

## COMMODORE'S ANNUAL REPORT 2008/2009

As I write, Newport is in a heatwave! We shall do our best to keep it going for our summer-holidaying Members. I shall start by reporting to you on boating matters, since that is what we are all about.

Last summer we had hoped for better weather for our summer events after the torrential rain and adverse weather of 2007. It was not to be. However sailing races still went ahead, some being postponed till later in August. The flexibility of race starts is greatly improved with our ability use the large Safety Boat as a Committee Boat.

We had another busy and successful rowing season. Our Veteran Ladies won the 17mile Ocean to City race from Crosshaven to Cork in Southern Ireland. In June 08 the veteran men did a sponsored row along the whole of the National Park Coastline starting at Poppit. Due to bad weather they could not complete the row over the scheduled 4 days but had to return later to complete. They raised £485 for Sports Relief and £720 for Water Aid. A notable event in August was the Dinas Head Challenge rowing race from Goodwick to Newport in which our Veteran Ladies were winners in their category. Throughout the year, our weekly rowing training nights were well attended, including many enthusiastic youngsters. We are most grateful to Lesley Fletcher for making these evenings such a success. On May Bank holiday we hosted the Southern League of the Wales Sea Rowing Association for a major competitive event. There were record numbers: more than 250 rowers!. Our Veteran Ladies took the honours by 30 lengths, also our newly formed U16 juniors raced for the first time. Demand was too much for our barbecue and we have made better plans for food provision next year. An excellent day!

On 11<sup>th</sup> April, a sunny Saturday evening, in a memorable and well-supported ceremony, our new Longboat, *Angharad DJ*

was blessed by the Rector, Neil Llewelyn – a tradition going back to our earliest longboats. The boat is named after rowers Rob and Phil John's daughter Angharad who died as a child.

Due to the interest shown in Kayaking and Canoeing we now have a welcome third arm to add to Sailing and Rowing. The Kayakers meet on Tuesday evenings throughout the summer and the number of participants grows. It is planned that there will be a Kayak race running alongside the Dinas Challenge longboat race this year (1<sup>st</sup> August).

It is worth mentioning the Club fleet – for sailing enthusiasts we have two Laser Picos and four Oppies for use by Members with appropriate safety cover. For our rowers, there are three Celtic Longboats. To support all our water-based events we have three Safety Boats: two Avon 4.0m Seariders (the older one of which was replaced this spring by a brand new boat), and one XS 5.5m RIB.

All the Club water activities rely on the dedication and support of the Club Members who organise and plan the events on and off the water. Particular thanks go to the Sailing and Boating Committee and Doug Williams their hard-working Secretary. Any Members wishing to learn more about our sailing/rowing/kayaking should contact a Committee Member who will put you in touch with the right people.

I turn now to finance and Club development. This year has seen an improvement in our finances and some important developments completed. In response to a suggestion from the floor at our last AGM, a limited issue of up to 20 Life Memberships was undertaken (see the Membership page). We now have a total of 38 Life Members. Along with the increased subscriptions, this has put our capital expenditure plans back on track, and our

current financial position is healthy. Our Treasurer will be enlarging on this at the AGM.

Improvements we hope you will appreciate are:

- New outside furniture replacing the old metal-framed tables
- A new longboat, *Angharad DJ*, part financed by the new Life Memberships
- A new safety boat, partly funded by Life Memberships and partly by Shell UK, thanks to three of our ex-Shell Members who successfully applied for a grant to assist with this
- a full set of new chairs for the Commodore's Lounge (delivery promised for early August)
- a new 'snug' in the old pool room, coupled with new use of the Nevern Room for younger Members giving them more space and additional facilities such as table football, video games etc.

Further, less obvious, expenditure of time and money has resulted in a major re-jigging of the Membership Database which is now fully integrated with a new EPOS (electronic point of sales) touch-screen till system supported by a new 'back office' computer. This has given us improved stock control, a reliable card-swiping system based on weekly updates and a much more 'member-friendly' system of card issue. The new system has various capabilities which may prove attractive to Members - more of that when the time is right. I am grateful to Ema our Manager who has become a key member of the Membership Group and has been instrumental in helping with all these important behind-the-scenes changes.

Our architect is currently preparing detailed construction drawings, for quotation purposes, of the new enlarged and improved balcony (for which we

already have planning permission). This will enable us to maintain momentum on this project.

As with any private members' club an enormous amount of voluntary work is done for you all by a few. This year we have a number of places to fill on the Committee. I do urge any of you who feel they can make a contribution to consider joining the Committee. Nominations may be made on the special form on the Bar Notice Board or directly to the Secretary. The Management Committee meets on the fourth Friday of the month in the evening and we have a friendly and inclusive style of conducting our affairs.

Please make use of our website which includes, amongst other things, a means of contacting individual Club Officers by email, a monthly updated Bulletin on the doings of the Management Committee, and Sailing and Rowing information including fixture lists. There are various downloadable documents including Club Rules, Standing Order forms for Members needing to correct their payments, and New Member application forms.

Sadly, this year has seen the passing of Ifor Williams, past Commodore and Founder Member. We shall miss his regular visits to the Club, and the link he provided with the Club's earliest days.

It was a great pleasure for us to learn that, in the last New Year's Honours List, our President Nica Prichard received an OBE for her contribution to fishing and work in that context with minority groups.

I do not intend to seek re-election this year - I think three years is about right. I have much enjoyed my time as Commodore. It has been a chance to see a number of projects close to my heart duly completed and it has been a pleasure and a privilege to head such a congenial team motivated by dedication to our splendid Club. I believe I am handing it over in good heart to my

successor and wish her/him well. I hope to continue actively serving the Club in the forthcoming years.

### MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

The new database is throwing up interesting information, for example, a fair number of you (in spite of our repeated mailings) are still paying into the old, incorrect, Lloyds account, in some cases the wrong amount! Hopefully, for many of you, this was for the last time and you have now corrected your Standing Orders and re-directed them to:

**Barclays Bank**, Fishguard, **20-37-82**, a/c No **03266206**, payment date **1Sep**

For the correct amounts, see the Subscription Rates table at the front of this document. Please check with your bank and make sure that, on 1<sup>st</sup> Sep 09 you make a single payment, according to the current membership rates, to **Barclays** and **not** to Lloyds.

Sending out reminders is very expensive for the Club and we do not intend to send any more on the matter of payment errors, because the likelihood is that we are looking at lapsed Members or Members who have changed address without notifying us. We can now rely on our new card-swipe system to identify and hence to rectify these problems.

Remember, we operate on Standing Orders, not Direct Debit. This means that it is you 'pushing' your money to us, not us extracting it from you! We have no means of correcting any errors made by your banks and it is up to you and your bank to ensure that you are making the correct payments. Unfortunately, banks are all too capable of making mistakes when setting up Standing Orders, as we have learned this year!

We have it in mind to make the change to Direct Debiting one of these days and invite comment on this from the Membership.

The new card-swipe system enables you to take advantage of Club discounted prices. Remember: to have no card with you means no discount!

If you have not yet been issued with a Membership Card, this is easily rectified with our new card-issue system. Simply ask for one at the bar (but not when our staff are working flat out, please!)

If you need a replacement card, again no problem, but there is a charge of £5 to cover costs.

A few Life Memberships remain to be issued, so if you want to take advantage of this rare opportunity: on your own behalf or perhaps to give a lasting present to a member of your family, we will be delighted to welcome you. Non-members may apply as well as Members. If you require further details, please contact the Membership Secretary c/o the Club.

George Potts

*Commodore*

5 July 2009