

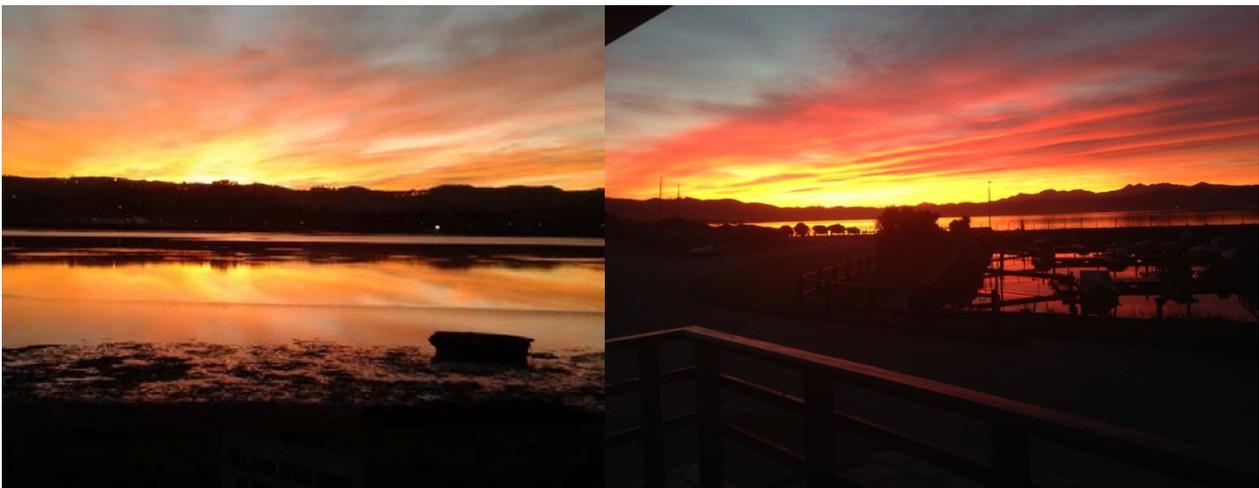


LEISURE ISLE BOAT CLUB: NEWSLETTER JUNE 2018



We have already reached the middle of winter and this newsletter is long overdue! The Knysna festival is just about on us and after that everyone will be able to start dreaming about the summer holiday period. Time definitely goes by faster every year.

Here in Knysna, so far we are experiencing a relatively mild winter. We have had the odd storm as cold fronts have moved in from the west (thankfully bringing much needed rain to the Western Cape), and Knysna has had some rain, but not enough. In between we have had typical glorious winter weather with sunshine and calm days. Night time is cold but sometimes the days feel more like December than June!



Winter brings the most beautiful sunrises and sunsets to the Leisure Isle Boat Club Harbour.

While the spotlight has been on the lack of rain and the water supply in the Western Cape and particularly Cape Town, spare a thought for the Southern and Eastern Cape where the situation remains dire. In Port Elizabeth, the dam levels are hovering around 20% and the city is in serious trouble. Fortunately there has been enough rain along the coastal strip to sustain the countryside and to provide just enough water to maintain an adequate water supply so the area is looking especially beautiful at present. The weather forecasters tell us that they are hopeful that later in the year we will experience one of the severe weather events that brings the heavy rain to this part of the country that we need to fill the dams, so we look forward with a positive outlook for the future!

On 7 June, Knysna and Plettenberg Bay remembered the terrible events of 7-10 June 2017 when the area was devastated by fire. Looking around, there are many stark reminders of that time in the form of burnt out trees and bush, and of course the sad remains of homes that were destroyed in the fires. At the same time, there are many more positive signs and it is clear that Knysna has risen above the tragedy and has been restored to its former beauty. Everywhere the countryside is looking fantastic with new growth, nourished by the modest amount of rain we have had and the fynbos has recovered dramatically. A lot of alien bush and trees are gone and a huge effort has gone into trying to prevent its regrowth. This is a challenge that will be ongoing and very difficult to overcome completely, but it is something the authorities and people of the Southern Cape are working hard to try to win the battle.

Knysna, and the Knysna lagoon in particular, are looking spectacular at present, and we are really looking forward to a wonderful Knysna Festival next week!

LIBC COMMITTEE

The LIBC Committee for 2017/18 was confirmed at the AGM held in December 2017. No new members were proposed, but in January 2018, the Committee was very pleased when David Alexander agreed to join the Committee. David has lived in Knysna all his life and now runs the highly respected and long standing building company started by his father many years ago. David has already proved his commitment to LIBC and willingness to climb in and help on several occasions and we welcome him on to the Committee and hope that he will continue to contribute to the well-being of LIBC for many years to come!

