

The official Newsletter of the International Yachting Fellowship of Rotarians
in Great Britain and Ireland



Rotafleet News



The International Fellowship of Rotarians is a group of Rotarians dedicated to the promotion of yachting and other boating activities as an opportunity for friendship and service. This fellowship operates in accordance with Rotary International Policy but is not an agency nor controlled by Rotary International.

Autumn/Winter 2013



Commodore's Ramblings



Since our meeting at Kings Lynn in March it has been a busy time with IYFR.

The RI International Convention in Lisbon and IYFR AGM in June were followed by a Post Convention Event, which although disappointing because we were not hosted on boats, still proved to be enjoyable because of the fellowship. It is really good to get together with IYFR members from all over the world. The next RI International is due to be held in Sydney, where again we will not be hosted on boats for the Post Convention Event. My husband, Brian and I, met up with the PCC

organiser, Robert Eaglesham and his wife Marlene in London earlier this year. We had a good day with perfect weather for a trip on the Thames and visiting the Cutty Sark at Greenwich. Robert outlined his plans for the PCC and he is putting in a great deal of effort to make it enjoyable for IYFR members.

The weather has proved to be very contrary this year with the Kids Out on the water event organised by the Sussex Fleet being cancelled. A great shame after so much hard work went into creating the event. Instead Brian and I visited Chichester Cathedral and viewed the Peregrine Falcons that nest there every year. It was a delight as the RSPB always set up cameras so that the progress of the chicks can be followed remotely and over the Internet. Absolutely fascinating!

Suffolk Fleet organise a barge trip experience for disabled and disadvantaged youngsters. The barge is hired with crew for two days on the Orwell. On the first day the weather was excellent, but it rained on the second day and was quite chilly. Guess who was on board on the second day! Nevertheless it was great to see everyone having a good time. Lots of squeals of delight when a fire tender came out of Harwich and gave a demonstration, which they did on both days.

The Rotary Club of Cowes 'Annual Sail Over Lunch' at the Royal Yacht Squadron again proved to be a good event, although there were a few anxious faces as the weather closed in, and many crews had a not very pleasant return journey back over the water. Brian and I decided to stay on the Isle of Wight for a few days and had B&B on board an ex-Navy Warship which has been adapted for the purpose.

The Area One AGM was held this year in La Spezia in Italy and coincided with the Med Tall Ships event. It was a great sight with around 14 Tall Ships in the Harbour. The AGM was actually held aboard one of the Tall Ships!

Promoting IYFR is still top of the agenda and the IYFR stand has been present at a number of District Conferences. We have also booked space at the RIBI Convention in Birmingham. Incidentally if any of you are attending and would be willing to man the stand for a slot please let me know. If you are attending your own District Conference and would like to organise an IYFR stand, again please let me know. Recently the North Wales Fleet had the stand at their District Conference. The stand

does look quite impressive and creates a lot of interest. We need to keep plugging away on promotion to let people know how much enjoyment they can get from IYFR.

It was a pleasure to recently attend the chartering of a new fleet, The South West, and we have to thank Rodney Davis and Bob Burns for the effort that they put in to get this fleet up and running. The Commodore of the new fleet is Chris Witt. He is very enthusiastic and I am sure that the fleet will steadily grow in numbers.

There is some news on the Broads Fleet which disbanded about 18 months ago. There is still interest in IYFR in the area so the possibility of setting up a Broads Squadron is being investigated. A Squadron is the same concept as a Rotary Satellite Club.

At the AGM next March we will be looking to appoint a Rear Commodore to the GB&I Bridge. Nomination requests for the post will be sent out to fleets early in the New Year.

Finally, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

Annette Lewis

Philippines Typhoon Disaster

There are nine fleets in the Philippines and the International Bridge felt that the need of our friends was greater than ours, and so all the possible International grant money that would have been available for IYFR Grants this year (\$30,000) has been sent to their aid in the Philippines. International Vice Commodore Jun Avecilla, along with District Governors and Honorary Commodores, will co-ordinate the management of these funds to ensure that maximum use is made of them in order to provide the greatest benefit to the affected people.

This unfortunately means that there will be no other grants available this year, or until appropriate funds have been replenished. It is hoped that everyone is in agreement with this action as many of the fleets are located in the areas that have been badly affected by the Typhoon.

