

THE RNLI CHRISTMAS TABLE WILL BE AT THIS NOVEMBER MEETING FOR CHRISTMAS CARDS AND OTHER GOODIES



Forthcoming Meeting

THE RNLI FLEET: 200 YEARS IN THE MAKING

Thursday November 13th

Paul Gillions, our local RNLI Coastal Safety Officer will visit SOCA this month.

Paul's presentation, The RNLI fleet: 200 years in the making will show us the development of the inshore and all-weather RNLI fleet from boats powered by oars, sail, steam, and diesel to the new Shannon class lifeboat that's propelled by water jets.

Paul will also cover the day-to-day operations of the lifeboat, lifeguard and flood rescue service.

The RNLI provide, on call, a 24-hour lifeboat search and rescue service around the UK and Ireland, and a seasonal lifeguard service. With lifeboats, lifeguards, safety advice and flood rescue they depend on dedicated volunteers and supporters to save lives at sea.



92% of the RNLI's total income is from generous donations and legacies, and this support means their lifeboat crews can reunite the 22 people they rescue each day with their families.

Visitors are welcome so please invite guests to visit the club with you to enjoy the presentation.

RNLI Christmas Corner

John Gardener will be bringing RNLI Cards and gifts to this month's meeting so don't forget your pennies.



COMMODORE'S CHARITY 2014-15 : SAIL4CANCER

COMMODORE'S REPORT

Hello Members,
Well we are well into the 'twilight' months of 2014 and it's now dark at 5pm!



The months have passed really quickly and the chance of a trip across the water eluded me again! I have to say I'm disappointed in myself, I'm sure the opportunity was there, I just didn't spot it early enough.

I hope those of you with yachts have already planned your winter maintenance and are writing your letters to Santa, asking for those gadgets you think you need, especially the pricy ones!

October's speaker was Captain William Wells, returning this time to regale us with the history of Trinity House and how it influenced the international maritime world. We also had a photo journey through their London HQ. An interesting and informed talk, with a few asides referring to Captain Well's previous career as a Thames Pilot, the evening was appreciated by all. However, due to the England Euro qualifier and the not so clement weather only 20 members attended; rather poor for an external speaker, so I hope we'll do better this month.

Paul, our speaker for November, will be talking about the RNLI boats

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SOCA LAYING UP / EARLY CHRISTMAS DINNER FRIDAY 28th NOVEMBER 7:30pm FOR 8:00pm

NEW VENUE: THE WHITE HORSE WELWYN - £27pp

PLEASE GIVE US YOUR MENU CHOICES ASAP

SOCA 2015 Calendar

PLEASE ORDER NOW!

The Stevenage Offshore Cruising Association 2015 calendar features some of the photographs which were entered into last years photo competition by SOCA members.

Please be generous with your ordering so that we can make a good profit for this years Commodores Charity - www.sail4cancer.org.

