



St Helier Boat Owners Association Newsletter - 2016



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As I sit down to write this article I have just looked back and I find your association has been going since 1990. More alarming is the fact I was a founder member along with the late Don Filleul OBE, our first ever Chairman, who passed away only a matter of weeks ago. Don was a very straight talking chap, not afraid to say what needed to be said. I guess that's where I picked up my training from. A boating man in his day, Don will be sadly missed and I pass the committee's condolences on to all his family.

Again looking back I find I have been your Chairman for the past twelve years and I feel the time is fast approaching for a new skipper at the helm. I must admit although we have sailed through some choppy waters during that time I have enjoyed every minute of it.

We have a very good working relationship with the Ports of Jersey and all their staff. Recently I had a one-to-one meeting with Captain Phillip Buckley, as did Will Simpson regarding an article for this News Letter, and Phil could not have been more helpful.

So what has been happening? We recently held our second dinghy cull with Mike Tait and his team along with our committee members. I am pleased to report the number of culled dinghies was considerably less than the first time. We must look upon that as a success but I must ask members to make sure their dinghy is properly marked with the correct length painter and that you check on a regular basis that it is not water logged.

I am certain you will have seen that parts of St Helier harbour are being dredged, along with an area in La Collette and the small roads. Please be aware of any restrictions in place at the time.

The port light signals similar to those at the pier heads are at last being installed on the West side at the end of Ferry berth. This will assist vessels leaving Elizabeth marina to see what is happening with commercial shipping leaving the main harbour and the ferry berths. The fit-out of VTS is also nearing completion at Maritime House. Once complete all port operations will operate from there, mainly by

camera. The old location on the end of the Victoria Pier will be retained as a back up but in general will be unoccupied..

Recently we were informed at the Marine Development Group meeting that the town marina is being looked at regarding a refit. A business case will be carried out. We are aware there is some concern regarding some of the piles but as this was Jersey's first marina they have stood up quite well. It is hoped the work will be completed by 2018.

There is also some concern about some of the pontoon fingers in Elizabeth marina. Port staff are aware of the situation and have moved several craft to other berths. Any boat owner in Elizabeth marina who may have concerns with their berth should report it directly to marina staff. Mike Tait is in contact with the manufactures of the pontoons and the matter is hand.

During February Ports staff replaced the riser chains on the mooring buoys at South Pier. I would ask boat owners in this area to check that their mooring chains are in serviceable condition. These moorings will have been down 5 years this June. Ports have done their bit so we need to ensure our part is serviceable.

We have in the last year seen a bit of decline in membership numbers. A few of these have been sadly due to bereavement but most of the others have been due to boat owners selling their craft and packing up boating. Our strength is in numbers, so if you have someone you know who is not a member please badger them. It's the best £5 they will spend for single membership. Or £8 joint membership. In fact attend the AGM in December and you get you membership fee back in the buffet put on afterwards. The price has not gone up over 26 years.

I hope that 2016 turns out to be a good boating season so I wish you all calm seas and light winds. May be a bit of a breeze for the sailors.

Mike Stevens, Chairman

A MEETING WITH THE HARBOUR MASTER.

When the St Helier Boat Owners Association approached Captain Phil Buckley, the St Helier Harbour Master (hereafter "PB") who was appointed late in 2014, to see if he would contribute to an article about harbour operations, we were impressed by the prompt & positive nature of his response. He said that he welcomed the opportunity to communicate with the boat owning community and recognised this newsletter as a useful way of reaching out to them. In particular, he said that he was keen to send out a message about safety within the harbour given its busy nature, both commercially and for leisure sailing, especially as it is a space that is very accessible by the public. In the event, I spent the better part of an hour with PB, who was joined by Bill Sadler, his Safety Management System Manager, who is also one the harbour pilots, and the rest of this article is intended as a reflection of their views and observations about St Helier Harbour operations rather than those of the Association.

