



Prawle Point

No: 38

'eyes along the coast'

Spring 2011

THE ISLAND TRUST

"Sailing is the best thing ever- I was scared at first but now I love it." "Wet night is wicked! It's like total wipe out." These are just two of the many spontaneous expressions from children thrilled by their experiences sailing on *Pegasus*, the 56' Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter owned by The Island Trust.

A group of influential Island Cruising Club members, who cherished an aspiration to motivate disadvantaged children through sailing, founded the trust as a charitable organisation in 1973 to provide opportunities for youngsters from 9 to 18 to spend holidays learning to sail. Dick Lloyd MBE, the driving force behind The Island Trust, firmly believes that sailing, above any other activity, encourages young people to work together as a team and acquire new skills, thus developing confidence, self-esteem and independence in an environment so different from their everyday life. Children come from differing backgrounds and their disadvantages are various. They may be visually or aurally impaired, have learning or behavioural difficulties or other special needs, be offenders on rehabilitation programmes; they may be in care or live in inner city or similar deprived areas, yet all respond to the challenges of seagoing and to the kindness, expertise and caring encouragement given by the Island Trust's very special instructors and crew.

Pegasus, often logged as she passes NCI Prawle Point, was built in 2008 of wood to a design by Ed Burnett derived from the original pilot cutters which escorted vessels up the hazardous Bristol Channel. She was launched by Libby Purves on May 22nd before five hundred spectators. With a reputation for speed and seaworthiness, she accommodates eight children, from the age of fourteen, with two helpers and two crew all enjoying exciting, comfortable and safe sailing along the south west coast and to the Channel Islands, the Isle of Wight and the Isles of Scilly. The children learn to work together with tasks of daily maintenance chores and cooking,



The Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter Pegasus

while any special interest in navigation is encouraged. "I liked being able to steer the boat and the overnight anchor watch. Staying on *Pegasus* was brilliant, it's really cosy and I loved helping with sails and knots," they said. When in port, *Pegasus* frequently attracts admiring comments and enquiries, then the youngsters realise they belong to a very special vessel and feel a sense of pride. With adult crews under charter during summer holidays, she has also participated in several Tall Ships races from ports in Belgium, Denmark and Norway as well as folk festivals in Brittany.

Last year Cremyll Sailing, on the Tamar, involved in similar ventures for disadvantaged children, initiated liaison with The Island Trust with the result that *Pegasus* will relocate from The Bag in Salcombe to join with *Moosk*, a 1906 gaff yawl and *Tectona*, their 1925 gaff ketch for an eighteen month trial period. Although the children's parents,

youth groups and schools pay towards costs, the trust relies on serious donations, beneficiaries and fund-raising events.

Younger children are encouraged to begin their sailing on a residential dinghy course in Salcombe on the Island Cruising Club's ex-Mersey Ferry, the *Egremont* moored in The Bag. A welcome on board is just the beginning of a whole new experience where interacting, helping and working with others, making new friends, learning unfamiliar terms and disciplines nurture respect for others and for the marine environment. Busy days are spent dinghy sailing on the club's Picos, kayaking and canoeing, speed boating and raft building as well as playing beach games, picnicking and barbecuing in the nearby coves; just living on board can be thoroughly stimulating and exciting. Although staff often find the children challenging and demanding, the rewards, they say, come from seeing the life changing effects such activities can achieve.

To support The Island trust or for more information, visit rfl@theislandtrust.org.uk

NOVEMBER EXERCISE - MARCH REALITY

The annual DFS inspection, entitled 'Operation November,' involved both Salcombe Lifeboats being conned by watchkeepers, using VHF radio at Prawle Point, on to pairs of volunteer divers from Totnes Sub Aqua Club who were being swept away with the tide.

Although the watchkeepers had extreme difficulty keeping divers in sight at 1.5 miles, albeit on a day of calm seas, they achieved notable success, giving constant position updates and course corrections, thus enabling the ALB Baltic Exchange III and the ILB Joan Bate individually to effect several directed 'rescues' while for the final run, both boats were conned simultaneously on to the dive boat.

Lifeboat Coxswain, Chris Winzar and Jeremy Linn, our Coastguard Liaison Officer, who observed the exercise from the Lookout with the Brixham Coastguard Watch Manager, all confirmed that the exercise went well and that watchkeepers performed to a high standard. Assessor, Colin Pomeroy also tested afternoon duty officers with chartwork, reporting exercises and responses to technical questions as well as putting training Officer, Andy Thomson through his paces. "If only all stations operated to the same high standards" was one of his later comments when Declared Facility Status (DFS) was re-confirmed. The chartwork was considered to be 'above average.'

