



The Seagull

The Journal of the Cramond Boat Club

September 2013

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Commodore's Jottings

Well here we are racing towards the end of another sailing season though perhaps "racing" isn't the most appropriate description. Despite having had the first half-decent summer for some years, the weather hasn't necessarily smiled on sailing events. It seems that if we get good weather it's often accompanied by very strong winds. The Novice Regatta which proved very popular on its introduction had to be cancelled this year and we've lost a number of other races because the winds were just too strong.

The weather has also unfortunately produced some very low tides and long light evenings which appear to have encouraged the criminal fraternity to target some of the boats on the moorings. It's very difficult to protect property in the open and we've explored various alternatives. High security locking devices are being fitted to the outboard motors on the RIBs. The nut on one mounting bolt was discovered to be missing – was it vibration or had it had some serious encouragement!?

We have also purchased a "Smartwater" kit to security mark club property. A register will be created detailing what is marked and where, and signage and labelling will indicate that it has been done. Hopefully this will provide some deterrent to would-be thieves and at least anything that is stolen will be traceable back to the club. Members may also wish to purchase kits for their own property – see www.smartwater.co.uk. A webcam system is also being investigated if we can obtain a suitable price for an effective installation. Inevitably it's not as simple as it might initially appear.

They say that what goes around comes around - how true! In the last edition I reported about the two new paintings in the club. Whilst we knew that the one in the function suite was by Kirkland Main, we knew little about the one in the stairwell. It was merely titled "Painted by G Duguid 1970." Out of the blue, I received a phone call from Nick Thomson, Life Member and the architect who designed the clubhouse. He informed me that from the photos in the "Seagull" he was certain that the picture in the stairwell was painted by his mother – Gladys Duguid. She used to live in Cramond and often signed her pictures in her maiden name. It just seems amazingly appropriate that it has ended up back in the club in view of the connections.

Crane-out will be with us all too soon and hopefully everything will go smoothly – good weather will help. Thereafter the AGM will be at the end of November and there will be Committee positions to fill as usual. In particular, we are looking for Commodore, Sailing Secretary, Social Convenor and Bosun.

It would be nice to have some volunteers to take the Club forward.

Euan Drysdale

Diary Dates

Wed 25th September
EGM

Sat 5th October
Crane Out

Sun 6th October
Post-Crane Out Tidy-up

Sun 24th November
(provisional)
Annual General Meeting



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We've had a full training programme this year including the Sea Monkeys and Level 1 and 2 dinghy courses. Three adults passed their level 2 and two youngsters have gained their stage 3, with a further 4 expecting to complete their stage 2 by the end of the season.

Unfortunately we lost nearly all racing for Cadets this year due to weather, a shame really as everything else has been well organised with safety boats reliable and ready for action. However, the freesails / practice sessions have been well attended.

We also had an extremely successful RYA inspection which took place during one of our Sea Monkey sessions and we passed with flying colours. In fact, the inspector thought we were better organised than some commercial training centres. The inspection lasted five hours and comprised land and sea-based observations and assessment. Basically the inspector went through everything with a fine-toothed comb.

A big thank you to all involved in supporting our training programme including the Sea Scouts. I would also like to thank Dougie Pringle and Campbell Calder for keeping the power boats, dinghies and equipment in the best possible shape. That said, we do have to think about replacing some of our old and worn dinghy fleet which is now getting beyond repair.

Lawrie Elliot



Cramond Sea Scouts Come Top

As you may know the Cramond Sea Scouts are closely linked to the Cramond Boat Club as affiliated members. Many Scouts have learned to sail with the club and take part in our lively Cadets programme.

The Scottish Sea Scout Regatta was held at Longcraig, South Queensferry on the 31st August to 1st Sept. Conditions were fierce with force 5 winds and up to 1m swell on Saturday, while Sunday was just too much so the event was stopped for safety reasons. Despite this some battled the conditions and did remarkably well. The sailors were awesome for just braving the conditions and showed some great skills.