PB does not come across as a "Health & Safety At All Costs" enthusiast, in fact, rather the reverse. That said, he does want his harbour to operate in a manner that avoids unnecessary mishaps. As he puts it, "My job is to assess the risks that exist in St Helier Harbour, and to mitigate them. But I realise that this is and has always been, an open harbour where the private boat owner is at liberty to come and go and we are not seeking to change that as a general principle. We just want to ensure that the private boat owner mingles with the commercial traffic and with other vessels in a way that minimises the risks for all concerned". Furthermore, this Harbour Master is not an armchair theorist. In his previous life in the Royal Navy he was responsible for running three major Navy ports. He also served in the Falklands conflict and commanded two seagoing nuclear submarines. He comes across as understanding boats and boating people.

If John Smith is lucky enough to win billions in the lottery, he can go shopping the next day and buy himself a Lear Jet, a Ferrari, and a 60 foot luxury motor yacht. He will almost certainly then need to hire a fully qualified pilot for the plane; he certainly won't be allowed to drive the car without a driving licence; but there is nothing to stop him (apart from common sense) from taking the boat out first thing next morning and driving it flat out without any

form of prior training or marine experience. The plane will not be allowed to take off until everyone on board is wearing a seat belt. The car will emit all sorts of beeps if the occupants are not strapped in and they will be prosecuted if found driving without having taken this precaution. Meanwhile, on the motor yacht no one is obliged by law or regulation to wear so much as a lifejacket. Yet the boat is certainly the biggest machine of the three, extremely powerful, and arguably at least as dangerous as the other two in the wrong hands.

The difference, PB believes, is that the maritime environment has grown and developed over many hundreds of years whereas cars and planes are relatively modern inventions of the last century or so. Ships and boats tend to have more time to react to the unforeseen than planes and cars - boats used to be driven by sail, which in effect meant that you could not make them go anywhere unless you already knew quite a lot about the sea & sailing. The same is certainly not true of the modern motor boat. "If leisure boating was invented today," says PB, "it would probably be subject to a safety regime much more akin to that in the aviation environment". Luckily for the typical boat owner, we are currently spared such a regime.

It would be wrong, on the other hand, to assume that there is little or no control, legal, regulatory or otherwise, over our marine activities as boat owners or otherwise. Improving safety at sea starts with international regulations that have been followed by all shipping nations since the mid-19th century. There is now a comprehensive, international regulatory framework for shipping covering safety, environmental concerns, legal matters, technical co-operation, maritime security and the efficiency of shipping. For example, the Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS) was first adopted in 1914 following the Titanic disaster. Subsequently revised and recast in 1960 and 1974 it has also been modified and updated to adapt to changes in safety requirements and technology. The IMO has continued to produce new and updated instruments across a wide range of maritime issues covering marine pollution, safe navigation, search and rescue, wreck removal, the training and certification of seafarers, and piracy.

These conventions are translated into Jersey Law - for example, the Shipping (Jersey) Law, which extends to some 220 pages of small print, or the Harbours (Jersey) (Administration) Law, similarly cumbersome. The Harbour Authority is

responsible for managing and running the harbours with particular responsibilities in relation to the safety of vessels and people within the harbour, efficient navigation and the protection of the port environment. The Harbour Master therefore interprets the relevant international conventions and Jersey Law and produces a comprehensive suite of regulations and guidance covering such topics as safety, operational procedures for various harbour activities, and codes of conduct in sensitive areas such as the Ecrehou and these take the form of Permanent Notices to Mariners, General Directions, Notices to Mariners, & Codes of Practice (all these can be readily accessed via Ports of Jersey's website - www.ports.je – and they are much easier to read than the legal documents). PB was at pains to explain that he generally tries to educate and inform and only use the weight of his powers when it is fully appropriate. He explained that most people follow the rules but there are a number of occasions every year when vessels are involved in serious breaches of the regulations, including the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 - Colregs – and boats failing to observe the IALA traffic lights at the pier heads. All breaches of regulation are investigated and, depending on the seriousness of the breach, the Harbour Master can take a range of actions from an informal warning up to a criminal prosecution.

