



SOVEREIGN HARBOUR BERTHOLDERS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 154

January 2022



On Friday 10th December berth holders and the local community braved the cold weather to enjoy **Sovereign Shines** which raised £1057.59 for Eastbourne RNLI lifeboat and Care for the Carers, East Sussex.

The free family event, organised by Premier Marinas, The Waterfront, Sovereign Harbour Berth Holders' Association and the Rotary Club of Sovereign Harbour was to celebrate the illuminations created by light displays on boats and houses in the harbour.

Alongside the light spectacle, the evening event hosted at The Waterfront included a heart-warming performance from local youth choir, The Theatre Workshop and an upbeat performance from Eastbourne Rock Choir, with its 40 members.

Daniel Heckford, Marina Manager, said: "This year's Sovereign Shines event was really well attended and feedback was incredibly positive from both the local businesses and people who enjoyed the entertainment. Our berth holders and the wider harbour community all got involved in the Christmas light spectacle bringing some festive cheer to The Waterfront and raising much needed funds for the Eastbourne RNLI lifeboat and Care for the Carers, East Sussex".

Happy New Year to all members of the SHBHA

Christmas lunch in our household was complicated this year. All three of our children and consequently all of our grandchildren are now vegetarian. My wife and I are not – although I don't deny the pressure is mounting. I was obliged to buy a tiny turkey and an awful lot of mushrooms and cheese and spend most of the day trying to cook things I don't understand and wouldn't like to eat.

But this is the new world that is coming. Every action will be measured against its effect on climate and the environment. And, like Noah, modern day mariners have an opportunity, perhaps a responsibility, to contribute to the good health and preservation of the planet. The RYA has published its policy on environmental sustainability (2021/22) which covers everything from best anchoring practice to electric engines (environment @rya.org.uk). The policy recommends making changes to the way we do a number of things, some of them fundamental (and expensive) but many quite small. Unfortunately, even a little change seems difficult when you have been doing things in a particular way for forty or fifty years. It requires a degree of commitment and resolve.

The New Year is a time for resolution. My wife is determined to use less plastic; I am going to walk more and drive less. We are both determined to eat our next Christmas lunch in a restaurant.

SP

What's Been Going On?

The regular monthly meetings with the Marina manager have resumed face to face. Items that have been discussed are listed below.

The cleaning routines have reverted to the winter programme of work.

Over the autumn members reported some difficulty in using My Premier when trying to report that they were departing for cruising. We were told that you can only do this if you are using the **My Premier APP**. Staff are fully trained and can help you if you need advice.

On a similar theme there was confusion in how to report a complaint. If you wish to do this you should initially speak to a member of the staff who will try to resolve the issue for you. If they are unable to do this, they will involve the Duty Manager. If there is still an issue the Marina Manager will become involved and ultimately if they can't help Head Office will take over with a personal 1:1 discussion. The full procedure can be found at:



<https://www.premiermarinas.com/Contact-Us/Complaints>

The unauthorised vehicles problem in the underground car park is being dealt with but information requests to the DVLA are sometimes not turned around in a speedy manner. I am however pleased to say that some have been dealt with in full and are now no longer on site.



Random checks are also completed regularly on the barrier into in the main car park. On a recent check 40 cars were authorised and 20 cars were turned away. The cladding contractors' vehicles are expected to park elsewhere. Inconsiderate parking is also being monitored and those taking up more than a space will receive a phone call. More

scaffolding has compounded the parking problem here but hopefully that nearest the office will soon be removed as the work is almost completed there. The cladding contractors regularly clean the car park so there has been some improvement seen with regard to this problem.

A walk around the marina with a camera created an action plan. The photos taken formed a priority list and the items will be blitzed over winter in order to improve conditions on, and the look of, the site. Jet washing is also due to commence on the worst pontoons.



There is a site meeting in January to review the main gate of the boatyard problem. Hopefully this will help get to the bottom of the issue.

The replacement programme with regard to the deteriorating distribution boxes is almost complete. The wet weather has held this up.

