

KSSC Newsletter

Spring 2010

Commodore's Notes

At last, the better weather has arrived (crossed fingers whilst typing this). We certainly deserve as much of it as possible.

Explorer has had much work done on her over the winter and she is looking great. The winter work parties were very well supported by many more members than usual, which shows a good club spirit. Thanks to all who helped. Bookings for her are going well and include the expedition to Scotland, which will be a first for the club, involving several crews over a six week period. Thanks to Francis Ursell for organising and co-ordinating it.

Ploes will have her annual maintenance in early May, including fitting a holding tank so we don't fall foul (ha ha) of the local authorities. We also expect to fix the few faults that appeared during last year. Immediately following this work she sails to Fethiye, Turkey. Reports of the Marina and surrounding areas are very good and we are looking forward to a successful time there. Her bookings are also going well, so if you haven't got your name down for the boats yet, please contact Ben or John to check availability.

Socially we have had the Fish and Chip supper with quiz in Feb and recently the Fitting Out Supper. Both were successful and enjoyable evenings with good food and a chance for members to get together. The next 'do' will probably be a Summer Barbeque, followed on November 13th by the AGM and Laying Up Supper on the same evening,

That's about it for now, so all the best for whatever your plans are for the summer.

Paul

From Jill Turner, KSSC Membership Secretary

It's been interesting hearing from you as your memberships have come in - thank you to those of you who've renewed memberships and welcome to new members.

There are still some folks who were members last year but have not renewed memberships for 2010. We hope that it's just an oversight, or has your cheque been lost in the post?

If you are leaving us, please let us know.

And may I remind you that boat bookings cannot be confirmed until memberships have been paid, which could cause problems as the boats get more fully booked by paid-up members.

Whatever you do, wherever you go, I wish you fair weather and a refreshing time.

Jill

Jean Shackleton Remembers....

The year was 1991. The place was Gosport. The auctioneer's hammer went down, and for £18,000 the KSSC became the proud owner of Explorer, a Contessa 32 that had formerly been owned by the Joint Services Sailing Centre.

In its earlier days, KSSC had been a dinghy sailing club sailing mainly Fireballs, Javelins and 505's from the beach about four miles south of Lowestoft, in Suffolk. As the years went by, the sailing became wilder; the beach became wider; and the members b, as members do, became older.

Well there are so many places in East Anglia at which to sail with ease, that inevitably the membership dropped off until the club eventually folded up.

There was money left in the kitty, thanks to the fund raising activities of the club's original members. But the constitution said that any money left after the demise of the club had to be spent on other sailing functions.

Rumour has it that the members of the committee met and deliberated for some years – no doubt in the local pub, and no doubt with frequent re-telling of the club's sailing exploits. Indeed stories of the catching of boats as they came in off the sea are regaled to this day.

Anyway, in the meantime the market value of the property and land boomed. So, by the time the old clubhouse and dinghy park were sold, the club, the Club had a lot of money to worry about instead of a little.

The members did their research and determined to buy a Contessa 32 at the Gosport auction where a fleet of them was being sold.

The then Commodore and another member went to Gosport with an approved limit of expenditure. One boat after another went for more than their limit. With two boats to go they made a declaration of independence, and bid determinedly and above their prescribed limit for Explorer.

One of the first resolutions of this tight knit group that now owned a Contessa 32 was, to be welcoming to new members , a resolution to which they have always adhered. As a result, the Club has an active social life, and a friendly feeling.

Bob, my husband, and I first heard about the KSSC in 1994. We were interviewed and were accepted as members. Bob was given the required test by the Vice Commodore of the Club the dedicated Sid Pretty, and was deemed to be suitably qualified to be allowed to skipper the boat.

Explorer is based at the RNSYC in Lowestoft. The RNSYC celebrated its 150th anniversary in April 2009. It is Royal because of its hospitality to the Prince of Wales a century ago. And the then Prince of Wales liked coming to Suffolk, so it is said, because of his hospitality to....but that is another story. The Clubhouse is Grade 11* listed. It was designed by an eccentric architect; and it stands proud as one of the important landmarks of Lowestoft. At any one time, six members of KSSC are affiliated members of RNSYC.

Some years ago we felt we were overusing and abusing the privilege of membership of the RNSYC so joined in our own right. That was our first step to independence. Our second was to buy our own Contessa, Dawn Walk, in 2000. In the meantime, the KSSC decided to buy a second boat, to be based abroad. They had a boat in Portugal, followed by a replacement in Mallorca; and now another replacement in Greece. Perhaps because of the second boat, and despite an active membership, there is still enough boat time for members who want to book Explorer to keep them happy.

