



Pin Mill Sailing Club



FEBRUARY 2012 NEWSLETTER

For all the very latest information, visit the website at www.pmsc.org.uk

Commodore's Corner

Christmas and New Year have been and gone, and we are racing through January – where does the time go? – It will soon be time to *think* about Anti-fouling...!

The Christmas period is always a busy time at the club, with excellent turnouts for both the Christmas Eve Carols and the Morris Men on Boxing Day. Moving on to January, we had an excellent Burns' Night supper prepared by Jo and Jackie, followed by Scottish Dancing led by Eileen and Francis Madden, and ably assisted by Susan Sinclair. PMSC will never win any awards for synchronised dancing, but it was enormous fun! We have plenty of events to come – something for everyone - check out the diary column opposite and details elsewhere in the Newsletter about a fantastic video illustrated talk about "Films made in Suffolk" on 4th Feb.

Older members will be sad to learn of the recent death of former photographer and film producer Len Fulford, an enthusiastic sailor and former member of this club. Malcolm Harding recalls racing against Len in the mid 70's when Len had Willow, a Bowman 45 and Malcolm had Misse Lee III, a Matilda 20. " I used to see Len briefly at the start," said Malcolm, "then once the race started he quickly disappeared and by the time I had finished he had gone home. So we didn't actually say a lot to one another." Having served an apprenticeship in the Oluf Nissen photographic studio in London, famous for its Beatles photographs, Len set up his own agency in Mayfair during the swinging sixties. He then recognised the opportunity for well produced TV commercials and switched to film. His most notable successes were the, "Go to work on an egg" campaign with Tony Hancock and the "For Mash get Smash" ads featuring the chortling, metal, Martians. Len retired to Aldeburgh in 1995 where he raced Dragons on the Alde.

I am extremely pleased to be able to announce that Fred Everitt has accepted the role of Trustee of the club. Fred has held a number of positions within the club over many years of service, including that of Commodore from 1987–89 and has remained an active supporter ever since, and I consider him extremely deserving of this honour – Congratulations Fred.

By the way, did anyone send me a letter in January? I received a hand written, unsealed, empty envelope, so if you are expecting a reply, please get in touch!

Lee Foster - Commodore

Diary



February:

Saturday 4th

Talk by Chris Green on "Films made in Suffolk"

Saturday 18th

Volunteer working party

Saturday 18th

Themed Dinner Night

March:

Saturday 3rd

Visiting speaker

Saturday 17th

New members evening

April:

Friday 6th

Good Friday working party and mast inspection

Saturday 14th

Fitting out supper

For latest updates and copies of booking forms check the website.

The next newsletter will be in late March, for APRIL.. Contributions by 23rd March please to;
circular@pmsc.org.uk

Welcome to New Members

Bob Driver of Shotley Gate, owner of Angel II.

Amanda and Paul Bennett, of Chelmo, owners of Kindred Spirit.

Rob Stockman of Badingham, co owner of Kizzy.

Latest News

“Films made in Suffolk”

Saturday 4th February

We are very fortunate to have a distinguished speaker to give us an unusual and very interesting talk on “Films made in Suffolk”. Professor Chris Green OBE had a distinguished career in higher education. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, the current Chairman of Ipswich Arts Association and has worked extensively in the arts as organiser, contributor and critic. In addition for more than 50 years he has been the Artistic Director of Trianon Music Group, which he helped to found in 1959.

Suffolk has been a favourite location for the makers of the makers of both film and television dramas. Most celebrated is Akenfield, but that is only one amongst dozens of episodes or one-off dramas. Popular locations include Elevedon Hall (Eyes Wide Shut) and Tomb Raider) and the River Orwell (Yangtse Incident and Forth Protocol as well as Ha’penny Breeze!)

This talk is based on a series of article written by Chris and will be illustrated with clips from over 25 films and TV programmes.

200 people flocked to hear the original airing of this talk....so don’t be late for the 2000 start.

RK

The mystery of the duvet in the library?

A number of personal belongings have been discovered at various times in the Clubhouse over recent weeks – including a mobile phone and some items of jewellery.

Anyone who thinks they may have lost something – or knows to whom they might belong - please speak to our bar staff giving a description of what was lost.

Also over recent months the number of jackets, coats, hoodies, hats and other clothing left in the ladies and gents toilets has become a problem. They are in the way on busy club nights and look untidy.

