

Have you seen our black rabbit? At the bottom of Whitefriars lane, just after the first passing place, I have seen this one rabbit on a good number of occasions. The various excavations are in evidence around the dinghy park, indicating existence of many furry friends.

With weather so mild it is not surprising that wildfowl are making the most of it, cormorants are making sure of a good vantage point on any still object in the lake, primarily anyone of the racing buoys will be a target for a quick take off in an attempt to secure a meal. Having dived into the water in catching fish, they then return to an elevated position, spreading their wings to dry.

Coots seem to have multiplied in recent months, many more are taking refuge on the grass in front of the club, pecking at fresh shoots. Maybe the pond weed is difficult to reach now that we have moved into the proper winter. There has been with a good coating of ice over the water and, judging by a recent forecast, plenty more cold weather to come later. Still not a patch on last year's five inch thick ice!

The recent fall of snow on top of ice shows up interesting tracks around, plenty of rabbit tracks, evidence of fox's about but not so many Canada Geese. A few years ago the lake was a mass of geese and ducks, and at dusk a powerful light would reveal that the place was alive: the noise almost deafening, On Sunday last, some odd foot marks were noted in snow on the ice on the water. The steps became longer by quite an amount each step taken and after various thoughts, it was decided that it must have been a swan taking off, by gaining speed and altitude the steps got further apart.

A recent walk took me away from lakes and water, across fields towards the old Cirencester to Cricklade railway, which also is adjacent to the again disused Severn and Thames Canal ( most of which is overgrown with bushes and even large trees ). But it is a very good wander amongst the meadows towards Siddington. The area is well known for foxes who will dig into banks and their spoil heaps are composed of sand rather than gravel which one would normally associate with our local geology. One of these "earths" was dug horizontally into a bank but a few feet away was another hole, this time vertical, which must have been the result of the soil collapsing. Due to the cold frosts, a ring of frozen condensation had formed on grass immediately surrounding the hole so there must have been occupants, possibly a vixen and maybe cubs? Spring is just around the corner, snowdrops and crocuses are well out with daffodils putting in a brave showing. Roll on warm winds and fine weather.

**Patrick Ward** Steward

## Contacting the Editor

Alistair Baird  
Tel 01242 862748  
al@alistairbaird.co.uk



## Commodore's Report



As the days start to lengthen and the sun begins to give some warmth, it's time to come out of hibernation and look forward to spending days at Whitefriars enjoying the sailing, the environment and the friendship. Whatever your age or ability, if you'd like to improve your sailing skills, or take part in friendly competitions, you will find there is much in the programme in 2012 to take your interest, along with social events to get to know each other a little better.

It promises to be an excellent season: the Junior group will benefit from a fleet of new boats will broaden the experiences of the youngsters and provide training options for others. The new Wednesday Sailability activities with the Aquadock will ensure that our less able-bodied members have the right level of assistance to allow them to continue to enjoy their sailing. There are a number of Open meetings where we look forward to welcoming visiting sailors and to coincide with the Olympic events, we include 'Push the Boat Out' with our Regatta Day. There is more detail of these and other events in this newsletter.

Lots has been going on during the winter: a dishwasher in the kitchen; improved showers for the Ladies and the middle northern slipway has been extended. Further changes are coming as the development plan takes shape. Thanks to all who have done so much over the winter.

At Whitefriars it is we, the members, who look after the assets and we all have a part to play. Sometimes the clubhouse and berth park look untidy and uncared for, making it less pleasant and not as attractive to new members. If the weeds are growing tall around your berth then borrow the mower or bring down some shears and perhaps do your neighbour's berth at the same time? If your boat or covers have turned green over the winter, a quick wash will transform them. Even if the mess is not yours if you take the initiative, it will encourage others to do the same, so please help keep the clubhouse tidy. A moments thought, some pride in the club and, yes, a few minutes of our time can make such a difference.