We will have to wait and see how the grant situation develops from here and everyone will be notified as soon as a way forward is identified.

Annette Lewis

Cover Photograph

This picture was taken one evening in the Menai Straights and features a boat owned by John and 'PJ' Royale of the North Wales Fleet. As with the previous cover, thanks to Patrick Tyrrell for supplying the photograph.

Please remember that if you have a special photograph, or details of a memorable expedition, or an interesting article, then please submit it to Rotafleet News. Your colleagues in IYFR want to hear from you.

Notes from the Executive Committee Meeting



On 2nd November 2013 sixty-two members and their partners met at Hardwick Hall in Sedgfield, County Durham. The highlights of the discussion were as follows.

The new South West Fleet was chartered by the Area One Commodore, Bob Burns, on behalf of International Commodore, Sergio Santi, at a launch at the Royal Fowey Yacht Club on 28th September 2013. Annette Lewis (GB&I Commodore) and Mike Pooley (past GB&I Commodore) also attended, along with the charter members and their partners. Chris Witt is the new Fleet's Commodore and has worked hard to get the fleet up and running. There are currently 22 members, although the net increase in membership is less as some of these transferred from the GB Fleet prior to chartering.

From the disbanded Broads Fleet it is intended to form a Broads Squadron attached to the Fenland Fleet, which would be appropriate given the location of some of the boats. In this respect membership, recruitment and promoting IYFR remain top of the agenda. In addition to their own clubs, members are encouraged to advertise the fellowship at District and other Rotary events. There is an impressive stand available for members to borrow and it creates much interest at these events, so if you are attending one, please use it. For example, floor space has already been booked for the next IYFR Convention in Birmingham. We need to keep promoting IYFR to let people know how much enjoyment they can get from the fellowship, as even many committed Rotarians are still not aware of the fellowships and the opportunity for international activity

Otherwise the number of members in our various fleets is falling slowly, and this is not just an IYFR issue as Rotary itself needs new members. Therefore yacht clubs and other venues provide an alternative to address these two issues and recruit for both, and members are encouraged to promote both organisations whenever they can.

The draft accounts to 30th June 2013 show a surplus of £374 on the period. However the planned publication of a new "Pink Book" (traditionally every two years) listing

member details means that a £1,287 loss is anticipated on the year. Likewise a loss of £617 is budgeted for the following year. As there are still sufficient funds in the bank (£3,747) no subscription increase is planned for the year commencing 1st July 2014, but this might have to be reviewed for the following year. In addition £5,773 has been received in grants from International and allocated to the fleets for their charitable redistribution. Currently we have 265 GB&I members registered on the International Web Site.



Finally it was noted that Rodney Davis replaces Annette Lewis as Commodore in 2014 and a handover event is being organised near Oxford for 27th to 29th June. As a result the Bridge will be in need of a new Rear Commodore and applicants will be sought in the coming months.

Sedgefield Surroundings

Sedgefield is a very typically English village (really a small town) located in the heart of some very attractive countryside. The North Yorkshire Moors and Dales are just to the South, whilst Durham and the beautiful Northumberland coast are just to the North. Most Rotarians attending the Executive Meeting took the opportunity to visit Durham at some point and immediately realised why it was such an important medieval centre. Located high on a rocky outcrop in a bend in the River Wear, it is a natural fortress surrounded by the river on three sides. With its ancient bridges, castle (containing sections going back to the Norman invasion in the 11th century) and towering cathedral, the centre of town still retains its medieval character. A seat of learning for over 600 years, the castle is now the main building of Durham University, whilst the students add much to the character of the place (an Oxford or Cambridge of

the North). The equally ancient cathedral was the birthplace of pointed arches and gothic architecture, and contains the tombs of St Cuthbert and the Venerable Bede. For much of its history Durham was really an independent kingdom or buffer state, ruled by its Prince Bishops.



However the main reason for choosing Sedgefield for the Executive Meeting was its proximity to Hartlepool and its Historic Quay. Based on a fully restored frigate, HMS Trincomalee, this is a ‘must’ for anyone with an interest in Nelson’s Navy and the days of sail. The IYFR visit took place on the Saturday and there is a lot to see.



