

NZRYS President's Report 2009

Newsletters:

In previous years the NZRYS 'Upwind' newsletter had been printed and posted. This involved a significant amount of work collating and folding and considerable expense with printing and postage. Last year this was changed so that these were published as PDFs and the primary delivery mechanism was email. Not only did this eliminate most of the work and cost, but also allowed much more use of colour.

This year saw the change from the quarterly newsletter and weekly emails of race results to a combination where the weekly report was upgraded to a PDF with a more formal format. It was always difficult to get contributions and by the time there were sufficient articles to make into a newsletter often some were outdated. The weekly reports incorporate articles as they come to hand.

Web Site:

Another innovation this year was the web site, which currently runs out of a Fedora Linux box sitting on my desk at home. This saves hosting costs but is quite slow as it shares my ADSL connection. The 'A' in ADSL stands for Asymmetric which means that the outgoing speed to the viewer is much slower than the incoming speed (to me).

The web site not only provides an archive of the last couple of years of newsletters, race results and NZRYS club documents, but also includes an extensive gallery of photographs, usually having a page for each race day sailing.

The site also has pages for the other users of the lagoon: the Ancient Mariners and the Electron Owners Association, and for the OLCC.

The Email List:

Last year and earlier this year the newsletters and weekly reports were sent out to current members, lapsed members and anyone who puts their email address on the visitor log, usually after trialling the club boat. There were also a few courtesy people on the list.

It was suggested that lapsed members, after a few months, should be culled from the list to encourage them to pay the subscription if they would like to continue to be informed. Leaving on the list reduces the benefits of financial membership. The visitors also should be given free emails for a limited time, perhaps a few weeks, and then removed. Again this is to encourage joining the club.

It was also suggested there be an associate membership at a lower rate that entitles receiving the emails but does not include voting or other full membership rights. In this respect we need to itemise the benefits that do accrue to full membership which would not to associate:

- Reserved sail number and frequency
- Participation in the series racing
- Awards of Cups and Trophies
- Voting rights

With the web site having all the reports available this issue became a moot point. The email list was cut back to only have members plus a handful of others.

Committee:

There has not been a formal committee meeting so far this year. This is mainly because there have been no issues to decide and the club has been running smoothly. The racing committee have been doing an excellent job on race days, ensuring that the courses are set for enjoyable and close racing and that the referees fairly monitor the observance of rules. This has resulted in good turnouts of members and absence of conflict.

The schedule has worked well this year. A proposed schedule for 2010 has been produced which has the same layout with the dates being amended for next year's calendar with its different holidays. We do need to keep in mind that the pond may be closed if the council do finally desilt the pond and this interferes with racing. At that time the schedule may need be adjusted.

State of the Pond:

Generally the pond has been in good condition most of the year. At the height of summer the heat did cause the bottom silt and dead weed to gasify which then floats lumps of decaying matter to the surface. Not only does this interfere with the sailing but it also smells bad. The cool of the winter kept the weed down but this has occurred again after warm weeks in the spring sun.

The new fountains were installed and were running nicely for a time. Unfortunately the intake was in the wrong place, it was at the base of the wall and difficult to keep clean. The silt, algae and mussels soon had the filters blocked. These were removed which necessitated the removal of the fountain heads as these would soon be blocked too. At least the pump moved salty estuary water up to the sailing pond and also kept up the oxygen levels. New intakes have been installed and soon the fountains will run again.

A meeting at the pond between the Council Parks and Reserves, the fountain contractors, Water Care consultants and the OLCC discussed the solution to the fountains and to desilting the ponds. This represents progress in that the desilting is recognised as a requirement, but there is still no timescale for it to happen.

New chains were fitted to the flap valves after the old ones rusted away. The flaps were soon adjusted to allow overspill of sea water into the ponds each high tide. The salt helps to control the algae. Heavy rain does bring the pond back to fresh water though.

There were still some problems with dead weed breaking up and floating to the surface so two Working Bees were organized to rake out this as much as possible. In the first a dingy was used by Kevin to clean the buoys and scrape the mussels off the buoy ropes, eventually their weight could sink the buoys. John scraped off some buoys that were badly weathered and resprayed them. In the second we dragged chains to reach the deeper parts and drag the weed to the side. Many thanks to those who turned out and to Cindy for catering refreshments.

Historical Archive:

Robert Williams, the founder of the club back in 1994, turned up at the pond and promised us that he will be sending us his archive of early documents. I hope to be able to scan these in to the computer so that they can be available on the web site when I receive them.

Richard Plinston
President NZRYS