With best wishes for a safe, healthy and enjoyable season,

**Steve Marlow** Commodore

## Contents

- 2 **Editorial**  
**Development Plan**  
future plans: have your say
- House Report**  
a busy winter of improvements
- 3 **Christmas Dinner & Prizegiving**  
...with revealing photos!
- 4 **Sailing Tactics**  
with Ivor Keates
- 5 **Ladies in 2012 Juniors report**
- 6 **Powerboat Tips**  
from Pat Ward
- 7 **Training:** courses & opportunities for the year ahead  
**Scrapbook** photos from the past
- 8 **Rural Ramblings**

The Spring Trophy has now been renamed the Ian Hewer Trophy in recognition of his contribution to the construction of the clubhouse

## Editorial

As a relative new-comer to the club I am in a position to comment on first impressions and one of the club's greatest strengths is how friendly we are: visiting sailors remark on this. Another observation is how easy it is to become actively involved, whether it's wielding a paintbrush on a Work Party or learning new skills with first hand experience on the water. There is a huge amount of knowledge within the club and Whitefriars people are always happy to help and advise whatever aspect of sailing takes your interest.



There are a couple of new items to look out for this year: Mentoring will allocate an active sailor to someone looking to build their confidence on the water and Novice Races for anyone new to racing who would like a go. Finally a reminder that the club does have a Facebook page: it is a 'closed' group so you need to ask permission to join from the administrator, Pat Green.



My thanks to all those who have contributed articles to this edition and to our outgoing editor Pat Green, whose focus is now on Membership. Another departing contributor is John Maggs who worked on its design, but still very much here is Rupert Whelan: our print-room hero.

**Alistair Baird** Newsletter Editor

## Development Plan

Behind the scenes there has been much burning of midnight oil as the Development Planners have been thrashing out ideas to improve the club's facilities and policy. The Dev Plan has taken last year's questionnaire as a starting point, but continues to be open to new ideas as it progresses. The aim is simple: to improve the club, so if you've had inspiration since the survey, then speak to Pete Bone or Steve Marlow.

## House - Spring Update

A warm welcome to all new members, I hope you will enjoy all aspects of sailing at Whitefriars. For any new members intrigued by my title, it simply means that I am the Site Manager and odd job man. Rear Com House, in conjunction with the Steward, is responsible for looking after the site facilities and implementing improvements. Whilst major developments are usually undertaken by outside contractors, smaller projects are completed by Club members, either on Work Party days or as a specific project.



Over the winter shut down we have installed new high quality showers in the men's changing room. The Tea Bar now benefits from a Dishwasher and at long last, the middle slipway has been rebuilt and is more user friendly. Thanks to Patrick Ward, Dai Williams, Ivor Keates and Bob Cullis for their hard work on these projects.



Future improvements, which should be completed in the next month or two are new lockable shower cubicles, fitted with high quality showers, for the ladies and the installation of a new bench unit.

Work will also be undertaken to stabilise the old pontoon and then position it at a suitable location.

As the Newsletter will be distributed as the Work Party is in progress, I would like to thank all who attended for their time and effort. **John Fellows** Rear Com House

verbal assistance. If the crew, single or double are OK they can often right the boat without further assistance. If someone falls out of a boat and the one left on board is not really in control, still go for the person in the water, then follow the boat. At all times the rule is People first then Boats second.

One situation will always occur at Whitefriars, should weather conditions worsen so that another boat is needed, volunteers will always take over the second boat. There is far more to this than I have covered here but my brief was to discuss the approach to a capsized dinghy, and how to right it. I feel that is a complete subject on its own and will reserve a place in the next Newsletter to cover this, with all the controversy that it will raise.

I organise Safety Courses as the demand determines: the last was organised in February, but the next one will be when YOU want it. Please come along for basic tuition or refresher. We all learn something.

**Patrick Ward** Senior Powerboat Instructor

## Training

Whitefriars Sailing Club has a long history as a RYA Teaching Centre; the club became a teaching centre in 1974 under the principalship of Lionel Ford. Those of you that use the Trio's will note that the yellow Trio is named after him. Many people have been trained at Whitefriars over the years and all by volunteer teaching staff.



Numerous Olympic sailors started in local sailing clubs with the same structure that WSC operates and 2012 is of particular importance to dinghy sailing, since it has been so successful in winning medals in the past.

The club has organised events to coincide with this year's **Sail for Gold**, the RYA programme that supports the UK's Olympic sailors. Much has already been done but what we really need is your participation and enthusiasm - they are great fun and cater for everyone in the club, so make a note in your diary and join in! My thanks to everyone who has been involved and we all look forward to seeing you: check the training notice board, the website and Facebook page for details. If you have interest in helping with training generally or would like to teach, then do contact me. The training team are a lively bunch and find it a rewarding activity.

