



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 2015

## Commodore's Report



I hope that you have all had a good boating season! We have been busy travelling this year, so have not used our boat as much as we would have liked to. However we were pleased to be able to go to Sao Paulo for the Rotary International Convention and the IYFR AGM to see Bob Burns duly installed as International Rear Commodore. The Post Convention Cruise did not involve much sailing: one rather wet trip which enabled a prescient quay seller of ponchos to make a killing as the price increased the nearer we got to departure! However, it was good to meet up with members from South America whom we

don't often see in Europe. It seems that in the past whilst IYFR has been able to claim that it is the largest of the Rotary Fellowships, it has recently been overtaken by the Wine Appreciation Fellowship. The remedy is in our hands!

Reference was also made in Sao Paulo to the fact that RI has recently changed the Rules about the membership its Fellowships. What the revised wording in the RI Code of Policy clause on membership says is that fellowships *shall* [my emphasis] be open to all Rotarians, family members of Rotarians, programme participants and alumni. As this is not that precise, I will be seeing if RI have any particular views.

I have been having an exchange of e-mails with a number of the UK branches (if that is the right word) of other Fellowships, who rightly bemoan the lack of interest in Fellowships on the part of RIBI and 'Rotary Today'. Even the edition of the magazine flagged as "Fellowship Month" had nothing in it about Fellowships! However, what is being suggested is that we should have a joint (probably double) stand in the House of Fellowship at the RIBI Conference in Bournemouth next April. The cost is £220 per space which would be split between those participating. Whilst there might be a bit of fight over who has what space, I am pleased that there was support for this idea at the Executive Committee meeting and I will be following the idea up with the other Rotary Fellowships.

Meanwhile my visits to the GB&I Fleets continue, and some are detailed in this magazine. Since my last report, we have much enjoyed the hospitality of the Fenland, Thames, Solent, Sussex, Humber and Medway Fleets. We are now planning a trip to the Scottish Fleets in the New Year.

*Rodney Davis, November 2015*

## **Kendal ‘Executive’ Weekend**

At the end of October IYFR Members made their way to the excellent Castle Green Hotel on the outskirts of Kendal. These weekends are a paradigm for the Rotary ideal of “fellowship”, providing the ultimate venue for meeting like-minded people and sharing stories from the preceding sailing season, and planning for the next.



There were plenty of opportunities for these activities at the informal dinner on the Friday, and a slightly more formal (i.e. neck tie) dinner on the Saturday night, not to mention the bar and the breakfasts. The Lake District was chosen for the obvious boating connection, and a reasonably UK-centric location.

To this end a cruise was organised from Bowness to Lakeside, and back, with time to



visit the aquarium at Lakeside (although certain members were seduced by the presence of a puffing steam train at Lakeside and opted for that instead). To those of you experienced with sailing in thick fog, especially an East Coast “Fret” or “Haar”, the trip had many familiarities. We did see several optimistic souls with their sails up, going nowhere and achieving nothing but wet rigging. One advantage of sailing on a lake like Windermere is that you are never far from the shore, even if you are only aware of it through a slightly different shade of fog. On open water one has to give thanks to electronic navigators and GPS. All was grey and still, with only our wake rippling the water.





In a break with tradition, the formal Executive Meeting was held after this expedition rather than immediately after breakfast. Arguably this was to leave members close to a television set so that they could watch the Rugby World Cup Final. This game did not disappoint, the membership being fairly evenly split in their support for Australia and New Zealand.

At the Executive Meeting the Bridge updated members on their various activities, starting with Bob Burns describing his Italian “cultural” experiences in Naples. As a result he is considering having the next (2016) Area One Meeting on the Baltic, either based in Berlin or somewhere in Poland. He also noted the 2017 meeting would be in Alicante, to correspond with the Volvo Ocean Race. These Rotary Regattas are an excellent way for UK members to meet and mix with other nationalities. The meeting congratulated Bob on his appointment to International Rear Commodore, noting that he would be the International Commodore in 2019.

