



Army and Navy Club Yacht Squadron

Commodore's Annual Report 2023

Building on our first cruise in October 2022, this year proved to be a considerable success with a modest programme built around cruising, racing and social events. On the water events focussed on The Solent with a successful circumnavigation of the Isle of Wight, a respectable placing (5th) in the Newman VC Trophy and our two, well attended, lecture-cum-drinks evenings. I believe we have established a workable and sustainable model to enable enjoyable and economical sailing for members of the Army and Navy Club

As previously reported our Newman VC crew felt we appeared a tad lacklustre by calling ourselves 'The Sailing Interest Group' when pitched alongside the other London Clubs. It was felt that we'd appear to be more stylish if we called ourselves the Army and Navy Club Yacht Squadron and came complete with officers and a pennant. More of this later.

We now have a proven way to access cruising out of Gosport using the Army Sailing Association's boat Grebe VIII - a well found Halsberg Rassey 34. Our arrangement has been informal to date, but from January 2024 we can formalise this relationship as a Group Member of the ASA. This will enable all members of the squadron to charter Grebe (subject to a qualified Yachtmaster being part of the crew). Members of the squadron will also be able to access RYA courses through the AMA at their discounted rate.

We've also started developing a relationship with the Go Sailing Association. The GSA has well found boats in Southampton, Plymouth and Largs (Oban in the summer). Following some discussion last summer it's been agreed that we make use of one of their boats over summer 2024 for a 5 day cruise and if this works well formalise our relationship in 2025. As with the ASA this will give us a very economical way to access cruising yachts.

Members of the Army and Navy Club already have reciprocal rights with the Royal London Yacht Club – whose club is on The Parade in Cowes. Following discussions during 2023, both clubs have agreed to develop this relationship further. As well as a well sited clubhouse, the RLYC also has mooring facilities on the Medina River, which, subject to availability, we would be able to make use of. The RLYC is also keen to join with us in running an RYA Day Skipper Courses – over 5 Sundays during the winter period 2024/25 – at the Rag. Discussions are ongoing.

The squadron's first social events took place in the spring and autumn of 2023 in the form of two lecture and drinks evenings. It was noted that the Coffee Room did well on these evenings and that there's an enthusiasm amongst members to be able to dine with the speaker. There will now be an option to book onto the speaker's table alongside booking a seat for the lecture.

Our WhatsApp Group has proved an excellent way for members to communicate informally. Particularly pleasing has been the way a 'Dating Agency' type facility has naturally emerged, where members with yachts looking for crew have put out a call. I'm hopeful this arrangement will continue to grow in 2024.

We now have a working executive with a Commodore, Hon Secretary & Treasurer, Vic Commodore Racing and the start of non-executive Advisory Group. As the squadron grows however, there will clearly be a need to find further officers to fill specific functions and spread the workload.

I'd like to finish this first Commodore's Annual Report for thanking Georgina Whiteside, John Amey, Gaurav Sarin and Adrian Walsh for their hard work and support in getting the squadron up and running.

Robin Ashcroft

Commodore

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19th January 2024