In addition, most intriguingly, there is a duvet in the library, and it has been there for over a year! It would be very interesting to know the story behind this

But, don’t delay collecting your stuff – any items not collected by the end of February will be given to a good home!

Sailing in *Hirta* in the ’50s: a few watery memories from Mark Grimwade.

Whilst a cadet member of the RHYC, I was sleeping aboard my 18’ gaff cutter *Seagoon* (so named with the written permission of Harry Seacombe, Spike Milligan and Peter Sellars) when I was awoken by cries of “Can you do First Aid?” A huge gaff cutter had come alongside Woolverstone pier, the owner’s wife having succumbed to exhaust fumes. I boarded and helped her recover. The next day I went to check that all remained well and to admire what turned out to be *Hirta*, a 33 ton Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter built in

1911. To cut a long story short, I agreed to



keep an eye on *Hirta* while she was there and a week later the owner, who lived aboard his other yacht,

the 61 ton ketch *Polaris* at Great Yarmouth, 'phoned to ask if I would like to borrow *Hirta*, as he had rather a surplus of large yachts. I was then aged 19 and was absolutely staggered at the offer. Gathering a crew of old school friends, we began climbing the steep learning curve of sailing such a vessel – especially as she drew over 8ft. For the next 4 years we sailed and “supped a few pints” a lot, keeping *Hirta* on an anchor and kedge in ‘Park Bight’ between Pin Mill and Woolverstone (no moorings there then) in the summer and in Ipswich Wet Dock alongside my firm’s “Ransomes Quay” in the winter, the latter at the princely sum of 2/- (10p) per week, which would pay for her to berth for 6½ minutes there today.

To give an idea of our sailing and social life, here are a few examples:-

We were all jazz fans and attended trad jazz performances at the Baths Hall. One night, Humphrey Littleton was playing and we met him in the pub afterwards. The outcome was a second performance by his band aboard *Hirta* in the Dock – Humph rated the Dock’s acoustics to be the best he’d experienced!

We had a Rayburn Cooker and a Tortoise stove on *Hirta* which required a lot of coal; this was regularly ‘retrieved’ from Ipswich Gasworks on an adjacent quay after dark. Shovelling some into a sack one night I was apprehended by a policemen. “Just getting enough coal to keep the boat stove going till I can buy some in the morning Officer!” “Oh, got a boat with a stove on it have you? Fill up the sack and we’ll push it back on my bike!”

From that evening onwards, the Police visited frequently – and knew where the smuggled brandy was kept in the timber stacks!

Even in those far-off days, *Hirta* needed security when she was laid-up in the Dock. Living on the ex-naval pinnace next door was “Professor Jack Zeek”, the local tattooist, fire-eater, sword-swallower and knife thrower who could often be seen, sitting on deck, chewing lightbulbs. No-one ventured near us.

One of my crew had a date with a “dead cert”. Could he borrow *Hirta* for the assignation? No way, but I would pretend to be the paid hand to this apparently rich young yachtsman. I picked the lady up by dinghy, cooked supper and, with my “owner’s” half crown, had a good evening in the Butt. Noisily returning aboard, I was asked to ferry the lady ashore – she gave me £1 (riches indeed in those days – 3 days pay!). Coming back aboard I mentioned the tip. “B***dy sight more than I got!” he muttered.

Hirta’s navigation was by leadline, Lancaster Bomber compass (which I still have) and a ferry timetable – if it was noon and we saw the



Harwich– Hook Ferry, then we weren’t far from the West Hinder LV. Similarly the

Harwich– Zeebrugge Train Ferry [£2-8-0 single, incl. supper, cabin & breakfast] often gave us a useful fix.

We sailed *Hirta* across to Ostend and needed TVO (Tractor Vaporising Oil – which is a form of paraffin and was used in those days in modified marine petrol engines). In search of supplies, we lashed jerry cans to oars and ‘the *Hirta* crocodile’ proceeded into town not knowing the right word in French - or Flemish. I tried “Tay Vay Ohhh” and

“Parafeen”, neither of which worked at a nearby filling station. A helpful Belgian suggested we try a different word (I forget it now) at a small shop up a side street. The crocodile proceeded to the address given and I asked for 200 litres of ‘the word’. The shopkeeper came outside, surveyed the crew and said. “Mon Dieu – you are ALL constipated?”



