



MMA CHAIRMAN'S NEWSLETTER February 2024

In my youth, just a few watches ago, the month of January brought a major event to the sailors' calendar: the Earls Court International Boat Show. Earls Court Underground Station was thronged with people wearing bobble hats and blazers all aglow with the anticipation of possibly choosing a new dinghy or yacht, or more likely just meeting up with old friends at the Guinness stand. Excel Centre was never the same and Southampton in September failed to provide the mid-winter lift for spirits starved of sun and sea. However over the last 50 years or so GRP hulls and hot air central heating for cruising yachtsmen have led to plenty of activity on the Solent and River Medina during the winter months.



Notwithstanding the three named storms that hit the Isle of Wight in January the dinghy park has emerged damp but otherwise unscathed. Not so the Oar House that received a direct hit from a falling tree. The roof was breached but fortunately no damage was done to any kit stored inside. Because of an element of asbestos in the building's construction, repair has to be undertaken professionally but fortunately we can handle the expense of this through our insurance.



With the MMA having been formed in 1972 most of our infrastructure is around 50 years old and starting to need attention. In particular the concrete slipway has dropped at the landward end and many of us have struggled to negotiate the ramp with boats on launching trolleys. A recent inspection with the Isle of Wight Council resulted in IWC's Senior Harbour Master agreeing to take action to repair this part of the slipway. Unfortunately deeper investigation revealed serious erosion of the river bed in the middle of the slipway. Overloading by vehicles towing larger RIBs and jet skis might well result in slipway collapse. Accordingly the Senior Harbour Master proposes banning all motor vehicles on the main Folly Inn concrete slipway and signage will be placed at the high water mark accordingly. The intention is to make arrangements with Folly Ventures for the launching of larger craft on the slipway by the MMA Office and new shower block.

You will now have received, and hopefully returned, your MMA membership renewal form. MMA is adjusting to our digital world and would encourage members to return forms on-line if possible. I can understand some uncertainty about signing Page 2 of the form to confirm

that you agree to your details being held by the MMA for their use only, and that you fully consent to the terms & conditions of use. While you can sign by inserting a digital image of your signature, it is also perfectly proper and legal these days for you to just type in your name on the form. Also, if you are able to pay membership and berthing fees by direct bank transfer this would be a great help.

MMA remains affiliated to the RYA. Full advantage has been taken of this especially the provision of legal advice, for example on the disposal of abandoned craft, and broader guidance on development and boating management. The RYA is in the process of introducing wide-ranging Safeguarding standards to be met by affiliated clubs, and we await more detail and direction on this. Meantime if you have some experience or knowledge of meeting Safeguarding requirements and are willing to help our Association move forward, the MMA Hon Secretary or myself, or indeed any committee member would be delighted to hear from you.

Linked to membership is the question of car parking. I am grateful to all those who are now routinely using the southern sector of the Folly Car Park, and who are advising the Folly Inn Management when leaving cars for extended periods while away cruising. Meantime I have been sharing with you for at least 5 years now the prospect of having to deal with Greene King introducing parking control measures. We have maintained lines of communication with both Greene King and their agents Britannia Parking but frustratingly there are no signs of movement on this front. The question of MMA's access and rights of way will hopefully be addressed in a new lease between MMA and Greene King, and although we are led to believe that this has been prepared and we were to have sight of the draft before Christmas, we continue to wait. This is having a major impact on our management of MMA finances including preparation of a budget for this year. On the basis of having raised membership fees last year it is hoped that we have sufficient resources in hand to meet potential increases in rent and maintenance and at the forthcoming AGM we will not have to seek further impositions on your wallets.

Our Annual General Meeting is scheduled this year for Monday, 8 April 2024 at The Bargemans Rest, Newport starting at 7.00pm. This event will establish how MMA is to be managed for the next 12 months, and potentially beyond. MMA's financial statement for 2023 will be presented for approval, and membership fees for 2025 and honoraria for 2024 will be proposed. Your Committee for 2024 has to be appointed.



Having joined the Committee in 2016 and moving to the key post of Membership Officer in 2018, Colin Caldicott has let me know that the time has come after 8 years for him to take more of a back seat. As well as dealing with your membership applications and renewals Colin has also been managing the dinghy park, and somehow found time last year to take over the MMA accounts until the appointment of Angie Jordan as Treasurer. However a particular legacy of Colin's work for MMA must be the creation of the Folly Inn car parks.

During the 2018 AGM a question was raised from the floor about the neglect of the Folly car park which during the winter became deeply rutted and effectively unusable. The

Committee's response was to approach Greene King with a proposal to re-surface and zone the parking area on a basis of matched funding. Colin became the Project Manager and oversaw the creation of the hard-core base and the three separate parking areas we use today. Although we would wish for more parking spaces for pub customers and MMA members alike, at least we can now park without the risk of becoming seriously bogged down. MMA owes Colin a most sincere vote of thanks for all that he has done for MMA over the past 8 years and we wish him an enjoyable and more relaxing second retirement.

We have the following important positions to fill at the AGM;

- Membership Officer
- Dinghy Park Manager
- Safeguarding Officer
- Social Secretary

Before moving on, it is important for the long term prosperity of MMA that we do not stagnate and accordingly we need to keep the Committee fresh. As well as recruiting members to step forward to fill the posts above we also need people to join the Committee "without portfolio" so they can gain a feel for the many issues we have to manage in order to provide the service that you looked for when joining. We need to grow key officers to take over from those of us who are increasingly looking towards SAGA cruises rather than active boating on the River Medina. Should you be interested in becoming an MMA Committee Member please let Janet Rule, our Hon. Secretary know (secretary@medinamariners.org) without delay.

It was disappointing that we were unable to arrange a Laying Up Supper last year. However the management of The Folly Inn has again changed and I am keen to ensure that an MMA social gathering of some sort takes place to mark the fitting out season. We welcome Victoria, Lee and their family (plus dog) and we offer them MMA's very best wishes for a happy and successful tenure. Victoria has already indicated that she is ready to make changes and is keen to work closely with MMA in the future. She has offered some suggestions on possible events that are being considered.

Finally, returning to the subject of stormy weather, I am grateful to those members who have stepped forward to retrieve and adjust boat covers and remove debris from the dinghy park. However it is the owners responsibility to maintain their boats in a seaworthy condition and part of this is preventing deterioration caused by wind and rain. If you have not been able to visit your boat recently perhaps the move of the flocks of Brent Geese down river and other signs of spring provide a signal to check covers and bilge water ready for the new season.



With very best wishes for a safe and enjoyable boating year ahead.

Peter Jackson
Chairman
Medina Mariners Association