I hope that all members, old and new, have a great 2012 sailing season and that you can find time to use the club as much as possible. Nothing is better than word of mouth recommendation, so spread the word and encourage family and friends to consider joining Whitefriars too.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that has assisted training in any way; it is very much appreciated.

Good winds and safe sailing.

**Pete Bone** Training Principal

## Scrapbook: look how far we've come!



Only minor damage, but what was the year?



The start hut is not the place for Protest Meetings 11.c



The old Clubhouse & Portakabins

**...still plenty to do**



## Safety Boat use and training

Whitefriars has always held the view that club duties should be carried out by members volunteering. This helps to promote skills for individuals to be proficient in their chosen duty.

In order to help members to learn how to run races or be powerboat drivers, various instructors are setting up relevant courses. These are free of charge to club members and although there will be no certificate awarded, candidates can attend as many of these sessions as they please. In fact we encourage a refresher for anyone who has not used their skills for some time.

My aim in this article is to discuss a few important points relevant to power boat drivers, when engaged in Safety Boat duty. It is club policy that Safety Duty is only allotted to a person who is



sensibly proficient in the use of power boats. We organise one-day courses so an assessment can be made of the individuals concerned so that duties can then be designated for either Safety Officer or Assistant (SO or ASO).

The subject is so wide that only a portion of it can be covered here. After you have learned where to find keys, fuel, rowing boat, fuel type to be used, Petrol Safety and all other on shore items, you are then introduced to the Dory Power boat, with its 25-horse power engine. The very first thing to understand is that the propeller is a lethal chopping machine, as well as your best friend: it is the means of getting the boat along, so at all times this must receive attention from the driver. In shallow water it must be raised to protect it from bricks etc. on the lake bottom. When anywhere near a casualty great care must be exercised. IF IN DOUBT the engine must be stopped. All these actions are discussed and demonstrated within the course.

As a duty officer your place is to be positioned on the lake, so that any incident can receive your attention as quickly as possible (no hiding in the clubhouse on a cold, windy day). Get close enough to any incident and talk to the crew, make sure all are accounted for and not trapped in an overturned boat. In most cases your presence is all that is required, to reassure and possibly give

## Christmas Dinner & Prizegiving



Alistair and Sue Steel ensured we had a first class venue at AV8 on the Kemble airfield on 25 November. The dinner was excellent and although we were well entertained with music by The Tourettes, most seemed happy to catch up with friends old and new making it a really happy and relaxing evening.

With so many prizes on offer throughout the sailing year, prize-giving could easily become a drawn out affair, but Steve Marlow opted to match winners to prizes in one go, keeping the presentations more manageable and enjoyable for all. The only problem was for those who had won an armful of trophies, but that's the kind of problem we'd all like to share! Notably, Richard Domoney went home with a car full of assorted cups.



After the meal there was one other important and happy presentation as Pat Ward and Jim Aldis were made Life Members in recognition for their many years of sterling service to the club. Little known facts about these two are that Pat can reassemble an outboard motor using only a 3/8th Whitworth and a paperclip, whilst Jim can tell the direction of the wind by its smell.

A full list of this years prize winners is published in the handbook and there are still some smaller trophies in the wetroom awaiting collection.

# The Start

The start is arguably the most important part of any race: get it right and you are well on the way to a good result; get it wrong and you have very little hope. So what should you be aiming for? At the start signal you should be:

- At the right end of the line,
- On or just behind the line,
- Travelling at full speed,
- With a space to leeward,
- Ideally, on starboard tack.



Which is the right end? The simple answer is the windward end. Most start lines will be biased to some extent. In other words, one end of the line will be closer to the wind than the other. As this means there is a shorter distance to the windward mark, that's the end to start.

How do I find the windward end? There's a number of ways but I find the easiest is to sail straight down the start line with your sails out and flapping. Do it from both ends of the line and the end you sail away from the fastest is the end to start. If the line is square, with no bias, then other considerations will determine where you start. A good Race Officer (OOD) will usually set a line with a small bias to port.