The Trincomalee itself floats in a Georgian dock surrounded on three sides by shops and static exhibits displaying various aspects of life at the time: a tailor, a sword maker, a Chandler, an apothecary, a victualler, and so forth, plus displays on the Press



Gang and other less savoury naval traditions. Musketry, cannons and audio-visual effects add to the visitor experience, whilst there are several modern quay-side hostelrys to provide good up to date refreshments.



However the main exhibit is HMS Trincomalee. Interestingly the ship was built in India (hence the name) to a British design, demonstrating that globalisation is not a new phenomenon (it was cheaper for the navy, especially as wood had become scarce in Britain after years of warfare). Launched in 1817 and built of teak rather than oak, her survival is probably due to being immediately placed on the reserve list and used as a training ship (apart from a period of about 10 years in the late 1840s when she was active around North America and the West Indies). She was mainly used as an



accommodation ship, a training ship, and a holiday ship, based in Falmouth then Portsmouth, and remained in service until 1986 after which she was restored in 1992.



Anyone with a passing interest in sailing, or even the 'Hornblower' or 'Master and Commander' series of books, must visit the Trincomalee. Whilst these books are well

written, a visit like this is the only way to get the “real taste and feel” of these ships. The Victory might be contemporary, but it is much larger. The only way to appreciate living conditions in the Napoleonic era navy is to stand in the cramped decks and hold of the Trincomalee. Beautifully restored and fully rigged, it is possible to see exactly how she was operated, sailed and manoeuvred.



Have You Considered Volunteering with Sailability?

Sailability is an organisation set up to facilitate “sailing for everyone”, regardless of age or ability. It is operated on ‘not for profit’ voluntary basis, and the aim is to enrich through sailing the lives of all those who are disadvantaged, either by way of disability, age, finance or any other circumstance. Age means both the old and the young, and the key factor is “disadvantaged”.

Sailability operates under various names in Australia, France, Greece, United Kingdom, Hungary, India, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Timor Leste and the USA. A large number of IYFR members in the UK are already actively involved in *Sailability* because it actually originated here when two parallel activities merged.

In the 1980’s the Royal Yachting Association formed the Seamanship Foundation, while at the same time a number of individual local groups formed the embryo of a national organisation for disabled sailors. As a result of the merger RYA *Sailability* was formed. Today the organisation is the leading UK national charity for disabled sailing with over 15,000 sailors benefitting from its activities. RYA *Sailability* is considered to be the most active sailing organisation for people with disabilities in the world, there being some 200 clubs in the UK.

Many Rotary Districts set up a rota of clubs to assist throughout the sailing season, which is how I became involved through my district, 1070. So on Thursday afternoons

between April and October, come rain or shine, you will find Rotarians helping out at my local *Sailability* centre on Grafham Water.

Sailability not only caters for those who wish to sail but it also provides the experience of just being out on the water. The activities cover a broad spectrum, ranging from recreation, therapeutic and competitive activities from grass-root entry level through to elite World Championships and Paralympic training.

I shall never forget the facial expression of one of my fellow Rotary club members who I had persuaded to help out at a regatta. She had just assisted another lady sailor into her own boat, making sure she was comfortable and ready for her race, when the sailor asked her to look after something that was very precious whilst she was participating in the race. She then proceeded to handed over her prosthetic leg!

If you are already involved in *Sailability* you will know just how much fun you can have whilst also enriching the lives of others. You do not need to be a sailor to volunteer, as all willing pairs of hands are needed. If you are not yet involved and would like to be, why not locate a centre in your area and enjoy yourself!

Annette Lewis

“Hydrogen” for Special Needs

Every other year the Suffolk Fleet organise two consecutive day trips on the River Orwell for groups of disabled and special needs children, along with some adults. So on Tuesday 2nd July I embarked on the Thames barge "Hydrogen" at Ipswich quay ready to act as a Galley Slave for the day.



While the barge set sail to travel through the lock and into the river I was set to work down below helping to prepare the packed lunches along with other Rotarians and wives. Having buttered dozens of slices of bread I then managed to chop several blocks of cheese without chopping off any fingers in the process!! I then acted as chief rubbish collector and, following lunch, chief washer upper. I had never realised just how domesticated I must be!