It was agreed that at the next RIBI Conference, IYFR would share a booth with other Rotary Fellowships. This would create a bigger impact on delegates (a bigger booth sharing prospective members) and reduce costs. Regarding Fellowships like IYFR, it was noted that Rotary International seem to have relaxed the rules on fellowship membership so that fellowships could potentially include non-Rotarians: the requirement seemingly being not for active Rotarians, but that fellowship members must have been Rotarians at some point in their lives (i.e. alumni as well as current).

Annette Lewis agreed to produce an IYFR publicity leaflet for use at the RIBI Convention and similar. In common with Rotary as a whole, IYFR is always looking for new members. All members need to do their bit in promoting IYFR and encouraging new members.

Robin Sudlow will succeed Rodney Davis as GB&I Commodore in 2016, and a handover meeting is being planned for 24<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> June in Suffolk. Thereafter Patrick Tyrrell will succeed as GB&I Rear Commodore.

Latterly GB&I has made very effective use of annual grants from International. There is a move by International to make these grants only payable every second year, the intent being to make the monies larger and more meaningful to the beneficiaries.

GB&I finances were presented and whilst the accounts are currently in surplus (thanks to the subscription increase), we still expect to make a small loss on the full year to June 2016, comparable to that in previous years and adequately covered by the reserves which are being depleted in line with previous AGM decisions. It is planned to issue a new ‘Pink Book’ in 2016.

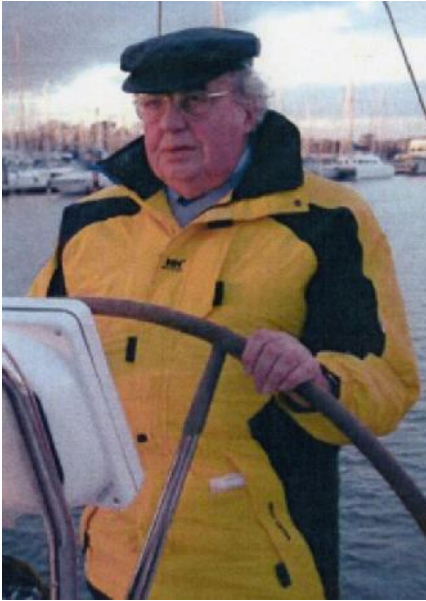
Formal minutes for this (and previous) meetings are available from the Secretary, Jean Skinley. After the aforementioned rugby interlude, partying resumed with an excellent speaker (Harry Thomason) who gave an excellent history of sailing on Lake Windermere. Harry, who donated his speaker’s fee to Prostate Cancer UK, is the commodore of the Royal Windermere Yacht Club. It acquired the ‘Royal’ moniker in 1887 largely because it was founded in 1860 by elite and wealthy individuals, mainly from the textile belt of Northern England. Today it is a typical friendly and welcoming yacht club, albeit with a longer pedigree than most.





## **In Memoriam: Reuben Skipper**

The Executive Meeting was saddened to hear of the passing of Reuben Skipper on 19<sup>th</sup> October. Born in Fareham in 1928, after university and National Service, he designed nuclear power station cooling systems before joining the scientific civil service to



become the youngest ever Deputy Chief Scientific Officer, co-ordinating a number of international programmes for the International Energy Agency.

His great passion was sailing, starting in dinghies and progressing to cruising yachts, sailing all around the south coast, the Channel Islands, and the north coast of France. He was Commodore of Stokes Bay Sailing Club and instrumental in the twinning of the Gosport and Royan sailing clubs.

In retirement, Reuben took a leading role in the Rotary movement and was the founder Vice-President of Farnham Wayside Club. He also served in IYFR as GB&I Commodore and later as International Rear

Commodore. He regularly attended Rotary and IYFR conferences and made Rotary friends all around the world. Towards the end of his life he battled a number of serious ailments, but kept his sense of humour right to the end. We will miss him.

