RHBOA Member Forum

Supplement to the
Rye Harbour Boat Owners Association News

Number 91 - August 2000

List of Contents

Boat Security - *RHBOA Committee*	2
Boat Theft - *Charles Bronsdon*	3
Good Read - *Gordon Dunsford*	3
HORAC Highlights - *Peter Etherden*	3
Sluice Safety - *John Sivier*	4
RYA Review - *Peter Davison*	5
Boat Registering - John Sivier	5
Questions for HORAC - *John Collard*	6
Keep It Simple - *John Sivier*	7
Don't Shoot The Messenger! - *RHBOA Committee*	7
All Looks Well on RHBOA's Website - *Steve Kemp*	8
DIY Websites - *Ray Battersby*	8
RHBOA Online - *John Sivier*	9
Just Say No To Bulk Cargoes - *John Sivier*	9
Titles Please - *Oliver Campion*	9
Link Updates - *Shawn Downey*	9
Harbour of Rye Newsletter - *John Sivier*	10
Rye Harbour Village Hall - *Michael Alford*	10

Boat Security

Boat security has been discussed regularly at RHBOA committee meetings. The view of the committee is that crime on and off the river has increased and is of real concern. Over the past year the subject of boat theft has been discussed with the Harbour Master and with local Crime Prevention Officers. Mike Roud has also offered the police a patrol vessel.

Clive Wall who represents RHBOA on the various police and crime committees was particularly incensed recently by the police response to his question on citizen arrests. Clive wanted to know the police 'targets' so that RHBOA members could be advised how long they would be expected to physically restrain somebody before the police arrived. Ambulances, lifeboat crews and many other public service agencies measure their performance with such yardsticks and for the little individual who catches somebody aboard a boat this is a critical factor in his or her decision on whether to 'have a go'. Eventually, after numerous evasions, the only reply forthcoming was 'How long is a piece of string?'

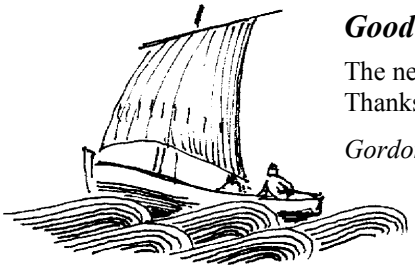
At present the Rye & District Police Consultative Group seem to lean towards Inspector Moseley's view that there is no significant boat theft in Rye…and indeed very little crime of any sort compared to the rest of the country. Apparently police statistics support this view. Our principal task is to change this perception with regard to boat theft. So let us have some facts. If you have been the victim of boat theft, like Charles Bronsdon, please let us know and your story will be published in the RHBOA newsletter.

Meanwhile one thing everybody can do to help themselves and to help the police is to mark any valuable piece of equipment. Information on how to do this was included in a RHBOA Newsletter last year. RHBOA owns a marking kit and a phone call to Clive Wall (Tel: 01797 226634) is all that's needed to get the ball rolling…and while you are on the phone, ask Clive about some of the security devices he has installed on 'Goblin'. He tells us his boat is harder to get into than Fort Knox…and getting in is the easy part!

Boat Theft

My boat was broken into on Wednesday 26th April. All the padlocks were cut with bolt croppers. The VHF radio was stolen as well as a compass and a large hand torch. The police were notified but their response was very low-key. I had the feeling the officer had no interest at all and only wanted to issue a crime number for the files. I subsequently received a letter and a booklet apologising for the fact that I had been a victim of crime and asking whether I required counselling. This incensed me to the degree that I wrote to the senior officer at Bexhill asking if any improvement in the policing of the moorings at Rye could be expected as I felt the reputation that Rye was getting regarding the high level of crime would eventually affect tourism. I have not received an answer or an acknowledgement to my letter.

Charles Bronsdon, The Boat House, Pett Level



Good Read

The newsletter is interesting and good reading. Thanks for the facts about Rye Harbour.

