

Second Inter-Club Commodores' Forum

HOSTED BY ROYAL HONG KONG YACHT CLUB: 26 TO 31 MAY 2006

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Inge Stompf-Jepsen
Commodore RHKYC



Chas Doyle
Aberdeen Boat Club



Jim Mercier
Burrard Yacht Club



Mark Houghton
Hebe Haven Yacht Club



Albert Shim
Kinabalu Yacht Club



Welcome Ceremony for the Second Inter-Club Commodores' Forum



Hong Kong Sea School Cadet Band



Flag raising, ceremony



Karl Kwok, President of the
Hong Kong Sailing Federation

The monsoon rains held off for just long enough for the Welcome Ceremony of the Second Inter-Club Commodores' Forum to go ahead as planned. Starting the proceedings was the Hong Kong Sea School cadet band, followed by welcoming speeches by Inge Stompf-Jepsen, Commodore of Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club and Karl Kwok, President of the Hong Kong Sailing Federation. A flag raising ceremony (also carried out by Hong Kong Sea School cadets) came next, with the finale being a traditional lion dance for the international delegates from 28 yacht clubs.

Inspired by the concept of the inaugural Commodores' Forum, hosted in 2005 by Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, Stompf-Jepsen had no hesitation in offering to host this, the second global meeting of like-minded yacht clubs. Clubs were invited on the premise that they would share their ideas and experiences on three topics, which were selected for their relevance to all yacht clubs regardless of size, age or stature;

- Strengthening International Ties
- Sailing and its Role in the Community
- Sail Training and Youth Programmes

It was a great pleasure for the Club to welcome senior Government officials from both China and Hong Kong to participate and the Club was pleased that Li Quanhai, Deputy Director, China Water Sports Association, and Roger Tupper, Director of Marine, Hong Kong Government were both able to participate in the Forum.

Monday and Tuesday of the Forum were designated for formal presentations by delegates, and included discussion time in a panel format. It was, however, quickly apparent that there was also great value in the informal exchanges enjoyed at the social events that formed an integral part of the Forum.

After the formal opening ceremony and cocktail reception on Saturday evening, delegates were invited to spend Sunday sampling the 'joys' of sailing in Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour.



THE 'SERIOUS BUSINESS' OF THE FORUM STARTED AT 0800HRS ON MONDAY 29 MAY, WITH THE FIRST PANEL DISCUSSION ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL TIES.

PANEL ONE DISCUSSION TOPIC: Strengthening International Ties

Panel Moderator, Fred Kinmonth, gave a brief introduction to the subject and invited Panel members to give an eight-minute talk on their chosen topic.

Sir Nigel Southward, Vice Commodore, Royal Yacht Squadron spoke on Cowes Week. Sir Nigel clarified that 10 member clubs organise the modern Cowes Week and that great strides have been made to improve the event, one of the best-known regattas in the world. The event has seen increased participation and exposure over the years and is now one of the largest participation sporting events in the world.

'Interports' was the next subject to be addressed. Lowell Chang, Past Commodore RHKYC, shared his extensive experience of regular inter-club sailing competitions, which he believes forges closer relationships between clubs. Although competitive racing is the initial attraction for participants, it is the 'fun factor' that is most important.

Vic Locke, another Past Commodore RHKYC and a veteran of the 'Asian Circuit', took delegates on a whistle stop tour of events currently available in Asian waters. He highlighted both old and new events in order to identify the recipe for a successful regatta. Warm tropical waters, a relaxed atmosphere and inexpensive cost of living mean more and more participants are being drawn to the Far East.



Li Quanhai Deputy Director, China Water Sports Association

Santi Kanchanabandhu, Flag Commodore, Royal Varuna Yacht Club, was then asked to reveal the secrets of the King's Cup's success. The regatta that celebrates the King of Thailand's Birthday has grown from a handful of competitors in 1987 to a weeklong regatta that boasts entries of 90 to 100 boats. The event not only promotes sailing but is also a major boost to tourism in Thailand.

Chartering of boats for regattas was a subject tackled by Olivier Decamps of Simpson Marine Hong Kong. Decamps admitted that it was difficult to find a well-equipped racing yacht to charter and enter into Asian events. Decamps believes that with the expansion of the Asian racing circuit there is a need for charter options and made suggestions as to how chartering could be developed in Asia.