How do I time the start? The OOD will give the usual 5..4..1..Go signals but these only give you a rough idea of when to start. So you need a watch, ideally with a countdown facility so you know exactly when the start hooter will sound. But remember that it is the movement of the flags that must be precisely timed, the hooter is only there to draw attention to the flags so its timing may not be perfect. The best way to get the timing right is to use the period before the start to practise your run to the line. Decide early which end you are going for. Then make a series of timed runs towards your chosen point. Ideally you should approach the line on a close-hauled course. If you reach down the line, you will have to keep clear of any boat to leeward – a close-hauled boat heading for the line has the right to push you over! Make your practise runs at less than full speed because, when approaching for the start, you will be surrounded by other boats and so may not be able to travel as fast as you'd like. If you practice at full speed, then your timing may be off. You should aim to be about 2 boats-lengths from the line with 10 seconds to go. If you can hold your position without moving through the water, so much the better. Get into position early, wait for the 10-second marker, then sheet in and accelerate towards the line.

How do I make space to leeward? This is a bit harder. Look at the boats around you to assess how they are going to start. As you approach the line, if there is no boat overlapped to leeward you can "zigzag" a bit to force boats astern to make room. Also remember that you can push a windward boat up to make room below you. Assuming you manage to create a hole below you, as the start signal sounds, bear away just a little to get maximum acceleration.

Why starboard tack? Although port-tack starts can be effective, they demand very good timing and a degree of luck! When starting out, sticking to starboard tack means there's one less thing to worry about as any boats on port will have to give way to you.

What happens if I'm over the line? If any boats are over the line at the starting signal, the OOD

should give a second hoot and lower the class flag to half-mast. (That's a Whitefriars "special" as the Racing Rules say that you should raise an "X" flag.) If the OOD is feeling kind he/she will call out the sail number of boats over the line – but there is no obligation to do this, the onus is on the sailor. If you know you are over, you must sail back until you are completely behind the line (again, a good OOD will tell you that you are clear) and then re-start. But be careful, as you go back you have no rights over the other boats so must keep clear. If you don't go back and the OOD believes you to be over the line you will be disqualified as "OCS" - "on-course-side".

I'm off the line OK. Now what? Now you have to work hard up the first beat. Keep the boat flat, tack smoothly, remember the Port/Starboard rule and do your best to avoid getting tangled up with other boats. Always try to find clear air, away from the effects of other sails. Good Luck!

**Ivor Keates** Rear Com Sailing



## Ladies

The aim of the Ladies' Group this year is to hone our skills in sailing and racing by tackling the RYA Level 3 syllabus in bits. Each session will start with free sailing where we practise what we learned last time, or in the case of the first session, try to remember what we knew last year! Then an instructor will give us some classroom tuition on a section of RYA Level 3 and we will go out on the water for a couple of hours to try it out in practice. It may not be possible to cover the entire syllabus to a level where the instructors will be happy to issue a certificate. Some ladies will not be able to attend every time. We hope that it will help to push us a bit further and develop our abilities and of course if any of us want to take Level 3 it will give us a head start. Each day will finish with a Cup Cake race where we race for fun and don't believe in shouting at each other! Specific aims for each day have not yet been decided, but the days will be 31st March, 28th April, 19th May, 16th June, 14th July, 18th August, 15th September and 18th October. If anyone would like to join the Ladies' Group the cost is £12 for the year. Please contact Kate Jackson 01453 511141 or Jo Birkin 01793 528581.

## Juniors

As ever, the Junior's have an action-packed year planned, with details in the handbook. A reminder to parents that it is essential to book for these days as they are always popular and the forms can be downloaded from the website or ask Andrew MacArthur or Simon Furber.

In addition to these events Junior's are welcome to join in any club sailing activities including the various RYA courses that Pete Bone is organising. The club committee will soon be organising the Regatta and need inspiration from the Juniors for activities: committee members were Juniors once, but for some it was a long time ago, so make your ideas known!

The Junior's management are to be particularly congratulated for pulling off something of a coup in the autumn: the fleet of boats available has been greatly increased by the addition of RS Fevas, Qubas and Teras through a grant from Sport England and investment from the club. Whilst manufacturer RS was generous, Andrew, Pete and Tim Hopes were instrumental in clinching the deal.