Gordon Dunford, 26 Old Top Rd, Hastings

The main points from HORAC's 4th July meeting were as follows:

HORAC Highlights

- Commercial trade reported to be increasing with 28 vessels so far this year.
- Leisure boat visitors have numbered 52 with increasing 'tide' visitors from Eastbourne.
- Dredging covered in current budget. Agency believes new long reach cranes in their possession can do the work using a Bridge Point disposal site.
- RHBOA pressing for action this year. Increase in annual charges for 2001/2002 limited to 2.5% compared with 3.5% for 2000/2001.
- Agency believes that a solution may be in sight for the Western Arm.
- Independent Consultants with the confusing name of 'Environment Council' appointed to prepare the Harbour of Rye Management. Public meeting planned for Tuesday 19th September.
- Six alternative sites investigated for forthcoming HORAC meetings. RHBOA-mandated RYA member was alone in voting for a change to Rye.
- Roger Breeds put forward a formal request to the Agency on behalf of Rye Town Council to ban motorcyclists from (free) parking on Strand Quay in the area designated for boat owners. Nothing to be done at present.

Sluice Safety

On reading the *'Notice to Mariners'* item in the May issue of the RHBOA Newsletter I was reminded of a piece sent to me in 1984 by John Ward when I was its editor. It appeared in Issue No. 30 in June of that year *(and is repeated for the benefit of younger members in this issue. Editor*).

As John Ward's article makes clear, opening and closing of the Tillingham sluice was controlled by human beings back in those days. Although automatic control was installed in 1993, initially it was subject to some problems, as I recall, to the point where manual control was reinstated.

With manual control it becomes a natural part of the operator's responsibility to take reasonable precautions to warn any *'Mudlarks'* to keep clear. But where does this responsibility go when automation takes over? What measures, for instance, are taken by the Harbour Authority to keep individual users of the Authority's moorings in the area…including of course our guests, the visiting boat owners from France, Belgium, Holland and other English ports…apprised of the dangers which can arise from an automated sluice management system?

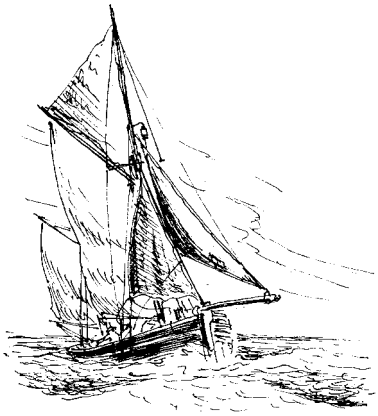
While John Ward's experience in 1984 may not have been particularly life-threatening…he may disagree of course…other activities such as paddling about in the mud trying to find a contact lens dropped overboard or clambering over guard rails to reach a rafted-out craft could be equally hazardous if subjected to the sudden onslaught of the Tillingham Bore.

My concern is that the *'River Bed Incident'* notice is an attempt to place the onus of maintaining a safe environment around the Tillingham Sluice entirely on boat owners. This is clearly a nonsense. Does the Harbour Authority really think that issuing a notice to mariners every few years to keep them up to scratch would get them off the hook when a Hillsborough-style Inquiry investigates the death of a couple of young kids messing about in their inflatables alongside their parents' boat on Strand Quay?

John Sivier, 200 Harley Shute Road, St Leonards-on-Sea

PS. How do we get onto the *'Notices to Mariners'* distribution list? Is it enough to pay harbour dues on time?

RYA Review

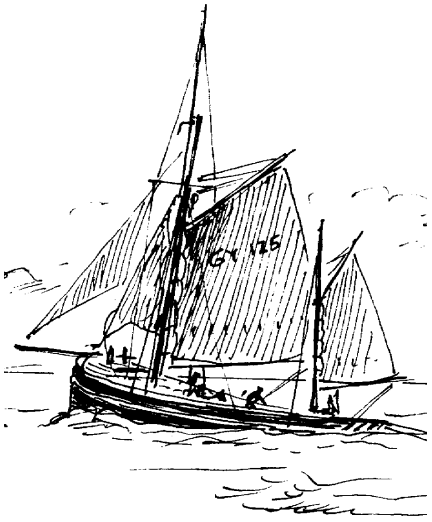


At our committee meeting on Monday 31 July a general discussion took place on matters relating to the Review. The outcome was a request for me to ask the Agency to prepare a brief report on the progress of the Review recommendations for discussion at the next HORAC meeting.

It is now a year since the Review was held and we hope that the Agency will agree that a progress report would be opportune. The RYA may also be interested in such a report.

Peter Davison to Carol Black, Secretary to HORAC at the Environment Agency

To assist the Environment Agency and provide feedback of the public's perception of the Agency's progress over the past year, we are posting the RYA Review on the RHBOA website and providing facilities for members to send in their own assessments of progress against each of the specific recommendations in the report.