Li Quanhai, Deputy Director, China Water Sports Administration gave an overview of sailing in China. Li outlined how a changing culture and improved living standards in China have allowed more time for interest in outdoor water sports. Although sailing is a new leisure sport for the Chinese, it is being embraced at all levels.

Panel one was concluded by Heinz Rautenberg, Past Commodore of the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. Rautenberg gave a brief history of the Commodores' Forum and looked at "Where do we go from here?" He proposed the setting up of an International Council of Yacht Clubs (ICYC) to act as an umbrella organization to represent the interests of clubs, and asked delegates to consider the establishment of such an organisation at this Forum.



**Terence Birch
Madoc Yacht Club**



**Pablo Bautista
Manila Yacht Club**



**Lynn Flores
Marianas Yacht Club**



**Gero Brugmann
Norddeutscher Regatta Verein**



**Jurgen Langemeier
Puerto Galera Yacht Club**



**David Holm
Royal Danish Yacht Club**



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PANEL TWO DISCUSSION TOPIC: Sailing and its Role in the Community

Panel Two was moderated by Vincent Wong, Director of Research and Public Affairs for APCO Asia. During this session Roger Tupper, Director of Marine, (Marine Department of the Hong Kong Government), took delegates through some of the facts and figures behind Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour, noting that it was a dynamic harbour hosting a wide variety of craft but not enough sailing boats.

Dr. Alan Lau, Past Commodore RHKYC, looked at the history of harbour development in Hong Kong with reference to the Club's involvement in the consultation process. RHKYC has been pro-active in making suggestions to improve the Harbour, not just for the Club, but for the general public to use as a recreational facility.

Harbour diversity was the theme for the presentation made by Rex Harrison, Commodore of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron. Harrison stressed the importance of championing the concept of the working harbour and believes that it is variety in water activities that adds to the harbour's vibrancy.

Europe has many well-established sailing events, and festivals such as Sail Amsterdam combine commercial and leisure activities to create a popular festival that encourages tourism. Gert-Jan Nieuwenhuizen, Sales Director Asia Pacific for the Port of Amsterdam, drew comparisons between the Rhine river delta and the Pearl River delta, noting that Sail Amsterdam has successfully showcased the leisure use of a commercial port.

Carlo Ravano, Commodore of the Yacht Club de Monaco, reflected on Monaco's outstanding success in attracting the crème de la crème of the sailing fraternity to its two harbours. Starting with a brief history of the principality, in particular its ties to maritime pursuits, he stressed the importance of partnerships and connections between clubs. He then commented on the importance of hosting classic regattas to attract tourists and competitors, and his club's involvement with European environmental bodies.



Roger Tupper, Director of Marine Hong Kong Government

Remaining in Europe, Marc Fritel, representing the Société Nautique de Marseilles, outlined the club's involvement and cooperation with local government to ensure its survival and also the development of its relationship with the community. With a decrease in commercial shipping inside the port area, local government has looked for ways in which to develop Marseille's potential for tourism and, in common with Sydney, has closely examined water front leases and public interest. SNM took this as a challenge, and with committees

concentrating on environment, heritage and public/private partnerships, together with public consultation, put forward proposals to local government.

The final speaker on panel two was Mark Houghton, Vice Commodore, Hebe Haven Yacht Club, who addressed the subject of 'Sailing for Charity'. Since 2002, the club has organized and hosted an annual 24-hour dinghy race to raise money for charity, with care being taken to include local charities in the distribution of funds. Sailors from clubs and schools throughout the territory form around 26 teams to 'relay-race' over a 24-hour period in one of Hong Kong's most popular community sailing events, which has raised around US\$250,000 since its inception.



John Anderson, Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club



Chris Frost, Royal Natal Yacht Club



Erik Turner, Royal Naval and Royal Albert Yacht Club



David Charlesworth, Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron



Ragnar Klevaas, Royal Norwegian Yacht Club





PANEL THREE DISCUSSION TOPIC: Sail Training and Youth Sailing Programmes

This session was moderated by RHKYC Rear Commodore Sam McBride and focused on youth and sail training. The first speaker for the panel was Paul Dalton, representing the RHKYC Youth Sailing Class. Dalton outlined the way in which RHKYC organises its training programmes before addressing the issues involved with holding on to young sailors and converting non-members into cadet members.

John Anderson, Commodore of the Royal Freshwater Yacht Club, talked about the High Performance Programmes set up by RFBYC in Perth in 2004. The objectives of the programme were to increase the numbers of Western Australians participating in Australian national squads and teams. After only two years the programme has produced successful competitors.

