

It is, perhaps, somewhat unusual for this, the first Newsletter of the year, to be written at the time of the year when our full-size brethren are hauling out their boats and 'laying-up' for the winter: this provides manual work in carefully checking over the material ravages of the past season, provides time for reflection on the triumphs, pleasures -aye! and disasters - of the season past, and for planning for the season to come. We are suffering an enforced laying-up time by the current state of our lake, and I would like to suggest to all sailing members emulation of our 'bigger' brethren in the reflection and planning aspects in the weeks ahead.

It must be conceded that the sport of model yachting has reached a plateau in interest and maybe even gone into a slight decline, in this past year, which is discouraging after the rapid advance in R/C sailing over the past ten years. This decline has been, perhaps, most marked in those old and famous Clubs which are finding it difficult to change from vane-control to radio control sailing, but it is noticeable all over the country (and in U.S.A., too, for that matter) so it would be surprising if it did not show itself in our own Club. Nevertheless, the continuing lack of interest in Sunday racing is very disappointing to those of us who founded the Club, and, in our declining years, still wish to see it proper. We are now faced with the situation that a number of officials, notably Commodore and Secretary, who only took office at the last A.G.M. because no-one else was prepared to shoulder the burden of running the Club, are so discouraged by this lack of interest that they have intimated that they are not prepared to continue in office after the next A.G.M. So, members are adjured to sit down to a quiet, serious, think about the pleasure they get out of sailing, and the responsibility they owe to the Club.... whether, in fact, they wish to continue as a Club, and, if so, what they are prepared to do about it.

Many members asked for a repeat of the "chinwag" we held at the Watersplash Hotel last winter: unfortunately, summer business at the Hotel has prevented this up to now, but an attempt is being made to book the Hotel, tentatively on FRIDAY, 30th Nov., for a "CLUB night" and, as there will not be an A.G.M. until April next, it is suggested that this might take the form of a general discussion on the working and future of the Club, rather than being devoted to a specific subject, such as the Rules, on this occasion: then, should this prove successful, maybe a further Club Night could be held in the New Year for such a specific topic. On this first occasion ideas for sailing for next season could be discussed, because, again, the Sailing Programme for 1985 should be complete before the new Committee is elected. One idea is that Sunday sailing should take place only on alternate Sundays - which some other Clubs have found successful: another is that RM's and R36's - the adoption of which as a Club Class is another idea in itself - should sail on alternate Sundays. You may have other ideas...if so, the Committee, at least, would like to hear them. So, make 30th November a firm date to come and air them.

Where Sunday racing is concerned, it has been a rather-below-average season, with turn-outs falling away to six, or even five, boats, until the low water level stopped racing for the RM's in mid August; one dis-appointing feature has been the very irregular attendance of some erstwhile regular sailors, and a reason for this issought and badly needed. The only two races to muster a double-figure entry were, first, surprisingly, the Frostbite Trophy in mid-January with eleven, and then the Shaw Trophy, in May, with ten, boats turning out.

The Former was won by Dave Watson, with Bernard Hinks a close second, and Andrew Claughton third.

I think we were all delighted to see Walter Newton win the Shaw Trophy, by quite a good margin from Dave Watson, with our President, Bob Jeffries, third.

The Charlotte & Kate Trophy was won by Dave Watson by a considerable margin from Bill Wright, with Maurice Cornell very close on Bill's heels (these two, of course, sailing identical boats): turn-out here was down to 8 boats, which was a pity, as, like the Shaw Trophy day, we were blessed with a lovely sailing day.

Racing for the Gascoigne Trophy, at the Donor's request, was scheduled for a series of six races, all to count, but, unfortunately, the low water level has wiped out the last two races, so the result has been decided on the four races sailed. This gives the Trophy to Bill Wright, with Maurice Cornell second (a Second prize is to be awarded this year), and Dave Watson third. Turn-outs for this Series were low throughout, and there is support for this event to revert to a one-day race.