## **In Memoriam: Ralph Lansdale**

Earlier, on the 9th July 2015, members of Sussex Fleet joined a large number of Rotarians and others from the Chichester Area for a Service in Celebration of Ralph's



life. Ralph was a long-served member of GB&I (burgee 47), a founder member of Sussex Fleet in 1988, and Fleet Commodore 1990/1. For some thirty years he and his wife Sally had been active members of the annual Kids-on-the-Water team in Chichester Harbour. An ardent supporter of Rotary Fellowships, as well as IYFR, he was also a member of the Rotary Caravan Fellowship, and the Rotary Amateur Radio Fellowship. His interest in short-wave radio began in

the army when as a signaller he transmitted one of the first messages from the D-Day beaches immediately following the allied landings. In keeping with his business career as a Florist and Horticulturist, the Church was a riot of colour.

## **Suffolk Disabled Sailing Barge Trip**

Every second year the Suffolk Fleet of IYFR organise two days of trips on a traditional Thames Sailing Barge on the River Orwell for local people. These are mainly children who suffer from a range of disabilities. Topsail Charters allow us to



have the use of one of their barges at a very-much reduced special rate for these trips. The passengers are given a picnic lunch to enjoy during the trip down river. This year



on both days they were treated to a thrilling display by the Harwich RNLI lifeboat as it circled the barge at high speed. Later they were then treated to a spectacular display by Svitzer's Fire Tug as it blasted its water jets skywards whilst circling the barge. After a gentle sail back up the River Orwell we docked at Ipswich where we then all



enjoyed a fish and chip supper before heading home. Total cost for the two days was just £1,295, financed with an IYFR Grant and some additional donations from local Rotary Clubs.

These local Rotary Clubs also help by identifying suitable beneficiaries for the trip in their communities, and do much hard work aboard the barge to keep everyone fed and watered. All on board the barge thoroughly enjoyed themselves during the two days and the Suffolk Fleet will be organising it again in two years' time.



### **BATS: Blind At Sea**

Another IYFR grant beneficiary was this charity, which is Cornwall's sailing club for visually impaired people. Supported by the IYFR South West Fleet they organised a mini cruise from Falmouth to Coverack. The original idea was to sail to Fowey on the Saturday, but the South Westerly winds would have provided a 'lively sail', with a return leg that would have been 'more of an endurance feat than fun'. Hence 'Plan B'.

Six yachts took part with 10 visually impaired sailors and 10 helpers/competent crew (plus one guide dog). Visually impaired sailors, skippers and crew all met up just after 9am at the *Mylor Café*. Having gone through the necessary briefings people soon were aboard the yachts and everyone had left the visitors pontoon by 10am, heading for

lunch at Coverack. All the yachts returned by 6pm to Falmouth Haven and by 7.30 we were all ensconced in the *Chain Locker*! Many thanks to the staff of the *Chain Locker* who produced a very reasonable and tasty supper for 30 people at very short notice on a Saturday night.



On Sunday all breakfasted at the Water Sports Centre where packed lunches were distributed, and skippers and boats were free to decide where they wanted to go. Being a typical Cornish summer's day (grey, drizzly and cold) most yachts stayed within the Carrick Roads, some going as far as they could up the River Fal. All the yachts returned to Mylor by 4 pm with everyone coming ashore looking tired but happy!

### **International Disabled Exchange**

Tullio Giraldi, a member of the Italian High Adriatic Fleet, is an international racing judge and has been associated with both the Barcolana Race in Trieste and the JPM Round the Island Race off the Isle of Wight. Three years ago, the High Adriatic Fleet presented a trophy to the club organising the Barcolana Race to be awarded to the first yacht classified with (at least) a disabled sailor and a Rotarian aboard. They would now like to present a similar trophy to the Round the Island Race. Their objective is to encourage entries of at least three boats in each race comprising a crew of able-bodied and two disabled sailors, one from each country and ideally one or more Rotarians.

