

*As 2020 draws to a close, we can reflect on an extraordinary year during which some long standing, customary arrangements were challenged by: a global pandemic, exit from the European Union and (last but not least) the retirement of our esteemed Commodore, John Judge (JJ).*

*I'd like to take the opportunity to say a personal thank you to JJ, without whom I wouldn't have known of the existence of the Royal Welsh Yacht Club. ... It was on the occasion of his 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party that I first entered the 'hallowed place', not suspecting it would become something of a 'second home'. I've come to know Porth yr Aur as a place of friendship and merriment, a haven for sailors and landlubbers alike. At the beginning of this New Year, I'll raise a glass to all the happy times that have gone before and look forward to exciting times ahead.*

*Wishing all of our readers health and happiness in 2021 and beyond!*

## **December at the Clubhouse**

Following the National Firebreak in Wales, the Clubhouse returned to "new normal" for the remainder of November with live quizzes and members able to meet in a safe and socially distanced manner. Then came the announcement that from the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020 all cafes, restaurants and bars in Wales were prohibited from selling alcohol and had to close by 6pm for the foreseeable future. Following several enquiries and requests from members, the Committee, with characteristic alacrity, arranged for the Clubhouse bar to open on what was clearly going to be the last opportunity to have a drink together before Christmas.

With the Christmas tree providing a festive backdrop, the Clubhouse was maintained at Covid-safe capacity throughout the afternoon of the 4<sup>th</sup> December by a succession of members, intent on sharing some last-minute festive cheer and the challenge of drinking the bar dry.

Alternating between trays of drinks and armfuls of antibacterial surface cleaner and sanitiser, our suitably masked Steward whisked around the room as firstly the real ale then the Guinness ran out. Last orders at 5.30pm saw us down to 2 bottles of beer (one of those being alcohol-free!) in the whole building.

The behaviour, discipline and conduct of members had been impeccable throughout until last orders had been served and our Steward was finally persuaded to have a drink. As the Staropramen ran out, approximately a quarter of the way up his glass, the volume of laughter became totally unacceptable, a semblance of order only being resumed when he announced that he was pouring the last bottle of beer on the premises. Success on so many levels - good company, good cheer and no wastage of beer.

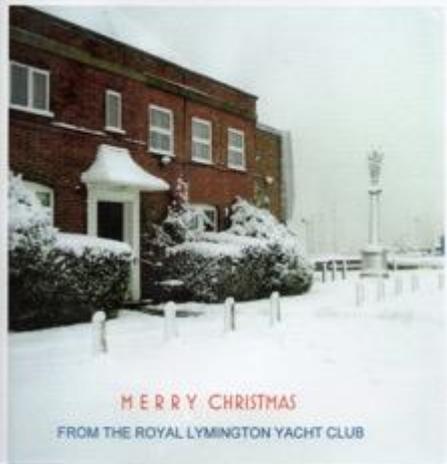
The other event to be held at the Clubhouse in December was the ever-popular 'Mulled Wine and Mince Pies Extravaganza'. In previous years this event has provided an ideal occasion and location for people to call in and catch up with friends in the midst of the hectic build-up to Christmas. This year proved to be no exception. Once again, we were at Covid-capacity as members enjoyed delicious home-made mince pies and regulation compliant non-alcoholic fruit punch.

The nautical credentials of the Club were also underscored during the afternoon as our new Commodore (then Vice) Chris Jones, was able to make arrangements for a boat in distress in difficult weather conditions on the Menai Strait to gain access to and a berth in Victoria Dock. Chris received the thanks of the local Constabulary for his part in dealing with this potentially serious incident. The non-alcoholic punch also played its part!

The 'Mince Pie and Non-alcoholic Mulled Wine' event, 19<sup>th</sup> December, marked the start of tighter restrictions on the hospitality industry in Wales. From 6pm that day only take-away services have been allowed, meaning that our usual Christmas and New Year celebrations have had to be cancelled. We would like to thank you all for your continued support of the Clubhouse, and as our past record demonstrates, we will be open for you again as soon and for as long as possible.

*A happy, safe and prosperous New Year to you all! (from Graeme)*

Christmas Greetings from some friends of the RWYC:



MERRY CHRISTMAS  
FROM THE ROYAL LYMINGTON YACHT CLUB

MERRY CHRISTMAS

The Flag Officers and Members of the Royal Lyminster Yacht Club wish you a very Happy Christmas and good sailing for the approaching New Year

Roger Conlich  
Commander.



To  
The guys + galls of the RWYC  
Season's Greetings  
Merry Xmas to you all.  
While my beautiful  
Princess S.65 lies in state  
in  
Menorca - Thank you -  
your sailing tour have kept  
my spirits up throughout the year  
Duncan + Jane (BARBER)



To all at RWYC.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A  
PEACEFUL NEW YEAR

Peggie & family.