The kayakers also did well to stay upright as they had to surf down the waves and then battle against the wind and waves on the way back. Amazing stuff.



It was a mighty team effort with everybody doing extremely well in the heats and making it through to the finals. Hannah (one of our Sea Monkeys) stood out with a first place in the single-handed sailing. Overall the Cramond Sea Scouts came 2nd in the Scouts section, 2nd in the Explorers section and 2nd in the Leaders race, so everyone was pleasantly

surprised at that. But what does 2+2+2 equal? Well, 1 apparently! Yes the Cramond Sea Scouts came first overall which is a fantastic result as the last time their name was on the trophy was 1981.

Paul Rogers, one of the Scout leaders, expressed his thanks to everyone involved including Cramond Boat Club, saying, "Thank you and keep doing what you do."

Lawrie Elliot

New Members

Welcome to our new members:

Full
Edward Willett

Junior
Katie Kistruck

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Having never taken part in a multi-day race series, I was happy to accept an invitation from Bert Hutchison to crew on his Sun Odyssey 32 *G-Maris* for East Coast Sailing Week. A few days before the event we headed out from Port Edgar for a shake-down. This was not quite what was hoped for, as the drop keel ... didn't drop! The problem was that the moorings at Port Edgar do not get dredged anymore and the keel box was now stuffed with mud. Obviously this was a major issue, and time was running out to get it fixed. Although the boat is a tad over the limit for the local crane, Bert used his silver tongue to get agreement to lift her out the day before the start. The freeing took a couple of minutes, but the mast had to be partially de-rigged for the strops to be slung. Not the best preparation for the next day.

Thursday arrived dry with plenty wind from the west, and so the crew (Bert, David Sharp, *young* Alastair Miller and myself) headed off for the first of two round-the-cans races to the west of the bridges.

As we headed for the line at our start it was becoming clear we might have a problem – the boat was not pointing as well as we were expecting. So race 1 for us was a bit of a non-event. We therefore used the time until the second race to try to find the source of our problems. It soon became clear that the quick re-instatement of the rigging the previous day was far from satisfactory, and we were now pointing about 15 degrees lower than the others when close-hauled. Not good!

Race number 2 arrived, Bert whipped the crew into shape, we started on the gun and were first across the line, but where the other boats were heading straight for mark No 1 we were well off their course, about 15 degrees lower. We limped round the course, finishing a long time after the rest.

Day 2 was to be a passage race from east of the bridges, down to Oxcars, across to Granton, up to Inchcolm then back to the finish at Port Edgar. Winds were still from the west and a bit fresher than the previous day. A change of Bert's crew for the day saw my sons Benj and Greg joining us. The start went well, and some tweeks suggested by Jeff McLeod had slightly improved the boat's performance, but lack of a pole for a long down-wind start leg did not help us keep up with the rest of the class.



The winds were picking up so we reefed down as we turned to head for Granton. Unfortunately we were now back to the previous day's problems as port tack seemed to be worse than starboard. We did a lot of deck-washing that day thanks to strong, gusty winds, and battled our way back up to round the mark east of Inchcolm. After half an hour beating into the wind with rain heading our way and at least 3 hours more sailing ahead of us, common sense prevailed and we retired. Another smart decision from the skipper was to put Greg on the helm for an hour in the rain

as we hid behind the spray hood on the way back to Port Edgar (thanks Greg).

That was the end of our racing as we had planned not to sail the next day to try to work on the rigging, and Sunday was cancelled due to high winds. Maybe not the best few days' racing but being out on the water with like-minded folk definitely beats sitting in an office.

Although we had a bit of a lack-lustre performance, there was plenty good news for Cramond boats at ECSW 2013. Race No 1 saw *Talisker* take second place, with *Kiri* taking first. Race 2 saw *Talisker* take a respectable fourth with *Kiri* coming first again. In race No 3 *Talisker* was second with *Kiri* taking her third consecutive first place. In the last race *Talisker* came in third with *Kiri* being pipped by an other Salty Dog, coming in second. Overall this meant *Talisker* was third for the series, 1 point behind *Joint Venture*, with *Kiri* romping home 5 points further ahead in first place. Not bad for a guy who has hardly raced in the last few years. Well done Hamish. I'm sure Michelle will enjoy polishing your trophies!

