

Minutes of the 2020 AGM, Brian Chislett, National Secretary

Held at Hollingworth Sailing Club, 1st Feb 2020, 11.40h

Attendance: 68

Apologies:

Colin and Jayne Firth, Jeffrey Rogers (Treasurer), Liz Baker.

Roger welcomed us all. Keith Muscott, seconded by John Booth, proposed that Jennifer Heney's Minutes of the last AGM, August 2019, be accepted as a true and accurate record. This was approved unanimously.

Roger introduced the discussion of whether we should raise our annual subscription. He also mentioned the importance of the forthcoming RYA Alexandra Palace Boat Show, now that Beale Park was unfortunately no longer available to us. Some discussion of how we would present ourselves at the RYA Show was necessary. He spoke of the importance of the Journal and our rally programmes in binding us all together. We are not a conventional sailing club with a clubhouse and a regular social calendar.

Roger introduced me as the new National Secretary of the DCA, before moving on to the Agenda. Keith Muscott was invited to deliver his Editor's Report first.

Keith chose to begin with the annual DCA awards, starting with his own Editor's Burgee, given to the writer of what was in his opinion the best rally report of the preceding year. He had decided that he could not distinguish between the two main contenders in 2019, so he made a double award: two big DCA burgees were presented to Chris Lavender and to Colin Holt for their entertaining accounts of their rallies in the Lakes and at Menai respectively.

Charlie Hitchen's cruise account *Realms of Gold* was outstanding among the logs submitted over the year and so he deserved the Naylor Noggin for 2019.

Keith had recently sent 50 surplus journals to the Communications Manager of the RYA, Loretta Spridgeon, who had mobilised her team to send them out to some of the 82 sailing clubs affiliated to the RYA that are dedicated to cruising, not racing. Some had been retained for use at the forthcoming Boat Show. Keith will also now offer past journals to members free except for postage (£1.72, £2.00 to be certain).

He went on to say that in his view we need to focus on the Forum and the Website in the coming year. The Forum is used by only 25% of the membership. We should really develop a procedure to give joining members automatic access to it. There is also great deal to be done on the website. *(After the AGM Jennifer Heney offered to help with the website and is now working closely with Osbert Lancaster—Ed)*

At some time in the near future members can expect to receive their journals in a paper envelope, as we need to be greener and not send them out in plastic. Finally, Keith drew the meeting's attention to the passing of

Edwin Dewhirst, a member since 1978, who had cruised 20,000 miles in his Bell Seagull 18ft sloop, *Sabine*, an astonishing record. Some of Edwin's logs will appear in the journal, starting this summer, in order to celebrate his life.

While he had the floor, the Editor also relayed the Librarian's Report to the meeting, which was a summary of books that have been recently donated to the Library, and an in-depth appreciation of one of them, *In Shackleton's Wake*, by Arved Fuchs (see page 78). Copies of the report were available to be taken.

David Morton introduced his Membership Secretary's report by celebrating the fact that membership numbers have increased by 37% over the last ten years. At present 87 of them (14%) live overseas, and Dave listed the countries to a rapt audience, taking in places as diverse as Hokkaido, Japan, the UAE, Italy and Malta — and one member in New Caledonia. Our 20 members in the US are spread right across the continent.

David paid tribute to Roger's YouTube videos, which are often mentioned by joining members as an incentive, supported later by the attractions of the Journal. Paying subs by Direct Debit now runs a close second to paying by cheque, and both Dave and Jeff, our Treasurer, would like to see many more switching to DD. David ended by stressing how important it is that members keep him informed about changes in email addresses and especially home addresses. Failure to do this frequently leads to problems.

Dave Jennings began his Technical Adviser's report by saying it had been a very quiet year for him, with few technical enquiries and no requests for Rebell or Roamer plans. Regarding these, he spoke about the deterioration in the plans after so many years, as they are yellowing and faded, so there is an urgent need to digitise them. Anyone who can help with this should contact Dave soon.

Dave awarded the Peter's Pint trophy — given annually for the best technical article — to Bill Haylock for his *Learning to Love Lofting, Or The Joy of Boatbuilding From Scratch* (DC239, page 61). This was published in the Autumn 2018 journal, but Dave felt he was justified in selecting it as there had been a dearth of technical articles in 2019, and the situation had been further complicated by the late AGM in August 2019.

Liz Baker had not been able to attend, and there was no current Shop Report, but she had delivered one at Cobnor just six months previously.

Once again, our need for a Public Relations Officer was raised by Roger, who then went on to the Election of Officers. There being no different suggestions from the floor, he suggested that a vote be taken on whether the present Officers be retained over the coming year. This was proposed by John Griffiths and seconded by Jerry Evans. The Meeting was unanimously in favour of

retaining the status quo.

The Meeting moved to the discussion of the DCA membership subscription and whether it should be raised, this being the most important issue before us. Roger read out figures from the accounts and suggested that we needed to look ahead and make sure that sufficient funds are available to avoid insolvency without having to lower the present standard of provision, especially in respect of the journal. A suggestion that we economise by reducing the number of journals per year to three was not well received. There followed a lengthy discussion of the relative merits of paper journals versus pdfs. The speeches in favour of the journal in its present form became more impassioned (and Keith was duly grateful). There is only one member at present who takes an electronic version of the Journal (a pdf), and that is Nick Vowles, who was in the meeting. He made it clear that he was content to agree to a rise in the subscription and did not wish it to be reduced in his case.

The discussion started to settle around £30 for UK members and £35 for Europe and the rest of the world,

because of the increased foreign postage, so Roger said that if there was a majority in favour of such a rise, were they prepared to vote in favour of trusting the Committee to arrive at the final figures? Nick Vowles seconded the proposal and the vote in favour was 67 to 1. (It was interesting to learn that the single no-vote was due to the voter's wish to have the assembled AGM decide the figures and not just refer the final word to the Committee — he was not against a rise in the rate *per se*.)

The Meeting closed at 13.00h. *BC*

(The Committee later agreed on a £30 UK membership, £35 for Europe and RoW, with a reduction to £30 for overseas members if they chose to receive a pdf. UK members can continue to opt for a pdf instead of, not in addition to, a paper journal, for no less than their standard £30 subscription. This was in line with the feeling of the meeting —Ed)