

# KESSINGLAND SEA SAILING CLUB

## NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2014

### COMMODORE'S COMMENTS & CONDOLENCES

#### 50<sup>th</sup> YEAR ANNIVERSARY 1964 - 2014

It's 'bin arr funny ole year, boy' as they would say in local parlance! Some high's and low's of 2014. Firstly, on behalf of the Club, our sincere condolences to Stan's nieces Mary White and Sarah Maher and their respective families on the loss of our Club President, Stan Beckett. At 93 he enjoyed a long and active life, always having a positive outlook on the value of life despite spending his latter years in a care-home bed.

The funeral service was held at Gorleston Crematorium on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> September and was well attended. The *Eulogy* was given by myself and Paul Noton and is copied elsewhere in this Newsletter for those unable to attend the service. Most of us returned to the RNSYC afterwards for a sandwich and a glass of wine, which I'm sure Stan would have approved of. Generous to the end, Stan bequeathed a sum of money to KSSC in recognition of his beloved sailing. The family requested we organise an event in April next year in fitting tribute to Stan, with all Club Members and friends invited. It's intended to scatter Stan's ashes at sea on the same occasion. More details to follow.....

A real mixed bag of weather this year. Early on, the Committee decided to break with tradition and base Explorer on the 'Orwell' for most of the season. We had an invite from Adastral Park Sailing Club, based at the Suffolk Yacht Harbour at Levington to become unofficially affiliated. A club of similar size to KSSC and formed as a sports recreation side of B.T., they have their own 33ft Jeanneau - Sun Odyssey - 'Carina'. The intention was for their members to have access to Explorer whilst berthed at S.Y.H. in order to increase usage and thus, income to us. Many formalities had to be sorted before we were able to offer them Explorer under our Club rules. Although late getting underway this year, the joint-venture produced some very interesting observations and has real potential for the future. It also produced some extra usage and income for **Explorer**.



*Homeward Bound – Oct 2014*

Ploes has had a good year starting with an engine and saildrive removal and a full maintenance programme on both, in May. There have been 14 weeks of bookings this year so far, generating nearly £13,000 pounds of income although running costs have gone up, as you would expect with increased usage. Amongst the main costs excluding the refit, was replacing the Genoa at a cost of 1,600 Euro's. Fortunately Ploes has been sailing virtually trouble-free for most of this season with thanks to Gareth & Claire.

On a low point, we've lost our Club Website which was to be expected considering that the site was run under a member's private web-space on 'www.atazoa.co.uk', who is no longer a member of the Club. There will be more on that subject at the AGM, but suffice to say for now that the new Club Official Home Website is [www.kessingland-seasailingclub.uk](http://www.kessingland-seasailingclub.uk).

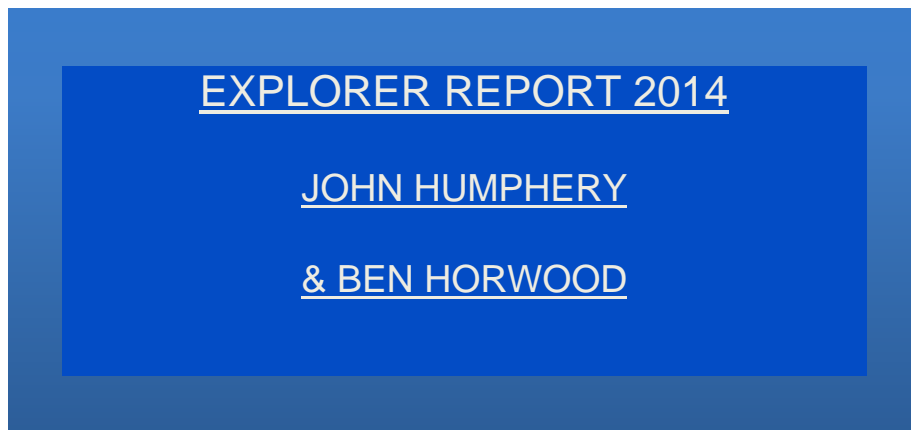
Laurie Rainger was appointed as the Club Webmaster earlier this year and can be contacted on e-mail address:- [admin@kessingland-seasailingclub.uk](mailto:admin@kessingland-seasailingclub.uk)

Please be patient as the new Website is under development by Laurie and other profession experts and will not be live and proactive until early in the New Year.

