



Chairman's Report 2009

As I reflect on 2009, I recall a passage from one of the sailing books I read this year – 'a good club member is one that puts in slightly more than they take out' and I am pleased to say that there have been plenty examples of this within the club this year – in some cases 'a lot more than they take out'! There are too many examples to quote here but several spring to mind as I write this – the work done by Andrew Riley in upgrading the racing results from paper based to computer based, to the extent that the results can be published on our website the same day – www.pilkingtonsailingclub.co.uk (thanks to my son Alex for building and maintaining this site). The Training Centre has flourished this year and few can underestimate the work that Dave Greenall, Caroline O'Brien and Trevor Fillingham have put in to make this happen. Two new 'Class Opens' were held for the first time by the club, for Solos and Lasers and much of the credit for this must go to Nick and Richard Hampson and also Richard Critchley. So as always, a club is only as good as its members so if anyone is hiding their talents out there, please bring them out for the benefit of the club!

Further progress was made with the changing room improvements with new floors laid in both and new lighting installed in the men's room. We will continue to review how this can be further improved and would welcome feedback/suggestions from members.

On the racing front, this year has seen probably more boats competing on a Sunday afternoon than for many a year with more than ten Enterprises regularly on the water not to mention our burgeoning Solo fleet – competition has been intense as well, so I suspect we won't have a repeat of the 'Royston Taggart Presentation evening' which we had earlier this year! As Commodore, I was especially proud that we improved on our 24Hr Race performance at West Lancs Yacht Club in September with a 4th place overall finish out of 75 boats (compared to 6th last year) and 2nd Enterprise overall, winning two trophies as well. I sincerely hope that we can win the race in 2010! It would also be remiss of me not to thank all the people who make our attendance at this event, the highlight of our year, in particular the catering of Cliff and Karen Waine. We are a big Enterprise Club and it is good to see the results confirming this – also did you know that we have the 2nd highest membership of The Enterprise Association in the country! So if you haven't joined please do so – it's worth it just to read Richard Critchley's articles! On the individual front, Steve Blackburn supported by crew Nick Hampson and Royston Taggart won the Enterprise North West Top Helm award for 2009 – a fantastic achievement by all. Steve and Royston also won the North West Area championship held at Wigan SC in August. In the national U21 championships held at Barnt Green SC in early September, Alan Roberts and Rob Lea finished a creditable 6th overall. It was also good to see several other members from the club competing in Open events across the region and doing much to raise our profile.

Our three Opens were blessed with plenty of wind (at times too much!), with 9 boats competing in our Enterprise Open with Royston Taggart and Diane Roberts taking the honours. The inaugural Laser and Solo Opens were well received with 14 Lasers competing in July and 10 Solos in October – honours in these events went to Ed Thomas (WLYC) and Mike Hobin (Oxford) respectively. Ed enjoyed it so much, he looks set to join us permanently whilst for Mike, it was a return to the club where he learnt to sail. Hopefully both these Opens look set to continue which can only be good for the club.

Our Training Centre goes from 'strength to strength' and this year saw record numbers participate in our traditional Beginners Course and also for the first time we ran a specific course for 'Age Concern' – both were a great success and hopefully many of the participants will remain members for a long time to come. Please make them feel welcome to the club and as always respect them on the water. In addition we continued our good work with the schools, running a course for Rainhill High School in the Spring and it was great to see all of them continuing to sail throughout the summer – I'm sure they will be back with a vengeance next year. Building on our work with youngsters, a very successful 'taster session' was held with Bleak Hill Primary School in October allowing 40 pupils the opportunity to experience sailing for the first time. Our good work with children was recognized recently by the award of RYA Onboard Club of the Year for Merseyside and Cheshire 2009 – all this can only be achieved by the

numerous volunteers who give up their valuable time to assist within the Training Centre – too many to mention but all appreciated by myself and the Officers of the club.

We must not forget that we are a Community Amateur Sports Club and so it was an honour to welcome Councillor Terry Shields and Mrs Julie Shields, Mayor and Mayoress of St Helens to our club last month to make the presentation of a cheque for £1500 to the Lilac Centre – monies raised as part of our successful charity fund raising events held in conjunction with Rainford and Prescot Round Tables and the Rotary Club of Prescot. Indeed the Mayor was so impressed, he is coming back to visit our children's xmas party! On a serious note, we must acknowledge the great work done by Freda Lunt in coordinating the fund raising activities – she can be proud that over £30000 has been raised by the club in the years that she has been associated with the hospice.

At this stage of the report, we should take a few moments to remember those members past and present who have passed away, including Eric Gill who joined the club in 1962 and died this year at the age of 95.

So as I prepare to 'hand the tiller' to Dave Greenall, we can reflect on the fact that the club is in good health financially (as the Treasurer's Report will show), our racing results are as good as ever, our Training Centre is very successful and we continue to play our part in the community, supporting worthy causes and giving people of all ages the opportunity to take up the sport we all enjoy. So once again, many thanks to the many people too numerous to mention who 'put in more than they take out' and to those that don't, please consider what help you can give the club as we continue our successful voyage!

Malcolm Armstrong
Chairman
November 2009