Boat Registering

There is a rumour going around that leisure boat owners are required by law to place their boats on the Government's Part 1 Register. This is quite wrong.

Of course any boat owner already registered is perfectly entitled to renew his Part 1 registration if he so wishes but why anyone should want to succumb to this daylight robbery by the government is quite beyond me.

Instead why not follow the example of most small boat owners and get a small ship registry (SSR) number for your boat from the Royal Yachting Association… not only is it perfectly adequate, efficient and cheap but it comes with royal approval.

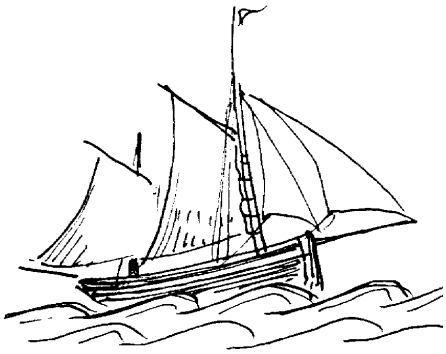
John Sivier, 200 Harley Shute Road, St Leonards-on-Sea

PS. As there is increasing concern in official quarters about the marine pollution being caused by baby's nappies I would like to know if any Rye-based yachtsperson has discharged any nappies into Rye Bay in the past ten years.

Questions for HORAC

One improvement following the RYA Panel Inquiry last February is the opportunity to see in the Rye Public Library the agenda, circulated papers and minutes of the *'Harbour of Rye Advisory Committee (HORAC)'*. I find that they often provide useful information about how the Harbour is being managed but occasionally they also provoke more questions than they answer.

I was particularly mystified by two items arising at the July meeting: the donation of capital to an outside organisation and the employment of outside consultants to facilitate the promised Harbour Management Plan.



The Harbour 1999/2000 capital account has been debited £ 18 000 in order to meet the cost of supplying electricity to Lime Kiln Cottage which is part of the Nature Reserve. While we all love and value the Nature Reserve very dearly, is it right in principle that the poor old Harbour should be subsidising an outside interest in this way when it is so short of capital and income for its own purposes? Where will this generosity stop?

The last Harbour Management Plan took us up to 1998 since when there has been a hiatus ie. no management plan has been forthcoming as promised. From the minutes of the July HORAC it emerges that the *'Environment Agency'* has commissioned an organisation called the *'Environment Council'* "to facilitate the development of the management plan". The minutes record that: "...the Council is a voluntary charity of 25 years standing concerned with environmental, economic and social solutions...its meetings will be well advertised to ensure all those with an interest could attend..." It would be interesting to know more about the financial resources, legal status, professional background and terms of reference of the *'Environment Council'*.

Even more questionable is the decision of the *'Environment Agency'* to resort to outside consultants when it has its own experienced and qualified staff. In a recent article in The Times, Simon Jenkins wrote "...when a company decides to call in the consultants, it really has problems...every business spawns consultants in its own image...consultancy is breeding a new generation of managers who don't know how to take risks and make decisions..."

Could the *'Environment Agency'* be succumbing to this disastrous culture? I would like to see the suspicion rebutted.

John Collard, 16 Watchbell Street, Rye, Sussex TN31 7HA; Tel: 01797 223305

John Collard is author of the authoritative 'Maritime History of Rye'.

Keep It Simple

On Page 7 of the Environment Agency's Newsletter Number 2 'on a more serious note' we are expected to believe that the 'Marine Safety Code' …introduced following major disasters involving bulk oil tankers… has relevance to the operation of Rye Harbour. Whatever 'Passage Planning' for commercial vessels entering Rye means, interpreting it as requiring the avoidance of 'confrontation' between other user groups is clearly nonsense.

In the Eighties, when several hundred ship movements a year were common and the volume of leisure craft, fishing boats, charter boats, dinghies, canoes, etc., was considerably higher than it is today, we all got along efficiently and safely with the minimum of direction from the Harbour Office. The intention to 'separate' the leisure and fishing, etc groups must be reconsidered and consigned to the waste bin.

We have perfectly adequate (and expensive) international light signals for controlling the harbour when the (now) occasional commercial ship movement occurs. Other situations requiring anything more than compliance with Collision Regulations and the Rule of the Road…with which, of course, all skippers should be familiar…should be very rare and each treated on its merits.