Calum Muir

Bar Staff

Welcome to our new weekend bar staff, Erin Donnelly and Megan Smith.

Erin has just started at Telford College while Megan is in the last year of a teacher training course.

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To many, the subject of summer spates on the Almond might be as dull as the colour of the river itself after heavy rain fall, but to those of us with boats moored on the trots the summer spates are a source of concern due to the damage they can cause to boats and moorings. This article explains a bit about spates and sets out revised arrangements for reducing the risk of damage to boats when they occur.

The Almond rises in the Cant Hills near Shotts and flows for about 30 miles to its mouth at Cramond. Together with its tributaries it drains an area of around 150 square miles with Livingston sitting roughly in the middle of the catchment. The channel of the Almond is relatively small for the area it drains making it prone to rapid rises in river level and flow, commonly known as spates. Fortunately, these mostly occur in winter but they can also occur in summer. In fact, recent rainfall statistics for the Lothians show July to be the wettest month!

The amount of rain falling at any one time is increasing, and it is these very intense and prolonged downpours that tend to cause spates. Summer spates have caused considerable damage to boats, most notably in 2000 when the East trot was effectively swept away and more recently last year when *Quicksilver* was swamped and sunk.

A detailed description of the Almond Catchment and the pressures on it can be found on the SEPA website at:

http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning/area_advisory_groups/idoc.ashx?docid=5c802726-628a-4e56-a39a-533e868ad717&version=-1

Friends of the River Almond Walkway

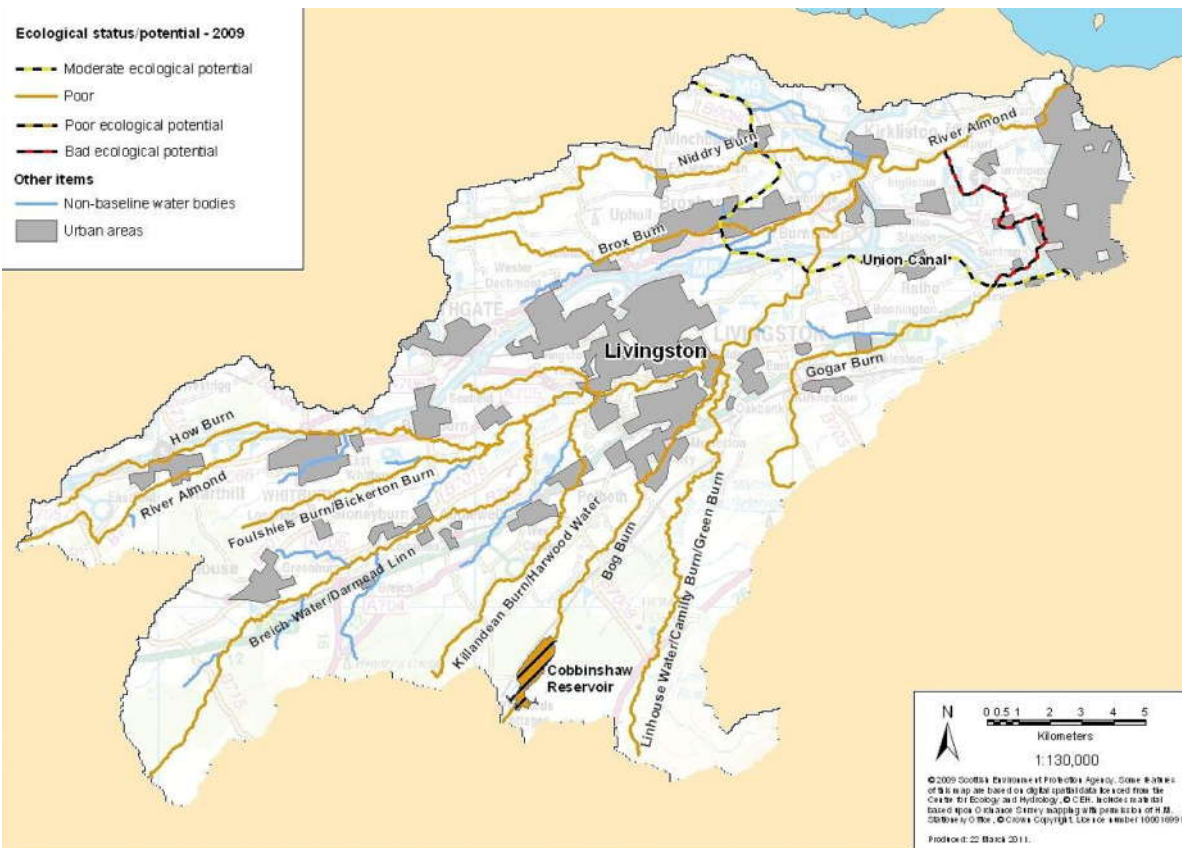
Work parties are continuing to tidy up the walkway.