Naturally, Tullio would like IYFR in GB&I to be involved in helping to see the project succeed although it is expected that local Rotary Clubs would also assist, as would RYA Sailability. It is also hoped that Fleets might be willing to make applications to IYFR for grants to assist with the travel, accommodation, and subsistence costs involved.

More information about the proposal can be obtained from Bob Milner, a member of the Rotary Club of Cowes ([trebormilner@btinternet.com](mailto:trebormilner@btinternet.com))

## Rivertime

The Thames fleet successfully obtained a grant from IYFR International to provide up to four trips for disabled groups on the 42-foot 'Rivertime', a boat specially designed to take wheelchairs and disabled people. For this it features a special ramp to board



the boat, and then an internal lift to lower the disabled safely into the hull. The boat can take up to 6 wheelchairs and 6 carers. The 'Rivertime' trust has 15 trained skippers and 30 crew members, all volunteers. In the last 6 years Rivertime Trust has carried over 15,000 passengers and last year received the Queens Award for Voluntary Service.



The Thames fleet has so far hosted disabled groups from John Mansfield House, The Henley Visually Impaired Group, and the Henley Bluebells Club. This year GB&I Commodore Rodney was even allowed by skipper Mike Pooley (under strict supervision!) to help crew the Henley Visually Impaired Group.



## Lifejackets for Africa

At the Executive Weekend, Bob Burns demonstrated a superb device that he discovered during his travels with IYFR. Invented in the Philippines in the wake of Tsunamis and Cyclones, this is a life jacket made from four large soda bottles. Basically it is a water permeable bag made from a durable PVC mesh that holds the Coke or other large PET drinks bottles in place to create a simple and effective buoyancy aid. In the Philippines each coastal household has to provide a buoyancy aid for every family member, hence the need for this innovative low cost approach. Four bottles provide sufficient floatation for an adult: three for a child. Several can even be clipped together to make a basic raft, and a pocket allows other emergency supplies to be carried, like a whistle or a torch.



The idea from the Philippines is to use the same approach for fishermen in Africa, where few can afford commercial buoyancy aids and many are drowned each year. In the past some Italian fleets have recycled their old life jackets to African fishermen, but there were never enough to meet demand. At the moment Bob is costing manufacture with several UK sail makers, the product needing to be cheap and durable. It could become the IYFR equivalent of a Shelter Box as an effective but much cheaper alternative to commercial life-saving devices.



## **Solent Fleet Haskell Turner Boat Race**

Ideal conditions saw the annual Solent Fleet race set off in fine style from the Coronation Buoy just off the Hamble entrance, then towards Gosport and the Browdown Buoy, and finally back over to the Norris Buoy near Cowes for the finish.



Although only a small fleet the race comprised a wide variety of vessels, ranging from under 30 feet to well over 40 feet. Bob Turner, a long standing Solent Fleet member is an absolute authority on the handicapping and set a staggered start, with the slowest

boat at scratch and the others then setting off at timed intervals thereafter. The aim was an exciting and close finish.





This year, with a light NNW wind, which is rather unusual for the Solent, it was a great race. The winning yacht, *Latimer Lady*, a Halberg Rassy 43 was helmed by Diana Robertson and crossed the line only 3 minutes ahead of John Robinson's *Tosara*, a 31 foot Jeanneau Sun Odyssey. Last year's winner *Tririba*, a 34 foot Bavaria crewed by Nick Lockyer, Neill Beasley and Steve Beasley was next. The honourable award for last across the line went to Commodore John Cogley, who was single handing his 35 foot Dufour Classic. His was a very impressive performance, including the use of coloured sails normally frowned on in this race, but forgiven as handling all that canvas on his own was considered a significant feat. Nonetheless he had to endure the embarrassment of presenting himself with the wooden spoon.

The motor-boaters in the fleet had to content themselves with spectating, but in a useful way. The *Arabesque*, a 38 foot Aquastar skippered by Bob Stevenson acting as committee boat with Race Officer Frank Chalcroft on board, whilst a 25 foot Hardy buzzed around in a very annoying way taking pictures whilst trying not to take the contestants' wind.

