

CHICHESTER CRUISER RACING CLUB

COMMODORE'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR 1991

We would have been lucky indeed to have experienced a third summer of such good weather as that which blessed Paul Chivers' commodoreship. In the event we had a mixed bag, usually too much wind or too little, a rather cold May, and a particularly wet June and early July.

Declines in new membership applications, and in fleet turnouts, might well have been expected as a result. Our Treasurer and Sailing Secretary will give you the precise statistics, but my own impression is that both are up on last year's very satisfactory levels. In fact, the Club is thriving despite the climate - economic and meteorological. I believe that there are several good reasons for this.

One is the very high level of enthusiasm shown by many of the newer members of the Club, as witnessed by the race results - the older hands are having to look to their laurels! It is probable that the increase in marina berthing in Chichester Harbour is now beginning to have a beneficial effect on recruitment, since contact between owners is easier than for those on swinging moorings. But probably the most influential factor this year has been the vast increase in the circulation of our newsletter, due entirely to the enterprise of Brian Dandridge in selling advertising space and thereby defraying the costs of large-scale production in A5 printed booklet format. As Commodore, I regularly receive compliments on the quality of our newsletter, often from unexpected quarters. Brian, and Deputy Editor Denise Cartledge deserve our gratitude for all their hard work: please show it by keeping them well supplied with plenty of COPY - not only race reports but other articles, or just snippets, on matters of nautical interest, and photographs. Or perhaps you can persuade Freddie Kemp to provide a cartoon illustration? (Thank you too, Freddie!)

The result of all this activity is that virtually all cruiser owners in and around Chichester Harbour must by now be aware of what CCRC is and does.

Brian Dandridge will be reporting on the Club's nautical doings and I shall therefore not steal his thunder, beyond observing that the standard of competition in CCRC is now so high that some of us have been driven to seek easier success in less demanding milieux - RORC, JOG or one-design events for example. This cannot be said of Tim Mitchell in "First Sight", who has done only too well in Club races also. In outside events, he came first in two Cowes Week races and fifth over the week in Class 5, second in class in the RTI, and first in the JOG race to Brighton earlier in the season. Rob McLeod won his class in the return race from Brighton to Cowes and went on to come 9th in the RORC De Guignand Bowl, 6th in the RTI (Class 9), 9th in the St. Malo, 4th of 38 in the Morgan Cup (Class 4) and 8th in the Fastnet Race.

"Brown Bomber", "Gunshot" and "Rimau" also did well in the RTI. "Petra" came second to a works-sponsored boat in this year's Storm 33 Nationals. I gather "Gunshot" will be sporting a new suit next season.

Once again we had three boats in the Fastnet, two of them for the second time. It is also well worth mentioning that the winning boat, both in Class 5 and CHS overall, namely "Min-O-Din" or "The Youth Challenge", had Gerard Mitchell, son of Tim, as one of her very competent young crew.

I would like to point out to those members who take part in RORC races in Club boats (even if only the St. Malo) that RORC runs an inter-club points championship. It costs nothing extra for your boat to be entered for this, apart from the 5 minutes to fill in the necessary form. Had we all entered this year, we would have been fairly high in the results table. It's another way of advertising the Club.

I am sorry to tell you that Brian Dandridge will be retiring somewhat prematurely as Sailing Secretary, due to family circumstances which will curtail his sailing next season, to the extent that "The Advocate" is on the market. You will however be pleased to hear that he will continue to edit and produce the Club Newsletter, and that he will be seen from time to time on other boats at Club events.

I am happy to say that the Club is not currently short of potential able Sailing Secretaries. But the job is no sinecure, as I can testify, and the problem is to pin down somebody willing to take on this extra load in these lean, hardworking times. We are fortunate to have secured the offer of Richard Creer's services, and I trust you will endorse his nomination at this meeting and give him your full support as he settles into his new role next season.

In my foreword to the Handbook this year, I mentioned that it was intended to hold an opinion poll this year to determine members' views on re-formatting the Beta Fleet to include the slower CHS handicap boats as a separate class. This has not yet been done, but will probably take the form of a questionnaire sent to those affected, i.e. Beta fleet members, and Alpha fleet members with TMFs of 0.925 and below. The Committee will take a decision based on the response to this. One thing on which we are already determined is that P.Y. handicapping will continue for the foreseeable future in CCRC for those who want it.

I could not conclude this report without expressing my thanks, personally and on the Club's behalf, to those who have done the real work: Mike Smith for looking after the social and membership side (and for agreeing to continue doing so next year), Brian Dandridge and his teams of assistants (nautical and journalistic), Jim Laing for keeping a whip hand on our finances, Stuart Hunt for trying hard to keep everyone happy with their PY handicaps, Mike Ware for the very considerable, and at times frustrating, task of getting the results out, Paul Dale for priming the yachting media with suitable copy and free lunches (out of his own pocket be it said), all those who have so ably carried out their OOD duties in all conditions, and indeed the membership at large

for making this a good-tempered, protest-free and well-supported season's racing. The last word of thanks must go to Pam Metcalf who, as for many years past, has been deciphering the output of myself and other Club officers, rendering it in legible typed form and mailing it out.

Brian Dandridge is bequeathing (as it were) an interesting programme of events for 1992 to his successor, and our Committee will be thrashing out the details over the close season. Please let them have any ideas or suggestions of your own for improving aspects of the Club's activities. I look forward to seeing you all at the laying up supper, and on the water next year.

Hugh Caldwell.