The Committee is thus made up as follows:

Chairperson:	Craig Clarke
Vice Chairperson:	John Meterlerkamp
Secretary/Treasurer:	Cecil Milne
Members:	Deon Steyn Chris Stubbs David Alexander
Ex-Officio Members:	Clive Garth-Davis Margie Johnson

While it would be nice to have at least one more person on board, the Committee is structured very well at present and is functioning efficiently and comfortably.

HARBOUR NEWS

LIBC and the harbour facilities have been ticking along quietly this year and there is nothing dramatic to report. Thanks to the efforts of Clive, Margie, Michael and Joseph, everything is continuously maintained and repairs are carried out as and when necessary so the result is that everything is kept in pristine condition at all times.

Earlier in the year Roger Clancy and his firm, Sea Services, undertook the next phase of replacing poles in the harbour which had been attacked by the marine borer. A total of another 30 Poles were replaced and we are waiting for Roger to attend to another five, after which we should now be in a situation where only odd individual poles will have to be replaced over the next few years using our stock of spare poles. It is almost impossible to determine the condition of every single pole based purely on visual inspections, but we are keeping a close eye on the situation.

The finger jetties have become a bit of a problem. Many of them are decidedly wobbly and the planking has deteriorated on many. Clive has rebuilt two of the jetties using a new method of hinging as an experiment to try to improve the stability. The old timber framework on both turned out to be sound so we were able to simply replace the top planking and install the new steel hinges and we will now see how they function, before embarking on a bigger project. So far, the new fingers appear to be functioning very well.

We also realise that the time has come to start a properly structured programme of upgrading and repairing the main jetties. Once again we intend tackling the work in a cautious and conservative manner by doing a proper job without throwing away perfectly good structures. We are in the process of deciding on the correct timber to use for the jetty planking, then we intend tackling one section of jetty and stripping it down, checking the sub-structure, which we are hoping will be found to be in good condition, then we will reinforce the damaged beams and replace all the planking. For some unknown reason, C Jetty appears to be in a worse condition than the others, so we intend tackling it first, and we will keep you all informed as we move along.

Margie, together with Michael and Joseph, have done an amazing job of keeping the lawns and gardens in wonderful condition despite the drought, and the Club premises are looking great and are something of which we can all be proud. Recently, as boating activities at the club slowed down with the onset of winter, Margie got itchy fingers again and she tackled the garden in front of the Clubhouse. With a little help from some friends, and a lot of blood, sweat and tears, she has imported large rocks and created a whole new garden which has made a huge difference. Overall, the LIBC premises are really a pleasure to behold. The Committee is now holding its breath as we wait for Margie to announce her next project!



Some problems have been experienced with the security floodlighting and a number of the LED floodlights have failed and had to be replaced (under guarantee). Also some fittings have shifted in the wind and these have to be adjusted. Because of the height of the light fittings, the work is very difficult, and we are indeed very fortunate to have had assistance from our members, Mark Sofianos and David Alexander, who have both had their building firms assist by providing scaffolding to allow access to the lights. Thanks, guys!!

HARBOUR SECURITY

It is indeed a great pleasure to report that LIBC has not experienced any security problems for a considerable time. We attribute this to many factors, including the position of the new raised Guard Hut allowing better surveillance of the harbour and trailer park, and due to the continued efforts of our security firm, Allsound. The Committee has not relaxed our attitude to security and we are constantly reviewing the Club's security measures and working with Allsound to improve the standard. We are also conscious of the fact that security will always be a problem given the value of assets kept on the premises, and the Committee will remain vigilant and keep aware of new technology and methods to maintain our present secure environment.

You are reminded that it is the LIBC Members' responsibility to take care of your boats and equipment and we again urge you to remove all valuables from your boats and to keep a careful check on anything that may go missing. Please immediately report any incidents to the LIBC Manager so that action can be taken.

Please note that it has been agreed with Allsound that when the night guard comes on duty at 18 00, his first duty will be to patrol the perimeter of the premises to check for any sign of possible criminal activity. Thereafter, the guard should remain at the old guard hut adjacent to the boom to monitor arrivals and departures and to record such movements in the log book. Thereafter, from about 11 00 the guard should move to the raised hut for the rest of the night. This means that if you arrive at the Club between about 18 00 and 18 45, or after 11 00, the boom is likely to be unmanned and you will have to let yourself in/out. If the guard is present, you MUST co-operate and sign the book.

A decision has also been taken to investigate the installation of cameras at the entrance boom and harbour entrance to better monitor and control the movement of people, boats and vehicles.