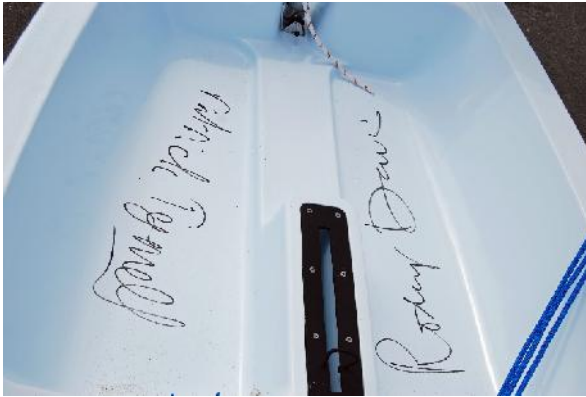
All hostilities on the water were suspended when the fleet met up on the harbourmaster's pontoon in Cowes for lunch and presentations.



## North Wales Fleet at Colwyn Bay

It was up to North Wales in early July for Commodore Rodney as Jeanne had organised a birthday surprise for him with a few days staying near Lake Bala, a visit to the Colwyn Bay Watersports Centre, and finally lunch at Bryn Williams' new restaurant on the seafront at the Porth Eirias complex.

At the Watersports Centre Rodney and Jeanne were joined by the North Wales Fleet and their Commodore Patrick Tyrrell and Fleet Secretary Anne, together with



Rotarian Alan Morgan. Alan has been instrumental in getting the Fleet and local Rotary Clubs to sponsor the new Optimist training dinghies at Colwyn Bay Watersports. Rodney and Patrick endorsed this project by signing one of the boats, as shown in the picture. The project really gets going next year when the North Wales

Fleet will be able to offer taster sailing lessons to local schoolchildren through the RYA approved training centre of Colwyn Bay Watersports.



Recently we have just learnt that the Optimist project has received a further grant of £3,000 from RWE Innology's Gwynt y Mor wind farm which is based off Colwyn Bay. This grant will fund a training day for local children in May 2016.

Back in July, after meeting the Watersports' principal, Taff Osborne, and looking at the facilities, lunch was in their restaurant, which was finished with a special birthday cake for Commodore Rodney (pictured).

Afterwards, Rodney and Jeanne were guests of Bangor Rotary Club where several of the North Wales Fleet are members including Past North Wales Fleet Commodores Robert Jones and

Bob Maskall, with Treasurer Syd Bowen and member David Williams.

## Thames Fleet Summer Cruise (18th-24th June 2015)

Early on the morning of Tuesday June 16th the First Mate and I set off for those well-known ships chandlers, Marks & Spencer and Tesco, to obtain the bonded stores for our cruise. The car loaded with stores we set off for *Lizbie-B*'s moorings at Sheperton Marina. By the time we had stowed ship it was well past lunchtime and the inner man and woman needed sustenance.

Casting off at about 1400hrs we headed up stream towards Henley. The efforts of shopping and stowing ship had taken its toll of us 'Gerry Hatrics', so as there was a nice mooring at Runnymede outside the 'Citroen Building', we moored up for the Night.



Wednesday morning dawned fine but with a chill wind, so we cast off for Cookham. Discounting narrow boats we almost had the river to ourselves, and all the locks were manned so we made good time to Cookham where we moored for the night.

On Thursday the fleet was to rendezvous at Henley, where we were the first boat to arrive. Finding a mooring upstream of Rod Eyot

Island, we were soon followed by *Zoetermeer* and *Pentonia*. The river was about six inches down and all but *Ratty's Return* had to find other places where there was more depth. By about 1600hrs all eight boats were sorted out (*Tarragon*, *Heloise*, *Tin Lizzie*, *Lizbie-B*, *Ratty's Return*, *Pentonia*, *Zoetermeer* and *Wild Holly*). Happy Hour was at 1800hrs aboard the Commodore's boat *Tarragon*, after which we repaired to the *Anchor* hostelry for our evening meal and where the Sansons joined us by car. This was a meal to end all meals with huge portions designed only for trenchermen and women.