He was also pleased to hear from the ALB Coxswain that he too considered the exercises to be good training value. Chris Winzar said, 'Direct communication with the watch saves time in locating and recovering any casualty and regular exercises enhance the working relationship and expertise between the two organisations. Having watchkeepers in a very prominent position is a valuable asset to all users of that stretch of water.'

In general conclusion, Colin Pomeroy noted, "NCI Prawle Point is a highly efficient station operating to a high standard, well led by a top quality manager and a well organised training team.



Each of the watchkeepers responded to questions posed in a competent manner and all were well motivated."

The volunteer divers were keen to perform again in spite of being left to drift in the water for an hour! Diver, Allan Tudor, who had previously addressed watchkeepers at one of their monthly meetings and volunteered members as 'guinea pigs', was even inspired to write an article for the local press, being one of their reporters. Diver Carole Tudor remarked that 'being

adrift is very lonely, even with a buddy, and it is very difficult to see any activity as visibility at sea level in a swell, is very limited.'

Little did anyone guess that a few months later just such an occurrence would be played out for real!

On Sunday, March 13th, both lifeboats were launched to reports of two divers fifteen minutes overdue half a mile off Bolt Head. Within a minute, watchkeepers at Prawle Point informed Brixham Coastguard they had the dive boat in sight and four minutes later the divers were also located, so immediately communications were established to direct the inshore lifeboat to the casualties. Conning and recovery were achieved very quickly so that, within ten minutes, the divers were reunited with their boat and Prawle Point received messages of thanks from both Salcombe Lifeboat and Brixham Coastguard for a job well done. It was indeed a team effort by all three services. It is worth noting that neither duty watchkeepers that day had gained experience from the November exercise, in fact both were newly qualified, so congratulations also to the Training Team!

Taking the Search out of Search and Rescue is what NCI is all about. As the Lookout stands 60 metres above sea level, watchkeepers gain a much better chance, than waterborne personnel, of spotting heads in the water and keeping them in sight. Even so, without marker buoys (SMBs) and colourful hoods divers could easily be lost.

Jenny Brown

NCI PRAWLE POINT: INCIDENTS TO DATE



07.04.11 - The duty watchkeepers at Prawle Point spotted a speedboat with apparent engine failure half a mile off Prawle Point and informed Brixham Coastguard. They also gave details of a passing multihull yacht. Brixham Coastguard called her up and asked the skipper if he could go to the assistance of the speedboat. The speedboat was then towed back to Salcombe by the yacht

13.3.11 - A dive boat, Totnes Diver 1, reported by radio that two of its divers were overdue. The Prawle Point watchkeepers spotted the two divers in the water and reported to Brixham Coastguard that they had them visual off the Mewstone near Bolt Head. Salcombe ILB (Inshore Lifeboat) was tasked and the watchkeepers successfully directed the ILB crew to the divers via radio communications. Both divers were recovered unharmed.



Friends Of Prawle Point

A Christmas party was held on December 14th for friends, watchkeepers and their partners. Attendance hit a record and certainly exceeded expectations while festive fare and entertainment were also exceptional.

The Old Gaffers shantymen set the pace and atmosphere with their rousing, unaccompanied songs for all to join in the choruses; a new venture for FOPP very much enjoyed. After supper with seasonal quiz, six volunteers sang, to the tune of Uncle Tom Cobley, a sixteen verse ditty written by Jo Laphorn in which all aspects of Prawle Point activities were included and every watchkeeper and FOPP committee member was mentioned by name in the varied choruses for all to join in. This was followed by our

theatrically talented Station Manager reciting a poem entitled 'Weekend Admiral,' a hilarious tale of arrogance and ineptitude as sometimes witnessed in a certain local yachting centre nearby. Radio communications between another would-be yachty and Brixham Coastguard-exaggerated but based on fact- brought tears of laughter as Roger alternately donned the appropriate hats to play both sides of the transmission.

Charleton Village Hall was again packed for the FOPP Quiz arranged and compered expertly by Alan Davey and enjoyed for its diversity of questions allowing all six members of each team to contribute varied knowledge. The winners each received a bottle of wine, snacks and dips were enjoyed and a profit made of £330.

Another jazz evening with the incomparable Antique Six is fixed for June 18th 2011.

The Incomparable Venables



At the monthly meeting on March 8th, Derek Venables, who has recently retired from his three posts, was given enthusiastic applause and thanks for his enormous commitment to the Station over the past ten years.

He has carried the full burden as Maintenance Officer since 2001 when he first qualified as a watchkeeper, became Deputy Station Manager in 2002 and also took on the role of Roster Co-ordinator. He also served as Acting Station Manager when Derrick Yeoman became ill. Roger Barrett,

Station Manager, commended Derek for his exceptional contribution to the running of NCI Prawle Point, saying "no one has done more for the Station," and presented him with well deserved gifts donated by grateful watchkeepers who hold him in deep regard. To help update his PC office, Derek received a wide screen monitor, a new keyboard, Microsoft Office software and a cheque for £130.

