



Sovereign Harbour Berth-Holders Association

www.shbha.co

Members' Newsletter No. 155

Seals in Sovereign Harbour

Several seals have been regular visitors to the area immediately outside the lock gates. They have been spotted sunbathing on the shore and swimming in and out of the harbour entrance. There are two species of seal regularly seen around the harbour and the south coast; the harbour seal and the larger grey seal. I'm guessing that those around Sovereign are probably Harbour seals but I can't pretend I could tell the difference.

Seals regularly haul themselves out of the water in order to dry off and also to better digest what they have eaten.

Although they have the appearance of social creatures, in practice they are more often solitary. When there are several together their behaviour is better described as "alone in groups".

People are advised that they are easily scared and do not relish close human contact. If they are seen to be apparently waving they are actually attempting to warn humans away from any closer approach. It is interesting that seal behaviour, according to observers, has changed during lockdown and they are appearing in places they would normally avoid because of "human disturbance".



After 50 years of service, Trinity House extinguished the light from Royal Sovereign Lighthouse on 21 March 2022.

The Lighthouse was built in 1971 with an expected life of 50 years. In line with the design forecast, the fabric of the building has been deteriorating and particularly during the last ten years and Trinity House ordered that the structure be decommissioned.

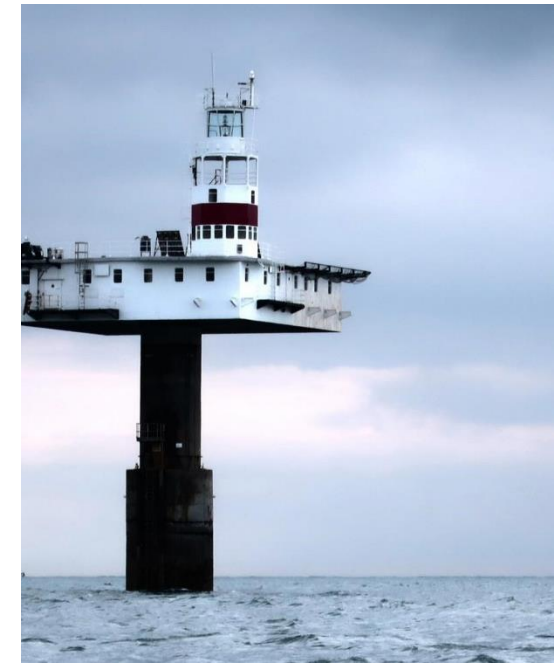
In anticipation of the removal of Royal Sovereign Lighthouse, Trinity House upgraded the lighthouse at Beachy Head increasing the number of solar panels around the base of its lantern gallery and installing a longer-range LED lantern.

Royal Sovereign Lighthouse was first lit on 6 September 1971.

The lighthouse is of concrete construction. The cabin section contained accommodation for the keepers who manned the lighthouse before its automation in 1994. The flat upper deck of the cabin section provides a helicopter landing platform. The lighthouse tower, with the control room, fog signal room and lantern is located at one corner of the main deck with direct access to the cabin section below.

Apart from its role as a navigational aid, the Lighthouse has provided a familiar destination for day sailors from Sovereign Harbour Marina: "We're just going out to the Lighthouse and back..".

A flotilla has been planned as one last day trip to honour the tower; however, poor weather has caused the postponement of the plans and at the time of writing no firm date has been set.





AGM 2022

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We managed it! We actually held an AGM in person after a Covid gap of two years.

Members turned up to the meeting and the business got underway after coffee and cakes.

The various reports were given and the Officers and Committee were re-elected unanimously. Nigel will carry on for the time being as Membership Secretary but we are still looking for a volunteer to replace him since he announced he would like to stand down after a dedicated period in post. We are looking for someone with some time to spare and a few skills with a variety of spreadsheets. If you're not that person but you can think of anyone that fits this bill and who might be prepared to step forward, be encouraging and get them to contact us.

The main topic of discussion apart from the refurbishing of the cladding on the flats overlooking the main harbour was how we could improve our admin environmental footprint.



Currently 32 members receive a hard copy of the newsletter at a cost of c. £200 a year. It was proposed and agreed that newsletters from September would only be available in hard copy form by special request. All

members with email addresses will get their copy automatically. Additionally, a copy of the front page of each newsletter, with a contents list, would be placed on the website and bulletin boards to inform others and help publicise the Association to non-members.

A significant cost to the association in time, consumables and money is the production and distribution of membership cards. It was proposed that membership cards are incorporated into an email letter from the next membership year (2023-24 Members could then show the complete letter or cut out and laminate the cards to obtain members discounts.