On Friday, with weather fair, *Ratty's Return* set off early. At 0930hrs *Pentonia* and *Lizbie-B* cast off towards Cookham. Once again there were very few boats about and we had an easy nine mile four lock voyage. We passed *Ratty's Return* (a short narrow boat) on our way. There were quite a few mooring spaces at Cookham when we arrived, but it didn't last so that when the rest of our fleet arrived some boats had to raft out. *Ratty's Return* was rafted to *Lizbie-B* and we had Alan and Pat aboard for afternoon tea. Hospitality was provided by the Hon Sec's boat *Lizbie-B* on the lawn. The special fortified Pimm's went down very well. A couple passing by and spying



the drinks and goodies on the tables remarked, “They must be Rotarians”, so we drew their attention to the pennants on the boats.

Dinner was taken on board. However on arrival at Cookham *Lizbie-B* had an emergency: the first mate could not turn off the “Heads” hot water, and neither could the skipper. A plumber was urgently required. Miraculously one suddenly appeared! He quickly fixed the problem whilst giving the skipper a lecture on plumbing technology. A fellow sailor, he waived his call-out charge but demanded a cup of plumber’s tea for his troubles.

Saturday, with weather fair, everyone cast-off early about 0930hrs and headed towards Boveney. This was an even shorter distance of 7½ miles and three locks to where we were to moor at Marlow lock and be greeted by Maurice and Treena. This mooring is only long enough to take four boats, so rafting out was a must. *Zoetermeer*, to keep us entertained, lost drive on one of her engines, and on close inspection was found to have lost one of her propellers. Neil, who is believed to have a secret engineer hidden aboard, soon found a new propeller and was on his way again.



The crew of *Lizbie-B* were invited aboard *Ratty's Return* for afternoon tea, and were then amazed to see how a quart can be squeezed into a pint pot when Rear Commodore Howard and Laraine, and their friends from the Solent Fleet arrived on board. There was a shower or two of rain that evening, but undeterred a BBQ was lit and we all had an enjoyable evening despite braving the damp.

Sunday, with weather fair, *Lizbie-B* needed to pump out across the river from the mooring. All then set off at 1000 hrs with *Zoetermeer* in the lead to cover the 12½ miles and four locks to Penton Hook Marina. The Solent members who had come aboard were put ashore at Windsor to make their way home. With moorings booked and an evening meal provided by the Penton Hook Marina Yacht Club, all took advantage of the marina showers (beats using the one on board as you don’t have to fill it nor dry it out). No hospitality this evening as the club bar was open. The club evening meal was an assortment of cold fish and meats with drinks from the bar, or coffee compliments of our commodore. We held a quiz deviously set by our Vice Commodore for the Rose Bowl Trophy. The winners were Peter and Neil. A coin was tossed to see who would be the guardian of the bowl for the coming year: Neil lost and has the bowl! *Tin Lizie* then had to dash home due to a family problem, whilst *Tarragon* had battery problems so stayed put to get replacements.



Heavy overnight rain continued on and off through Monday morning during the 8 miles and three locks to Kings Lawn in Sunbury. With the fleet now down to five boats mooring was easy. Hospitality was courtesy of Vice Commodore Grant and Angela, where the Pimm's seemed to be getting progressively stronger, and where the missing boats' crews joined by car. The evening weather

was more like it should be in June, and as our evening meal was but a mere fifty yards away on foot, we could stay and consume more of the Vice Commodore's booze. Thus at 1900hrs we swayed off to the *Magpie* and had a meal to remember looking out on the boats of the Middle Thames Yacht Club with the sun shining down on them. Our pretty young waitress informed us this was her last shift at the *Magpie* as she was off to Ibiza for the summer and some proper sun!

