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News Letter January 2009

Hi everyone.

Happy New Year.

We are looking forward to 2009 and hopefully a busy, warm spring and summer.

Training. Lots of you are coming back for more in 2009. We are either doing something right or you must be desperate. We hope it's the former. Yes business as usual on the training front. Bespoke own boat tuition and the full RYA range of courses. The only thing new in training will be the additional pressure on the skippers to avoid being the first to allow the inevitable first scratch to appear on one of the new boats.

Diesel is back down to a price that we can live with so the fuel levy which we planned to introduce will no longer go ahead and we will continue to absorb this expense.

Boat Handling Courses. Once again these two day berthing courses will run at the beginning of the season. Two courses are planned. 20th 21st April and 27th 28th April. Ideal for those wanting to brush up on berthing. Four people per course. First come first served.

Oban. Planning permission has now been granted for a small marina, east of the main pier. This will make Oban an even more attractive proposition for overnighters. I'm not sure that Oban Marina (Kererra) will be over the moon but the advantage of instant access to the towns many shops and restaurants without the disadvantage of having to get the last ferry back to Kererra will be great. We don't have installation dates as yet, so watch this space.

Trip to St. Kilda 2009. One boat fully booked now with a second going in company. 3 Places left on boat number two. A trip to this remote island is a must for any real sailor.



The Fleet. At the time of writing this newsletter, we are very busy preparing the three new boats for commercial work. This on the surface seems like an easy straightforward operation. Don't be fooled.

As an operator of a commercial fleet we are required to refer to a Maritime Coastguard Agency document called MGN280 (M). This covers everything from BS & ISO numbers to Flame retardation of soft furnishings all the way to life jacket maintenance schedules and life raft installation. 148 pages, what a great read! Anyone suffering from insomnia should get a copy of this bad boy.

On a serious point though, the attention to detail ensures that responsible commercial operators supply you with a vessel that is ultra safe.

Marine Diesel Duty. A lot of column inches have now been printed on the new duty rates on diesel for use in the leisure marine sector. The real question of course is, how will this affect me? Without going into great detail about the history and the political posturing etc, etc, we can tell our customers, quite simply, if you are attending one of our courses or skippered charters/cruises then it will have no financial effect on you whatsoever. If you are bareboat chartering then there are two simple changes:

1. When you replenish the fuel at the end of your charter you will have to sign a declaration stating what percentage of fuel you think you have used for propulsion and what percentage you have used for heating & generating of electricity.
2. The detail on the declaration will then define the amount of duty you pay on the fuel uplift you take. On a typical week bareboat Yacht charter we estimate that the additional cost will be no more that £20.

The 2009 Schedule is as follows:

From the Clyde to the West Coast with Skipper

Boat		Depart	Arrive	Availability	Days
Bacchus	Ardrossan -- Oban, via Northern Ireland	28 th June	3 rd July	Full	5
Jura Star	Ardrossan – Oban, via Northern Ireland	28 th June	3 rd July	Spaces	5
Christina	Ardrossan – Oban, via Crinnan Canal & Tobermory	28 th June	3 rd July	Spaces	5
Lady Q	Ardrossan – Oban, via Crinan Canal & Tobermory	28 th June	3 rd July	Spaces	5

Cruises/Mile Builders With or without Skipper

Boat		Depart	Arrive	Availability	
Bacchus	Ardrossan – Bangor- Strangford Loch – Dublin - Ardrossan	17 th June	26 th June	Spaces	9
Christina	Ardrossan – Bangor- Strangford Loch – Dublin - Ardrossan	17 th June	26 th June	Spaces	9
Jura Star	Ardrossan – Bangor- Strangford Loch – Dublin - Ardrossan	17 th June	26 th June	Spaces	9
Bacchus	Oban- Loch Harport (Talisker Distillery) Eigg Muck Rumm Canna	19 th July	24 th July	Spaces	5
Lady Q	Oban-St Kinda and back - Hopefully	7 th Aug	12 th Aug	Full	5
Jura Star	Oban-St Kinda and back - Hopefully	7 th Aug	12 th Aug	3 Spaces	5
Bacchus	Ardrossan return via Crinnan Canal, Gigha, Campbeltown	16 th Aug	21 st Aug	Full	5
Christina	Ardrossan return via Crinnan Canal, Gigha, Campbeltown	16 th Aug	21 st Aug	Full	5
Bacchus	Ardrossan Ballycastle Islay Gigha Cambeltown Ardrossan	23 rd Aug	28 th Aug	Spaces	5
Lady Q	Tarbert Music Festival	18 th Sept	20 th Sept	Full	3
Bacchus	Tarbert Music Festival	18 th Sept	20 th Sept	Full	3
Christina	Tarbert Music Festival	18 th Sept	20 th Sept	Full	3
Jura Star	Tarbert Music Festival	18 th Sept	20 th Sept	Full	3

From the West Coast to the Clyde with Skipper

Boat		Depart	Arrive	Availability	
Bacchus	Oban via Ballycastle Ardrossan (5 Days)	13 th July	15 th Aug	Full	3
Christina	Steady Eddie back to Ardrossan - No Hurry No worry!	23 rd Aug	28 th Aug	Spaces	5
Jura Star	Oban via Ballycastle Ardrossan (5 Days)	23 rd Aug	28 th Aug	Spaces	5

The price for these trips is £440 p/p for the 5 day trips and £800 p/p for the 9 Day trips. They include all breakfasts & lunches and two evening meals on board. They do not include any canal fees (Approx £130 per boat) or mooring fees. Any of you wanting a berth or berths on any of these trips should call me soon as the cruises are popular and I don't like disappointing anyone.

If you have a specific destination and would like us to do arrange a skippered charter then let us know and we will see if anyone else is keen on the destination.

A Happy New Year and best wishes,

Colin Hamilton



Does anyone know this woman?

Stop Press:

In the current economic climate, many businesses are going through a difficult trading period. The sailing and chartering business is not immune to this. However with the euro now trading almost on par with sterling, sailing in Europe is now a very expensive option. As a consequence, charter enquiries are now coming in from skippers who normally sail abroad for the summer. Also the Europeans now see us as a cheaper option. We are delighted to be getting an increased level of enquiries from western Europe.