

Combs Sailing Club Newsletter

No 208

January 2011

From the Commodore's Couch



Happy New Year

I was at the sailing club yesterday and I'm pleased to be able to report that the reservoir is now full. Today we had brilliant sunshine and I'm starting to look forward to the sailing season. For me that means trying to remember the things that need fixing on my boat that I planned to do in November.

John Saunders is looking forward to the new season by preparing the Byte that he has bought to replace the boat that was burnt at the end of last season as mentioned below.

For the club it means there's lots of work going on behind the scenes for the coming season. The calendar is being planned and will be on the website soon. Boats, engines and trolleys are being mended. We're planning the work that needs doing at the work parties, which will include putting back all the marker buoys and fishing for the pontoon anchors that have come undone.

For this season we're going to try and arrange some events for people to develop their sailing skills and encourage all our members to get out on the water as often as possible.

The first event of the year is the Presentation Dinner and Dance in Buxton at the Old Hall Hotel. It should be a good evening so if you haven't already booked then it's not too late. I'll hope to see you there.

Russell Talbot

Editorial

Happy New Year. Welcome to the first newsletter of 2011, and the first with Russell on the Commodore's couch.

As well as our regular items, this month we have a biography of our multiple National Champion, Louis Saunders, and an obituary of Byte 406.

I'd like to take this opportunity to plug the For Sale/Wanted section of the newsletter. This is a chance to shift a boat or some gear you no longer want, or to pick up some bargains. Just let me have details and I'll include them in the next newsletter, due out in early March

Andy Butler

Around The Marks

The 2010 sailing season was brought to a close on Sunday 21st November with the last Frostbite event. Twelve helms had competed in the series and the enthusiasm to continue sailing into the winter months was most encouraging. However, as the water levels increased the temperatures plummeted and the Frostbite series became an Icebreaker.

Amongst the competitors were several of our "more experienced" helms, with good results recorded by Mike Craddock, Tony Lawton & Harry Mayo. The series winner was Rick Whitehouse just edging Paul Thomson into second place and Richard Silson into third.

In November three of our leading helms, Paul Thompson, Rick Whitehouse, and Louis Saunders were selected to represent their respective class of dinghy in the prestigious annual "Battle of the Classes" pursuit race. This event was scheduled to be held on the last day of the London International Boat show at the EXCEL docklands complex. The dock selected for the event is very pond-like and subject to shifty wind conditions. I feel we could have done very well. Unfortunately, due to problems with access to the dock the event had to be cancelled in December. Hard luck lads.

The 2011 calendar is almost complete. A Supernova series has been introduced and we will be hosting five open meetings during the season. The GP 14 Bell Northern meeting starts our programme of Open events in April. We then host the Combs round of the Derbyshire Youth Sailing Series. In August we have a first for Combs as we host a combined Byte and Lightning 368 Open weekend. Our final Open of the season is the Supernova Open in September. The demand for Open Meetings within the club is a very good indicator of the sailing enthusiasm of its members. Please remember, we do need your help and assistance to make these events enjoyable and successful.

Bob Pyett

Notices

Annual Presentation Dinner

Old Hall Hotel, Buxton

5th February 2011

Get out your glad rags, polish the silverware, it's time for the Combs Sailing Club Annual Dinner.

Work Parties

Sundays 6th and 13th March

10am to 12 noon.

Come and help prepare the club for the forthcoming season and earn your subscription credits

Subscriptions

A reminder that 2011 subscriptions are now due and a thank you from Tony Berry for those he's already received. You should have received a renewal form with your AGM papers at the end of November and by email from Tony, but if you've mislaid it, you should find a copy with this newsletter.

Joining Fees Cut

The Club has decided to waive joining fees for the forthcoming year to help attract new members – this was one of the decisions taken at a lively Annual General Meeting on 7 December. There was a lively discussion on membership, which has fallen slightly in each of the last two years and many good suggestions on ways to build membership. We will be acting on some of these through the coming year.

We also discussed the timing of the annual dinner and agreed that at the end of the forthcoming season we should hold the dinner in November while the season is still fresh in our minds.