Finally on the social side, please do try to come to our special Golden Anniversary Dinner on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Jill has produced, with considerable effort, a retro-style meal circa. 1960's for those of us old enough to remember and I include myself. We have some entertainment in the form of 'sea-songs' from a local songster and for those that wish, you can join in. It should be fun....

I hope to see you all there - ☺ ☺ ☺

**COMMODORE**



Explorer has been kept at Suffolk Yacht Harbour, Levington, all summer. She still had a few minor problems after the Winter refit, but

generally, they have not prevented her use. Until the last couple of weeks or so the batteries have not given trouble, and the mains-charging system has

been working well while she has lain

A battery/charger problem has been reported in the last few days, but due to my impending trip to Russia, I have not been able to investigate it.

The echo-sounder has generally worked OK, but the speed/distance log suffered total failure when the cable to the sensor-unit broke completely at the

alongside on her pontoon berth.

"wet" end. The speed/distance log is due to be replaced with a new instrument this winter. It is likely that the new sensor unit will be of a different size to the old, which means that the hull-fitting will have to be replaced. This can only be done with the boat out of the water.

**Lift out and laying up will be on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October - Volunteers are required.**

## **EXPLORER 2014**

### Usage:

Previous years have seen a "4 way split" for Explorer's season: April/May at RNSYC, Lowestoft for familiarisation plus skipper accreditation sessions, followed by a spell at Suffolk Yacht Harbour (Levington), then a period for back-to-back bookings to enable extended cruising and then return to berthing at RNSYC, Lowestoft. The back-to-back bookings worked well in 2010 and 2012 but have not been a

regular feature of Explorer's recent sailing years. At the start of this sailing season I undertook some "market research" to identify how to best maximise the use of Explorer in 2014. The unequivocal outcome was that usage would be increased by basing her at Suffolk Yacht Harbour, following a period for enabling familiarisation and accreditation sessions at RNSYC (Lowestoft).

The outcomes for Explorer usage have been as follows:

- Adverse weather precluded the single expression of interest by a non-member in a familiarization / accreditation session.
- Explorer was used for 27 days by 7 skippers whilst at Suffolk Yacht Harbour (Levington).
- There has been no interest in back-to-back bookings this year so no extended cruising.

An added bonus of being at Suffolk Yacht Harbour has been the tie-up with Adastral Park Sailing Club. This has been a “getting to know you” season and has resulted in some additional usage of Explorer and revenue for KSSC. Whilst this benefit has been relatively small this year there is the potential for more, should the arrangement be repeated next year.

#### The financial dimension and the future:

27 days usage means £1,350 revenue to offset maintenance, lift-in, lift-out and berthing fees. There is, therefore, a cost to the Club in keeping Explorer. An analysis of the 27 days shows that whilst 7 skippers used her, 1 skipper was responsible for 37% of the bookings. This is a precarious situation! The debate over Explorer’s future will, I am sure, continue!!

**Ben Horwood**

### **A TRIBUTE TO OUR LATE PRESIDENT – CECIL STANLEY BECKETT**

**1921 - 2014**

#### **EULOGY SPOKEN BY THE COMMODORE AND PAUL NOTON AT STAN’S FUNERAL SERVICE :-**

To spend a few minutes recounting some periods of his life we must start in June 1921 when Stan was born near Wrexham into the family of a Yorkshire father and Northern Irish mother. He was their second son as Adrian was 15 months old when Stanley arrived.

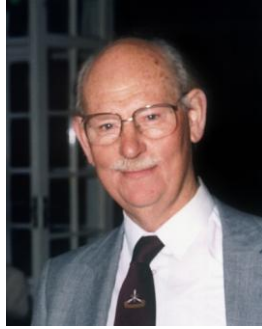
In 1929 they all moved to Virginia Water where Stan finished his schooling and started work. He had several jobs before he got what he says was a dream job for a young man. It was with a flying training company at an aerodrome near Chobham. He was there when war broke out and was in the Home Guard until he was called up in Dec 1941, aged 20.

While training in the RAF he became known as *Thomas* after a Corporal thoughtfully re-christened him ‘*Thomas a Beckett*’.

Sadly he did not become a Spitfire pilot, but in 1943 joined active service as a Mid-Upper Gunner in Halifax bombers. He completed 22 successful operations before being shot down on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, in 1944. Stan and the rear gunner parachuted to safety, but unfortunately the rest of the crew died in the crash landing in Belgium.