PEREGRINE, CAROLINE, INDIA AND  
ROBERT ARMSTRONG-JONES

CHORLEY FARMHOUSE  
WEST WICKHAM  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HP14 4BS

34 CHEYNE PLACE  
LONDON  
SW3 4HS

2020

*Thanks to Maresa for supplying these pictures of the Annual Dinner Dance which took place at the newly refurbished 'Old Courthouse' in Caernarfon:*





*And now, as promised, the second instalment from our correspondent on the Solway. ...*

### **Engine Trouble** (2 of 2)

*(From Malcolm Hemmingway, who is based in Maryport Marina on the Solway.)*

Following on from my article [see *last month's bulletin*] about jury rigging an outboard bracket I thought people may be interested in the case of my engine failure. By the time I had returned to Maryport I was certain the problem was lack of compression. Having done some research and talked to people on the marina I had found out that there is a known problem with the exhaust elbow on the 1GM10 where the cooling water from the engine enters the exhaust. The sudden cooling and slowing of the exhaust gasses causes a build-up of carbon. I took the elbow off and sure enough it was nearly completely blocked.



While this was maybe the cause it was not the problem. So, the cylinder head had to come off. Which revealed a broken exhaust piston. I bought a new piston cleaned the head up and ground in both pistons. You can see the amount of carbon I got out of the exhaust chamber in the cylinder head.



So, back to the boat to rebuild the engine. I must admit that stripping down and rebuilding was easier than I feared it would be. I also gave the engine a service while I was putting it back together. Now the crucial part, would it start? It took 3 or 4 attempts to bleed the fuel lines then she started!! Success and I could immediately hear that the engine sounded smoother. I took the boat out to test the engine for real, motoring for about an hour gradually running it in and all was OK, so I returned to my berth with a smile on my face!

The cost was about £125 and that included valve, gaskets, new fuel and oil filters plus one or two bits and pieces all bought off eBay. I borrowed a valve spring compressor from a friendly garage, and it took me in all 2 days of work to do the job. Needless to say, I will be checking the exhaust elbow at regular intervals from now on.

*In these times of social distancing, communication technology has become increasingly important. Here is an article for anyone interested in improving their radio communication skills, from our newly elected Commodore.*

## “Hamming It Up”

*from Chris Jones (Commodore)*

I've always regarded 'ham' radio enthusiasts as a rather unusual breed. A bit like long distance solo sailors, or members of an intense religious sect – sort of OK to meet in a crowd but best avoided on a one-to-one basis especially if there is free food on offer. So, it was with some trepidation that a month or so ago I decided to go for it and embark on an 'Amateur Radio Foundation Course'.

Why?, springs to mind. Good question, and in truth I suppose it was a mixture of curiosity, the opportunity to learn something new and probably also a twitchy reaction to another Covid lockdown. The fact that the on-line course was completely free may also have finally contributed to tipping the balance. And anyway, what was there to lose? The worse that could happen might be the 'admiral' presenting me with a new anorak for Christmas – so all good. Her words not mine.

The course is designed and run by <https://www.essexham.co.uk/> with nine modules being presented over about a month, supplemented by downloadable material, comprehensive videos and training slides followed by a short test. There is also a 'Foundation License Manual' available online which is well presented and good value. The 'Foundation' course is the introduction to what is essentially a technical hobby with a wide range of practical applications from radio construction to complex long distance communication including use of satellites. At Foundation level operators are limited to 10 watts power but over a wide range of frequencies within HF, VHF and UHF band plans. For inshore sailing, i.e., within 50nm of land, VHF is clearly all that is basically required, although 4MHz or 7MHz HF would give greater range. Oddly, Foundation licensees are not permitted to use HF on a vessel - without the skipper's permission – so there seems to be a potential loophole there. The other route is to take a GMDSS Commercial Operators course, which allows use at the full range of HF marine frequencies - but not Ham frequencies – and comes at a considerable cost.

So, as ever, it comes down to choice and situation. For inshore sailing, mobile phones, marine VHF, radar, AIS position reporting and DSC emergency alerts provide an umbrella of safety equivalent to the densest of cotton wool wrapping. For more remote passages mobile phones and VHF DSC alerts drop out and are replaced by satellite phones, EPIRBs and DSC HF radios. However, use of the latter as a main form of voice communication requires some good theoretical knowledge to get the best out of the system and to ensure that installations do not cause unwanted problems – as I found out to my cost on a couple of initial ocean passages. The fact is that, after completing the 'Foundation' course, if I'd known when we set off what I know now, it might have saved us a deal of time effort and expense. 'Better late than never' is a good motto but 'a stitch in time' is a better one.

The other bonus is that, for under £50, a cheap Chinese Baofeng VHF / UHF radio, with an upgraded antenna, can be programmed to include all marine VHF channels

as well as ham frequencies and provide a useful affordable backup radio which is fully legal at Foundation level.

So, for anyone interested in learning more about what might be considered the celestial navigation equivalent in long distance communication, particularly if your future passages might stray into ocean territory, the 'Foundation Course' is a good place to start - and I'm still waiting for my new anorak.

*Thank you again to all this month's contributors.*

*Please submit any material for next month's bulletin to: [rwycbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:rwycbulletin@gmail.com)*