

# THE SENTINEL



Newsletter of the  
Bembridge and  
St Helens Harbour  
Association

No. 37 February 2008

## Bembridge Harbour Fore & Aft Moorings

The first batch of new fore & aft trot moorings have been laid over the autumn period. The moorings consist of 18 rows of large chain with each row consisting of a large 'stockless' type anchor at each end and two steel railway carriage wheels equally spaced out in the length. From this large chain smaller long link chain terminating in orange mooring float buoys are attached.

Of the 18 rows, 14 have 7 mooring buoys and 4 have 6 mooring buoys, giving a total of 122 mooring float buoys. This will provide, leaving 1 navigation 'slot' a total of 108 mooring berths. The 18 rows are roughly at 90 degrees to the main fairway i.e. running roughly North South. The craft moor up to the buoys in an East West direction.

As yet no 'row' of craft have been attached to the moorings, only individual craft, so results cannot be assessed, however, these small craft (Dory's and a Shetland cruiser and a sports boat, plus for a time the works barge) in total no more than 5 have been given a foretaste.

The vessels attach themselves, from their bow, with a small line to the eye in the top of the ahead buoy and likewise with their stern line on an after-buoy. According to the strongest element at the time (wind or tide) the boats are pushed correspondingly until the length of line and mooring chain restrain them. With luck, that could be bows to the oncoming weather, which is the most suitable direction for a normal boat. However, nature is not kind and weather (strong wind, gales and subsequent waves) can come from any direction and the boats could and do face the oncoming weather from the stern and sides, which is not good as it can result in swamping of the boat (with subsequent pollution from



engine oil and fuel) and chafe on the mooring lines. It has been seen that these few craft have had their outboard engines and propellers wrapped around their mooring lines and the propellers themselves sawing away at the mooring buoys. The result could be dramatic because if one end becomes detached that boat could and would swing around into its neighbours causing damage.

At low tide the scene is appalling, none of the anchors, chains or carriage wheels have yet been dug into the mud or sand. One of the moored craft had its outboard entangled in an anchor fluke. (See photo) Until these pieces of metal work are buried they pose a serious threat to safe navigation

The area of mooring buoys and eventually moored craft effectively seals off a large portion of Bembridge Harbour. No sailing dinghies or yachts will be able to cross by the 'slot' which is so narrow and conflicting with anticipated traffic to make it dangerous. Indeed even trying to enter the Fairway from this slot is unsafe with no room for evasive action. This is causing considerable concern to users of the harbour.

## Chairman's Letter

*Dear Member,*

There is both positive and negative news to report. Decisions are still awaited from the IWC Planning Department on several outstanding planning applications and BASHHA's Objection to the level of Harbour Dues has still not been determined. Since our first Objection was made on 24th March 2006 this is very frustrating (see report from BHUG).

Local and visiting members cannot fail to have noticed the appearance of 122 bright orange mooring buoys in the harbour. BHIC have replaced the original swinging moorings with fixed fore and aft trot moorings. Considerable concern has been expressed at the effect the narrowing of the channel will have on the safe navigation of vessels in the harbour. Young people attending sail training courses at the two sailing clubs may face increased difficulties and hazards (see article elsewhere).

At our last *Know Your Harbour* meeting in November we were pleased to welcome Chairman Donald Biddle who brought us up to date with the progress of the Bembridge Harbour Trust, which had just held its inaugural Founder members' meeting. Besides the Trustees, he was able to announce the Trust already had over 100 Founder members. Two of our members are Trustees and BASHHA has become a Founder member. Our Vice Chairman, John Askham represents us and has also joined the Advisory Board to the Trust. Our organisations have similar aims and objectives. Donald was warmly thanked for his presentation and we look forward to further developments.

At the subsequent Forum session, a lively discussion took place and the perennial concern about water quality in the harbour was raised. When undertaking the Association's Bembridge Harbour Report in 1995, which appraised different aspects of the environment of Bembridge Harbour, Perry Kuhns (former Vice Chairman) carried out an in depth investigation and produced the chapter on Water Quality. We hope to undertake further investigations this year.

We will be holding another Spring Beach Clean on Saturday 26 April. We have enjoyed excellent support

from members and families with children in recent years and hope it continues. The Street Fair takes place on 26th May. We hope the weather will be good this year and we will be able to have our usual publicity stall. If you know anyone you think might be interested in becoming a member, please encourage them to do so! The more members we have the more weight we carry, especially when responding to planning applications that could adversely affect the harbour.

Annual subscriptions were due on 1st January, but many members have overlooked this and our Hon. Treasurer has been away. He would be pleased to receive subs soon or at the AGM on 15th March. In order to improve our handling of membership records, the data is now maintained in a computer file. However, in accordance with the Data Protection Act, for payment of a small fee you are entitled to receive a copy of the information we hold about you, as supplied on your application form. Further, without your specific approval, we will never make the data available to any other party or organisation. Many people are now Life Members which is excellent, but it means our annual income is dropping. Production of the Sentinel is our greatest expense, but it is an important means of keeping in touch with members. If you have any views on the matter please let us know.