With all due respect to the club's second boat (with all its cruising comforts) nothing, in my eyes, touches a Contessa 32; and of these, at the risk of offending Dawn Walk, Explorer is special.

Her innards remain Spartan despite the club's efforts to prissify her. She was, after all, designed to accommodate six beefy men for beefy training. There is no fitted table. There are two forward bunks and a quarter berth behind the nav table. there are three bunks in the saloon, two on the port side - the upper bunk being above large storage spaces, and the lower bunk placed into the saloon.

Explorer is maintained by the members of KSSC and is hired out to members at so much below the market rate for boat hire. We ourselves have had many happy holidays soon Explorer. She has taken us safely across the North Sea in foul weather to potter happily around Holland. We have also ploughed up a good many East Coast rivers in her. Sometimes she changes her base in the Summer so that members can pick her up in the Orwell, or on the South Coast, for example. Last year she was taken up the coast to Lindisfarne.

Once we were on Explorer in St Peter Port, Guernsey when a crew of marines came fairy footed across the foredeck in their service boots. I was about to mention the attributes of socks when their tutor exclaimed with glee that he had learned to sail on Explorer. I forgave the boots immediately in favour of hearing about his learning experiences.

That was but one such incident. It seems half the world learned to sail on Explorer. She is hailed as a heroine of the sea.

Perhaps her finest hour was in the Channel storm of October 1987 which is recounted in the book Heavy Weather Sailing (Fifth edition page 228) where she encountered rogue seas in a Force 8 which the boat made feel "like a fairground ride" The boat made it ion time to Gosport where the crew were to be tested, presumably for an RYA practical exam, but it was the examiners that never made it.

Not long ago, some club members sailed her from Lowestoft to Ostende in 13.5 hours. we found their shopping list on the boat afterwards - enough alcohol to sink a gin palace - but still she reached home safely.

Boxing Contessa

We have boxed our Contessa innumerable times on our trips to the Baltic. My husband Bob is skipper. I am first mate. Because of the boat's design it is Bob who has to make the long legged leap from bow to shore, whilst I am on the tiller.

When properly boxed, port and starboard warps will lead for the stern to two posts; and the bow will have port and starboard warps to the shore. The tension in the aft warps should

be used to keep the bow at an appropriate distance from the pontoon. Like most yachts in the Baltic, we have thick rope tied along the boat below the toe rail to protect the hull from the posts.



Entering a box, we try to make sure we have chosen one with poles far enough apart not to get stuck like a child with its head through the banister. It is often difficult to judge the distance of the aft poles from the pontoon. We prepare very long aft ropes as a precaution. It is embarrassing to lose a member of the crew, still clutching the aft warps, over the transom.

With no wind

We enter the box with; fenders on the side decks ready to be kicked over to protect the neighbouring boats; forward warps flaked out ; aft warps looped with a bowline, flaked out and threaded round the winches, ready to be led back into the hands of the person at the tiller (me!).

After we have thrown the at bowlines over the posts, I dash back to the cockpit where, steering with one leg each side of the tiller, I take an aft warp in each hand and edge the boat forward using tension on them to keep the boat on track, and to brake.

Bob then makes his way to the bow. He stretches a leg forward towards the pontoon. If the leg is braced, the boat is moving too fast. If it hangs limply, the boat is moving too slowly. If the leg is poised like a ballet dancer about to go en pointe, I am in with a chance. Bob leaps ashore with the forward warps, which he secures on the pontoon. I secure the aft warps and turn off the engine. With luck, the boat is close enough to the pontoon for Bob to get back on board. With the wind directly aft use the engine in reverse. The steering of

course, then goes to pot .

With strong side winds

If possible choose a box with guide ropes between the poles and the pontoon. In addition to normal method of entry, we loop a rope from the bow round the windward guide rope and use this to prevent the bow swinging away from the wind. Some people use a boat hook for this purpose; but in very strong winds both boat hook and crew will be at risk.

Leaving

With the engine in neutral, pull the boat backwards by the aft warps until bowlines can be undone. The loops should have been long enough for the knots to be close to the boat. I may be asked to keep tension on toward warps to help control the boat.