The Premier corporate office improvements are almost complete.

The hoist's software problem has been resolved.

Programmed work on the locks and bridges is being carried out. Not easily identified but this is all very necessary as bits wear out with years of use.

Dan has also been prioritising his proposed projects for 2022. **On his wish list** are: completion of the boat yard surface and drainage, the creation of a Waterfront boat storage area opposite the Yacht Club, an upgrade to the main harbour facilities, a digital fix for the barriers in the main car park, a new workboat, new buoyage and more replacement ladders and bicycle racks. Phew!



All change ahead!

Trinity House has begun preparation work on the project to decommission and remove the Royal Sovereign Lighthouse. It is the intention that the now-deteriorating lighthouse will be completely removed clear to the seabed.

Although the work was due to be completed by 2020 it has not only been delayed by Covid but also for technical and financial reasons. It would seem however that as we have recently had the Notice to Mariners regarding the placement of four cardinal buoys, work should commence in 2022. (<https://www.trinityhouse.co.uk/notice-to-mariners/25/2021-royal-sovereign-lighthouse>)

The Royal Sovereign Lighthouse was built in 1971 with a design life of 50 years. Having monitored the fabric of the lighthouse over the last decade the expected signs of deterioration have started to show, consequently Trinity House has concluded that the ongoing safety of mariners requires that the structure be fully decommissioned and removed.

In anticipation of this decision, Trinity House has upgraded Beachy Head Lighthouse; it will also increase the capability of the offshore CS2 buoy and will retain the nearby Royal Sovereign buoy. The upgrade to Beachy Head Lighthouse has seen an increased in the number of solar panels around the base of its lantern gallery and the installation of a longer-range LED lantern. The CS2 lighted buoy will also benefit from an increased range.

The upgrade to Beachy Head Lighthouse has come as good news to mariners and the local community alike. Once Trinity House decommissions Royal Sovereign Lighthouse as proposed, Beachy Head Lighthouse's future is secured as the principal aid to navigation in the area.



You may not be aware that one of the last lightships that preceded the Royal Sovereign Tower is still in existence. Originally built for Trinity House in 1947 by Phillips and Son in Dartmouth, (part of the site of the new buildings at Premier's Noss-on-Dart Marina) this vessel

was on station in many locations off the East Coast of England and in the English Channel.

It was in 1993 that the then owners of Haslar Marina, John Dean and Richard Reddyhoff squeezed through tiny hatches and down long ladders of their new purchase, each clutching a torch and an old plan to see if they had bitten off more than they could chew with an idea to convert the vessel into a restaurant. In due course a master plan was evolved and the men with the burning gear were brought in to make a start.

Eventually, when the project was completed, the vessel was painted green and renamed Mary Mouse II, after the director's wives Mary Reddyhoff and Joanna (Mouse) Dean. The restaurant has had a name change and very recently has been bought by new owners who are upgrading the facilities but you will probably recognise it if you have ever visited Gosport.



Meet others!

If you are interested in lighthouses in general you may like to know that there is an interesting group of enthusiasts.



The Association of Lighthouse Keepers provides a forum for everyone interested in lighthouses, lightships and maritime aids to navigation. Despite its name, being a lighthouse keeper is not a requirement for joining the Association!!! (although a number of serving and former keepers are members) Whatever your interest in lighthouses, you can join the ALK and will be assured of a warm welcome!!

Currently because of the changes about to take place there are regular articles about the structures mentioned (and others) in the quarterly magazines that come as part of your membership. Events such as talks and visits are also on offer. To join see their website.

www.alk.org.uk

contributed by Sue



Blowing Hot & Cold

You may have noticed that we have moved into winter and it has become a little cooler. Apart from wearing a beanie and insulated socks many of us

who come to visit our boats during the months of December through to March have occasion to turn on the heating: “Now,” as the poet says, “*is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer*” - often by turning on the diesel-fired heater.