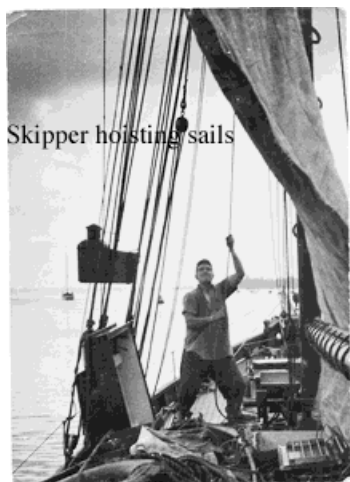
Also in Ostend, to celebrate a fast crossing, our “Bosun Jim” once hoisted an enormous Royal Standard flag he had borrowed from a Scottish Castle.

Unfortunately a member of the Household Cavalry was

moored nearby and took exception to this “Act of Treason”. When boarded by the British Consul, the bosun was attired as in the photograph, which didn’t help matters!

I nearly lost *Hirta* on one occasion. Returning to Pin Mill from Holland, we had secreted 6 bottles of Brandy in the Rayburn’s chimney. Someone lit the stove. Burning brandy cascaded into the bilge and flames licked up between the floorboards.

Fortunately they subsided as realisation of our loss rose.



. . . . and was nearly arrested! One of the crew met a charming Belgian girl in Nieuwpoort and she sailed back with us. We missed reporting to Customs at Harwich. On boarding the ferry to return

home, she had no passport. Next day the works Tannoy announced that I was “required in the office, where HM Customs are waiting.” Much hammering on benches followed, but I was released when they admitted she was definitely not altogether an “undesirable alien”!

Hirta passed to a family on the Clyde who kept her for 24 years until Tom Cunliffe bought her and made her famous for their many joint exploits. When Tom sold her, she fell on hard times until bought by her present owner who had her totally rebuilt by Tommi Nielson in Gloucester. She now sails under her original name of *Cornubia*. When owned by the Marquis of Bute before WWII, he renamed her *Hirta* after the main island in the St Kilda group – which he owned. He used her to carry goat-shooting parties out to the island.

More memories of sailing in the Orwell in the '50s next time.....

Working parties please

Volunteers required!

We are introducing a series of occasional Saturday morning working parties, in addition to the well-established Good Friday event. The aim is to ease the load on the small number of people who frequently give up their time to help the club save money by carrying out minor maintenance, repair and spring-cleaning jobs in and around the clubhouse.

The first one will be on **Saturday 18 February**.

Anyone with basic DIY skills – or even just a cheerful disposition and a willingness to muck in - who can spare an hour or two between 0900 and 1200 will receive a warm welcome and invited to opt for one of a number of fairly simple jobs. Appropriate tools and materials

will be provided so why not come along and do your bit for your club?

If you would like to help – either on this or any subsequent date – please get in touch with

James Ackland (property_sec@pmsc.org.uk)
or Rick Kirkup
(vice_commodore@pmsc.org.uk)

Escape from Singapore in 1942 aboard a ship's lifeboat – 12 crew.

The Bedfordshire and Herts Regiment, of which my uncle was one, had been sent out to Singapore in January 1942. Very soon after their arrival, the decision was made to surrender the island and he was told that his only options were either to get away or be taken prisoner. He chose the former and, as a consequence, his family were informed that he was missing. The following are excerpts from a letter he wrote to his family telling them that he was alive and well and how he and 11 other soldiers had got away. It is a boating tale of sorts.

'February 14th. We were told that the Island was going to surrender the next day and we had the option of getting away or being taken prisoner. As a party of 12 we found ourselves a rowing boat which was a ship's lifeboat and set forth from Singapore at 4.30am on Sunday morning. We left with some rations we had got from the YMCA and a little water. Just about dawn we got caught in a very strong tide and were carried on to the rocks. We managed to get off after about an hour's hard rowing guided by the fires burning on Singapore, which were dozens.'

Their route was via the Rioun Archipelago, Zuid Brocker, then Sumatra, where they discovered that there were many other parties

like themselves. They eventually abandoned their lifeboat and travelled by road and rail to hopefully be taken on by ship from Padang to Colombo and, ultimately, India.

On the way they were helped with information and food by the local people, Malay and Chinese. They also raided a bombed ship, and a deserted house which provided clothing, gin and whisky.

Initially they rowed but eventually set up a mast of sorts, a square sail out of a tarpaulin and made a rudder.