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The Association will remain as active as ever but in doing so we wish to support both members and the environment.



Allowing you time to cruise and enjoy the water and to dovetail with the events programme planned at The Waterfront and elsewhere, we are running an array of events throughout the year. Meetings with the Marina Manager will continue to take place regularly. Below is a summary.

Waterfront Events

Pop Up Artisan Food Markets – dates for your diary!

Celebrating everything that's great about British food, The Waterfront food market is a collaboration between The Waterfront and Sussex food producers. Open 9am – 2pm on both Saturday and Sunday.

25 – 26 June – Summer Market

29 – 30 October – Autumn Market

December – Sovereign Shines Christmas Market



We have plans for a DIY BBQ during Airbourne weekend before we start a full winter season of events.

Eastbourne Airbourne
18th -21st August



We are currently investigating events such as Fire Onboard, a French lunch with helpful advice on the new regulations, a fishy event, a mince pie morning, a Ladies Day plus more helpful hands on courses - such as vhf for crew and Buoys and Toys... maybe - to run from September onwards.

Safety Day

With the help of local company Seago Yachting Ltd, the safety day soon got underway and a steady stream of members and other berth holders turned up with their containers of out-of-date flares. There was the usual collection of orange smoke, parachute rockets, hand-helds and white flares ready for legal disposal. Some brought just one or two, others came with bags full. There was even one that had been found on the shoreline washed up after probably illegally being dumped out at sea. The oldest presented on this occasion was one dated 1989!!

Our members benefitted from a £1 per flare discount and 15 new members joined during the event to take advantage of our offer.

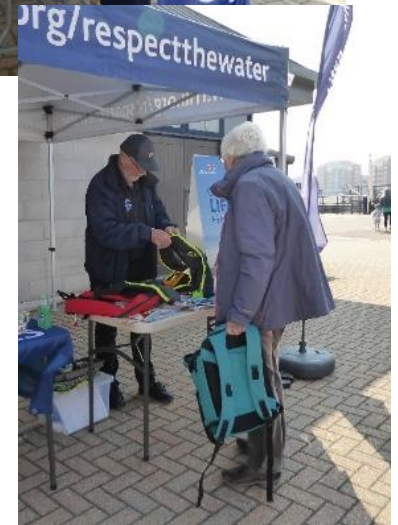
New flares were also on sale.



- ✚ In all, 520 flares were handed in during the session.
- ✚ The harbour is a much safer place.
- ✚ The RNLI benefitted from your generous donations.

On the same day, in the same place the Eastbourne Water Safety Team were on hand to give free lifejacket checks.

Many took advantage of this much valued service and fifty-eight jackets had the thorough once over. A large percentage of the lifejackets checked failed mainly due to out of date components. Advice was given about the importance of crotch straps and spray hoods as those presenting their lifejacket learnt more about their safety aids. Well done to those who owned the 7 that were fully functional. It was a good job that the owners of the two discovered to have loose or unattached gas bottles found out before it was too late!



Boaters and Buyers

Our first boat jumble in three years took place on another sunny day. A reasonable number of cars turned up with interesting stock which was quickly snapped up. A visitor on passage along the south coast bagged a trolley from the central facilities and loaded it up with electrics he had just taken out due to a refit. He was pleased to sell most of it and merrily went on his way to Brighton to fix a few repairs before continuing west. He especially enjoyed the refreshments and hot-cross buns and was grateful



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to land at Sovereign harbour and find such a 'facility' on hand. He thanked us for our efforts and an enjoyable morning.



Dog lifejackets also provided some fun as a variety of dogs squiggled to try and avoid the fitting sessions.

There was also another chance to get human lifejackets checked and again the usual faults showed up. This most useful bit of kit could save your life if it is full working order. Please check it before you might need to rely on it.

There was one marvellous piece of kit which was not snapped up on the day. There was a bargain to be had for a donut in good condition. If you're interested, please contact me via membership@shbha.co.uk as I have contact details for the current owner who has given up boating.

Sue, Chairman



Ropes and Cleats 2

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The rearranged date proved to be much more user friendly than the original! Sunny at least, but with a chilly wind, the attendees enjoyed the outdoor practical tasks which followed the theory session. Very active activities kept them warm enough but the coffee and biscuits were much appreciated upon their return to the boathouse.



Those assembled split into two groups with one practising rope activities such as tying bowlines, lighterman's hitches (best for the fuel pontoon), tying off, tying fenders, lassoing and using throw lines all supported by David Sawyer (RNLI), Gill and Sue.

