



## LEISURE ISLE BOAT CLUB: NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2016



Summer is really trying hard to arrive! We have had some glorious warm summer days, and then just when you think it's time to pack the winter clothing away, we have another cool spell. I am sure, however, that by the holiday season, the weather will play ball and we will have another fabulous year end. Certainly LIBC is looking in good shape and the staff are all hard at work making sure that everything is ready for our members and visitors when they arrive.

Leisure Isle has been a busy place over the past few weeks with all sorts of activities taking place. The highlight was definitely the Leisure Isle Festival which took place over the weekend of 5/6 November, and was very well supported. What started off thirteen years ago as a small craft market for Leisure Islanders, has become a major event on the Knysna calendar and it is an occasion not to be missed.

This final Newsletter for 2016 is just intended to provide an update on a few matters of interest.

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

We announced in the last newsletter that the LIBC Annual General Meeting would take place on 20 December. Unfortunately we discovered that this date had already been announced by LIRA for their AGM so we decided to shift the date for our meeting to **Monday 19 December at 18 00 at the boat club**. Formal notice of the meeting, together with proxy forms and any meeting papers, will be sent out at least two weeks before the meeting. Please remember the date and make every effort to attend because this is your opportunity to hear about what has been happening at LIBC and what is planned for the future. We also welcome input from you. Drinks and snacks will be provided after the meeting, which should be brief, so you can all go home to your braais and festive season fun!

Note that nominations for committee members must be placed on the club Notice Board at least seven days before the AGM. Nomination forms will be available at the clubhouse.

## **FINANCIAL**

Invoices for the annual subscriptions were sent out in October, and thanks to the many members who have paid promptly. If you have not yet done so, please remit your payments as soon as possible, remembering that the Club cannot survive without the subscriptions.

One important note is to make sure that you provide the correct reference when you make an electronic payment. **PLEASE USE YOUR SURNAME AND INITIALS, AND/OR YOUR LIBC MEMBERSHIP NUMBER AS THE REFERENCE.** Even the invoice number will assist the treasurer, but without a reference, we have no way of knowing where the payment comes from. Many payments are made without any reference at all, but references like “Boat Club”, “LIBC”, or (in one case!) “Karel”, do not help us at all, and do not be offended if you receive a reminder because we have no record of your payment!

## **LIBC SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

For many years, provided that the financial circumstances of the club have so allowed, LIBC has made an annual donation to the National Sea Rescue Institute, and the Knysna Sports School. Traditionally the matter has been discussed at the AGM, and the amount of the donations approved at the meeting. This year a more structured approach has been followed and the budget for 2017 allows for an amount to be set aside as part of LIBC’s corporate social responsibility programme.

The committee proposes that an amount of R60 000.00, which is 5% of the total budgeted income for 2017, or R150.00 per member, be set aside for donations for the 2017 financial year, to be distributed as follows:

- |                                 |            |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| • Knysna Sports School          | R35 000.00 |
| • National Sea Rescue Institute | R10 000.00 |
| • Knysna Basin Project          | R15 000.00 |

The above will be presented to the LIBC AGM for approval or rejection.

LIBC members are no doubt well aware of the work done by both KSS and NSRI and articles about both organizations appeared in this newsletter earlier in the year. There is news about KBP elsewhere in this edition, and the committee decided that we need to channel funding to them. Not only has KBP provided information and advice to LIBC on many occasions, but the committee feels that their work is invaluable for the future well-being of the entire Knysna lagoon and surrounds, and this affects the entire Knysna community. The Knysna Basin Project commands a lot of respect and their impartial, scientific evidence is listened to by decision makers.

LIBC also supports the Knysna Sea Cadets by employing some of them to support harbour management during the holiday season.

The future survival of bodies such as those listed above largely depends on donations from private organisations such as LIBC. We would like to do more but we have limited resources and our primary responsibility must be to look after LIBC. Our members are encouraged to add their support by making additional private donations, either directly to the organization concerned, or through LIBC (**NOTE THAT IF YOU MAKE A DONATION VIA EFT PLEASE USE YOUR NAME AND THE CHARITY TO WHOM YOU ARE DONATING AS THE REFERENCE!**).

## **SECURITY**

We are pleased to report that there have been no further incidents in the past couple of months, and we hope that this will continue. Construction of the elevated guard hut was delayed while we tried to get quotes for the work, but we have now appointed a contractor to do the labour while the club will purchase all the materials and do as much of the construction as is practical ourselves.

Once the hut is complete we will have to review the whole security operation and particularly the manner in which the boom is controlled at night. In the meantime we are very conscious of the fact that the Allsound guard is often not in the existing hut when night visitors arrive, and therefore access to the club is not being properly controlled. It must be understood that the guard is under strict instructions to patrol the grounds (and his movements are monitored by the “bloodhound” system), so it is understandable that he may not be in the hut when you arrive at the boom, but we ask all members to cooperate and sign the book when asked to do so, and, if the guard is not there, please report this to the harbour management as soon as possible so that the situation can be monitored and followed up.

We also continue to investigate various methods of improving security, and it may be expected that during 2017 we will proceed with the installation of some type of security system, such as an electric fence, or other intruder alarm system.

## **MEMBERSHIP, BERTHS AND TRAILER PARKING BAYS**

Membership of LIBC has reached the limit of 400 and there is now a waiting list. As is usual at this time of the year, we have had a few resignations, so the list has dropped right down, but we expect many new applications into 2017, and this is a matter that the committee has debated at length. LIBC is basically the only “open” facility of this nature in Knysna, and we expect pressure on our facilities to increase. The current limit of 400 members was set by previous committees after careful consideration of many factors, and taking into account the best interests of our members, visitors, the capacity of the LIBC facilities and the Knysna lagoon and community. LIBC will not become an elitist facility but we must be mindful that we simply cannot allow membership to grow unchecked and the committee has therefore decided that, for now, the limit of 400 members will remain. We will monitor the situation and will not make any changes without consulting our members.