The letter runs to some 9 pages but here are some of the choicer bits, although it is all interesting:

- *'About 10 'clock that morning we were still in the tide race and passed a buoy which was half submerged by the tide and was producing quite a wake. Freddie, who believes all he is told, and quite a lot he isn't, was convinced that it was some kind of Jap reconnaissance boat, and it was not till we landed in Sumatra and someone mentioned No 8 buoy that he would believe it. That first morning we managed to land on one of the small islands of the Rioun Archipelago and stayed there till the evening watching the Jap planes flying round, we were unlucky for food and water but found some unripe coconuts which produced a good drink.'*

- *'Freddie was completely doxy that night from sleep and seemed quite incapable of rowing or talking sense. He couldn't understand why it was that although we were going through the water that we went backwards if the tide was against us. I don't think he knows the answer yet'*

- *'The Chinese certainly know how to cook rice. Maddocks made a nuisance of himself by saying he couldn't eat rice without sugar and milk. He was told that he was darned lucky to have a skin to put the rice in and anyhow we would eat it for him. Result he*

sulked for about 2 hours. Some men are worse than any child.'

- *'We sailed into the estuary of the Indegin River and across to get into the entrance of the river leading to Prige Rajah where we had been told to go. There was a strong tide, which helped us a bit, but we had to make across it. We thought that the tide was slackening at about 4.30pm and so decided to stop at the next hut, but Freddie was steering and we told him to come up alongside the hut: too late we realised he was approaching down tide. We hit the middle of the hut with a resounding crash, nearly losing the mast in the process but, fortunately, it was an old and disused one and the stakes it was built on gave way; bringing down part of the floor and most of the roof on top of us. We managed to extricate ourselves and were away once more. We then had the hell of a row against the tide to the next hut. The Malay who lived there wasn't at all pleased to see us and was evidently trying to send us packing. We turned a deaf ear, thanked him very much, tied up the boat, told him what his parentage was and sat ourselves down. When he realised that we were not going to pinch some of his wives and children, he became slightly more helpful and cooked some rice for us.'*

The next port of call was Rengat where *'Things were pretty well organised but we had two additions to our party. One, a Lance Corporal in the CMF who was completely vacant and a queerer who must have been born dirty and had done nothing about it. He hadn't any teeth and he certainly hadn't washed his feet since the outbreak of war. We christened him "Septicaemia" and he answered to it quite well.'*

Proceeding by road:

'After about another 20 miles we came to the mountains and climbed steadily in bottom gear for about 1.5 hours round hairpin bends with a precipice on one side about 4000 feet. It was a bit hair raising at times as the road was just loose gravel and every time we went

round a right hand bend we went down on the tyres. After a bit, however, the driver realised that, when a fist was shaken in his face and he was told that we would swing his bloody neck, he was to go slower. It was thick jungle all the way and it poured in torrents most of the time'

Then by train:

'We entrained as ordered the next morning and set off for Padang on the west coast where we hoped to be taken on by ship. The railway was semi funicular and some of the gradients were very steep. Tigger was unlucky as his half pint of Epsom salts only started to take effect after we had started and every time the train stopped he had to dash off to the nearest bush. The engine driver (native) then took a delight in starting off again and Tigger had to do the hundred yards in record time, on two occasions clutching his shorts, to avoid missing the train – much to the delight of all concerned.'

From Padang, they were picked up by a destroyer for further transfer on to an Australian light cruiser *'which had already been sunk 3 times by the Japs, twice by Jerry and once by the Iti'*. After 3 days they made it to Colombo.'

'Arrived in Colombo on 5th and found slight confusion as the ship had signalled 650 evacuees on board and the locals, assuming that we were women and children etc, had managed to accommodate us in convents. After a bit of a flap, the nuns took us in.'

The letter was written while on the sea voyage from Colombo to India.

Romy Blackburn

Can you help the local Coastguard team?

Have you updated your Tom Tom or other car navigation system recently? Do you have unwanted set that could be donated as an additional resource for the Coastguard vehicle? If so please contact Sara on 780510.

Pin Mill Sailing Club

70s Buffet and Dance

Saturday 18th February
19.30 for 20.00

£7.50 per head
oo0oo

**Food, music and dancing from the
decade fashion forgot**

.....
Please reserve..... place/s at £7.50 per head

I enclose a cheque for £.....made payable to PMSC

Please return this slip and your cheque no later than
Friday 10th February to:

Jo, Pin Mill Sailing Club,
The Clubhouse, Pin Mill, Ipswich, IP9 1JP.

Telephone enquiries to 01473 780271 during opening
hours