The other group supported by Mark Sawyer (Coxswain) and Alan Simister (RNLI) went aboard Alan's boat, Ocean Belle, to practice the same activities but from on deck.

This proved to be a realistic mission and participants found the opportunity most helpful. Once the objectives had been achieved the groups swapped over.



Our grateful thanks go to those supporting our members - without them we would not be able to host such events.

By the end of the morning everyone felt they had improved their knowledge and skill level and would feel more confident in the coming season.



What's Been Going On?

Clearly, we have spent lots of time talking about the problems created by the cladding on the flats. After a series of meetings and comments about the work practices which were causing debris to fall into the marina and on to berth holders and their boats some improvements have started to be noticed. Recently more netting has been put in place and more care taken in not polluting the water with assorted polystyrene in the first place. It is encouraging to note that clearing up any airborne debris that escapes the work site has started to become routine.



More scaffolding has come down on the waterside but you will notice that the project is now moving into the outer harbour side. Pollution on this

side is more of an environmental worry as it cannot be contained in the harbour and will be sea-bound and even arrive in the Marine Conservation Zone. The situation is being closely monitored by the marina management.

Premier is trying to work on how the work programme and any updates can be communicated to us all most effectively and clearly.

Car parking issues associated with the scaffolding on site seem to have eased slightly. There is a new project to start soon that will give better control of the in- barrier which will be added to the digital system. As part of the same project, bollards which pop up and down to prevent unauthorised traffic from taking the outer harbour road will be installed.

The netting is going to be refurbished once the cladding project has been completed.



After an enormous amount of continued pressure, car parking in the underground by Hamilton Quay has also improved as cars have been impounded, disposed of and/or removed by their owners. Many unfortunately belonged to berth holders. Owners should not store vehicles in there (or in any other area). Berth holders have a space for their vehicle only when on their boat and not for months, and in some cases years, as evidenced by vehicles under cover. Similarly bicycles left chained for months in inappropriate areas are also being dealt with.



Staff have been concerning themselves with tidying up the whole site in readiness for the season getting underway. Lots of small jobs with high impact have been identified, addressed and ticked off of the list daily. Many of the degraded ladders are, finally, being replaced. We all hope never to have to use one but getting fibre glass shards in your hands if you do is no joke. If you are unsure of the location of your nearest

ladder there are now notices showing the placement of the various types of safety equipment on site.well worth a look just in case.



The North Bridge and locks have now been refurbished and serviced and the new pontoon installed. This should ensure they work well over the summer. New bridges are being considered for the west and south junctions as they are wearing out fast.



The next phase of the block paving in the boatyard has been agreed and should happen soon. Be warned though there is a phase 3!!



The pre dredge survey has been completed and shows a build up of 800mm at the entrance to the channel. The channel itself is not as silted up but Sospan Dau is planning to arrive approximately

8th May to deal with the cubic capacity that needs removing. Notice to Mariners will be issued once the arrival date has been confirmed.

We have been scrutinising the regulations and are seeking clarity about the rather vague term 'nuisance'.



Most gates have closers fitted for security reasons. Please do not prop gates open and then walk away leaving the site open to all.

Lockdown

I met Steve, who has been working as a lock maintenance engineer for seven years with Premier marinas. He quickly exploded several of the false

ideas I had about the work that was going on, and has been over the past months.

I had assumed that they were, essentially, shifting mud and my first question: "How much mud have you shifted?" was met with a very clear, "None. We don't shift mud."

Steve explained that the purpose of lock maintenance is to refurbish the lock – replacing the door seals where necessary, checking the hydraulic mechanism and replacing the anodes which prevent electrolysis. The seals prevent water escaping when the lock gates are closed; over time these rubber seals deteriorate and allow water to ingress or escape. This year, they are replacing the seals on the marina side. In two years, they will replace those on the seaward side. He explained that as the seals expanded in the heat of summer they were fitted to allow for that which meant that in winter there was a very small amount of leakage.

Glorious Mud!

Steve is one of a team of nine who regularly service the locks in Premier marinas across the country. I had imagined that the mud at the bottom of the lock would have been a rich source of treasure trove but Steve says that although in past times they have discovered mobile phones and watches, this time around there was nothing of any interest – well, other than the bag of gold bullion - but he didn't want to talk about that.



Steven Pugh

February 2022

Sovereign Divers

Sovereign divers are Eastbourne's oldest BSAC (British Sub-Aqua Club) scuba diving club. We are delighted to be celebrating our 50th anniversary.