We also discussed how we should cover the costs of club boats and whether we should charge members to use them – common practice in many clubs. I was slightly surprised to find that most people were happy to leave things as they were with boats available for use for free. That saves us some time then!

In his final duties as Commodore Harry Mayo reported on the past year – an excellent season for the club with many positive events on and off the water. The meeting paid tribute to Harry's hard work as Commodore.

The meeting also re-elected the GP and sailing committees – Damian Haigh has joined the GP Committee. Other members and officers remain the same except that Harry Mayo became Rear Commodore, Mike Craddock became Vice Commodore and I became Commodore.

Russell Talbot



Obituary – Byte 406

Rick Whitehouse bought Byte number 406, new, in 1991. It had a long and successful career, with the original “classic” rig for many years, but Rick was an “early adopter” of the new CII rig and 406 continued to perform at the front of the fleet, winning four Inland National Championships and topping off this winning streak with the World Masters in 2008. Unfortunately this hard working hull began to feel the effects of age and overuse (a bit like its owner) and in 2009 at the National Championships in Mumbles, the hull moulding for the mast foot failed, allowing excessive mast movement and also water into the hull during the racing, on which Rick cruelly blamed his failure to win. Repairing the mast foot was not enough for Rick, and he spurned his erstwhile favourite, buying a new boat and selling 406 to John Saunders, little realising that John would lend it to his son, Louis (Lightning Inland and soon to be National Champion). Louis proceeded to sail against Rick in the Inlands at Northampton, but over-enthusiastic roll-tacking combined with leaking side deck hatches (fitted by Rick to allow repairs to the cleat holders) put paid to his ambitions on that occasion. Undeterred, Louis took 406 to the Nationals at Plymouth and after 3 days of close racing, forced Rick into 2nd place, adding another trophy to 406’s career.

It is now with great regret that I must inform you, gentle readers, of the untimely demise of 406. On a cold November night (I’m guessing) person or persons unknown built a fire at the Combs sailing club lake shore, fuelling it with the nearest available flammable material, which was, you’ve guessed it, 406. Hull, mast, boom – all were consumed, leaving only a blackened patch, some glass fibre matting and bizarrely, fragments of a Belfast sink...??. A funeral pyre if you like, though the culprits have burned their boats if we ever get our hands on them....

So - glassfibre doesn’t burn, but styrene resin, carbon fibre and aluminium do. Boats are not secure in boat parks – lock them down. Even then, fires can be set anywhere. The only sure protections from this last mindless behaviour are, I guess adequate insurance or taking your boat home every week.

Goodbye 406, you will be missed.

Rick



Byte 406 in its prime with Rick at the helm

Louis Saunders Sailing Biography

(to be included in a forthcoming Lightning 368 newsletter)

Was sailing a family sport as you grew up?

Not at all, however my father who is now a keen sailor, used to sail model boats all over the country when he was young.

What club did you first sail at, and in what sort of boat?

I started at Combs Sailing Club at the age of seven, when I stumbled across the annual Combs open day when on a walk around the reservoir, which I can see from my bedroom window less than half a mile away. My mother gave me 50p so I could be taken out with one of the club sailors who happened to be sailing a GP14.

Did you have any successes in other classes before your first Lightning 368 Nationals win?

When I was growing up I split my time between sailing toppers, and sharing a crewing position with my sister in a GP14, both at club level. I also spent a short time sailing a graduate with my dad who crewed for me, as well as crewing myself in many other boats, ISO, Fireball, and Enterprise. When I was fifteen I managed to buy my first boat, Lightning 104. We had noticed an abandoned orange decked boat at the back of the dinghy park and as far as we knew, no one had sailed it in years. We managed to contact the owners and offered them 275 pounds, which they accepted. Within the next year aged sixteen, I managed to improve enormously achieving a great deal at club level, which in turn gave me the confidence to enter the Derbyshire Youth Sailing circuit and with the support of my dad, I won the DYS Championship aged seventeen. That same year after competing in one of the DYS circuit events at Staunton Harold SC on the Saturday, we drove to Grafham to sail in the Lightning 368 Nationals 2004 on the Sunday. The wind was very light and I felt nervous but not completely outclassed. After gaining some confidence I decided to attend the Rum and Mince Pie later that year, which again to my surprise I won. The following year I won four open races on my way to my first Nationals win in 2005.