Another reminder is that, although in the recent past, the sliding gate has been kept open during the day, this is not necessarily always the case, especially during the quiet winter months, and if you arrive and find the gate closed, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP YOUR ACCESS TAG WITH YOU AND TO OPEN THE GATE YOURSELF! It is NOT Clive or Margie's duty to jump and open the gate for you!

LIBC SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BENEFICIARIES

In accordance with a decision made at the December 2017 AGM, LIBC made contributions to the following organisations:

- NSRI – R 20 000.00
- Knysna Sports Academy – R40 000.00
- Knysna Basin Project – R20 000.00

In one or other way, all three of the above bodies play a vital role in the future well-being of Knysna and the lagoon that we all tend to take for granted. LIBC can thus be proud of the fact that we are able to contribute in some small way to their future sustainability.

We note that sincere letters of thanks have been received from all three organisations.

BOATING MATTERS



Not only big boats use LIBC and the radio controlled model yachts are regular visitors to the harbour. It is worth a visit on a Saturday afternoon to watch these nippy little guys in action!

As time goes on we are seeing larger and sophisticated watercraft in the harbour. The Leisure Isle Harbour was designed and constructed at a time when the average length of boats was around five meters and most were fitted with outboard motors of 50 hp or less. The harbour is thus becoming very congested and manoeuvring in the channels can be really tricky. It is a matter of concern that many boats are being purchased and operated by people with very little experience of power boats, and the Harbour Managers have witnessed some very dubious skippering. Collisions with boats at their mooring have become a regular occurrence, and we are aware of at least one incident where the steering gear on a brand new boat was severely damaged by a “hit-and-run” driver. All boaters need to appreciate that the responsibilities associated with skippering a boat are no different from driving a motor car or piloting an aeroplane. You would not dream of climbing into the driver’s seat of a large sports car without the necessary skill and experience so please adopt the same attitude when at the helm of your boat.

It takes considerable skill and a huge amount of practice to become proficient at manoeuvring a boat in confined waters like the Harbour, so we appeal to everyone to only do so after you have practiced over and over again in open water outside the harbour.

Apart from skill and experience, there are a few golden rules before you attempt to pilot any boat in the Harbour:

- **Travel at dead slow speed.**
- **Do not set off if the wind is blowing. Even an experienced skipper struggles to control a boat moving at slow speed in the confined harbour channels.**
- **Make sure you have at least one boat hook on board and have it handy at all times to fend off other boats and jetties.**

Another essential bit of advice is always to make sure that you have a safety chain on your trailer hitch, and also do not rely on the trailer winch to secure the boat on the trailer. Tow hitches often come loose and winches can jump out of gear. When this happens on the slipway, the result is disaster and serious damage to equipment can occur. Worse still the risk of injury or worse to any person in the vicinity is huge. Simple little slips like this may not only spoil your holiday, they can destroy your life in an instant.



The above incident was an accident that can happen to anyone but it serves as a reminder how horribly things can go wrong! Always check everything before launching your boat or setting off on an outing!

MEMBERSHIP, BERTHS, TRAILER PARKING, AND CANOE RACKS

The vast majority of LIBC Members paid their annual subscriptions a long time ago, but it is disappointing to note that there are still some payments outstanding. By now those members should have received final letters of demand, and if payment is not forthcoming immediately, their membership will be terminated and they will be denied access to the Club premises, regardless of whether or not they own a mooring. Come on guys, this is not the sort of behaviour expected of an LIBC Member!

We mention that there is still quite a long waiting list of people who wish to buy a mooring, mostly non-members. Berths have been selling quite regularly this year and the going price seems to be around R90 000.00. All the sales this year have been privately arranged between members, which is fine AS LONG AS THE SALE PROCESS IS THROUGH THE CLUB and administered by the LIBC Secretary/Treasurer, Cecil Milne. Please remember that if you wish to sell your berth to a non-member, you must first offer it for sale to Members.

Recently there have been a couple of instances where berths have been “sold” as part of a package with a house sale. That is not the way it works, and is not acceptable. There are formal sales agreements for harbour berths and any sale process must be handled as a completely separate transaction. You MUST advise LIBC if you intend selling your berth in order to ensure that the process is handled correctly. The instances mentioned above have resulted in considerable problems for all parties.

Another issue, is to remember that Trailer Parking bays are rented from the club, and it is impossible for a Member to “sell” or “give” his bay to someone else. You must relinquish your trailer parking to LIBC who will then arrange for it to be allocated to someone else.