Results of Inter-Club racing have not been so good this year, Ryde beating us at Setley, and New Forest doing the same at Kingfisher, both by considerable margins. Ryde's win was due, mainly, to a superb performance by John Buttigeig, their Sec., with a somewhat unlikely-looking boat of his own design: however, losing to nice bods like Ryde is easily stomachable. (Incidentally, it was sad to hear of the death of their ex-Commodore, George Mathews, whom older members will remember well, during the Summer). At Kingfisher, we suffered from lack of support once again, 'our' team of six having to incorporate THREE non-members. It is to be hoped better support is forthcoming for the return visit to Ryde (14th Oct.) and also for the visit to Gosport (7th Oct) for the 3-Club meeting with Gosport and Guildford.

An attempt to run a Sail-and-Scale Regatta was made during the summer, and in the event this was spoiled by lack of planning: however, it was sufficiently successful to warrant another attempt another year. It is to be regretted that the main object of the exercise, to get our two Sections to mix, was not achieved, but each Section seemed to get some pleasure and satisfaction out of their own activities - and each had a lot of fun in the balloon-bursting competitions. Eight yachts turned out, and were considerably outnumbered by the Scale section's fine models; Dave Watson won the sailing race, while Jack Fry won the Scale Section's Steering competition, whose realistic obstacles took at least one mind out to the Western extremity of the Isle of Wight !

A major development has been the interest in the 36" Class, the Club in this respect reflecting the whole country. A year ago, I imported the first hull, in all innocence, as something to show summer visiting parents who tend to find the RM too big and costly for children, and in the year, this has grown to 20 boats built or building, so the Club must consider seriously the adoption of this as a second recognised class - with all the perils of diversification. One particularly noteworthy, and praiseworthy, effort in this class has been the designing (?) and building of one by Lester Palin - irreverently referred to (by me) as the 'Palin Perisher' - which is proving to be an attractive and obviously very competitive boat. It has been good to see so much interest shown by members in visiting the two National Championships held in the area this year: 'twould be even better to see a Club member actually competing in one of these another year. As we 'go to Press' this writer is trying to recruit sufficient support to warrant an application being made for the Met. & Southern District 36" Championship to be held at Setley next year, for which he has got the support already of the Chairman of the M.Y.A., and Roger Stollery. So, if you would like to see this event held here, which could be quite a boost for the Club (and the morale of its Officers), AND are willing to help run the show - as apart from watching, or even competing - PLEASE let me know...and SOON, as the application has to be made early in October. It will be a one-day (Sunday) event; duties will be helping with scheduling and compiling score cards (I would anticipate 20 - 25 boats), marshalling, general dog's-bodying, and, most importantly, assistance with some catering from the ladies, who so rarely fail us (that means NEVER, so far).

The RM's, although somewhat in the doldrums this year, are not extinct by any means, and several new boats could be sailing next year; Stan Parker has a Mk.6 Trapper which would very much like to meet some water (apart from a Trapper 3), Derrick Thomas is assembling a Trapper 7 kit, new member Rex Hancock is doing the same with a Pirol; Bernard Hinks is completing a Heartbeat, prospective new member Alan Ford has bought a Trapper 6, Dave Watson is making noises about a new boat (if he can remember where he stashed his sporrán), while this writer is suffering intermittent buzzing in his ear - a bee, possibly? However, it's NOT the owning of boats that matters at this time...it's getting them on the water, on Sundays, and racing them.

Finally, I think we should express our thanks to the ladies, particularly Ann Watson and Etta Newton, who have spent so many Sunday afternoons running the racing for such a small number of competitors - always accurately, always cheerfully: thanks, too for providing hot drinks and snacks when we have a full-day event - always so very welcome to the competitors, and beneficial to the Club's Funds. Thanks are due, too, to Bob and Marjorie Mathew, and Derrick Thomas, for the loan of their caravans which make this facility possible.

---0---

Little room for a "For Sale" note, but I think Bob Jeffries would be prepared to sell his 247, while I should like to hear from anyone wanting Bantock 'groovy' mast material before I replenish my stock.