Tuesday dawned fair with an overcast sun. At 0930 hrs *Pentonia* and *Lizbie-B* cast off towards a mooring known as Citroen at Runnymede, a total of 11 miles and 5 locks. On entering Sunbury lock we were followed in by a small cruiser and a large hire boat. Clearly the hire boat party was clueless: they only secured by the bow and so the stern drifted right across the lock, leaving the "Muppets" on board to wonder what day of the week it was. The owner of the small cruiser did them a good deed and stepped aboard the hire boat to sort them out. Afterwards, however, his good deed was not rewarded as he slipped off their boat and ended up in the water after first hitting his back and head on their side. A large man on the hire boat had to pull him out. Later we spoke to the owner of the small cruiser before we left the lock. He said he was all right, but we were sure he had hurt himself. Therefore the lesson is, unless life threatening, leave things to the lock keeper to sort out.

We all got moored at Runnymede in time for afternoon tea on the lawn, which continued into a Happy Hour provided by *Wild Holly*. GB&I Commodore Rodney and Jeanne, Past Commodore Mike and Jackie, Past Commodore Tony and Barbara, Rear Commodore Howard and Laraine, and Maurice and Treena, all joined us for farewell dinner at the *Italian Concept*. After dinner Rodney thanked the fleet for inviting him and Jeanne. Jean then presented Vice Commodore Grant with the fleet's silver salver for running a very successful cruise. Grant thanked us all for being a cooperative bunch of mariners. Thus on Wednesday morning, one week later and under a nice June sun, we all said our farewells and departed for our home moorings.

*Nigel Fentiman*

## The Sussex Fleet on the Thames

The Sammy Community Bus is voluntary service supported by a number of Rotary Clubs in the Chichester Area. The Sussex Fleet was delighted to make use of this much respected and well-run community service by making a donation and using it to organise a cruise on the River Thames. They were joined on this cruise by GB&I Commodore Rodney and his wife Jeanne. Basically the bus dropped them off at Westminster and then picked them up at Hampton Court for the return trip to Sussex.



After embarking the river route took the Sussex Fleet past the Houses of Parliament and followed the Royal Barge route of King Henry VIII. The river passes near many interesting and famous sites such as Battersea Power Station (now being converted into mega luxury residential accommodation), the well-known Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race landmarks (Putney, Fulham and Chiswick), and the various rowing clubs



on the way. Thereafter the river twists and turns to become more rural and a haven for wildlife. They eventually reached Teddington Lock, Richmond and finally to the Hampton Court Landing Stage. Although they were too late to enter Hampton Court Palace, they were able to enjoy the beautiful gardens with their multi-coloured tulip beds, manicured lawns and carefully trimmed geometric hedging.



## **Clyde and East of Scotland Joint Fleet Muster**

At the start of the season the two Scottish Fleets agreed to meet mid-way between them on Loch Katrine for a joint 'Fitting-Out Supper'. Loch Katrine is actually a huge



reservoir supplying Glasgow with drinking water, and is located in the very scenic Trossachs National Park, a picturesque area full of associations with Rob Roy and Sir



Walter Scott. Unlike the season to follow, this event was blessed with staggeringly good weather as the pictures show (proving it doesn't always rain in Scotland!)

The muster started with a cruise on Loch Katrine using the SS Sir Walter Scot which was first commissioned in 1899. This being a triple expansion steam ship on a public water supply, the engine is actually fuelled by vegetable cooking oil, just in case of a mishap.



Afternoon refreshment was taken outdoors in brilliant sunshine at the excellent ‘Wee Blether Tea Room’ overlooking Loch Ard. This water is the source of the River Clyde. For those unfamiliar with Scots dialect, ‘blether’ means to gossip or chat, most appropriate under the circumstances.

The evening meal and overnight accommodation was provided by a local hotel just outside Aberfoyle at an amazingly good volume discount negotiated by Commodore Murray Grubb. Everybody thoroughly enjoyed a marvellous time, and it just goes to show what can be done if you pool resources. Basically we got coach party rates!