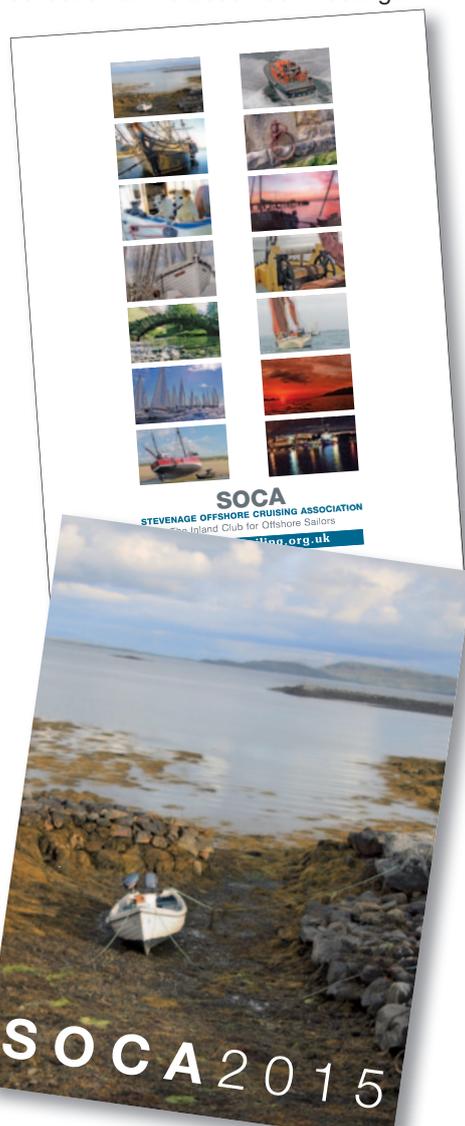
Large A4 calendars for £7.50

Small A5 calendars for £5.50

Orders that require delivery will incur P&P

We will be printing to order so reserve your calendars today. Please email your order to news@socasailing.org.uk. If you wish to make payment by direct transfer please email for details.

Your calendars will be available for collection at the December meeting.



Log of Wabbit GBR4604

**TEDDINGTON TO
CALAIS SWIM 2013**

...continued

The Last Leg

As usual work was getting in the way of having fun when, one Wednesday about three, Andy rang and said that the pilot boat skipper had called to say that "tonight, is the night" for the last leg - the swim to Calais.

This seemed to me to be a bit unfair, as we all had been up since the crack of dawn and with the prospect of a twelve to twenty four hour swim ahead of poor Andy he would be mighty tired at the end of it. Other boats we had watched over the last few days had departed in the dawn.

Plans, food, drink, etc were put together and Andy arrived with Lieva, to take us all to Dover. The drive to Dover was uneventful, if rather busy with lorries heading for the port.

We drove up to Dover marina office and waited for the skipper to arrive. As we were early Andy wanted to rest so snuggled up in the truck as best he could while the other three of us went to the pub for a coffee and a bite.

On our return darkness had fallen, the night was cool but no rain was forecast and the light winds were a good omen for the task ahead.

Our skipper turned up with a helper, to adjudicate the swim and who immediately started the checks with Andy. Name? address? health? what drugs was he on and were they approved? was he swimming in a wetsuit or trunks? etc, etc. It took a while to sort out all the possible scenarios and whether the swim could be counted as a genuine Channel attempt or be just a swim across. Andy chose the trunks option to make an official attempt at the swim.

Unbeknownst to us we could have taken a team across with us to help with the feeding and encouragement for Andy. Leiva was to take the ferry over to Calais and meet us on the other side, taking



Tanya with her for company, which left the boat job to me. Little did I know about the job that lay ahead.

Andy and I boarded the swim pilot boat Suva and got ready the food, drink supplement and drugs for Andy's pain, the last wishes of encouragement were given and ropes were cast off.

Lights were fixed to Andy's swim cap and trunks to show the pilot his position and orientation.

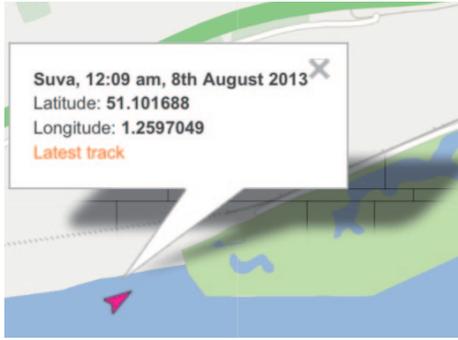
As we motored out of the harbour and turned right to Samphire Beach, instructions on how to start the swim were issued. Andy would enter the water, swim to the beach and get out, the boat would then give a sound signal, the clock would be started, and Andy could then get back into the sea and start swimming out into the darkness.

Now we all know its only 20 miles to Calais from Dover but, with the tide pushing up and down the coast the distance for swimmers is considerably more depending on how long you take. It's advantageous to do the crossing as quickly as you can to shorten the distance.

The early morning was quite a task for me, by now I had been awake some eighteen hours and was feeling the



ARTICLES, PHOTOS AND SNIPPETS FOR SOCA TIMES WOULD BE MUCH APPRECIATED



pull of sleep, but the task was to keep Andy supplied with food every hour and painkillers when they were due.

The Suva crew kept the boat next to Andy and showed him the course to swim with the engine continually being put into and out of gear, so as not to leave him behind.