Alistair Skinner, Club Admiral of the Shanghai Boat and Yacht Club, has been obliged to approach sail training from an entirely different angle. Starting in 2002, the club aims to promote sailing at the grass-roots level, and now has a fleet of 30 dinghies, including members' boats. The club runs monthly Open Days to introduce sailing to absolutely anyone who is interested.

At the other end of the scale is Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron's Match Racing Programme. Commodore David Charleworth pointed out the high cost of running this programme and that attracting sponsorship was an essential part of the development programme. He commented that there were no SE Asian participants at this year's ISAF Nations Cup Regional Final, but he did hope that there would be some regional entries for the RNZYS Youth Match Racing Series in February 2007.

The Royal Vancouver Yacht Club has created sailing

programmes for the very young progressing through to support for sailors racing at the international level. Commodore David Jennings stated that the club strives to encourage participation in the life-long sport of sailing. The club has a Junior Executive with a Commodore, Vice-Commodore etc responsible for social events, fundraisers, and junior cruises to the RVYC outstations, with the intention of integrating young members into the mainstream of all club events and activities.

Chris Otorowski, Commodore of the Seattle Yacht Club, described the 'principally cruising' activities of the SYC members, and provided an overview of the geography of sailing in the USA. The club has 60 committees he quipped, so there's not much for the Commodore to do.

The lasting and overwhelming impression created by the Panel Presentations and the ensuing Q&A was one of a committed and focused collection of people, determined to make the most of an opportunity to exchange views and expertise on the subjects under discussion. Perhaps the most illuminating feature was the similarity in issues faced by clubs, from co-existing with commercial interests in a harbour environment to holding on to youth sailors in the face of competition from a myriad of alternative activities.

At the end of the Forum a show of hands decided that further Forums should be held on an annual basis. Marseilles, Freshwater Bay, and Seattle offered to host in 2007 (Chris Otorowski said that his 61st committee needed something to do), and another show of hands gave it to the Societe Nautique de Marseille. Natal made a strong bid to host the 2008 Forum in South Africa, to coincide with RNYC's 150th Anniversary. 🌐



Richard Curtis
Royal Selangor Yacht Club



Rex Harrison
Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron



David Jennings
Royal Vancouver Yacht Club



Santi Kanchanabandhu
Royal Varuna Yacht Club



Sir Nigel Southward
Royal Yacht Squadron



Chris Otorowski
Seattle Yacht Club



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Alistair Skinner
Shanghai Boat & Yacht Club



Marc Frilet, Société
Nautique de Marseilles



Anthony Goldner
Southport Yacht Club



Joe Stott
West Vancouver Yacht Club



Carlo Ravano
Yacht Club de Monaco



Winner of the Commodores' Forum Cup: David Holm



Club starting line

Commodores' Forum Cup

The inaugural Commodores' Forum Cup was contested by 45 sailors. They waited patiently while RHKYC Rear-Commodore for Sailing, James Farquhar, drew lots to allocate the race boats, loaned by Club members. When it became apparent that no amount of delay would keep delegates out of the rain, the Race Officer sounded the warning signal for Race 1, to start in front of the Club's Kellett Island base.

After a slow start, a strong tide and steadily worsening conditions forced the RO to shorten the race and abandon racing for the day, with Commodore David Holm of the Royal Danish Yacht Club emerging victorious after one lap of the course. Later in the Main Bar, there were no grumbles of disappointment just a great atmosphere. Thanks to the members who lent their Etechells and Dragons for the Commodores' Forum Cup.



Wet, Wet, Wet



Wet and windy



Father and son sail together

Middle Island BBQ

After completion of Panel 2 discussions, delegates were invited to take a leisurely boat trip, taking in the bright lights of Victoria Harbour and the bustle of Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter on the way to the Club's Middle Island centre for an evening BBQ. A big thank you to John Leigh, Chris Botsford and Aberdeen Boat Club for the use of their boats for the evening!

Middle Island BBQ



Gala Dinner

Having concluded the formal side of the Forum's proceedings, the evening was then devoted to a Gala Dinner held in the Compass Room. A final photo call preceded the call to be seated for dinner. Over 110 guests enjoyed a sumptuous three course dinner and spent the evening dancing to the music of Mike Legge...



Fun and dancing at the Gala Dinner