A new gate has been installed at Queensferry Road, while the steps and paths up to it on both sides have been renewed and resurfaced.

There hasn't been as much progress with the replacement of the Salvesen steps.

The original design submitted was rejected on the grounds of suitability and potentially high maintenance costs.

Design is going out to tender again and it's hoped that we will see some real progress in the coming year.



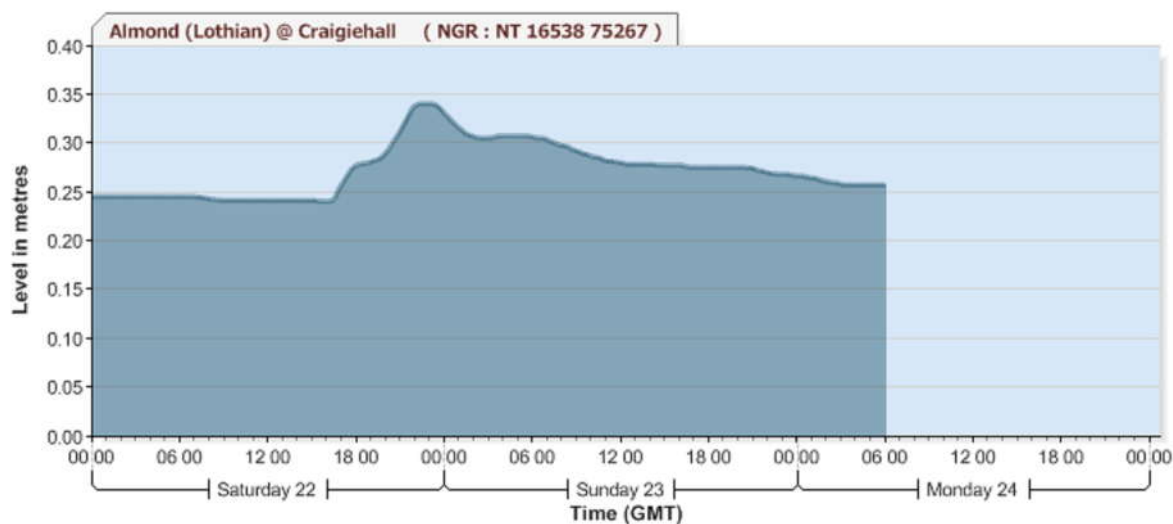
The river Almond is prone to spates when there is heavy rainfall in West Lothian so the river can come into spate even when there has been little or no rainfall in Edinburgh. Hence members concerned about spates need to consider the weather in West Lothian as well as in Edinburgh.

The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) monitors the level of the River Almond through an automated station at Craigiehall and publishes data on river levels through its website on a daily basis, more frequently when there is a risk of flooding. Data for the Almond is available at the following link: http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_levels/river_level_data.aspx - note it is the Craigiehall station you need to click on.