The waves coming onto the side of the boat made a horrible motion of rocking at quite a rate, so I was not looking forward to hours of this.

The routine was quickly set up feeding drugs and drinks to Andy by throwing them to him in a container on a line, then back to swimming. The lady adjudicator was concerned that Andy was too slow feeding and would be suffering getting cold and slowing down. Shouting encouragement to drink quickly and get back swimming was very important also keeping up his moral with positive words.

As the hours went by the constant rocking of the boat helped to keep me awake and watching Andy's progress. The feeding was now every half hour as Andy showed signs of slowing down and possibly needed more energy. The crew informed me that the swim rate was well down on speed and the crossing was likely to take twenty four hours. A



prospect of staying awake that long was not good for me let alone poor Andy.

Andy's swim attitude had started to slip, when he started the swim his attitude was horizontal with both lights showing clearly that his swim rate was of a good speed with a fourteen to sixteen hour swim possible. Now as the daylight started to dawn the swim attitude had changed from horizontal to more vertical and the swim rate had slowed so twenty four hours or longer was more likely.

Morning was well on the way and we were nearing the shipping lanes, with large vessels passing ahead and astern of us increasing the swell and rocking of Suva. By this time Andy and I had been awake some twenty five hours and keeping awake was defiantly a concern for me, the crew made it clear that it was my responsibility to look after Andy and keep him fed and watered at all times. This is where another assistant would have made a big difference.

In the mean time, following our good byes at Dover Harbour, Tanya and Lieva had taken the truck up to a layby on the road above Samphire Beach and watched as the very small lights that indicated Andy as a swimmer in the water started the long cold swim towards France.

P&O had very kindly donated the team a free crossing, as and when the swim started, so the truck joined the ferry to Calais. The girls peered through the windows trying to search out the small pilot boat in the dark. There were quite a few lights at sea and if any of them were Suva they were soon left behind as the ferry made it's speedy way to France.

A possible landing spot for Andy in France was Cap Gris Nez so Lieva and Tanya drove west from Calais through the winding roads to the remote car park on the cliffs. This cape is the closest point of France to England and a perfect vantage point, on a clear day the white cliffs of Dover on the English shore can be seen.

Now it was dark but dawn was not far away so the girls tried to get comfortable in the truck for a few hours sleep.

Photo Competition & CHRISTMAS SOCIAL Thursday 11th December

This year's Photo Competition and Christmas Social is being held on Thursday 11th December 2014 at 8.00pm

Enjoy a chat, a mince pie and a drink while judging the excellent show of photos from our members. As you may be aware, the winning photos from this years photo competition stand a chance of being published in the 2016 Soca calendar!

Please come along and bring your prints to enter into the competition. Remember this is a friendly contest and we would love to see a range of photos.

This year we have a new category of "Best Sailing Holiday Shot". All photos should not have been entered before and nothing older than 2 years. This year's categories will be:

- 1 **Club People, Club meetings, Club rallies** (prints)
- 2 **Seascapes** (prints)
- 3 **Artistic** – with a nautical flavour (prints)
- 4 **Boats** (prints)
- 5 **Weather & Sunsets** (prints)
- 6 **Sailing Holiday** (prints)
- 7 **Digital** (limited to 2) please e-mail your photos to:

terry@terrybranston.co.uk

CHARITY RAFFLE

During the evening there will be a raffle so if you have a prize to bring in aid of sail4cancer your donation will be much appreciated. Sail 4 Cancer is primarily a provider of water based respite days and holidays for families affected by cancer. The charity also makes grants to cancer care centres and supports research into the positive effects of exercise (e.g. sailing) and how it can help prevent cancer and aid recovery post diagnosis.

BAVARIA 32 FOR SALE
C. £45K FULL INVENTORY
IF YOU ARE INTERESTED
ANTHONY KIRKBY

details from: news@socasailing.org.uk

COMMITTEE MEETINGS: TUESDAY AFTER THE MONTHLY MEETING AT RNC WGC



AUNTY'S COLUMN

News, hints, tips and oddities from the web and undercover reporters

www.routedurhum.com

GREY POWER RHUM MONO CLASS

30/10 Robin Knox Johnston is racing again 'Because I bloody well want to!