I would just like to make two points about diesel heating: firstly, although a professionally installed marine appropriate heater ie not one intended for a lorry, is largely safe and effective it will nonetheless emit Carbon Monoxide. At a time when the attention of most of us is clearly focused on what we can do to reduce the build-up of pollutant gases in the atmosphere it is worth considering that using a diesel heater is rather like keeping the engine of your car running when parked.

The second point to be made is concerned with more immediate health concerns. Carbon monoxide poisoning is the leading cause of death by gas in the United States. There are a number of accounts of sailors being poisoned by their own heaters where a fault has developed in the system causing fumes to remain in the vessel rather than be exhausted outside.

It is also worth considering what happens to exhaust fumes once they are outside of your vessel. If you are moored in a marina and the fumes are blowing onto a neighbour’s vessel the effect can be horrible. This is a quote from an article in *Passagemaker* (April 2017)

“...But for the purposes of discussing heating systems for vessels—diesel or otherwise—the following warning must be given: Unless you use wind or electricity alone to propel and heat your vessel, you run the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. While it is true that diesel engines produce less CO than their gasoline brethren, they still produce CO—as do LP gas ranges and heaters—and a diesel-fired heater typically does not burn fuel as completely as an internal combustion engine. Additionally, even if your boat isn’t equipped with diesel or LP gas heat, the vessel docked adjacent to you may use this fuel for heating (or propulsion or power generation), so you and your crew are at risk. Cases have occurred where fumes from one vessel have entered the open ports or hatches of a nearby vessel, poisoning its occupants.” The same article identifies various other, safer and more environmentally conscious methods of heating your boat,

although it also notes that most of these are less effective and efficient than forced-air type systems.

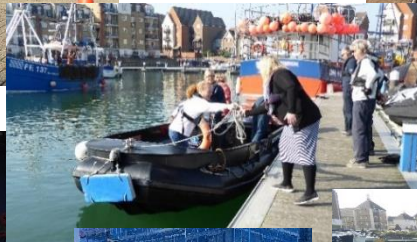
It is likely, then, that vessel owners will continue to use diesel and LPG fuelled heating in the short-term. If so, the exhortation to all of us must be: use with consideration and courtesy to others; install a CO alarm on the vessel and, perhaps above all, wear an extra vest and use heaters only when necessary.

SP

Courses are back!

Our socially distanced courses finally got underway as Covid restrictions eased! The two courses we managed to run in the Autumn were both a success. Unfortunately, the weather let us down on third but we will be planning a new date so that those already booked can finally get to tackle ropes and cleats.

Ropes and Cleats 1 happened on a glorious day in October: The following pictures tell the story of the activities on offer.





The **Positions and Bearings** course was fully booked and the assembled members took off on to the set tasks after an introduction to the topic by Mark Sawyer, Coxswain of our local lifeboat stations. Activities were outside and in and were the first to have an indoor element since lockdown began.



Plotting Course

I recently attended a position plotting course organised by the Sovereign Harbour Berth Holders' Association. I have tried position plotting in theory and thought it should be easy. We use my boat for scuba diving and are rarely out of sight of land. If navigation fails we just need to head north and we will end up close to Eastbourne. However, I have found that things can always take an unexpected turn and it's always best to be prepared so I booked a place on the course. I discovered that theory and practice are not necessarily the same.

The first issue was taking an accurate bearing. I tried my scuba diving compass and the removable compass from the boat. Both pointed in the right direction but neither had sufficient resolution to accurately plot a bearing. I tried a pair of binoculars with a built-in compass and found the bearing was much easier to read accurately.

The second issue was that I could not locate myself in the right place. It sounds easy. Take bearings on three known points, plot them on a chart and I must be where the lines intersect. My first attempt put me in the water. Subsequent attempts gave me varying results but none were correct. I don't give up easily and was determined to find out why I couldn't locate myself. I continued to try unsuccessfully until I noticed that the compass bearing changed when I moved my left hand. It was my smart watch. I discovered that my smart watch would move the compass 20

degrees when it was close. Unfortunately, this discovery came at the end of the session and I didn't have a chance to try with my watch off my wrist.