In between my duties, however, I was able to spend time on deck with the children who thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Some of them took turns on the helm as you can



see from the photo whilst others helped to raise and lower the sails. We passed under the Orwell Bridge and continued downstream to Harwich harbour where arrangements had been made for one of the large tugs that help the container ships to dock at



Felixstowe to come alongside and proceeded to spray a very powerful jet of water into the air which fortunately wasn't close enough to spray us although I think that some of the children were rather hoping that it would.

Once we were off Harwich we raised the sails and cruised back into through the harbour and due to the wind being in a favourable direction were able to sail as far as Pin Mill before again motoring back to Ipswich.



When we arrived back at the quay a van from the local fish and chip shop was waiting with supplies and everyone was treated to a large portion of cod and chips.

It is a long day for some of the children but they all left with a smile and lots of thank yous after a wonderful day out. For us Rotarian helpers it was immensely satisfying



experience and it is always a pleasure to be involved with members from other clubs in the region and thanks must go to a number of the members of the fleet and their wives who put in a tremendous amount of work organising these two trips.

Len Nieuwenhuis

Annual Trip to St Katherine's 2013

Every year we endeavour to make a trip from Burnham-on-Crouch to St Katherine's Yacht Haven by the Tower of London, accompanied by as many members of the East Coast Fleet as are able. Our timing is a bit dependant on the tides, but if possible we try to go up around the beginning of July.

This year the timing was such that other boats could not come with us so we ventured off alone. Our boat *Kriesty* is a Southerly-95 and, although a comfortable sail, is not going to win many racing prizes: this means that we are more dependent on using the tide than some of our faster brethren!



The forecast looked good for a two-day sail via Queenborough, and we took the opportunity to bring an old friend who had sailed on the Broads but who had never tried the Estuary. Six hours of a pleasant sail across the Maplin Sands brought us to the mouth of the Medway and along to Queenborough, where we took up a mooring buoy. The mooring buoys there are notoriously low in the water and on a previous visit Rosemary had wedged herself between the guard rails to catch the chain. Unfortunately she caught the toggle of her life jacket and inflated the jacket trapping her between the rails! She had the presence of mind to hang on to the mooring so I was able to secure the boat before returning to deflate the jacket.

Early next morning we set off to Saint Katherine's assuming an eight hour trip, ready for the locks to open and allowing a tidal window of two hours each side of high water London Bridge. Skirting the wreck of the *Montgomery* in the mouth of the Medway, which is a sunken World War Two ammunition ship with explosives still on board, we used the yacht track on the south side of the Channel as far as Shell Haven off Canvey Island. There is no cutting off corners here as it shallows very quickly! The track then changes to the conventional port to port and round a bend to find a number of large vessels loading around Tilbury.



The *Marco Polo*, which we used to visit the Baltic and St. Petersburg later in the year was tied up at the Tilbury Cruiser Centre, and this gave us the chance to look her over. Further up, the container port kept us on the lookout as ships were manoeuvring all the time and place. Forget the rules of the road just keep clear!



The Thames Barrier looks daunting and you have to radio ahead to ask permission to pass through. You are then directed to one of the lanes. The lettering system can be unclear so they make it easier by having green arrows pointing to the hole you need to go through. Following this the river passes the Millennium Dome and it can become very confusing as you go along. Sometimes Canary Wharf seems to be on your left and then on your right because of the bend in the river. Now the pace of the river increases with the fast catamarans flitting backwards and forwards along with barges, police boats and every kind of navigation.

Greenwich makes an impressive sight on the port hand side, and we have vivid memories of getting a cement sack around our prop and rudder here many years ago. The current is so strong that we were swept down the river into moored old barges and

had to be towed off by the river police. We were beached at Greenwich, just outside the pub, so that we could cut the bag off with lots of free advice from the shore. All was fine, but we learned to respect the effects of the tide even this far up the Thames.

Turning round the bend, the Tower of London and Tower Bridge come into view. It's so magnificent from the sea level! We were on time and able to ask for permission to enter the lock. However, with some 15 other boats trying to position themselves, plus a Thames barge that came up late but took priority, and the London fast cruisers and police launches, the result is mayhem. Although there is a fuelling station on the north bank, just before the dock, we were not allowed to moor there. Instead there is a useful gap just after it, into which you can tuck yourself and keep out of trouble.