John Sivier, 200 Harley Shute Road, St Leonards-on-Sea

PS. Colin Marsh and *'Rother II'*…now in ashes on the side of the Rye Harbour Road…was all we needed to run the harbour in the good old days when I was a boy.

Don't Shoot The Messenger!

The Environment Agency is just one of a host of public and private agencies meddling in matters that are much better dealt with locally. At present the 'subsidiarity principle'… delegate upwards only such matters that cannot be dealt with below…works in reverse. But this might change.

Meanwhile agencies like the Environment Agency are often given the unpalatable task of implementing a myriad of rules and regulations dictated from 'high government'…Westminster, Brussels etc…Carl's 'list' in Newsletter 2 indicates the scale of the agency's problem.

The real villain is the encroachment of the bureaucratic state and its' rule by regulation' as this creeps insidiously into the nooks and crannies of the daily lives of the subjects of these offshore islands. This is not just a problem for us 'as boat owners'.

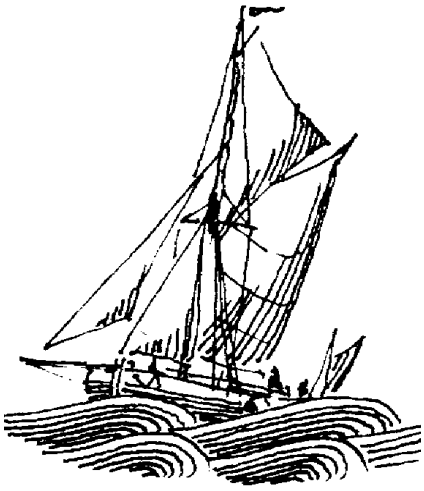
The RHBOA Committee has learned to weigh carefully its response to the Environment Agency. Shooting the messenger is not always a smart move.

All Looks Well

I have perused the website and all looks well at first glance…and thank you for including the Excelsior article. One thing I found a little odd was getting the BNFL Nuclear Power Station closure programme when I clicked on the home page and then on Dungeness…or rather out in mid-channel where Dungeness would be after a little global warming.

Steve Kemp, 5 Harbour Barn, Winchelsea Beach

Eventually we would like to see all the feature articles, past and present, keyboarded in and posted on the website…back to articles by RHBOA founding fathers forty years ago…although present ambitions stretch no further back than the beginning of this year...plus 'The Millers Tale'.



However if there are any volunteers willing to do some typing…or any patrons or prospective will-writers willing to make available the £4.00 per hour we would pay for keyboarding then John Sivier has promised to apportion the typing tasks and provide us with the HTML files we would need for our Rhboa Heritage Trail web site.

As for Dungeness, the link is actually to the BNFL Press Office so the page changes every day. Steve probably clicked in the day BNFL released their latest closure plans for media scrutiny. However it would appear that global warming will be taking care of both the Dungeness closure programme and the long-term storage of its nuclear waste!

DIY Websites

The website is easy to navigate (no GPS needed!) and the data's interesting, informative and readable. The site is also pretty fast by normal standards. Congratulations. Maybe one day you'll explain to me how you did it all. I too own a dot-com site and have fiddled around with it but never really used it for e-mail or for publicising my business. Guess I've been too busy to learn the intricacies and nuances of HTML and yet more of Uncle Bill's software.

Ray Battersby, 21 Samoa Way, Sovereign Harbour North, Eastbourne

The trick is to get yourself Adobe Pagemill 3.0. Image mapping, for instance, is amazingly easy in Pagemill…just a click or two. Oh and it helps having an artist at your elbow to draw pictures in glorious technicolour at the drop of a hat. Then once you're done, you take your website to websitegarage.netscape.com for a tune-up.

RHBOA Online

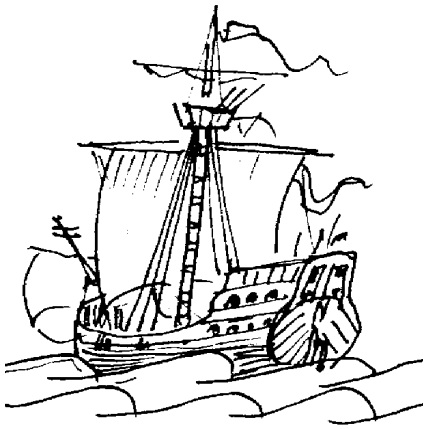
Congratulations on the web site. AOL managed to find an error on the home page but it was easy to bypass and everything worked fine. Could I suggest a sort of 'About the Rye Harbour Boat Owners Association' page for surfers which might include an application form for membership? In case it is of any help I am attaching an old file I found on a back-up disc which sets out the basis for a form I designed some years ago. Have you visited Shawn Downey's Rye Harbour web site? Would it be worth a (reciprocal) link.