What is Combs SC like to sail at?

Due to the elevation of the reservoir we can get some good prevailing wind from the SW; however the topography of the area makes it so those winds are gusty and variable. In all, a difficult place to sail.

Do you sail regularly elsewhere, and in what?

When I owned a B14, my helm and I used to sail at Carsington Water due to the fact that Combs is just too small for a skiff. We sailed there for a season, and competed within the B14 TT circuit for two seasons.

Apart from the Lightning, what other classes have you sail?

Competitively I sailed a B14 for two seasons with my helm Paul Thompson with our most successful result placing 2nd overall in the Anglesey Offshore Race 2007. Until a year ago I sailed GP14 due to our entry into the Southport 24hr Race every year, which we have now replaced with an Enterprise. There was a short period when I sailed an RS300 which I managed to win an open event with, and currently I have focused sailing the Byte CII which has proved to be a unexpected success.

I used to own a Magnum 8 Moth (which John Carriage built) that I sailed with little success due to the difficulty of sailing it on such a small patch of water, and with the absence of constant winds it made it almost impossible. I current own an International Contender as well which I bought for a challenge, but unfortunately I came across the same problems.

Winning Lightning 368 and Byte CII Nationals in one year - must have felt great?

For a season that I thought would be an introduction back into sailing after taking a couple of year off for university, proved to be more successful than I could have imagined. At the start of the season I was more than happy to sail at my home club on Sundays just for the enjoyment of sailing again, but it all began when I started to borrow my dad's Byte CII when it was windy, as we all know how hard Lightning's are to handle in a blow. We also have a very successful Byte sailor at our club that has won multiple Inland Championship

titles and I found that I could stay with him, and because of this I decided to enter the Byte Inlands at Burton SC. This event proved to be a disappointment as the first day of results was wasted with a leaking boat and although the second day went well I finished in 4th place overall. I wanted to prove myself within the fleet and so entered the Byte CII Nationals at Plymouth in August, which after three days and eleven races in all conditions, I ended up winning beating my club rival into second place. After this unexpected success I felt obliged to try my hand at the Lightning 368 Nationals again. I only had time to sail my Lightning twice before the event, but due to my experience sailing the boat in the past, I managed to find form fairly quickly, but I was still shocked yet delighted to do so well against fierce and unknown competition and under such challenging conditions.

Have you got any advice for those just starting out in a Lightning 368?

I think there are two things I would like to mention; the first point is to always keep the boat flat! It's one that most sailors have heard a thousand times but in my opinion this can be easier said than done. When the wind is constant, most people tend to cope, but as we know most of our sailing is done on inland waters where the wind can be gusty and infrequent. This is where good boat handling becomes essential! I wrote an article where I described this as 'Ease-Hike-Trim', ease before the gust, hike through the gust and trim the sail back in. The top sailors will be able to do this within seconds however it does take some practice. The second point relates to sail trim. A lot of lightning sailors underestimate the flexibility of the rig, and most cases they know they need some kicker, outhaul or cunningham, but these are often not used enough to match the situation. The control lines on my lightning are pre tensioned for this reason, so when the conditions favour a flatter rig, I can fix it.

What are your future ambitions in sailing?

In the future I would just like to continue to enjoy my sailing, whether that consists of racing at club level or competing at a national level. After all I had no plan for last year and look where that got me! Sometimes however, I think it is important not to be over intense about your sailing. What I mean by this, is to take a more relaxed view on things whilst keeping a level head and maintaining focus.

Forthcoming Events

Have a look at the [Calendar](#) and [Sailing Instructions](#) on the club website for more information about these events.

Date	Time	
Saturday 5th Feb 2011	Evening	Annual Dinner and Trophy Presentation
Sunday 6 th March	10:00	Work Party
Sunday 13 th March	10:00	Work Party
Sunday 20 th March	13:00	H1 Handicap - opening races of the 2011 season

For Sale/Wanted & Lost/Found

This is a section for boats or sailing paraphernalia. Please send me details – up to 20 words, and I'll include them (space permitting) in the next newsletter. email Andy Butler