The lock master obviously took pity on us and we were called in to share the lock with the Thames barge whilst the others waited. We were able to sail into the Yacht Haven and moved around to our allocated slot. However, because the harbourmaster was able to squeeze three yachts into a space that we thought was just for us, we woke the following morning to find that we had new neighbours. The Queen's barge was also manoeuvred in beside us: it is a magnificent vessel and apparently still there now, five months later.



St Katherine's is great for exploring London and going to theatres and such like. We indulged in performances at the Globe and in the West End. We walked the Thames Path to Canary Wharf, finding various historical sites on the way that gave us a strong idea of what the communities used to be like along the river. We also found ourselves having to spend a few more days there than expected as the weather worsened, but we didn't complain too much.

Eventually we were homeward bound, first by edging out very timidly to avoid scraping the paint on the royal barge and ending up in the Tower, then getting into the first lockout and back out onto the open Thames. It was sometimes tempting to cut corners, but we soon discovered that Big Brother is watching you: as we approached the Barrier a voice boomed out telling some other boat (not a British one I am glad to report) to keep in lane.

The Queen Elizabeth Bridge framed a tall ship as we passed. Having left at 7a.m. we made good time making full use of the tide. Six hours later and we were back to Southend, opposite the Medway. This should have enabled us to get back to Burnham in one trip of about 12 hours.



Next morning BANG! Passing up the side of the Maplin Sands, the impeller imploded. Warning lights and alarms went off, as did the engine. We were not justified in calling the Coast Guard as we had sails and the foresail was out already as we had been motor sailing. We had some difficulty getting the main up as the lazy-jack system kept getting in the way, but we progressed, albeit very slowly.

Knowing that the Maplin Sands were on our port side we resisted the temptation to cut across what appeared to be open water. The wind farms off Foulness make it very difficult to pick out the buoys, but we finally made it into the mouth of the River Crouch and felt a little less tense. It was now a race to try to get to the marina, normally a two-hour sail, before the tide turned. We were now sailing in the dark, at times making 6 knots over the ground. After a discussion regarding tactics to get into

the marina, we left ourselves with a reduced foresail which by luck rather than judgement gave us just enough control to tack four times in the marina and get us on to our own pontoon and berth. It was an interesting manoeuvre but not one I would like to repeat.

Regardless, I am sure we will be visiting St Katherine's again next year. Do join us, even if just to give us a tow!

Robin Sudlow

IYFR La Spezia Area 1 AGM

La Spezia was selected as the venue because it was the end of the final leg of the Mediterranean Tall Ships Race, with the ships arriving on the weekend of the Area 1 AGM. There was a real carnival atmosphere on the waterfront throughout the event.



The weekend began on the Thursday evening with a meal, advertised in the programme as 'a welcome informal dinner at the hotel'. In reality it turned out to be a grand formal dinner, hosted by the Rotary Club of La Spezia. Cocktails and appetizers of the highest standard set the scene for a delicious three course dinner, with wine flowing all evening. The District Governor, Club President and other speakers addressed us in Italian, while one of the speakers, who like us did not speak Italian, gave his address in French – a good international beginning to the weekend!

Friday; we visited the Italian Navy Museum, where IC Sergio gave us a personal tour. We now have a much clearer understanding of how the entire Royal Navy was sunk by the Italian Navy in World War Two! In the evening we returned nearby to the Warrant Officers Club to sample a typical pizza meal from that part of Italy. Curious to see how 70 pizzas could be cooked in just 5 ovens and still served hot, well cooked and without delay, we are still curious. However, wine again flowed throughout.

Saturday; we took to the water on the Naval Brigantine '*Italia*', the Italian Tall Ship sponsored by IYFR which takes disadvantaged children and others on trips. A buffet lunch was followed by the Annual Meeting when all the Regional Commodores gave their reports. Luigi Norsa also advised us on the planned changes to the website, where the minutes of the meeting are now to be found



In the evening we went up market to the Navy Officers' Club for a Gala Dinner, another superb three course meal with again much wine. IC Sergio inducted two of his former Naval Admiral colleagues as Honorary Commodores of IYFR.