We are an active club based in the Sovereign Harbour Yacht Club where we meet socially every Tuesday evening at 8pm. We have full facilities including kit and filling room able to fill cylinders up to 300bar and blend Nitrox.

Our club boat, a 7.2m dive RHIB, is moored at the back of the Yacht Club giving easy and direct access to our kit room. We cater for a diverse range of abilities- from people brand new to the sport who are offered full training and qualification through to experienced divers from all agencies.

Dives are planned for most weekends and occasionally mid-week in the summer. We are lucky to have a fantastic selection of wrecks in the channel catering for all abilities from a 20m single cylinder dive though to 45m technical dives ideal for two-set and side mount divers. For those wanting a shakedown we can also drop divers into the north harbour basin for a confined water dive.

If you would like to know more please drop in and meet our friendly members on any Tuesday evening (we will be happy to give you a tour).

Alternatively, email ianmather9210@gmail.com

Ian Mather
Sovereign Divers



Do You Know What's Going On Around You?

It was so good to see people out on the water enjoying the Easter sunshine.

Like many berth holders I spent some time onboard tidying up and getting ready for the coming season. Being the nosey person, I am I always like to put my VHF on to hear what's happening. The office really was busy with boats coming in and out of the lock, many radioing the staff requesting to lock in or out. I did wonder whether this was necessary as they were so busy, so I asked. The answer I got was that it's not necessary, just go around to the lock and enter on the green light. This will help the staff considerably.



The other problem is that it's not always easy to identify boats, they don't all have names on their bow and stern although this is actually a requirement. Worse still, not everyone has a VHF or, if they do, it's not switched on and monitoring ch17. Airbourne is one case, where lock packers are trying to get us back in to the marina as efficiently as possible. Trying to identify unnamed boats is not easy and saying 'the small white sports boat' doesn't always help. How many are there likely to be out there? All this is pre-supposing that everyone has their radios tuned to Ch17.

As the season progresses, there will be more users on the water including the Sea Cadets, Buzz Active and Planet Divers, who will all be using the North Harbour. If you're monitoring Ch 17 you will be made aware of these additional users and be prepared to take avoiding action if required. The Sea Cadets will be on the water on a Tuesday and Friday evening plus some weekends. These users will have informed the office of their intentions,

allowing a radio call to be made by the duty team, in much the same way as marina top-ups.

Hopefully, we can all have an active summer on the water and get back to some semblance of normality this year but *please* remember to turn your radio on to Ch17 and if you haven't got your boat's name emblazoned fore and aft, please do so.

Gill Clare, G23, Morning Mist

A Bit of a Drama Sailing Ruby May to Her New Home.

Recently new member Samantha McClements and her partner Hodge made the decision to change their home marina to Eastbourne.

Accompanied by Samantha's three children they made the trip from Chatham, where they had been berthed, in two legs as they had planned. The easterly wind was blowing strong and the waves were pretty significant. They were all on deck enjoying the sunshine when the radio crackled into life calling them! The caller identified themselves as a boat that could be seen on the port bow. Once communication was established, they were asked if someone onboard could read signal flags. Grabbing the almanac Samantha quite quickly worked out that the approaching boat was flying the signal: 'Will you marry me?'

In a state of shock, she was offered a yes flag and a no flag. Fortunately for Hodge she held up the Yes (Charlie) flag!

He then went down on one knee and presented her with a beautiful ring. They continued on to Eastbourne where they were met with music and cheers by the staff. What an incredible welcome! What an incredible surprise!



Here's to a lifetime of happiness, adventure, fun, laughter and love for them all from the members of SHBHA.

To read the full story see Samantha's blog on www.SheWhoSails.com

Maybe excitement follows Samantha about as the following weekend, sailing to

France there was another drama the tale of which can also be read on her blog.

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.

Chairman and West Harbour Rep	Sue Sydney (WS17) Sovereign Star
Vice Chairman & Central rep	Gill Clare (G23) Morning Mist
Membership Secretary	Nigel Dumbell (F30) Topsy Tart
Secretaries	Andy and Cathy Davy Mr Mac
Treasurer	Sarah Price (F38) Supernova
North Harbour E Rep	David George (NZ06) Solara
North Harbour Rep W Vacancy	
South Harbour	Vacancy
Newsletter Editor	Steven Pugh (NZ10) Nameless

If you would consider joining the committee, please contact us soon.



All members of the committee and officers can be contacted via the website www.shbha.co.uk or via email (membership@shbha.co.uk)

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