



Gravesend Sailing Club

Newsletter – April 2020

This edition of the newsletter is dominated by the Covid-19 situation. The Club programme has been suspended until at least the end of April, which includes the Lift-in (we decided early but events have overtaken us and we couldn't do it anyway). Obviously, we would all like to get sailing as soon as possible, but the priority for the General Committee is the health and well-being of our members and all our decisions will be made with that in mind.



A big thank you to club members who are working in the caring professions at this difficult time, we are thinking of you.

Lift In

A tentative date has been set for May (owners of boats in the South Yard will be kept informed), but we are aware that the present situation may change that. One of the considerations will be the condition of our river moorings and we have had the following from the PLA;

'All works have been split into two groups, Critical and non-critical. As you can imagine our main priority is to clear the outstanding critical moorings, these are things like navigation buoys and ship tiers. I am afraid we have had to postpone our attendance to the two Gravesend yacht trots.'

PLA Notice to Mariners 6 of 2020

COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS RECREATION AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

We are issuing this in line with current Government coronavirus guidance, placing restrictions on movement.

To reduce social contact, travel and potential strain on emergency services, we strongly recommend that all recreation and leisure activities on the tidal Thames are avoided until further notice.

Our priority at the PLA is to help ensure the UK continues to receive essential supplies of food, fuel and medical goods at this time. As a result, we expect to have a reduced capability in responding to recreational incidents on the river.

To support our essential port operations, we are reducing the operating hours of our harbour service patrols between Putney and Teddington.

We are grateful for your co-operation in these exceptional circumstances.

Message from Gravesend RNLI

Dear Fellow Sailors,

As you will be aware the RNLI has had to take the decision to cease all but the most essential work required to keep people safe at sea.

Our dedicated teams who crew and maintain the lifeboats are still on call 24/7 in case of an emergency, but we have been asked not to carry out any other work which may put ourselves or others at risk of contracting Covid-19 virus. This means that all Lifejacket Clinics, training sessions, talks, and fundraising events have had to be cancelled.

Like many of you we have found this to be a very difficult decision to make, but everyone's health must be our priority.

At the moment the 24 hour walk from Teddington to Gravesend due to take place on 23/24 May in aid of the RNLI is still in place. We are hoping, perhaps foolishly, that with two months to go things might change and the walk may take place. A decision on this will be made towards the end of April.

In the meantime I ask you all to take care and keep well. Exercise and smile if you can. I will be in contact with you all again once we have a clearer idea of how this epidemic is going to pan out.

We are still available to you on the phone or via e-mail if you have any queries that we can help you with, or indeed if you just want someone different to chat to, so please feel free to get in touch.

Gay Marchant, Water Safety Advisor, Gravesend Lifeboat Station, gay_marchant@rnli.org.uk

If you are a resident of Gravesham

The club has had an email from Adam Holloway, Gravesham MP about a local initiative.

'MAJOR LOCAL INITIATIVE - Coronavirus communication'

'In conjunction with the leader of the Council, John Burden, we have created a new and major local resource:

Gravesham Community Support

This is a database that will assist Gravesham residents during the weeks and months ahead. By entering your contact details we will be able to link you up with people in your local area, so that you can help and be helped.

It will also be a highly effective means of you receiving information and advice from the Council and the Emergency Services. May I beg you to spend two minutes signing up.'

You can find out more about this and a link on Adam Holloways website.

Things to do while we wait to get sailing again.....

RYA Online Courses

A suggestion of things to do when at home from RYA

Those who are aspiring dinghy instructors could complete their RYA Safe and Fun course online. The VHF radio course can be done online, albeit with a classroom based exam required subsequently which will need to wait until that's possible.

There are various online navigation courses which can be completed, relevant for most watersports.

Watch "Maiden war on the waves"

Val says that this is an excellent film to watch one evening. The inspirational story of how Tracy Edwards, a 24-year-old cook on charter boats, became the skipper of the first all-female crew to enter the Whitbread Round the World Race in 1989.

It's on BBC iPlayer and available for 2 months. Search for Storyville and it's one of the options.

Most importantly; Keep Safe

Do phone or keep in touch with older and less able members of the Club. Often a chat is a real morale booster.