Remember too that if you allow a friend or family member to park his/her boat or trailer in your berth or parking bay, you MUST inform LIBC of the fact IN WRITING! Keeping track of berths and parking bays is a major administrative nightmare that takes up a huge amount of Clive, Margie, and Cecil’s time and they can only manage this with your cooperation and assistance.

On that subject, Clive and Margie recently undertook a complete survey of every single parking bay in order to straighten out the Club records. Everything is now finally sorted out but only after tracking down the owners of several unmarked trailers and boats, and unravelling trailers parked in wrong bays and being used by unknown friends and family. You must assist by ensuring that all boats and trailers are properly marked in accordance with LIBC Bylaws and by keeping Clive and Margie informed as described above. Trailer stickers are made available by Harbour Management at no cost or effort by you. This requirement also applies to all canoes stored on the Canoe Racks.

Finally, PLEASE, if you have a canoe on the canoe rack, MAKE SURE THAT IT IS PROPERLY TIED DOWN. In the winter storms we are currently experiencing, loose canoes are sometimes blown right off the racks. Not only will your canoe be damaged but it could damage other canoes or worse still cause injury or damage to persons or property in the vicinity, in which case the canoe owner WILL be held responsible.

KNYSNA ESTUARY ECOLOGY

Thankfully the awful sea lettuce algal bloom which did so much damage to the whole Knysna lagoon and the LIBC Harbour about eighteen months ago has largely stayed away this year, although we do see some patches from time to time, and quite a lot has been apparent in the last couple of weeks. As a result, the water in the harbour has mostly appeared to be in good condition this year and dense shoals of small fish have often been present, a promising sign of a healthy environment.

But all is not well in paradise and the whole of the Knysna Estuary system is under severe threat from various sources and it will have to be carefully managed to ensure its future sustainability.

Obviously SANParks is the main roleplayer concerned with managing the estuary, but, in fact there are many other statutory and private roleplayers involved and to this end the Knysna Estuary Forum is intended to afford everyone the opportunity to become involved. LIBC is represented on the Forum by Arland Read, Richard Compton, and Chris Stubbs, and recently the LIBC Chairman also attended a meeting of the Forum at which time the future management of the estuary was discussed. SANParks did a presentation explaining that all marine estuaries in South Africa are required to develop a management plan, and the meeting was part of that process, specifically aimed at the Knysna Estuary, and intended to obtain input into the management plan by all roleplayers and affected parties. While not much was achieved at the meeting and it is clear that there is a long and rocky road ahead, it was nevertheless very interesting to hear the many diverse and often conflicting opinions and ideas from the different people present.

The future sustainability of the Knysna estuary and its ability to meet the needs of future generations of the Knysna community and visitors to our area will have to look at the very broad picture and will have to address social, economic and environmental aspects in a very committed, thorough and sympathetic manner for the estuary to survive. There is a huge amount of work involved and everyone can help. If you are interested, please contact LIBC or Arland Read to see how you can become involved.

The one message that came through strongly at the meeting was unanimous condemnation of the apparent inability of the Knysna Municipality to control the quality of sewage and stormwater effluent being discharged into the estuary, and the harm that this is causing to the ecology.

FISHING NEWS FROM ARLAND READ

Thank goodness 'Cobtober' 2017, through to April are over. They were the worst known fishing months in living memory. Regulars with a choice of live bait, lagoon chokka, worms and prawns, reported not a single bite over several outings. Why? Only difference noted was that since the fire the water has been cloudy or very turbid. You must have noticed an inability to see the bottom in our harbour, even at Spring low. This despite the drought with little run off of silt. However, *ash* can be wind-blown and it is thought this could have been the problem. There were also evenings of phosphorescence (no fish will bite at night whilst this beautiful phenomenon is present) and several very cold snaps which can kill plankton and presumably cause turbidity. One such hit 6,5 degrees which stunned Grunters in their hundreds. In Plett they were picking them up off the beaches in wheel barrows! White mussels now litter the beach in their hundreds of thousands. However, this hardly explains the dearth of life in our Estuary. Bait fish and birds were also absent. The boating chaos over the holidays did not help as usual. Our iconic Leervis, that were still around, were all very small at 50cm and under. It is obviously important to release these –try to do so in under a minute with *wet* hands. Using *single* hooks (not triples) with a *flattened barb* certainly helps.

One interesting phenomenon happened in our harbour---a several thousand strong shoal of Maasbanker came in and swirled around the corner of A jetty for two weeks. Henry, our tame Heron, nearly had a cadenza watching them in water-- just too deep for him to get in. Then at the end of May, a massive shoal of mullet (all about 225mm long), arrived in the estuary. The shoal stretched from Brenton -on- Lake to the heads. Must have contained hundreds of thousands. What were they doing here....?????