6/11 All good on Grey Power where Sir Robin is recharged and ready for the next weather system. He is going well and reports having been close to some of his class rivals.

07/11 Lost a few miles on his rivals going upwind but he is back reaching today and going faster, determined to keep climbing the leaderboard

10/11 Just found the jib overside. Peak lashing gone. Cannot see the reason yet. After an hour of struggling, and the loss of finger nails, the sail is back inboard and appears undamaged. I will await daylight to see what, if anything can be done to get it rehoisted. The fact that it is on a roller furler adds to the difficulties.

> past and present; plus maybe a little about his specialist subject "safety on the water".

We will also have John Gardener manning the RNLI Christmas table, with RNLI branded gifts and cards; this was very well supported last month, so those of you who missed October's meeting don't forget your pennies this month.

As usual, December will be our

theguardian.com

DOVER FERRY CRASHES INTO HARBOUR WALL

Four people were taken to hospital after a ferry carrying 320 passengers hit a harbour wall. Passengers and crew were evacuated after the Dover Seaways ship hit the dock moments after setting off on an 8am crossing to Dunkirk.

www.greatwar.co.uk

NOVEMBER 1914

2nd: British Admiralty declare the North Sea a military zone

3rd: First German naval raid on British coast near Gorleston and Yarmouth

6th: British submarine B.-11 proceeds two miles up the Dardanelles

11th: H.M.S. Niger sunk by German submarine off Deal

26th: H.M.S. Bulwark destroyed by internal explosion in Sheerness harbour

annual photo completion, so I expect to see plenty of photos from this year. We will also be running the usual raffle, so prize donations will be gratefully received.

See you all on the 13th and as the Laying-up Dinner in Welwyn is on the 28th of the month, I hope you will all join me there.

Dee Hilliard,
Commodore



Log in to the SOCA website for the latest events information

SOCA DIARY

NOVEMBER MEETING: Thurs 13

THE RNLI FLEET:
200 YEARS IN THE MAKING
Paul Gillions, RNLI Coastal Safety
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NOVEMBER EVENT: Friday 28

LAYING UP SUPPER / CHRISTMAS
DINNER at The White Horse, Welwyn

DECEMBER MEETING: Thurs 11

PHOTO COMPETITION
and Christmas Social with raffle
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JANUARY MEETING: Thurs 8

Stuart Carruthers, RYA Cruising
Manager and Gus Lewis, RYA Head
of Legal and Government Affairs tell
us how the RYA is representing our
interests on a range of issues

FEBRUARY MEETING: Thurs 12

CRUISING THE BALTIC:
Ever popular speaker, Paul Bragg,
returns to present some stunning
photos of his summer 2014 cruise

MARCH MEETING: Thurs 12

COMMODORES REPORT AND AGM

APRIL MEETING: Thurs 9

SAIL4CANCER: Visitors from SOCA
Commodore's Charity 2014-15 will
explain how our donation will help

APRIL/MAY EVENT: TBA

FITTING OUT DINNER date and venue
tba, watch this space

MAY MEETING: Thurs 14

ANNELIEKE VISITS THE SOMME:
Alex Nicholas and Andrew Davison
recount their 2014 sailing adventures

SAILING

WINTER

Some soca boats remain afloat
over the winter - watch the website/
Facebook for crewing opportunities

SOCA - Where & When?

WHERE Stevenage CIU (Please use the front entrance and ring the intercom).

LOCATION 31 High Street, Old Stevenage, Herts SG1 3AU – next to the Standing Order

WHEN The second Thursday of every month. **TIME** 7.45pm doors open.

**IDEAS OR VOLUNTEER SPEAKERS FOR SOCA CLUB TALKS
WOULD BE WELCOMED BY THE CLUB AND COMMITTEE**

THE COPY DEADLINE

For the next SOCA Sailing Times is
25th November please send photos
and general contributions to:
news@socasailing.org.uk

Any comments made by contributors are not
necessarily those of the Editor or the Association,
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The Editor reserves the right to shorten and
edit contributions where necessary.