**Stan 1941 age 20**



**1989 at Sarah's Wedding**

POW life was then his lot until the end of the European war after which he started the long march home. Thankfully, it was not very long for him and a few other men, as they came across an American flying field and got a lift back to Blighty in a Dakota. Then came a period of re-training to become a Mosquito engineer followed again by a complete change, managing a Services Club in Germany. Demob finally came in 1946 and with his grey pinstripe demob suit he was back in civvy street, where he was able to become Stan again...

After a short time as a civilian worker with the Met Police he embarked on his career in the food supply business, which involved various positions with several well known company's, then running his own shop for a while. His longest position was with G. Costa & Co for some 26 years, followed by a period as a Director of a delicatessen supply company before he reached retirement.

While working at Costa's he moved to Hopton in 1957 and then took up sailing in 1964, soon joining KSSC. I joined the Club in the early 70s and Stan and his wife Joan, were keen to ensure we took part in as many other activities as possible and so he became a good family friend.

He would often call by our home for a cuppa and piece of cake when on his selling rounds and, up to recently, whenever we visited him he always enquired how our children were getting on, particularly Andrew with his disability.

Most of our sailing tuition took place at sea and we were often able to learn from the friendly banter between Stan and his crew Billy Killett, which could be heard above the noisy waves. Sailing turned out to be a hobby Stan really got on top of and it was not long before he was winning races and trophies with his Javelins.

Always a keen Club member he helped in many ways and held various Club offices. He became our Commodore in 1976, a position that he held again from 1985 until 1994 finally becoming our President in 1996. During his second time as Commodore we took the decision to sell up the beach clubhouse and, later on, we decided to become the big-boat club that we still are today. So, Explorer was bought and we all had to try and handle a proper sailing boat. After some hairy practising and RYA courses we got sailing around the East and South coasts.

I remember after one very uncomfortable ride to Dover, trying to convince Stan that the best thing for seasickness was to eat mars bars and drink fanta. The theory being that while it's inside, you are getting plenty of energy, then, if it comes up it tastes just like a Terry's Chocolate Orange, so you swallow it again. It always works for me, but I don't think Stan ever tried it....

We had several trips together across to France, Belgium and Holland and he was always excellent company with many tales of his escapades in the RAF and then in his retail career.

As well as sailing, Stan also enjoyed playing golf until a stroke unfortunately put an end to this and many other things. But he remained on the club committee and gave us the benefit of his thoughts and opinions until getting around became too difficult. One of the last things he undertook was to write his life story, which I had the interesting, though often quite difficult, task of putting together and getting printed. It was titled Stan Beckett, a Halifax MUG. That's a Halifax Mid-Upper Gunner.

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**Thank you Paul,**

As you quite rightly said we could both talk for hours on Stan's fulfilment of life. It is, after all, not just out of respect we're all here today, but as part of a celebration of his very long and active life....

Unfortunately I didn't get to meet Stan until I joined Kessingland Sea Sailing Club in the mid 90's, soon after the decision was taken to purchase the first 'big-boat' - Explorer. Stan was approaching 75 by then, but still keen as mustard to practice his sailing skills on Explorer - a Contessa 32. Some might argue the Contessa has similar characteristics to a dinghy – low freeboard, fast exhilarating sailing, especially carrying spinnaker, in sea conditions that you really shouldn't. Like dinghy sailing, you could say a hairy, seat-of-the-pants, wet-bum ride and that wasn't always sea-water. Stan took it all in his stride, as Paul recounted.....

Edna May came soon afterwards – the first of three Mediterranean yachts. Although Stan never managed to sail on any of them, he frequently talked to me about the possibility.

He had dreams of sailing the Atlantic right up to the end. At the age of about 85 Stan decided to give up driving, although he still took the occasional sail. Living in the next village to Stan, I was happy to act as his chauffeur, regularly picking him up for the club's quarterly management meetings and for the occasional yacht club dinner. As generous as ever, he always insisted I have a bottle of wine to cover the cost, despite my protests to the contrary.