By way of illustrating his preferred approach to control of the harbour, PB talked about the Port and Harbour limits which are now defined in the Harbours Administration Law but for convenience are repeated in General Direction No 8. The St Helier port limit is quite extensive, reaching beyond Noirmont to St Brelade's Bay and includes the various passages that commercial vessels must use to approach the Town. The Port Limits underpin General Direction No 3 which prevents any swimming or diving activity without permission in certain specified areas – namely “the Precautionary Areas, Narrow Channels, Fairways, Main Passages and near to Leading Lines”. As PB points out, the focus here is on the approach routes to St Helier used by commercial shipping, where the presence of swimmers or divers would be hazardous to say the least, and the wording of the Direction is deliberately uncomplicated, with the intention of making it easy to comprehend for all. Consider the alternative – a more legally styled document, which would have to meticulously define the approach channels, and in the process become

much more complex, lengthy and, all in all, a good deal less easy to absorb and comprehend. “Keep it as short and simple as possible” says PB, “so it is easy to understand”.

In their previous professional lives, both the Harbour Master and his Safety Manager have worked in the UK, particularly in the busy Solent area, so I thought it would be interesting to ask how they perceive the average St Helier boat owner as compared with the UK equivalent – better or worse? Interestingly, they both thought that the typical local Jersey boat owner is generally a better behaved mariner – largely because of Jersey's island setting and a fairly widespread sense and experience of the sea. PB believes that if you have learned to sail around these islands then you have learned to cope with a challenging maritime environment and grown up to respect it. In short, our extreme tides, strong currents, and rocky shores have tended to breed a more competent and better informed sailor.

The message from PB to the local boat owner seems to be fairly clear. While the boat owner may feel that his traditional freedoms are gradually being eroded by rules and regulations the reality is that Jersey benefits from a sensible application of regulation based on general experience and respect for the sea. Fortunately for the boat owner, he is supported by a Harbour Master who, together with his team, are keen to maintain a mature and open approach to safety and are prepared to manage the challenges of a busy harbour where commercial and leisure traffic co-exist. The question of how long this approach can be maintained lies in the hands of the local boat owner and depends on the number and nature of incidents experienced. PB wants everyone to enjoy the fantastic waters around Jersey and to consider all other waterborne users – but above all to be safe. The more that our boating activities assist rather than challenge the safe running of the harbour the less there will be a need for change.

WHKS

With acknowledgement to Captain Phil Buckley

STOP PRESS – HARBOUR CRANES

Please see the urgent item about the South Pier crane in Bits & Pieces, page 5

NOTES FROM THE TREASURER

There has been little change in the finances of the Association, with the bank balance standing at £7,034 at 30th September 2015 as opposed to £7,201 at the end of September 2014, although there was a small deficit of £166.90 at the end of the year.

Donations of £500.00 each have been paid to both CIAS and RNLI and a further £70.00 to CIAS which is the total of subscriptions received from members who have resigned but have forgotten to cancel their standing orders!

Membership at the end of the year before renewal was 499, and currently stands at 462 as a result of resignations since December. We were sad to lose seven of our long-standing members who passed away during the year, and send our condolences to their families: Des Crafter, Cynthia Goaziou, Peter Hanning, Keith Livesey, Pat McGinley, Bill Sugden and, most recently, Don Filleul OBE who was a founding member of the Association as noted elsewhere.

We attempt to keep costs down by emailing members wherever possible instead of using snail mail, which has recently been increased to 48p. **If you have not yet returned our Members' Details Update Form (there are 127 of you out there who have not done so!) please find the form on the website, or call me** and I will send one to you. Even if you do not have an email address, we like to have a record of members' phone numbers and in which part of the harbour they moor their boats. Savings are also made when subscriptions are paid by Standing Order, so if the members who still pay by cheque could complete a mandate (also on the website) and return it to me, I would be most grateful.

At the end of this year I will have completed the three year term of office that I agreed to when I took over from Penny Hatter - so the Committee would be delighted to hear from anyone who feels they could volunteer for the role. Give me a call if you would like to find out what is involved.

Our house flags and boat/car stickers are available at £10.00 and £0.50, respectively.

Christine Gill

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ST HELIER HARBOUR

It is odd to think that, in a place surrounded by water, no harbour facilities were available until the very late seventeenth hundreds, but this was the case in Jersey where, up until then, small jetties had been built in St Aubin, Gorey and St Helier (South Pier). The island was basically an agricultural community producing cider and knitted goods for export. The fleet, such as it was, dried out in the shelter of the west side of St Aubin's Bay or underneath Elizabeth Castle. Ships were loaded and unloaded using horse-drawn carts along the beach. Even the cod-fishing fleet which spent most of its time travelling to the Newfoundland grounds and returning via South America and the Mediterranean, laden with high-tariff goods such as tobacco and brandy, had to dry out but then spent much of the winter in St Malo.