Jean Shackleton

From James and Rhiannon Parnell

We had made meticulous plans for our year away on our Boat in the Mediterranean. I would sail the boat from Swansea, across Biscay, with a crew and my wife Rose and our daughter Rhiannon (9) would fly out and meet me in La Coruna. However, we had a disappointing start with my original Biscay crossing crew which left me in Falmouth looking for a new crew. I was eventually re-united with Rose and Rhiannon in Finistere some 10 days late. Despite this we had a wonderful Autumn, travelling down the Atlantic coasts of Spain and Portugal. We enjoyed the abundance of sea food, wonderful dolphins and clear water. We also endured the legendary fogs and emerged into Algarve to face a stout F7.

In the following weeks we had a heat wave and plenty of time to savour the pleasures of peaceful anchorages. We had arranged for a week tuition for Rose to do her Day Skipper and for me to do a Yachtmaster in Faro. This proved to be a highly enjoyable, as well as successful week. From there we made our way to Gibraltar, taking in as many places as we could but also

sacrificing some long planned visits as pressure of time fell upon us.

After a week ashore in a friend's villa, we headed across the Straits to Morocco and into another world. We relished the difference. Rafting up in small fishing villages – being boarded by the Royal Moroccan Navy and navigating into ports that were not even on a chart added to our sense of adventure. Yet one overnight crossing took us to the highly developed Spanish coast and all it has to offer.

We had intended to sprint up the Spanish coast until we crossed to the Balearics but there was so much of interest that we took our time. We were held up in Cartagena by its beauty and its history, we dallied in the Mar Menor and sampled the old fashioned Spanish resorts on its coast and we delayed in Alicante enjoying the facilities and town and waiting for a weather window.

We left Alicante with a reasonable forecast – which proved wrong and as a result got seriously caught out in our overnight crossing to Ibiza. The boat was superb and kept us

safe. When the dawn came we could see the extent of the waves and changed course for Formentura, and made an entry which reminded me of Lowestoft harbour in a stiff Easterly. We were glad to get in.

We got to the Balearics in November, warm enough to still swim and sun bath but every one else had gone. Prices had tumbled from there exorbitant high to more reasonable rates and we enjoyed many days at anchor, often alone, in breathtakingly beautiful calas. However by the end of the month winter was catching up with us. Our last Island, Menorca, was windy and cool. Christmas decorations started to appear in the shops - it was time to move on.

We anxiously watched the weather charts for a window to take us 3 days to North Africa. We eventually sailed on the 4th December and arrived in Tabarka Tunisia on the 7th having had a fast and enjoyable passage.

Tabarka gave us a respite from winter but the North coast of Tunisia can be cold and rainy so we made our way to Sidi Bou Said near Tunis for Christmas and then in the New Year we went further South to Monastir, where it was cruiser heaven. The weather is noticeably warmer and sunnier, the town is a short walk from the Marina and the local market has fresh fish, meat, veg. and bread all at very low Tunisian prices. Monastir is well connected by road and rail so sightseeing was easy. We left the boat for 6 weeks and travelled overland to Libya (wonderful Roman and Byzantine ruins) and Egypt. We enjoyed Alexandria, Cairo (where I have an old friend) Aswan, Luxor and then 10 days snorkelling and diving in the Red Sea at Dahab. We

were relieved to find the boat just as we left it on our return.

After a week of settling back in we met another British boat with a girl the same age as Rhiannon. We have been sailing in company with them up the coast of Tunisia. They are turning left to travel back to the UK and we will turn right to go to Sicily, Malta and then on to the Ionian. We will leave the boat in the Med. and pick up our travels as and when we can in the future. Meanwhile Rose has a job to return to in July and of course Rhiannon has school in the autumn. Teaching Rhiannon this year has been enjoyable but not without its challenges. I think we shall happy to pass the responsibility for her education over to her teachers.

We have had a fantastic year so far. Our boat (Nicholson 38) has looked after us in bad weather and proved to be a good choice for a live aboard. We have kept a Blog of our travels, which can be viewed on www.swyn-y-mor.spaces.live.com

I have just heard that we have won two Cruising Association Log competitions so may be appearing in PBO and Yachting World.

We have missed the KSSC events, and I have missed doing the news letter but I am sure we will pick up the treads of our old lives on our return in July.

James Rose and Rhiannon Parnell. March 2010

From the Spenders

With Ploes to Kythnos

So much wind: northerly force 5,6,7,8 from Monday to Friday, with illusory lulls.

We embarked at Lavrio Port Olympic on Saturday 16 May. Sunday first thing we tried stern-to-ing and bowthrusting in the harbour, to the consternation

of the harbour master. Before lunch we were on our way towards Kythnos.