Brave volunteers have come forward to support NCI Prawle Point in these several roles vacated by Derek, but whether on watch or just unable to keep away from the Station, he still keeps a weather eye open for its well-being.

LINCOMBE BOATYARD

When welcomed into the office of Winters Marine by Manager Vicki Soole, initial impressions are of a professional, highly motivated and well qualified team at Lincombe Boatyard.

Occupying a western creek off the Salcombe, Kingsbridge estuary between Heath Point and Tosnos and lying within a valley of sloping farmland, the boatyard provides shelter and protection from extremes of wind and current.



The site was purchased by Langham Industries in the early 1970s and gradually extended over the years. The undercover areas have more than doubled, while hard-standing, either side of the slipway, has continued to expand, incorporating dredged materials within concrete foundations on the north side and substantial further hard to the south leading to a dinghy pontoon reached via a gangway. The approach channel, connecting to the main fairway, is regularly dredged giving access one half metre above chart datum. The row of deep water mooring pontoons, secured by chains, was installed in 1977 and improved by the recent piling work to make them more convenient for yachtsmen.

At this time of year, yachts, motor cruisers and fishing boats stand, gunwale to gunwale over the whole area, many of their names being familiar to watchkeepers since they regularly pass Prawle Point. In summer the vacated spaces are hired out for dinghy and small boat parking with plenty of room for owners' cars.

The yard is run by three full time staff - manager, foreman and assistant foreman/yard operative and one part time administrator. Assisting on site are also sub-contractors, everyone having certificates for competency in their respective fields displayed on the office walls- slinger/signaller, boat transporter, telescopic hoist handler, mobile crane driver. The boatyard is highly commended for Health and Safety aspects in which the staff take pride. While the core business of Winters Marine is the lifting of vessels up to 30 tons, or 60 foot in length, in autumn and spring, all ancillary services are available on site including glass fibre and wood

repairs, electrics and electronics, rigging, safety equipment provision and maintenance, washing and painting facilities. Four other companies also run their own leased workshops at Lincombe. They are Traditional Sail specialising in restoration and maintenance of wooden boats, SMS (Salcombe) Ltd providing marine engineering services, Richard Lewis Marine Electronics and Danby Maritime Safety supplying and servicing equipment from lifejackets to liferafts. In fact Lincombe Boatyard offers employment to over 25 local workers

across all the trades available on site. One unpaid employee is the yard cat which specialises, highly successfully, in rodent control.

A security barrier restricts entrance to authorised personnel while four CCTV cameras, which can be monitored from the office as well as other locations, scan the site continuously. Green issues also come high in priority. The aim is to recycle whenever feasible, possibly install photo-voltaic cells for energy production and respect the SSSI designation of the estuary when dredging. Apparently the oft criticised method of recent dredging near Kingsbridge, where silt is displaced into the current for dispersal further away, is favoured for environmental reasons and is actually effective.

Just as watchkeepers of NCI are alerted by anomalies to the possibilities of drug smuggling (strange procedures, an unkempt yacht or atypical crew to name a few) so at Lincombe a 35' steel sloop aroused suspicion by being abnormally light when lifted from the water. Tony Watson, previous manager at the yard for twenty years, recalls that her keel was empty of ballast and although no drugs were found on that occasion, customs officials, who had known the vessel after a previous arrest in Ireland, found machine gun parts dispersed around the boat. An ensuing trial resulted in prison sentences for the gang while the owner managed to evade custody by a technicality and was never seen again. The boat was eventually auctioned to cover costs.

The vessel's name was *Lucky Irish!*

Jenny Brown

SOME COMMON SAYINGS OF A NAUTICAL ORIGIN

<i>Tide over</i>	Use of the tidal flow to carry a vessel in the desired direction.
<i>Hand over fist</i>	Action of hauling- a speedy procedure for an experienced sailor.
<i>In the black book or on the black list</i>	A book, bound in black leather, listed the names of transgressors among the crew.
<i>Bootleg</i>	A sailor who smuggles booze by concealing a bottle in the top of heavy, leather seaboots.
<i>Hijack</i>	Prostitutes would treacherously attract a sailor's attention with the call, "Hi! Jack" whereupon a furtive bandit could assault him and either rob him or sell him on to a ship needing extra hands.



Please help us to maintain this valuable service by making a donation and becoming a supporter of NCI Prawle Point or becoming a watchkeeper.

*Please contact: The Secretary, NCI Prawle Point, Kingsbridge, PO BOX 58 TQ7 2QZ
Station tel. no. 01548 511259 www.nci-prawlepoint.org Cheques to NCI Prawle Point*