The following day most Rotarians went on to explore the local area in beautiful spring weather. The “Go-Ape” facility in the Achray Forest is recommended for the energetic (!) wishing to improve their rope work (!), whilst Inchmahome Priory and the Lake of Mentieth (the only lake in Scotland) is recommended for a more spiritual and relaxing on-water experience.

## The Plate Goes South

Finally, the IYFR Plate has left the Clyde for North Wales. On the weekend of the 15/17 May North Wales Commodore Patrick, Vice Commodore John, Secretary Anne along with PJ and Colin enjoyed great fellowship with members of the Clyde Fleet.



Plan A was to host our guests on our boats and sail on Saturday round the Kyles of Bute to Portavadie Marina for dinner and the official Handover of the Plate. However, typical of 2015, the weather forecast got steadily worse as the weekend approached, so it was on to Plan B (i.e. take the Land Yachts on the Tarmac River).

Gib and Jennifer Fitzgibbon very kindly volunteered to host in their house all the guests from North Wales, as well as Commodore Mac

and Julie from the Clyde Fleet, and so there was no need to brave the elements on the pontoons at Largs Marina. Meanwhile Past GB&I Commodore Annette and Brian stayed with Bob and me at Inverkip. On Friday night Tom Williamson and Janet joined the party at Scott's in Largs Marina for the welcome dinner. A very pleasant and chatty evening ensued which boded well for the rest of the weekend.

Saturday morning dawned bright but very windy as we headed for Gourock for the ferry across the Clyde to Dunoon – at least we were on the water! Peter Ayre and



Sheena completed the contingent from Clyde Fleet and we all drove in convoy towards Tighnabruaich for morning coffee. The road is very scenic and highly recommended to anyone visiting the area. After coffee, we set off for Portavadie Marina. The staff at the marina restaurant were most welcoming and accommodating

especially as they had agreed to change our booking from dinner to lunch at very short notice. Shopping in the marina shop was a pre-lunch must for all.



The next item on the agenda was to help the Plate on its journey round the UK. Commodore Mac officially handed the Plate over to Commodore Patrick as we all cheered. Lunch was excellent and then we drove back to the ferry to cross the water. Gib and Jennifer had arranged a light supper at their house and further Clyde Fleet members and friends joined us for

drinks and a sumptuous buffet. The fellowship flowed as everyone relaxed and enjoyed the evening.

The weekend was a great success even if we didn't get to sail. Everyone enjoyed themselves and friendships were made or renewed. Doing things together in unfamiliar waters is a strength of IYFR, and the South West Fleet will enjoy the same fellowship when the time comes for the Plate to travel to their region.

### **Mark the Dates**

- The IYFR AGM will be on the weekend of **11/13<sup>th</sup> March 2016** at the Lion Quays Hotel in Oswestry, Shropshire. This is a beautiful canal side location ([www.lionquays.co.uk](http://www.lionquays.co.uk)) with much to see within a 10 mile radius, including the stunning UNESCO World Heritage Pontcysyllte Aqueduct Site, Chirk Castle, Erdigg Hall and the Llangollen Steam Railway. The AGM itinerary will include a canal trip over the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and a Welsh cream tea.
- The GB&I Commodore's Handover weekend will be on **24/26<sup>th</sup> June 2016** at the Ufford Park Golf Hotel ([www.uffordpark.co.uk](http://www.uffordpark.co.uk)) in Woodbridge, Suffolk. The itinerary includes a Thames sailing barge which will be boarded outside the Old Customs House in Ipswich Dock. Sailing (weather permitting) down the River Orwell to the North Sea, this promises to be an extra special event.
- On **22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016** the Rotary Club of Cowes is hosting its annual Sail-Over Lunch in aid of the Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust, a national organisation for young people between the ages of 8-24. Contact [jhamar@btinternet.com](mailto:jhamar@btinternet.com) .

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