Members may be wondering why there has been no final report on the Eastern Yar Strategy (EYS), originally scheduled for this Spring. Running out of funds is the answer and further funding has been applied for from DEFRA!! I am delighted that our tenacious linchpin Chairman of the Working Group, Paul Sanderson, has kindly agreed to update us as much as possible after the business of the AGM at 2.30 pm on 15th March at St Helens Community Centre. Don't forget we are always pleased to welcome new members on to the Committee. We look forward to seeing you there.

Yours sincerely,  
*Barbara Clough, Chairman*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

AGM Saturday 15 March at 2.30pm St Helens Community Centre

Speaker: Paul Sanderson, Chairman St Helens and Bembridge Coastal and Harbour Working Group  
The Eastern Yar Strategy - Update

Beach Clean Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April

Meet at 10 am Tollgate Café Bembridge or Hovertravel Works St Helens. Gloves and stout shoes essential.

Bembridge Street Fair Monday 26<sup>th</sup> May at 2 pm

BASHHA Publicity Stall. Offers of help in manning the stall gratefully received.

### THE SENTINEL

Newsletter of the Bembridge and St Helens Harbour Association, Number 37 February 2008

Published by Bembridge & St Helens Harbour Association

Produced by Desktop Studio, Unit 6B Weavers Yard, Lane End Road, Bembridge, Isle of Wight PO35 5US (Tel 01983 874874)

Opinions expressed in The Sentinel are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Association

## Bembridge Harbour Users Group Update

The Section 31 appeals (for 2006 and 2007) by BASHHA to the Secretary of State for Transport against the level of Harbour Dues continue. It is understood that DfT Ports Division are currently preparing a case for consideration by SofS.

The planning application for the 69 bedroomed Hotel on Yar Quay overlooking Bembridge Marina (the current site of the old Harbour Office) has yet to be considered. No progress seems to have been made on two other applications made last year – the Angling Club Marina by the old St Helens Mill, and for piles and mains sewerage system for 34 houseboats.

Once the long promised refurbishment of Selwyn Marina is complete, refurbishment of Fishermans Pontoon (Embankment Marina), will start as far as we know. The Harbour Company has yet to apply for a FEPA Licence to extend the pontoons toward the channel.

All (as far as can be ascertained) of the 118 fore and aft moorings to the east of Fishermans Pontoon have been laid. The section 106 agreement which requires them to be vacated for 4 months over the winter (1st Dec - 31st March) and for the buoys to be removed has still not been signed off. IWC are understood to be delaying taking enforcement action pending the outcome of the channel maintenance planning appeal by BHIC. The appeal is opposed by Natural England and IWC. No decision is expected for at least 6 months. The outcome will establish whether 106 agreements provide the Planning Dept. with authority to control harbour authorities.

Members may have seen the report in the East Wight Beacon of a Bembridge Harbour Liaison Group set up by BHIC. The first meeting took place in early December, the second one was in mid-February. So far we have not been formally informed of its aims and objectives or its membership. Our User group is monitoring this closely and will update once more is known. BHUG will remain independent representing the interests of harbour users.

BHUG has recently setup a blog site as a means of further improving the passage of information to its members. Visit [www.bembridgeharbourusergroup.blogspot.com](http://www.bembridgeharbourusergroup.blogspot.com) (a separate website may be set up in due course).

### The Impact of Plastic Bags

During Beachwatch 2006, 7476 plastic bags were found on 358 beaches, an average of 40 bags /km.

*(Beachwatch / Beachcleans carried out at Point and Silver Beaches, Bembridge, consistently collect more plastic pieces, including plastic bags, than any other items).*

Plastic bags are easily mistaken for food and are eaten by a wide range of marine species, frequently with fatal results.

BBC Camera woman Rebecca Hosking made a film about the appalling amount of plastic litter she found in Hawaii. She used the film to prompt her local town of Modbury in Devon to go-Plastic Bag Free.

For more information visit [www.adoptabeach.org.uk](http://www.adoptabeach.org.uk)

*Extract from Marine Conservation Society's Strandline Newsletter 33*

### Bembridge & St Helens Harbour Association Aims & Objectives

- ▶ To collate information regarding Bembridge Harbour and the surrounding areas and reflect the information and independent views of local residents, visitors and harbour users.
- ▶ To propose, facilitate and update long-term policy for the harbour and surrounding areas including, but not limited to: dredging, funding, maintenance, management and ownership.
- ▶ To encourage a balance between the natural environment of the Harbour and its commercial, environmental and recreational uses.
- ▶ To encourage, within statutory and other appropriate authorities, positive initiatives which improve the appearance and use of the harbour and surrounding areas and are compatible with the agreed structure, policies and views of the community.
- ▶ To encourage the community to cooperate effectively in response to any proposals concerning the Harbour and surrounding areas.