Everyone took 30 minutes at the wheel. We sailed past cargo boats, fishing boats, launches and yachts and westward spotted the bright Temple of Poseidon at Sounion.

We left Kea to port, the wind dropped and picked up and we moored late afternoon in the small harbour village of Loutro/Thermia on the NE coast of Kythnos. The hot spring flows down to the beach of the harbour, into a basin made for two, and on to the sea, which was quite cold in May, so the hot bath was welcome.

“We” were three Spenders (Jane, Philip and Isobel), two Horwoods (Ben and Melanie) and one Osler (Kay).

Unable to sail out on Monday to a deserted cove for lunch, siesta and swim, we walked inland. The way to Agios Georgios is along an ancient track between drystone walls, behind which were lots of enclosures for a few goats, some lambs and the odd mule. They were all hobbled. Behind them were the stoney remains of prodigious hard work – more small fields, lots of terracing and scattered low buildings.

We spotted little flocks of brilliantly coloured beeaters and a siskin, and large pollen-carrying bees working the flowers along the track. There were poppies of a deeper stronger red than ours, bright purple flowers and waves of creamy flowers – going over but still abundant enough to delight, and everywhere pungent thyme on spiky little branches which we picked and cooked with.

We spoke to a man and his dog. Vassilis was his name; he said Kythnos had 1,500 inhabitants today, there used to be 10,000. He had worked and studied all over Europe, and his wife was from the island. He recommended a place for supper – his friend worked there, the mother did the cooking,

today it was lamb and potato in the oven, and it was good. And it was.

On Tuesday we pushed off into wind and wave. After considering their height, and the nothing to be made, we returned to port and went for a walk in the other direction via Holy Irene, the helipad and the solar farm.

Demetrios the young harbour master, whose words were few, direct and helpful, delivered six wonderful pork chops which we cooked on board and enjoyed with retsina. Melanie’s penny whistles came out after supper, Jane playing together with Melanie. All the songs were sung, the tunes strong, the memories weak, so turnover was fast and neighbouring sailors came to see what was going on.

Wednesday we compromised. Two of us walked West across the island to Merichas, the rest sailed north around Akros Kephalos then downwind to Merichas.

Having practised stern-to mooring in Lavrio, the crew of Ploes watched the skipper’s performance with interest and he did well. Skippers arriving later were closely watched. Many did it easily, in spite of the near-gale. One or two hovered about indecisively perhaps waiting for a miracle. One reversed briskly without hesitation towards a narrow space, forcing the parked boats to shove up a bit and make room, which they appeared to do willingly. Another went straight to a tight spot bow first, having dropped his kedge anchor off the stern. Later, when the ferry created waves which rolled us all mightily, his bow thumped hard against the harbour wall. At once her hatches popped open and out poured her scantily clad crew and rushed forward. Nothing serious.

The wind seemed lighter before 10am, and after 6pm. The weather forecast from the Greek/English VHF (Rod Heikell: “often mumbled and at such a speed that it can be difficult to hear...”) was baffling. The boat beside us was a better bet. In Loutro, this

was a circumnavigating couple with Navtex and satellite links, in Merichas a chartering couple with a laptop linked to the internet via the mobile phone network. Best of all, talking to a skipper sitting in a café with a laptop, which brought the locals into the conversation and they suggested websites like www.poseidon.hcmr.gr

At Merichas the gusts swooped down over the yachts - three of them with genoas in tatters - playing along the masts and booms like pan pipes. As the masts leaned over together, a windy howl rose, levelled and fell, and the masts stood up again. Merichas is a bit bigger than Loutro, but you can walk all round it in less than a morning, following the road along the coast this way, or that way. Or if you take the road into the interior, you climb and gaze down on the valley floor at an olive grove, vegetable gardens, small fields, all protected from the wind, and scattered houses covered in flowers. Bushes of bright red geraniums showed off magnificently against the whitewashed walls of the roadside houses.

Walking along the coast southwards, reaching the headland we felt again the force of the wind, passed the not-yet-active night club, the isolated refurbished dwellings, past more stonework, more field systems, terracing and drystone structures from another age, and then the path petered out, thorny shrubs took over, the rocky cliffs carried on and those in flip-flops or sandals stopped walking further. You could see miles across the Aegean and follow the gusts darkening the surface, and spot the ferry, the cargo ships and the sailing boats.