In the eighteenth century political differences of opinion resulted in trade between France and England becoming difficult if not at times impossible because of government restrictions. Jersey was an ideal place to benefit by trading goods for both countries in Jersey waters. The founding of the first Chamber of Commerce in English speaking countries in 1768 helped to protect the merchantmen's interests and it was clear that a proper harbour would need to be constructed on the St Helier side of the bay.

The first significant action was to reclaim a vast area of land in front of the Town Church to what is now the Esplanade, as far as the Grand Hotel. This new land was developed gradually with merchant's houses built on sand, allowing the provision of cellars (Bond Street) as well as warehouses and shipyards. In addition, a two hundred yard breakwater was constructed (the original North Quay) to protect the small harbour areas of Havre Français and Havre Anglais from the swells and prevailing winds, as well as rebuilding and extending South Pier. Further work was stopped by the Napoleonic Wars and it was not until 1814 that the merchants started work on their own quay, Le Quai au Marchants, and constructed warehousing and accommodation. Because the States wouldn't pay for it, they numbered the buildings the wrong way round!

By this time shipping was increasing so rapidly that further extensions were deemed necessary, resulting in the construction of Victoria Pier, opened by the Queen in 1846, and Albert Pier in 1853. Some years later, the North Quay was extended and widened to form the New North Quay (1877). As suggested by Prince Albert with his remark: "Why do Jersey men build their harbours on dry land?", ships still dried out. It was not until the early 1900's that the harbour was dredged. This required strengthening the original Victoria and Albert piers with additional walls in which tidal landing stages and steps were provided. The deep water harbour was completed by 1928.

Despite the protection given by this new harbour, the Atlantic swells could still be a problem, hence the spending beach behind South Pier. In 1870 it was decided an even bigger harbour was required, especially now that the fleet had increased to over 450 vessels, not counting the passenger ferries from England which moored at London Quay between South and Victoria piers. Forty two engineers were invited to submit designs and the contract was won by Sir John Coode. The work included a breakwater from Elizabeth Castle and another from La Collette. However, over three winters the La Collette wall was destroyed, reconstructed and ultimately abandoned, leaving only half of the Elizabeth breakwater which was completed in 1887 to its present length.

The final pieces in the jigsaw, adding the modern facilities we have today, were La Collette in 1977, Town Marina in 1981, Elizabeth Harbour - opened by the Queen in 1989, and Elizabeth Marina in 1998.

Hugh Gill (Blue Badge Guide)

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## **BITS & PIECES**

### **The Crane at South Pier**

Members will be aware of the problems affecting the proposed replacement of the cranes in various harbours around the island, and the crane at South Pier is no exception. Ports of Jersey have just issued an on-line survey for users aimed at establishing how much use the cranes get, whether the weight limit is adequate (2 tons for the South Pier crane) & if other alternatives to an expensive replacement are

feasible. If you use the crane, your Association encourages you to please complete the survey ***BEFORE THE CLOSING DEADLINE 27 MAY 2016.***

Go to: -

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZB2N72P>

### **AGM Notes**

The AGM was held on 24 November 2015 at St Helier Yacht Club and was attended by some 70 members. The draft minutes can be found on the Association Website.

### **Disposing of Flares**

Your post-dated flares can be disposed of at the Domestic Refuse Centre, Gate 4, at Bellozanne, open 7.30am-4.15pm daily, Sundays 8am-12.45pm. Thanks to members who sent in this information.

### **Trips to France**

Boat owners taking a trip over to France in 2016 would be well advised to bear in mind the migration problems affecting Europe. We have already seen evidence that this issue may be creeping closer to home. In the view of your committee this is quite likely to result in closer scrutiny of private boats entering & leaving France this season, and we advise you to ensure, more than ever, that all on board have their passports to hand, & that all ship's documents are in good order.