Sunday, we were promised a private visit to the Italian Navy's Flagship, '*Amerigo Vespucci*', for a personal tour followed by lunch. No members of the public were to be allowed on board at the time and we were to be ferried to the starboard side of the ship, well away from view of the pontoon where the public boarded. Unfortunately we had to wait for over an hour for the ferry, during which time we were joined by about 70 members of the local Rotary Club and their families. The result was that our numbers were too large for the Captain to deal with, and so we had to forgo our lunch

and make do with a little drink and nibbles, which we were competing for with the crew. Finally we were all asked to hastily leave the ship before a party of VIPs arrived. As the day was still early a number of us took a local ferry up the coast to visit the ports of the Cinque Terre. This was a fascinating afternoon, visiting small villages nestling at the foot of the narrow rocky valleys with small landing stages, landing via a narrow gangway over the bow of the boat. It more than made up for the earlier disappointments.

We were all looking forward to Monday, when we were again due on board the *Italia*, but again there was some confusion over the arrangements. Those of us staying in the hotel were told to be on board by 8.00am to sail fairly early.

We duly arrived on the quayside by 7.45am and boarded *Italia*. At first we thought we had boarded the *Mary Celeste* as there appeared to be no one on board. Eventually some crew members appeared, although none of them knew what time we would be departing. We also wondered where Sergio and others were, when to our surprise he arrived with a large party at around 9.30am. Apparently the message he left at the hotel to advise us of our new departure time did not get through to us!



However after this unfortunate start, the rest of the day was absolutely fantastic. We cast off around 10.30am and motored out into the bay. All the tall ships then proceeded to leave the port in a steady procession, several of them hoisting their sails. It was a truly grand sight. The *Italia* crew hauled up some of our sails and the engine was silenced. This being for several of us the first time we had experienced a tall ship

under sail. The crew put on a good spread for lunch and, as at all the previous events, plenty of drink. After the other tall ships had passed by us on their way to various destinations we returned to a quay in the Italian Navy area, and then travelled back to our hotel by coach.

Sailing the European Waterways

Why do we now cruise European Waterways rather than UK ones? Well it's a fairly long story but I'll be as brief as possible.



It all started when 10 years ago or so, in company with three other boats from the Suffolk Fleet, when we sailed from Harwich to Ijmuiden. I also had three friends with me on my boat from St. Neots Rotary Club. Ijmuiden is the port for entry into the North Sea Canal and the passageway to Amsterdam. After a memorable couple of days in the city's Six Haven Marina, we sailed to Horne and then into the Markenmeer through the lock which separates the north and south part of the old Zuidersee, followed by Medemblik, Enkhuizen, and Lelystad. It was there that my three friends departed for England, and my wife Maureen and fellow Iyforians Ian and Norma Hornsby from the Suffolk Fleet joined me.

The next day we travelled to Lemmer and moored in a marina on the Ijsselmeer. We walked into the town and saw many ships in the canal that went through the centre of the town. We then found out that Lemmer was one of the ports of access into the hundreds of miles of rivers, lakes and canals of the Netherlands. We enjoyed several days exploring these sheltered and largely tranquil waterways that are not so subject to the vagaries of weather and tide.

It was then that we thought about taking our boat to France. Our boat, a Southerly-105 had a lifting keel and was therefore suitable for the French canals. So the following year we sailed from Harwich to Calais with the intention of travelling on through the rivers and canals to the south, and eventually to the Mediterranean.

'Hoopla' was 35 feet overall and the mast nearer 40 feet so we would have been very vulnerable to damage en route, particularly in locks. Instead we decided to un-step the mast and had it craned off and stored on the dockside, ready for it to be transported by road to the South of France sometime later that year.

We proceeded down the Canal de Calais to the Canal du Nord, the Oise River, and the Seine and into Paris. It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon and although there were several passenger boats, no private vessels that I can recall. We passed under the bridges where people were waving to us (or I hope they were), which was a delightful welcome to the city. Just upstream from the Ile de la Cite and Notre Dame is the Arsenal Marina. We locked in the marina, which is by the Bastille and close to many tourist sites and attractions. We spent three days sightseeing and then continued up the Seine to Fontainebleau and St Mammes, where there were many commercial barges.

Our itinerary took us down the Canal de Long, and on to a narrow viaduct over the Loire River to Sancerre. The vineyards were some distance away and the marina owner very kindly drove us to the town where we visited the wine cellars. On returning home we found the same wine in our supermarkets was quite a bit cheaper!