I learned much more from the course than I expected and what I learned could make a huge difference in a dangerous situation.

It's never a good idea to rely on theory without trying it out.

Colin Tapp

Forthcoming events

Hopefully we will be all systems go for the 2022 **SPLOSH!** event on Saturday 12th February (3.30-5.30pm). For those who have never tried this opportunity before this is a must! Get your life jacket checked for fit, learn how to jump into the water, see what it's like to wear it inflated and then go on to learn a few life preserving techniques. Also, as part of this active course you will get to see a liferaft inflate and deal with any issues that may arise, learn how to get into it and how to help others in your crew. The added advantage is that it will be held in a very lovely warm swimming pool!!!! Gill will be taking bookings shortly.



A Safety Day event will take place between 10.00-14.00h in the area adjacent to the locks on 26th March 2022. This will be a joint venture with Premier, The Association and the RNLI. This will include *a flares amnesty*, free life-jacket checks, and stalls run by a variety of on and off-site contractors. After the various lockdowns you will probably have more flares than you think that are out of date. Please check and use this local opportunity for getting rid of them safely and legally. **Members of our Association will only be charged the reduced fee per flare of £1.** Non-members will need to pay £2 for each flare handed in. Look out for the posters which will carry full details of the event.



We will be organising a Boat Jumble which will take place between 10.00 and 12.00 on Saturday 9th April. After two years of hoarding, you will probably be keen to sort out the items you no longer need. Alternatively, if you are new to boating you may find the item you didn't know you needed at a very reasonable price! Our event will take place in the area adjacent to the boat yard gates in front of the chandlery.

Members will be able to have a free pitch (cars width). Non-members will be charged £10 for the same but will gain a free membership card. Free tea/coffee and a great atmosphere. Get tidying those lockers and garages in readiness!!

Sovereign Harbour Survey

By Claire Saxby, SHBHA member and member of Sovereign Divers

Love or hate the mess created by all the cormorants in the Inner Harbour near the locks, they auger well for the health of a marina. There is life in these waters which is most obvious in the thick-lipped mullet roaming around and the odd edible crab or lobster escaping the pot in the murk. And yet they are the tip of the proverbial iceberg.



Sea Squirt Lightbulb 12.05.21 (Clavelina lepadiformis)

Enchanted by the sight of Lightbulb sea squirts shining up from the side of a pontoon, and buoyed by support from Keith Alexander, another

experienced volunteer with the Sussex Wildlife Trust's Shoresearch initiative, we decided to survey the marina's North and Inner Harbours for a year to see what was there. Incidentally, Keith was the first to officially discover the presence of a climate change indicator species in the UK when taking scrapings in the harbour's public area.



San Diego Sea Squirt, North Harbour 29th July 2021 (Botrylloides diegensis)

To date, after just four surveys (every 6-8 weeks since 29th July 2021), we have identified 64 species of which 31, thanks to renowned algae expert, Ian Tittley* who joined us in September, are seaweeds – a fascinating diversity that deserves to be highlighted.

As boaters, you will not be surprised to hear that of the varieties of animal life, sea squirts are surprisingly varied and in a close second place with eight species identified although pipped to the post by the crustaceans on nine, including our climate change indicator, the hyper-active stick-insect-like *Caprella scaura scaura* (aka skeleton shrimp, although it's an amphipod!).



Snakelocks-flax-brickweed anemones (edge of pontoon Sept. 21) (Anemonia viridis)

Marine life can be the bane of boaters' existence but when you learn that the humble barnacle has one of the longest penises in relation to its size in

the animal kingdom, that the beautiful starry *Botryllus schlosseri* sea squirt is regenerating its entire body every week, or that sponges have been around 580 million years, you have to take your hat off to them.

It is too early to draw conclusions but we will be reporting back late this summer on our findings and take this opportunity to thank Marina Manager, Dan Heckford and his team for giving us permission.

So, if you see people walking round with buckets and funny square magnifying glasses strapped to their foreheads, please do come and say hello.

*Ian Tittley is author of 'A New Atlas of the Seaweeds of Kent' and is currently working on an atlas for Sussex.