He was such good fun at after-dinner speaking - we had all heard the same jokes time and time again, even though I wrote out a selection of new jokes for every event. We never tired of hearing the same jokes as he never finished them!!! He just laughed so much before the 'punch-line' at his own joke, and we of course laughed at him, so the jokes became everlasting, as all good stories should.... **Good old Stan.**

On one occasion we walked into the Royal Norfolk & Suffolk Yacht Club main entrance and unbeknown to me, Stan had forgotten to do up his trouser braces. Needless to say, opening the door he revealed a side of Stan we had never seen before! Luckily Penny Walker a G.P. was just behind... She immediately came to the rescue with a heave-up and a safety-pin and said, "It's alright Stan, I see the same thing in my surgery every day" Stan, looking at the safety pin, was speechless...

Another occasion I was driving Stan and his latest lady-friend Joyce, home to Hopton after a fairly late-night boozy dinner at the Yacht Club. Joyce called Stan her *toyboy* as she was a few years older than him, then approaching 90. They lived quite close to one another on the same quiet road in Hopton. I discretely said to Stan, sitting in the front seat “Shall I drop off Joyce at her house tonight or should I take her home to yours???” Stan replied with a slightly indignant smile “She’s not that type of girl” – I smiled and did as I was told. I could go on much longer with more anecdotes that were typical of the man, but unfortunately time does not permit.

Nance and I regularly visited Stan at Lound Hall Care Home, usually with a small bottle of wine. He seemed to like a glass or two and still talked keenly of his sailing ambitions, like sailing the Atlantic, although I believe he really knew his limitations. He said to me on more than one occasion, he’d had more strokes than Big Ben!

It remains to say, on behalf of Kessingland Sea Sailing Club and all the members he called his friends – Thanks Stan for all the pleasure you’ve given us over the years. We hope we can continue with your legacy as our President, in keeping the Club in its 50th Anniversary Year, healthy and moving forward towards our next milestone, exactly as you would have wanted. **Thank you .....**



Stan at 90 - still smiling!



‘Three’ old crocks at the RNSYC...

**ADVENTURE IN BELIZE**  
**BY PENNY & ALEXANDER WALKER**

This is edited from a much longer log sent in by Penny. It is hoped that the full version with all the photos will be posted on the new website once it is up and running.

**James Parnell - Editor**

In 2013 my brother who lives on board his yacht in Central America, suggested to us that we might like to sail on his second boat for 2 months in Central America to test it out after an extensive refit in preparation for selling it.

We arrived in Fronteras in Guatemala to be met by my bro and his wife (J&S). Both of them had been working



Texan bay / burnt key marina is ideal for boats to spend hurricane summers holed-up & well protected. The bay is lush and jungly and well protected and there are lots of slots for boats in the mangroves. The facilities are somewhat basic, as expected as we are out of contact with anywhere except by boat and phone. There are about 30 boats here, some are just house boats, everyone seems to know each other and there are stories about each of them - village life on the water. Electricity on the boat doesn't seem a problem as it is made by solar panels and wind generator but fresh drinking water is more a problem. We have been sailing the Lady Anne in a regatta arranged by John in the last 3 days and LA has done well --- we were

very hard to get the boat up to scratch. We were told that we were going to sail in a regatta in the jungle marina which J. is so fond of, in 3 days so we got ourselves more used to the boat and it's workings. It is a sleek and beautiful 35 year old 31foot S and S Bermudan yacht with self steering and solar power. It sails like a dream there is a small cabin with a 4 burner stove and a fridge and 2 forward berths.



1st yesterday after the faster multi-hulled boats. Our next move which was a 17km trip along the Rio Dulce (sweet river) to Livingstone and then out into the Caribbean sea to Belize.

### **Belize:**

We have arrived and have been in Placentia for 2 days. We are anchored off Yolis bar and have got a lot anchor chain out, we are anchored in 16 foot and have over 100 foot of chain and another 50 foot of rope. J. has advised this as the NE trade winds whistle down this area and if you are well and truly anchored it feels better and safer. We have been swimming a lot and the water is very salty. We are now starting to think about our trips out to the cays (coral



islands). There are a few beautiful ones with hardly anything on them so we will need to take our own food and water.