Don't whatever you do miss watching the TV series "Blue Planet II", with David Attenborough. It's about marine life around the world in totally stunning photography. For instance, there is a sequence of GTs (Giant Trevallies/kingfish) taking Terns out of the air!

Few fishing tips---1) Once you have played or caught a shark, remove at least 3 meters of the end of your line –their skin really frays line, including braid. 2) Keep your moonshine and Bloodworm in separate containers. Moonshine constantly nip the bloodworm making them bleed. 3) Once you have caught your worms, lay them all out on a flat surface and discard all sections not connected to a head. These sections die and poison the water in the container, so dramatically shortening lives. 4) If you want to start fishing at night, it's best to have a cigarette lighter socket fitted somewhere. This allows you to use a powerful torch, and to charge your headlight and cell phone batteries. 5) If your depth finder is slow or not responding, it may either be covered in weed or the sender unit is not parallel to the ground. (been bumped as you hit a sandbank perhaps). This is easily adjustable. 6) It appears as if fish simply go off the bite completely if the water is below 16 or above 23 degrees. Head towards the heads if you need cooler water and upstream if it is too cold.

Safety and signs of disrepair

Navigating the Estuary at night is currently quite difficult, with a number of missing poles and or defective buoys. Even the main two navigational lights on the hill below the TV Mast giving direction down Thesen's channel, have been inoperative since the fire. We are on Sanparks case here and have also suggested that they simply make more use of maintenance free reflective tape on buoys and poles.

Maps show us where the *oyster beds* are but of course, haven't they all been removed? They may have removed the metal frames but the poles holding them remain. Using the one in the Cob Hole channel as an example, (opp. Salt River exit), over 70 poles remain and stick out about 400mm at Spring low. But as you guessed, lie just covered from half way through an incoming tide. Warning signs have long since disappeared. In between some of them is razor wire which was put there to deter oyster thieves. Really watch it here! There is also razor wire at the end of the horse shoe channel in the mud just behind the 4 poles. Watch yourself around all old oyster beds. The warning pole topped with a green triangle is missing that warns the start of the island at the end on Leisure Isle. Various signs around the Estuary are illegible. E.g. The sign as you approach the white pole on the Eastern Head which you should not go beyond unless you have two motors and a wet deck. Hope you all received a Flyer with your boat licence from Sanparks and or one from the Post Office with your bait and fishing licence. Sanparks have had no bait and fish rules for 18 months to give out and of course the P.O. have never given out rules with their licence. Crazy! Anyone coming to Knysna and wanting to fish here legally, had little available info. So, we took the essence of the "Code of Conduct" presentation, that some of you attended or downloaded from our website and put it into the am Flyer. Big thanks to Action Ads who printed these for us free of charge, and to Louw Claasens, head of The Knysna Basin Project, who really pushed this, whilst adding valuable input.

By the way if you want us to try and persuade Sanparks into changing how the Estuary is managed, please let us know. Know in advance though, that asking to replace a pole or buoy is easy, asking for different baiting laws etc is a long process, as we tend to be governed by *National* rather than *Knysna Specific* needs. The same goes if you need new laws promulgated through Parliament, or high cost solutions, there just isn't the budget.

About two years ago, Sanparks, who are legislated to engage with Stakeholders, initiated the so called *Knysna Estuary Advisory Forum*. It meets 4 times pa with representatives of various bodies and clubs associated with the Estuary. This body became largely ineffectual for various reasons and currently, is in a state of flux, in part due to the resignation of its Chairperson. A well represented team from LIBC is leading the charge to elect a new Chairperson, and structure it properly, so it can be more effective. Without jumping ahead of ourselves, a working document has already been drawn up, with the aim of getting back to basics of what can actually be achieved within the current framework. Issues pertaining to growing siltation, illegal and damaging extractive ways of baiting, inadequate policing and poor maintenance are high on the list. Fundamental to this is our wish to work with Sanparks whilst encouraging representation from all clubs using the Estuary.

Having said that, it has been disappointing to see so little input from local fishermen at this and other various Sanparks forums. This Forum may not be operating at optimum, but it is the best we have at the moment. The more support we get from active Estuary users, the better.

LIBC WEBSITE

Another reminder to make use of the LIBC website (<http://www.libcknysna.co.za/>) and there is an opportunity for advertising on the website. Anyone who is interested should please contact Clive Garth-Davis for details (clivedavis56@gmail.com)

If you want to know where to find membership application forms, remember that these can be downloaded from the LIBC website. Go to the "About LIBC" page at <http://www.libcknysna.co.za/index.php/about-libc> and you will be able to download the form.