As can be seen from the following image, the webpage shows data in the form of a graph over a 3 day period.

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The current river level is also shown on a tide gauge type diagram. The latter shows the current level against a background of 3 river states (low, normal and high), with normal shown as between 0.25m and 3.00 metres. However, in our experience spate conditions start when the river level gets to about 1.5m. This can happen in just a few hours during periods of heavy rain.

SEPA now provides Flood Alerts by text message rather than just by phone. Members can register for this service for the lower Almond using the club postcode (EH4 6NY) at the following link: <http://floodline.sepa.org.uk/floodingsignup/>

The effect of spate conditions on moored boats can be severe causing them to swing back and forth across the river putting extra strain on mooring lines and ground tackle. The other major cause of damage is debris brought downstream in the flood; particularly trees and branches which tend to get caught in the riser chains and put additional strain on the moorings. Debris in the river can also collide with boats and some of it can be surprisingly large and heavy, such as gas canisters and fridges!

In the event of a spate, there are two main things we can do to reduce the risk of damage to boats:

1. Keep the boats out of the main flow as much as possible, thus reducing the strain on the moorings, and reducing the risk of debris colliding with the boats. This is done by using lines to pull the boats closer to shore and out the main flow.
2. Avoid the build-up of debris on bow moorings which increases drag and thus the pressure on the moorings. It also has the effect of dragging down the bow which for craft with a low freeboard can lead to them being swamped and sunk.

In the past, work parties were deployed at the onset of spate conditions to attach shore lines to certain boats. This involved dangerous trips out on to the river in rescue and/or work boats. Over the last few years permanent shore chains have been attached to the rings between the relevant boats on the West trot avoiding the need for perilous trips across the river.

A permanent shore chain is also attached to the head of the East trot, and just recently permanent shore chains have been installed at the head of the slip and ferry gaps (i.e. the bows of Dabchick 2 and Lafter). Both these are installed in such a way that they sit on the bottom but with the facility to tension them up when needed.

Now that these are in place the only boats requiring temporary shore lines are those just outside the club house. In the past it has proved possible to get lines onto the riser rings between these boats from the quay wall using grappling hooks. This does not allow the boats to be pulled in as far as when the lines are on the boats themselves, and ideally shore lines would be attached to the boats themselves when a spate looks likely. As a result of these developments it should no longer be necessary for folk to go out on the river during a spate.

The other job to be done is clearing debris off bow lines. Ideally this should be carried out before full spate conditions occur. During periods of prolonged rainfall boat owners should be prepared to come down and help keep bow lines clear and reduce the risk of build up during a spate. Following a spate it is important that that bow lines are cleared as quickly as possible to reduce strain and be prepared for a further event.

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With so much information (weather, river level and tides) now readily available online and anyone able to sign up for the SEPA flood text alerts, the club no longer needs to run its own spate alert system (in the old days someone had to receive the phone call from SEPA and pass the message on). All members concerned about spates are advised to familiarise themselves with the various sources of information and keep their own look-out for when spates are likely to arise.

We now have 6 members who have volunteered to act as 'key contacts' when there is risk of a spate. A list of key contacts will be hung on the notice board adjacent to the front door and put on the website. When conditions look threatening, the key contacts will keep in touch to ensure that at least one of them is able to get down to the club and provide access to equipment and boats (each will have a key to the tool store at the back of the workshop and the rescue cellar).

Key contacts will not be responsible for making decisions on behalf of other members about the safety of venturing out on the river. It is for individual members to assess the risks both to themselves and over the use of club equipment. Though if conditions are challenging safety boats should only be used by those with experience of handling the boats in such conditions. A system for indicating which safety boats are serviceable is to be introduced.

Alan Hampson, Moorings Convenor



That Sinking Feeling

A sight no sailor ever wants to see is a sinking boat. But that's what greeted observers at Cramond on Friday 6th September when *Voiles*, owned by Rear Commodore Hamish Henderson, failed to rise with the afternoon tide and remained firmly on the bottom at high water, with the water level above her coachroof.