**19<sup>th</sup> April:** We have struck out on our own from Placentia to visit a caye (coral atoll) called Ranguana . It was about 16kms from Placentia and there was not enough wind to sail, so we had to motor which meant a lot of rolling around . We went over a couple of coral outcrops and the depth below us changed from 89 feet to 8. It was nail biting and we could easily see the bottom. Advice is to proceed very slowly so we did and all was well. We found this wonderful coral island Ranguana, with Palm trees, ospreys, frigate birds, pelicans and loads of fish. We were lucky in that as it was considered "rough " there was a spare mooring not taken so we tied up to that one negotiating our way between coral heads. We were still rolling around a lot and cooking supper and washing up in the cockpit was fun as things were travelling with each roll. We were safe on the mooring ,although 1st mate spent a lot of the night checking all was well. This coral island is as close as it gets to paradise in that it is beautiful, coral sand, coconut palms, coral to snorkel around and a small bar to drink a cool beer. We landed on the beach and we saw the caretaker's son catch a enormous barracuda on a line and land it. It was approx 30lbs and guess what we had for supper? barracuda steak with coconut and coconut rice , it was delicious. This morning we saw one of the two island ospreys go fishing and it caught a red

snapper with a precision dive and brought it back to land just beside us. It was amazing. We are so enjoying this caye that we will stay another night it feels like a honeymoon spot , perfect for our 30th wedding anniversary coming up in a few days.

**27<sup>th</sup> April:** Update in Belize. We have been off in the cays on our own now for 5 days. It has been an interesting experience and very different to life in East Anglia. Our days have settled into early waking at 05:30 and early bed at 20:00 when it has been dark for an hour and a half and we've had our G & T and supper. The cays are best approached with sun overhead and bright light as it is possible to see the shallow patches as bright blue compared with the deep blue of deep water. Vigilance is required to keep an eye on the depths which often go from 90 feet to 8. We draw 4.6 foot. Sailing is great fun, a warm trade wind of north-east direction which often blows a bit in the pm and drops in the evening. Today we are safely tucked up on a mooring in 60 foot of water which is a relief to the mate as for safe anchoring we would have to have put down 360 foot of chain which we haven't got. This would make pulling it up a marathon. J. and S. have just left Placencia 19 miles away to join us here and are bringing a rotisserie chicken and veg / fruit for us. They have some friends who run a bar restaurant in hideaway cay. This cay is a mangrove one instead of palm & sand and I think would handle hurricanes better.



Hurricane Iris in 2001 wrecked havoc here and flattened large areas on the mainland and obliterated all buildings and trees on cays. J. describes catamarans flying upside down at 70 mph and sheets of corrugated iron like knives flying around . Scary stuff - especially when this part of the world is subjected to earthquakes as well. Hurricane shelters are different buildings from earthquake ones.

We have been to 5 cays so far and 2 of them are tropical paradises with white sand and palms, the others had great snorkelling. There is a lot to see. Snorkelling is great - you can dive off the boat and find coral patches around which have all sorts of colours and shapes. Great purple fans waving around and brain corals and of course wildlife - starfish a foot wide and conch shells. Swimming around all of this are a variety of fish. Big ones such as 10 foot nurse sharks, barracudas and stingrays. Smaller ones of different colours - indigo, striped and green and iridescent. A lot to keep one's eyes busy.....

### **Back in Guatemala:**

We left Placencia and decided to sail 25miles south to stage our journey back to Burnt Key in 3days. The first day we sailed down wind with a force 3-4 NE wind, (trade wind) to a secluded anchorage in Newhaven where there was nothing but jungle. We anchored there and saw a couple of dolphins cavorting and went swimming ourselves. I was bitten on the arm by a giant horse fly called by locals a 'Dr fly'. It swelled up and was quite uncomfortable but I knew it would settle, but I managed not to have a jelly fish sting for which I'm very grateful. Next morning we left to sail 20 miles to cabo tres puntas in Guatemala. We anchored there and got up the next morning at 05:00 to sail 10 miles to cross the bar into the rio dulce at Livingston. We had to go at this time as it was high water and the bar is shallow. The tidal range is very small compared with the east coast, only 1.4 feet so not really important for us as we only draw 4.5 feet. We crossed it easily using the way points from J. and S. with 2.4 feet under our keel. We hoisted our flag and were visited by 5 officials who sat on the cockpit and there was a squeeze as you can imagine. We were invited to go ashore in an hour to pay £100 or so for checking the boat in. The next day was spent deep cleaning Lady Anne to get her ready for being laid-up and she is now of course up for sale, so we wanted her to look good.....

***Ed. Note - Any offers from KSSC Members?***