John Sivier, 200 Harley Shute Road, St Leonards-on-Sea

Click on the RHBOA logo for FAQs on RHBOA. Reciprocal links have been arranged with Shawn Downey's Rye Harbour site and Oliver Campion's Rye-Tourism site. Interactive e-commerce bolt-ons will be in place by year-end to support membership applications, retailing and online auctions of boat bits.

Just Say No To Bulk Cargoes

There is clearly not much room for argument on the benefits of sea transport for bulk cargoes where the appropriate infrastructure exists. But debouching hundreds of tons of dusty truck cargoes on to the totally inadequate A259 has a very clear downside for the residential areas through which it has to pass. In this connection, it is relevant to recall that the builder and first proprietor of Alsford's Wharf, John Alsford, would not entertain its handling of "dirty" cargoes.



John Sivier, 200 Harley Shute Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea

Titles Please!

I've had a look at your website. Looks good! You might want to give the html pages a title though. If you would like me to link to your site from the Rye Tourism site just confirm that your Rye Boat Owners Association is a non-profit making organisation.

Oliver Campion, webmaster@rye-tourism.co.uk

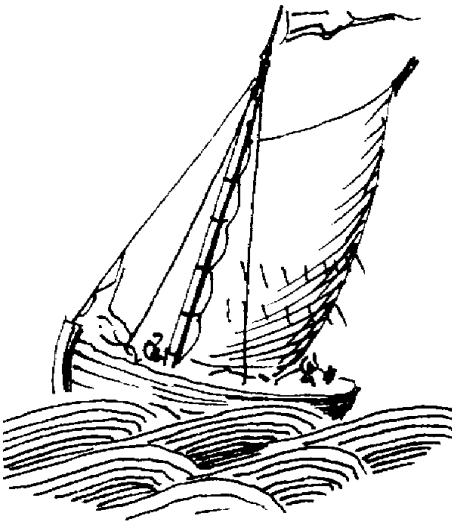
Link Updates

Thanks for your e-mail about the beta version of the new Rhboa website. Just returned from a biz trip to Hong Kong. Have now updated my links page on the ryeharbour.org website.

Shawn Downey, webmaster@ryeharbour.org

Harbour of Rye Newsletter

Everyone seems to be saying how wonderful Carl Bagwell's newsletters are and I would be the first to agree. Indeed it's quite clear that Carl would make a superb editor for RHBOA's own newsletter should our current incumbent be run over by the newly refurbished Pilot Boat nineteen miles offshore in the French shipping lanes.



And of course with the splendid team of deputy harbour master, pilots and assorted other volunteers now running the harbour so efficiently after the success of the RYA Review Carl must have plenty of time on his hands.

But still somebody has to ask the question whether a Sunday supplement type of magazine is really what is required from the Harbour Office.

Can the expense put into its production really be justified …bearing in mind the information is already made available by newsletters produced by the Rye Harbour Sailing Club, the Rye Harbour Boat Owners Association and on several local web sites.

John Sivier, 200 Harley Shute Road, St Leonards-on-Sea

Rye Harbour Village Hall

Enclosed are the 1999/2000 accounts for Rye Harbour Village Hall. RHBOA is one of our trustees as they were involved when the village hall was first set up. Lettings are somewhat down but the proposed new toilets may revive matters. Finally I am pleased that we are getting a few commercial craft at the wharf.

Michael Alford, 1 Burnham Place, Tram Road, Rye Harbour

P.S. If you are looking for a venue in Rye then the British Legion Club in Landgate would be happy to accommodate…*contact Michael Peatfield on Rye 224564.*

1999/2000 Summary of Accounts

Rye Harbour Village Hall's 1999/2000 income was £ 7000 against expenses of £ 6000. Half the income comes from rents and lettings and the other half from subscriptions etc. Most of spending goes on looking after the hall…caretaker, electricity, upkeep, heating oil, insurance etc. The bank balance of £ 5000 provides a buffer of a year's expenses for the village hall.