At low water that evening, Hamish and a band of club members manage to bail out *Voiles* enough to inspect the damage and rescue some equipment, including the outboard engine. It was clear that a major leak had occurred alongside the port keel where a substantial area of fibreglass had become de-laminated.

The following morning, a temporary repair was attempted but the hole was too big. So the cabin was filled with every conceivable flotation device that could be found - buoys, race marks, buoyancy bags, etc.



Voiles was detached from her mooring so as not to damage other boats, and secured to the quay wall.

Eventually, and with some difficulty, she was towed to the slipway and hauled onto a trailer using trolley jacks and a pile of sleepers. She is now sitting in the dinghy park waiting for a professional survey to assess the damage and whether a repair is possible.

The leak in the hull is extensive and the exact cause is not yet clear, but *Voiles* is an old lady and may perhaps have landed on a rock at low tide.

Hamish sends his gratitude to all the kind members who rallied round to help.

Family Fun Day

For the second year running, the Family Fun Day on 24th August co-incident with the annual 'Punks Picnic' on Cramond Island.

The conditions were sunny with very little wind, which probably suited the music lovers on the island more than the sailors.

Nevertheless, a handful of dinghies and cruisers anchored off the island and had various food and drink on board without actually venturing ashore.

Perhaps next year we should co-ordinate our diaries with the organisers of the punk event!

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It happened on Monday 22nd April. My intention was to paddle out to *Sprightly Peggy*, then bring her alongside to load up with sleeping bags, gas etc, for the Opening Cruise the following weekend. The wind was very gusty, from the south. I thought that it would be an easy trip in the rubber dinghy with the wind behind so I took nothing with me, expecting to paddle, occasionally, out to the mooring.

However, the dinghy was caught by a gust of wind and suddenly, I was looking up through the river as the dinghy's stern lifted and tipped me out. I managed to struggle to *Talisker's* stern mooring from which I was dragged ashore by a gallant gentleman, "Mac", who entered the river to waist level. I was lucky that Mac and Rosie, who live in the Ferryman's cottage, had seen the event and were on hand to help me.

A 999 call was made when my age and health were enquired. Mac made me comfortable with a very acceptable blanket and a flask of tea. Enjoying these as I sat on a rock on the west bank, I heard a siren approaching Cramond. Three rescue Landrovers and an ambulance appeared on the east foreshore. Club members who were there gave a quick geography lesson when they heard one ambulanceman phoning to say that I was on Cramond Island. ("That's Cramond Island out there and that's the earl's estate!") Bob Sharp and George Laidlaw reported that my dinghy was last seen cartwheeling towards Kirkcaldy!

Next the Lifeboat arrived. I was to be transferred to the other bank and duly made my way aboard. Realising that one boat downriver was mine, I asked the helm if we could slip back and I could get a dry set of clothing from it. "No!" In a change of plan, I was now to return to my rock to await the ambulance which had set off for the estate. In it, my wellies were emptied, I was stripped and wrapped in three blankets for about half an hour. As my temperature rose I contemplated how much this cost the country.

"We'll have to take you to the Royal for clothes." "Why not take me to the club and I can get my wife's pink dressing gown and a couple of sleeping bags." "Good idea!" When we got to the bottom of the hill, Bob and Dougie Pringle were chatting. We stopped and Dougie kindly offered some clothes so I was able to travel home in a respectable manner!

I reported my loss to the police and phoned a few of the Fife boat clubs to ask them to look out for it. After a week or so, I started to look at adverts for a new dinghy. On the third weekend, I got a phone call! "This is Aberdeen Coastguard – have you lost a liferaft?" I described my lost dinghy. "Yes, that's it. It was found by the *Grampian Defender* in the Lomond Field. She will be returning to port next Friday at 2am, leaving that day at 6pm."



I looked up the Lomond field and discovered that it was about 170 miles east of Aberdeen, the last gas field before entering Norwegian waters!

