross border travel!

Any vague plans we can consider at the moment are limited to England (Solent plus the West Country). Even then, we have to consider the constraints on any activity in accordance with the RYA guidance, and "Rule of 6" or "mixed households" until after 21st June.

If you want to be kept informed about any Club Offshore Cruising developments this year, it would be very useful if you emailed me offshore.captain@wlyc.org.uk or telephone Rob.

Rob Pickering - Offshore Captain

RC Sailing



Tuesday 30th March was the first day we were allowed to sail, our first time on the water since late 2020. The day at the Club started with 6 social distanced RC Lasers - and helms. One decided to have a "fry up" before they started (Technical term for cooking the signal receiver). We all had a great sail, in glorious sunshine with a warm breeze, just trying

to remember which way the sticks worked on the transmitter's, and setting those sails!! We will do better next week, I hope... RC racing continues on Tuesday afternoons at 14.00 until May. Sunday RC racing starts on 11th April with the RC Fitting Out race at 11.00.

Alan Tickle - RC Racing

Ron Harper

Ron Harper died suddenly on 15th March, aged 89. He, along with his wife Anne, were proud members of West Lancs Yacht Club for over 50 years. His lifelong love of being on or near water developed when he discovered sailing in the 1960's. As an extremely fit and competitive man, he moved quickly into racing. Typical of Ron, he studied and practiced until he was moving up the fleet and then winning races. He raced in Enterprises, GP14s, Mirrors and also in his Merlin Rocket, with Bob Willetts as his crew.



He loved to help people learn to sail and improve their skills, so he set up the RYA training at West Lancs, which he ran for many years. When children came along, Ron built a Mirror dinghy in the family lounge, so he could teach them sailing. Later, Ron moved into offshore racing, eventually owning Rupert Bear, his Hunter Delta. He became Offshore Captain for the Club. Ron racked up many thousands of sea miles over the years, not only on trips around the UK and other coastal waters, but also frequently crossing the Atlantic. He sailed with a number of Club members, particularly Bob Willetts and Dave Pratt. Ron was a born storyteller and he had so many stories to tell with all his adventures at sea. He felt privileged to have sailed with so many people all over the world, representing West Lancs YC.

A fuller tribute to Ron by Dave Pratt and Bob Willetts is available on the Club website

Filling the Marine Lake



Last August the sand was cleared from the sluice gates.

For the sea water to actually fill the lake, it is only at the highest 'spring' tides when the sea level can reach the sluice gates. The sluice gates are operated from the control room under the road, at high tide time, day or night.



Ian Hughes - Hon Secretary