Meeting Mark Sawyer, Coxswain/Mechanic with the Royal National Lifeboat Institute, based at Sovereign Harbour, Eastbourne

I met with Mark Sawyer, Coxswain/Mechanic of the Eastbourne branch of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI), at their office cum training centre at Sovereign Harbour in the mid-afternoon of a cold December day which had already been a very busy one for him.

Mark Sawyer is Coxswain/Mechanic. To put this in context, Diamond Jubilee, the All-Weather lifeboat which is used when a rescue is off-shore or in extreme weather, has a crew of seven consisting of: Coxswain, Navigator, Mechanic, Helmsman and deck crew. In addition, the Coxswain is responsible for the In-shore lifeboat, which has a slightly smaller crew. Volunteers to the RNLI come from many walks of life; those at Eastbourne are drawn from the police force, NHS, mechanical-engineering and tree surgery amongst others. All volunteers are trained to a high level in navigation, First Aid, and using radar. Mark has been in his current role for twenty years; prior to this, he was a volunteer with the Service. When I suggest that this is a record of remarkable dedication he shrugs and says

simply that the work tends to dominate one's life; not only his, one of the regular crew members is his son, David.



Diamond Jubilee, Eastbourne RNLI's all-weather lifeboat

When asked to identify the major issues facing the RNLI nationally and locally, Mark is clear that finding the right people as volunteers is increasingly difficult at both local and national level - despite the fact that the Institute has removed the age-limit on volunteers and replaced this with an annual fitness test; however, the training that new volunteers must undergo is extensive and therefore the gap between volunteering and becoming a regular crew member is much longer than when the RNLI first began recruiting volunteer crews 185 years ago. Mark sees the more sophisticated and lengthier training as a necessary part of the increasing professionalization of the RNLI.

At a local level Mark identified the role of the Service in rescuing those attempting channel crossings from Europe in insubstantial vessels and lacking appropriate clothing or equipment as a significant challenge. He and the crew of the lifeboat station in Eastbourne have rescued more than a hundred people in such circumstances. On at least one occasion they have experienced heckling from bystanders as they returned through the

lock. Recently the CEO of the RNLi has received harrowing threats of violence directed at both him and his family.

Mark Sawyer is very clear about his position and that of the organization: “Our mission is to save lives at sea. We do not adjudicate on which lives we save.”

It is worth saying here that he is the holder of a Silver Star which he received following the rescue of the two crew members of the vessel *Paperchase* in October 2002. It transpired that on the same day that I spoke with him Mark had been awarded a Special Commendation for Humanitarian Work in recognition of the work he had done in rescuing cross channel transient people.

Finally, I asked Mark what were the best and worst parts of the job. After some thought, he replied cautiously: “The worst part is when we arrive too late to help - and you never forget those times. The best...the best times are when we get people to safety and they say, “Thank you.” It may not seem like much, but it’s all we need.”

Safety Tips for Sailors from the Coxswain

- Make yourself aware of the principal dangers on any voyage, in particular when crossing sea lanes and navigating around wrecks and in or near shallow water.
- Be thoroughly familiar with the working parts and operation of your flares and life-jackets and other essential equipment. Don’t wait for an emergency to find out how to use them.
- Keep at least a basic tool-kit and an essential First Aid kit on board.
- Boat electrics can fail for many reasons. Keep paper-charts as well as electronic charts.
- Have a hand-held VHF (Mark cites an example of rescuing a man whose vessel had sunk. Although in the water, he used his hand-held radio to call the Lifeboat).



Your Officers and Committee work voluntarily to help you enjoy Sovereign Harbour. We ask you to encourage others to join and keep the Association strong.

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Vice Chairman & Central rep	Gill Clare (G23)	Morning Mist
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Secretaries	Andy and Cathy Davy	Mr Mac
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Newsletter Editor	Steven Pugh (NZ10)	Soulmate
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All members of the committee and officers can be contacted via the website www.shbha.co.uk

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Tele 01323 734680