Dougie Pringle suggested that Bob Sharp could arrange for collection from Aberdeen, which Bob generously arranged. After a panic when I discovered that the *Defender* was leaving

at 1pm, not 6pm, the dinghy was picked up at 12.45. I was **VERY** happy to collect a nice clean dinghy from Bob at Broxburn.

It turns out that the skipper of the *Grampian Defender*, Captain Gerry McGill, is a sailor himself. He owns an Old Gaffer and has raced on the Forth in East Coast Week. He made up an amusing ditty about the incident:

*Sprightly Peggy, I am your tender.
Cast out to sea, an ocean pretender.
Recovered by crew of Grampian Defender,
Please return to the original sender!*

Break Ins

A number of boats on the west mooring trot were boarded or broken into during July.

It seems to have been a fairly clean professional job, with minimal damage although items such as VHF radios and binoculars were taken.

It is not entirely clear how the miscreants gained access to the boats, but muddy footprints suggest they may have waded, perhaps from the Dalmeny side.

Nevertheless, members should ensure that all dinghies and tenders are secured safely with no paddles or oars accessible.

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The Green Blue

The Green Blue is a UK-wide programme created by the British Marine Federation and the Royal Yachting Association in 2005 to enable the UK recreational boating sector to decrease its impact on the environment by:

- Raising awareness amongst industry and users
- Reducing harmful discharges
- Reducing environmental disturbance
- Encouraging sustainable choices

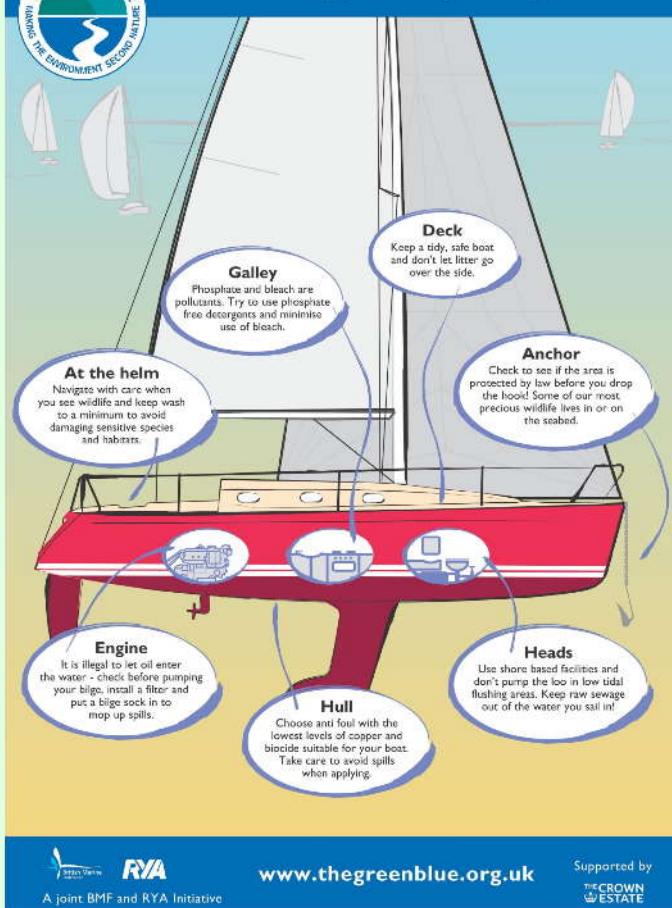
The RYA are offering resources to clubs to help us to reduce our impact, both individually and as a club.

As well as the obvious issues like oil or fuel pollution and sewage disposal, they have information about recycling, energy usage and costs, water efficiency, environmental legislation, non-native invasive species, events and regattas.

All the resources are available on line at: www.thegreenblue.org.uk. Or look out for information on the club noticeboard.



How to green your yacht!



Alvin Barber



The Green Room

The condition of the bar seating has been an issue for some years now so the committee decided it was time for it to be completely re-upholstered. The operation has now been completed and it looks very smart. It has even been done in club colours!



Acknowledgements

Except where stated, all photos are by club members and reproduced with their permission.

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