### Bembridge & St Helens Harbour Association 2008 Membership Application/Renewal

I/We wish to apply/reapply for membership of the Association and enclose a remittance as follows:

ORDINARY MEMBERSHIP	Annual	£3	Life	£30
FAMILY MEMBERSHIP		£4		£40
REDUCED MEMBERSHIP (unwaged, retired)		£2		£20
DONATIONS		£		

Names .....

Address .....

..... Telephone No. ....

Signature ..... Date .....

Subs may be paid direct to your Sentinel deliverer or to the Hon Treasurer, Rod Bowman, 1 The Brambles, Bembridge. PO35 5QH  
Please ensure that subscriptions are in an envelope clearly marked with your name and address. Thank you.

*Extract from a new booklet soon to be published by the Bembridge Heritage Society.*

## Britten-Norman Cushioncraft at Bembridge and St Helens 1959-1967

The Britten-Norman Cushioncraft CC1 was built at the request of Elders and Fyffes Ltd and was to be used to study the potential of this type of vehicle for the carriage of bananas from plantations in the Southern Cameroons. Using this unique method of transport Elders and Fyffes hoped to be able to save road building costs and long lorry runs over indifferent roads, which caused bruising and scarring to the fruit, to bulldoze a track from the plantations to the river, and thus down the river to the wharf, where the refrigerated banana ships load the fruit.

Britten-Norman, together with its associated company Crop Culture had studied the potential for this type of vehicle in different overseas countries and revealed the possibility of a break through in transportation techniques by the use of air cushion vehicles which could accelerate the pace of development in territories where roads are non-existent and costly to build and where rivers are seasonally unnavigable.

When Britten-Norman began seriously to consider developing a Cushioncraft, a study was made of the factors affecting the load and capacity desirable for a prototype machine that would, in production form, immediately command a useful market. The main point that emerged from discussion with potential users was that provided the vehicle cost less than £10,000 then industrial companies and corporations would be prepared to buy immediately to gain field experience with vehicles using the air cushion principle.

Armed with this experience, potential users could specify the optimum machine for their particular transport requirements. £10,000 or less spent on a route assessment vehicle would probably be saved on subsequent larger machines because the precise capacity and speed requirements dictated by the routes and loads concerned could be accurately established and so the CC1 was born.

The CC1 was built using all local labour currently employed by Britten-Norman and was the second craft of its type to be built in the world, the first being the SRN1 built by Saunders-Roe at East Cowes.

The CC1 was circular, 18 feet 10 inches in diameter and had an empty weight of approximately one ton. It carried a driver and two passengers in a cab mounted on the deck where

there was also space for outside cargo and was designed to operate about 12 inches above the water or ground. The CC1 was powered by a Coventry Climax sports car engine producing up to 170 bhp. Only one CCI was produced before it was replaced by the CC2.

In 1964, the CC1 took its place in history when it was transferred to a mainland museum. It was airlifted by helicopter from Bembridge Airport to an RAF landing craft, waiting in St Helens Roads, which then took the CC1 to Lee on Solent for forward transport by road to the Royal Collage of Military Science in Wiltshire.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> September 1961 Britten-Norman announced the successful first trials of their second Cushioncraft, the CC2. This new machine, designed and built as a private venture by Britten-Norman at Bembridge Airport was a ten-seater craft powered by a Rolls-Royce V-8 petrol engine which was supplied especially for the Cushioncraft. On its first flight the CC2 was driven out of the hanger into pitch darkness at 3am. After a flight of about ten minutes over the grass airfield the CC2 was flown back into the hanger.

After further trials the designers were confident that clearance heights of up to two feet were within the reach of the CC2 and forward speeds of up to 50 mph were predicted.

The design of the CC2 incorporated the lessons learned from many hours of research flying with the CC1.

The CC2 of which 3 were built, was propelled and steered by thrusts from the air curtain jets, and no external propellers were used until 1963. Construction was of light alloy sheet, and the basic flotation hull. Only 3 CC2's were built all at Bembridge Airport.

There was no CC3 produced, production went straight to the CC4 of which only one was built at Bembridge Airport. Further production of the later Cushioncraft namely the CC5, which had its first flight 24th March 1966, and the CC7, which was moved to rented workshops at Woodnuts boatyard at St. Helens Duver and had its first flight early 1968.

There was no CC6. Only a static model was produced a photo of which is included in the book.

In 1967 a decision was made to sell the Cushioncraft business to The British Hovercraft Company, Westlands at East Cowes, to enable Britten-Norman to consolidate their business to the production of the Islander Aircraft.

Fairy S.A. of Belgium acquired BN as a going concern and the company was re-named Fairy Britten - Norman.

John Britten and Desmond Norman left the company in 1976 to pursue their separate interests.

John Britten died 7<sup>th</sup> July 1977 and is buried in the cemetery at the Bembridge Trinity Church. Desmond Norman died 13<sup>th</sup> November 2002 and is buried in Gore Cemetery Arreton.

*Peter Frankland, Bembridge Heritage Society*



*CC2-002 in Bembridge Harbour 1963*