### **St Helier Y.C. Rally to Portbail**

St Helier Y.C. are organising a rally on the weekend of 2/3 July 2016 to coincide with the Tour de France passing through Portbail. A dinner is planned at the Rendez-Vous des Pecheurs on Saturday evening. Contact Chris Parlett, Club Manager at St H.Y.C., for further details & an application form.

### **Visiting Les Minquiers**

The Maîtresse-Ile Residents Association (MIRA), newly formed last year, has issued a Code of Conduct which can be viewed or down-loaded from the Ports of Jersey website in either English or French. Visitors to the reef are urged to make themselves familiar with the Code in order to preserve and protect the fragile nature of the reef. You can find it at:

[www.ports.je/jerseyharbours/RegulationGuidance/Pages/CodesPractice.aspx](http://www.ports.je/jerseyharbours/RegulationGuidance/Pages/CodesPractice.aspx)

### **Les Ecrehou**

A similar Code of Conduct covering Les Ecrehou can also be found at the above web location.

## YOUR COMMITTEE FOR 2016

If you have any harbour or marina related issues, please do let us know. Contact one of the officers, or any committee member, or use the 'Contact Us' page on the website.

We try to monitor the facilities regularly, but we can't be everywhere, so your feedback is important.

Also, don't forget, if you spot something untoward happening, do call Jersey Coastguard Boat Watch on 01534 447705, which is manned twenty-four hours every day, including weekends.



**Mike Stevens, Chairman**

Tel: 07797 711093

“Dawn Lady 2” French Harbour



**Nick Wood, Vice Chairman**

Tel: 07797 786877

“Coriolis” St Helier Harbour



**Peter Donne Davis, Secretary**

Tel: 863765

“Midnight Blue” St Helier Marina



**Christine Gill, Treasurer/Members**

Tel: 720882

“Trewyn” French Harbour



**Phil Carter**

Tel: 629916

“April Rose” La Collette Marina



**Matthew Clarke**

Tel: 07797 722754

“Lionheart” La Collette Marina



**Kevin Hennelly**

Tel: 853179

“Indybar” St Helier Harbour



**Peter Rose**

Tel: 07797 749522

“La Rose Sauvage” Elizabeth Marina



**Will Simpson**

Tel: 07797 749250

“She'll Do It” La Collette Marina



**Vic Walker**

Tel: 509943

“Natasha Alexandra” French Harbour

## Members' Discounts

Make the most of your membership by taking advantage of the discounts kindly offered by these local firms on showing your membership card: -

**Allied Traders** Catering & Swimming Pool Division no longer offer a 10% discounts to members but instead you may qualify for their 'Allied Traders Privilege Card' which gives a 10% discount.

**South Pier Marine** offers a discount of 10% on all purchases above £10

*These are valuable benefits of membership of the Association, so always carry your card – and tell your friends.*



Offshore powerboat racing is to return to Jersey this summer - over two decades since the last series of races - with the island playing host to a Festival at the height of the season in 2016.

The glamour of the fast craft racing will return to St Aubin's Bay in August when racers from across Europe are expected to ride the waves in front of an enthusiastic audience.

The Jersey Powerboat Club has announced that the Island will host an Offshore Circuit Race, a category of racing officiated by the RYA Britain's national authority for watersports.

The racing is being held on **Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 August** and the JPC is hoping to provide as much excitement onshore as it will on the water with a host of events planned throughout the weekend.

Powerboat racing in the Channel Islands was at its height 30 years ago when Guernsey was a venue for a leg of the World Championships. In the mid-90s Jersey was playing host to the predecessor of the current offshore series.

Jersey Powerboat Club chairman, Roy Smith, raced in both of those series and went from strength-to-strength. After becoming a national champion and winning 2 world Championships, he only hung up his helmet after clinching his 3rd world championship title in Guernsey in 2008.

With a strong local contingent competing alongside leading UK and Guernsey competitors, this event is set to put Jersey back on the Powerboat Racing Map.

The club is looking to get people involved to help stage the event. Anyone interested in volunteering or offering sponsorship support should go to the [www.jerseypowerboatclub.co.uk](http://www.jerseypowerboatclub.co.uk) website, email [jpcteam@jerseypowerboatclub.co.uk](mailto:jpcteam@jerseypowerboatclub.co.uk) or call Nicolle Maltwood: 07797783689 or Scott Walker: 07797774932

