

Chairman's Annual Report 2011

The aim of the HOA is to foster an interest in Hurley boats in all their forms and in particular:

- To keep members informed of developments concerning the Association and any proposals concerning the Association Rules.
- To organise meets, afloat and ashore.
- To maintain an archive of information of general and technical interest relating to boats within the Association.
- To provide a forum for discussion and queries through a newsletter and website

Reading again my report for last year I am struck by my own comment that 2010 seemed to have been the best year for HOA, in my memory. I think that was true then but I am bound to say that I think 2011 has eclipsed its predecessor!

As always, keeping an eye on the ‘back bearing’ of our aims and objectives (above), the mechanics of HOA are still working as smoothly as ever. The newsletter and web site are working really very well in forming the principal means of communication and repositories of great information about Hurley boats, their use, renovation and maintenance. Thanks again to Mike Sheridan and Rod Coomber for their excellent work here. The Yahoo forum remains a lively source of discussion and often the first point of contact for newcomers to the Hurley world. The warm welcome afforded to folk who post messages for the first time is a great feature of our community.

There is lots of good information being shared between members in order to provide mutual support but what is not obvious to most is the continuing support given by Nick Vass. This is mostly to people wanting to buy a Hurley but also those facing fairly serious technical issues. Nick manages to find time to respond to enquirers with detailed descriptions of points to look for and advice on an amazingly wide technical front, despite his punishing schedule as a self-employed yacht surveyor.

Many thanks are due to Ian Sinclair who has sailed through his first year as Treasurer and Membership Secretary with never a hint of choppy waters or head winds, although he had to navigate round some infuriating bureaucratic banking ‘rocks’ in the early stages. He operates the finance and membership systems seamlessly, despite the fairly hefty turnover of numbers – somewhere around 80 members leaving or failing to renew in the year and about the same number of joiners. Membership is in a kind of dynamic equilibrium averaging at about 250. He has also managed to find an excellent new source of burgees, which have been selling steadily throughout the year.

The rally scene remains lively – mostly in the South West where they have a great concentration of Hurley owners who are keen to get together. These have been well reported in the newsletters and on the web site. In the South Area we keenly anticipated the Poole Rally and Mike Carter had done a sterling job of preparing things. Sadly, the weather decided differently.

After last year's AGM, I dumped (rather unceremoniously!) a number of cardboard boxes into Bruce Carter's lap (metaphorically). These were the 'Hurley Archive (hard copy)', although the organisation of the material hardly qualified for so grandiose a title! Many thanks to Bruce for taking ownership of this random, uncatalogued pile of historical stuff, which is a bit like the Crown Jewels – irreplaceable. Lots of photographs, boat production lists, brochures, old technical notes, business information and letters. Over a fairly long period of time, Bruce is going to sort it all and scan some items, with a view to progressively building-up a soft-copy archive on the web site.

I was able to pass this treasure-trove of Hurley memorabilia on to Bruce because we had finally brought 'A History of Hurley Marine' to a finished state – having distilled all the relevant historical information. The book finally came back from the binders in April and Ian and I were able to get into gear with distribution. At time of writing we have distributed nearly 120 copies, about 20 of which were complimentary copies to people who had given significant help. I admit I was rather surprised at the low level of uptake from members, 60 or so, (it really is a bargain for a tenner!) but it has achieved the desired effect of turning cash into stock, which should last for a while. Copies are getting into all sorts of unusual places, including a book shop in Cheltenham who have taken 16!

Although Nick and I had the privilege and fun of doing the leg work, getting the book to completion was a joint effort of many people, especially the Committee and key folk such as Ian Anderson and Tom Eaves who all took their share of reviewing. Publication of the book has been the high point of the year and I am especially delighted with the opportunity it gave Nick and I to meet the Hurley family. In 2010 we were able to meet with Mrs Marion Hurley and her daughters Margret Miller and Linda Reeves when we introduced them to the idea of the book – and also picked their memories for information. I am very happy to report that they are all delighted with the book – it clearly surpassed their expectations – and they have been passing copies to many of their friends and family. Linda, Margret and their respective husbands Berry and Mike, very kindly treated Nick and I, with our wives, to a celebratory supper.



Back: from left: Nick Vass, Tim Sharman
Front: from left: Linda Reeves, Margret Miller

It has also been a great year for Hurley in the press. Firstly and just in time for last year's AGM, yours truly bared his soul to the yachting world with an article in PBO about my escapade off Portland the previous July. Well, they say there is no such thing as bad publicity and the reputation of the Hurley 22 certainly came out of it well, rather better than mine did! However, the very fine watercolour of *Strider* off Portland is now hanging proudly at home – so it was worth it!

Then in September we had a great ‘double whammy’. Firstly, Bruce had an article (and his picture) published in Yachting Monthly’s Cruising Log, describing how he came to buy Gala and began to take her further and further afield. This was a great little article demonstrating how much value can be derived from these classic old boats, in the hands of someone determined to use them to the full.

Secondly, PBO published a stomping 6-page article on Hurley boats, based on the information in the ‘History’. In an e-mail from PBO Editor, Sarah Norbury, after the article was published, she said:

“I’m delighted you are pleased with the article in PBO’s September issue. We consider Hurleys to be quintessential Practical Boat Owner yachts and were therefore pleased to have your excellent raw material with which to create the article. I wish you every success with the book.”

To conclude – I rather feel that I should follow the old adage and ‘quit while I am ahead’ as the Hurley ‘star’ could hardly (it would seem) rise any higher in 2012. That is only partly a joke as I have nearly completed 6 years as the committee Chairman and I distinctly recall saying at the AGM in about 2008 that I would be very happy if someone else felt like a ‘turn at the tiller’. I have given up repeating this at subsequent AGMs – but probably I should repeat it. Although I am quite happy with the role and enjoy it, it is healthy to have new blood in such organisations in order to ensure succession and avoid getting stale. Bruce and James were the last people to join the committee a couple of years ago and we have benefitted enormously from their sage advice and contribution. Although we don’t need a committee of 20 there is scope for one or two others to join if you have a yen to do so (we are quite a sociable bunch!). Do contact me if you would like to know more about the life of a committee member!

Best wishes for your winter lay-up and the new season.

Tim Sharman