There is a nice place to bathe if you walk north from Merichas for ten minutes, past the new harbour building works, to a cove with a beach and a line of tamarisk trees. Around the tiny bay are scattered white cubist houses and a small white church. From just one or two houses came signs of life, a person walking, a gardener, or a builder at work. Here, as everywhere else we went, were several unfinished cement houses, unpainted, littered with signs of

abandoned work, eyesores asking questions we didn't pursue.

There were no crowds in the cafes, the only visitors seemed to be the boats and there were enough of them to fill the mooring places. How do the yachts cope in the high season in high winds? Where do they rest?

Friday we left early. Plan A was to drop the anchor in Ormos Fikiadha for breakfast. But the wind was strong, we reefed more, kept going and continued to Cape Sounion where the wind blew harder and we shortened sail still further until we had to use the engine to make headway windward. For a ghastly moment it looked as though we might not anchor in the Bay of Sounion below the Temple of Poseidon. Fortunately, there was a boat or two already at anchor there, so we decided to give it a go and followed suit. Other boats followed. It had taken 6 hours of windward sailing to cover the 30 nautical miles from Merichas to the Bay of Sounion. We deserved the long lunch and siesta in a fabulous setting.

The anchor windlass is a joy when it works perfectly. But watch out for its tricks – the chain jumping off the roller (then be careful not to lose your fingers) or not passing freely down to its hold. The mainsail's trick: the in-mast furling jams the moment you allow a fold to compress itself onto the roller. One technique: let the person on the mainsail outhaul just keep the sail tidy, and let the person on the rolling in (or out) lines be in control of the winding in or out, keeping the tension at all times on both lines.

Between Sounion and Lavrio the wind disappeared entirely and we motored the last bit, alarming the harbour master again, until he understood we were Ploes.

Where to eat ashore for supper? We asked one of the people who endlessly tend the large gleaming motor cruisers and he recommended Theatron – a fish restaurant a

few minutes north of Lavrio. The mullet, anchovies, cod, calamari, chips, etc were fresh, excellent and inexpensive. I think we were the only non-Greeks there. Like the other restaurants, they were not yet ready to take cards, so we paid cash.

On Saturday there was time for a quick bathe. Coming out of the harbour, you turn left towards Sounion, then take the first left, which puts you on a local road which follows the coast. After two or three miles of twists and turns you reach the unmistakable sight of a very large beach, more or less deserted at 10am, crowded by lunchtime; masses of clear cool water.

With six of us on board it worked out at roughly £300 per person for the week including flights, boat, food, drink, taxis and hire of one small car. Three of the party took a taxi each way between the airport and Lavrio. The other three hired a car over the internet in advance for 238 Euros from Ace (plus a bit more for petrol). The car party, (Ace met the flight and had the car waiting), loaded up with a vast amount of essential provisions from a small supermarket, keeping a wary eye on closing times. The car was also useful for getting us to Theatron and the beach, and back to the airport, where the handover was very straightforward.

Philip and Jane Spender

“PLOES” - FROM GREEK ODYSSEY TO TURKISH DELIGHT



Fethiye Marina – Jetty Restaurant



Fethiye Marina – Terrace Bar

For over two years the Greek Aegean has provided us with some of the most stimulating sailing, combined with some of the most testing weather conditions we've experienced in nearly 15 years of Club sailing in the Mediterranean. This year it's a new decade, a new location, new weather patterns and for the first time in Club history, sailing outside the EEC.

“Ploes” is to be based for a year commencing mid May 2010 at ECE Saray Marina & Resort, Fethiye on the Turkish south-west coast. A “5 gold-anchor Marina” attached to a “5 star Resort and Leisure Centre” which boasts a spa & fitness centre, an Olympic size swimming pool, boutique, bars and many restaurants. Fethiye Marina is just a 45 minute drive from Dalaman International Airport, a 10 mile sail from Göçek and about a 45 mile sail from the busy port of Marmaris.

The Marina is located in Fethiye's Town centre. The ancient name of the Town is Telmessos where you can still see the Fortress on the hill overlooking the Town which was built by the Knights of Rhodes. Fethiye is known for its rock tombs carved into the face of the cliffs by the Lycians dating from the 4th Century BC.

The Bay of Fethiye forms a beautiful blue lagoon known locally as the “Paradise that God granted to Earth”. Surrounding the lagoon are numerous bays and sandy beaches, some accessible only by sea, set against a backdrop of pine-forested mountains and crystal clear waterfalls. If it sounds good that's because it is and prices are still in *old* money outside the Eurozone. Go on, try a bit of “Turkish Delight”.....

**From John Bird
Vice Commodore**