South of Nevers there is the small town of Decize where the Canal Lateral a la Loire meets the Canal de Nivernais and the Loire River. The Nivernais passes through hilly countryside and is a very (and I mean very) narrow waterway with many locks.

We successfully negotiated these and the unlit tunnels to emerge unscathed at Auxerre, which is on the Yonne river. Going into the town was a fabulous site with the churches and cathedral dominating the skyline.

In France it was helpful that I could speak a little French, but I'm sure one can get by without it. In Belgium and Holland all the lock keepers spoke good English. It was



about this time that we realised that we were so much fun enjoying this 'boating' way of life that we made the decision to abandon our original plan of sailing in the Med

and decided to buy a boat more suited to inland waterways. Later that year we returned to Calais, re-stepped the mast and sailed back to Harwich.

So in the November of 2006 we travelled by car to the Netherlands in search of another boat. After three days we purchased a 41-foot Dutch steel hull cabin cruiser with many of the home comforts that we did not have on our sailing boat. Since then we have travelled extensively through Holland, France and Belgium spending a total of over 80 weeks there in the last 7 years, much more time than we spent on *Hoopla* in 20 years.

I should mention that of the many hundreds of locks that we have passed through, there isn't one that we have had to operate ourselves. They are either manned or activated remotely, sometimes by radar beams or more frequently by remote controls that are supplied at the start of an automated series of locks.

Everywhere we have travelled we have found people to be very friendly and welcoming. Travelling by boat we have seen towns, villages, and countryside that we would never have seen any other way. It has been a great adventure and one that we would certainly recommend to others.

David and Maureen Smith

New IYFR South West Fleet

The new South West Fleet was chartered by Area 1 Commodore, Bob Burns on behalf of the International Commodore at a lunch at the Royal Fowey Yacht Club on the 28th September. Annette Lewis, GB&I Commodore and past GB&I Commodore Mike Pooley attended, along with charter members and their spouses. District Governor, Stephen Lay and his wife Carol attended the event, and Stephen even joined the new Fleet!



Chris Witt is the new Fleet's Commodore and he was presented with a new Fleet Commodore's jewel by Annette Lewis. Chris has worked hard to get the Fleet up and running. David Boardman is the Vice Commodore, Peter Ripley (a former Commodore of the Sussex Fleet) is Secretary, and Robert Humphrey is Treasurer. There are currently 22 members, although the net increase in GB&I membership will be less as a number had joined the GB Fleet in the lead up to chartering, whilst a few former members of the Dart Fleet have also transferred. This is a very welcome addition to the local GB&I



!!! MARK THE DATES !!!

AGM & FELLOWSHIP WEEKEND

7TH to 9TH March 2014

This will be held at St Ives, Cambridgeshire, a picturesque market town on the banks of the Great Ouse. Special rate accommodation will be provided at the Dolphin Hotel (www.dolphinhotelcambs.co.uk) and this is a joint fellowship weekend with the Rotary Flying Fellowship or IFFR, a similar organisation obviously dedicated to flying (www.iffrr.org.uk). The question is who will be the first to blag a free fun flight!

In addition to these attractions and the river, Cambridge is easily accessible via a guided bus service from St Ives, and there is the Imperial War Museum site at Duxford, which will be the subject of an organised visit on the Saturday. Duxford is home to many iconic aircraft, as well tanks, military vehicles, and of course boats.

There will be an informal dinner on the Friday night, and a slightly more formal dinner on the Saturday night when the speaker will be Paul Heiney, the well-known writer and broadcaster.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

11/12/13th April 2014

The IYFR stand will be on display at the Rotary International Convention in Birmingham 11/12/13th April. If you are attending the Convention and could spare some time to help out on the stand it would be helpful and much appreciated.

Please contact GB&I Commodore Annette on: annette-lewis@ntlworld.com

HANDOVER WEEKEND

27th to 29th June 2014

Rodney Davies takes over as Commodore from Annette Lewis in 2014, and to mark the event a Handover Weekend is being organised, tentatively in June at the Four Pillars Oxford Thames Hotel. Final details will be sent when the organisation is complete.

Thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter!

Please remember to send all your news, photographs and stories in whatever form to the editor by mail or at andre@hawryliw.plus.com as this newsletter will only be as good as you make it.