#### 4.

In the meantime, the committee has decided that when we receive applications for membership in excess of the current limit, the applicant must pay the entrance fee (currently R 2 750.00), after which he/she will be placed on the waiting list until a place becomes vacant. If persons on the waiting list want to make use of the club facilities, they will be required either to join as temporary members on a weekly or monthly basis, or they may use the facilities as non-member visitors, and pay the slipway launch fee each time they wish to launch their boats.

**THIS BRINGS US TO ANOTHER VERY IMPORTANT POINT, AND THAT IS ABOUT HARBOUR BERTHS AND TRAILER PARKING BAYS.** The situation is very simple – there are currently no spare berths or parking bays available, and once again, if you are looking for either you will have to join the waiting lists. Harbour management is constantly approached by people wanting to join the club and to buy berths or rent parking bays – **INSTANTLY!** Obviously this is impossible.

For this reason also, you are reminded that, in terms of the LIBC by-laws and the berth owner's agreements, if you wish to sell your berth, you **MUST** first offer it to LIBC members. There is nothing to stop you coming to a private arrangement with a member, but you may not offer to sell a berth, or come to any arrangement with a non-member before first offering your berth to members, which may be done privately, or in this newsletter, on the website, or on the club notice board. If no club member takes up the offer to sell within a reasonable time (normally one month), you may then offer the berth to non-members, at the same asking price. Non-members may only purchase a berth **AFTER** they have applied for membership, paid the entrance fee and annual subscription, and been accepted as a member of the club. Furthermore, all berth sales **MUST** be processed through the LIBC Secretary, who draws up the sale and berth owner's agreement.

Similarly, trailer parking bays must be "handed" back to harbour management who will then arrange for the bay to be allocated to someone else. You may not make private arrangements.

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.

### **HARBOUR NEWS**

A lot of work has gone into making sure that the club facilities are ready for the holiday season and we can all thank the LIBC management and staff for ensuring that everything is in good condition.

A big effort has gone into repairing the lawn in the members' parking enclosure, where there have been some patches where the grass has never grown properly. A huge thank you goes to **Howard Cory of Bitou Irrigation and Landscaping**, for donating sufficient instant lawn to enable us to fill in all the blank spots, and also to **Andy Vogel** who donated four bags of fertilizer to get the grass growing.

We ask our members to understand that the parking area has to slope in a manner which ensures that water will drain away from the harbour basin in the event of heavy rain. This inevitably results in some low spots which become soggy and muddy after rain, and cars driving through these areas destroy the lawn. We ask you to be careful after rain and to be patient if you encounter barrier tape around the vulnerable areas, which is only there to protect your assets.

At the time of writing, work has not yet started on replacement of any of the jetty poles which have been earmarked as being badly affected by marine borers. Unfortunately the process of treating timber for underwater marine applications is specialist and lengthy and the suppliers were unable to give a firm delivery date. We could therefore not appoint a contractor to do the work until the new poles were delivered, so the whole process was delayed. In the meantime, after obtaining competitive quotes we are pleased to advise that Roger Clancy's (a long-time LIBC Member) firm, Sea Services, has been appointed to do the work, and we are still hoping to have the first twenty poles replaced before the holiday season.

In the meantime, members may notice that some of the existing poles have been marked with yellow paint. These are the ones that we have identified as being in poor condition, and we ask you to treat them gently! The jetty poles are only jettied into the harbour floor which is largely mud, so, while they are completely secure and sound for normal usage, they are not designed to withstand shock loads when rammed by boats, or being grabbed to restrain boats that are out of control. Please, be careful!

While on the subject of jetty poles, you are reminded **NOT TO TIE YOUR BOAT TO A POLE** under any circumstances. Almost every year there is an instance of this, and what happens is that, as the tide slowly rises, the buoyancy of the boat simply lifts the pole out of the mud. It is inconvenient, it could damage boats, and it costs over R3 000.00 to replace a pole, the cost of which will have to be paid by the responsible boat owner.

### **HARBOUR ECOLOGY**

There is no doubt that the entire Knysna lagoon is coming under ever increasing pressure and the ecology of the entire area is seriously threatened. There are many reasons for this, and factors which negatively impact on the environment, and it seems clear that those in authority are not taking sufficient decisive action to rectify the situation. While this is not the time or place to make a noise, it is clear that it is in the interests of the entire Knysna community to ensure that our lagoon and the environs are protected against further destruction in the future, and it is essential that bodies like LIBC become involved and take a much stronger stand, not just to make our voices heard, but to actually start making a difference. LIBC liaises regularly with Sanparks, but the time has come where we need to do more.

Previous newsletters have reported extensively on the so-called sea lettuce, or sea cabbage which has invaded the whole lagoon and has been an incredible nuisance in the harbour. This phenomenon is actually an algal growth, which appears to bloom as a result of certain nutrients in the water, which in the case of the lagoon can almost certainly be largely attributed to sewage effluent from the municipal waste water treatment works.

Our LIBC staff have fought a never-ending battle to try to remove as much of the growth from the harbour but it is an uphill struggle. Right now, the biggest problem seems to be in the approach channel where the algal growth has died and is rotting, causing hydrogen sulphide gas to bubble out of the water.

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Then, in September, we were horrified to find a new threat in the form of a different type of seaweed that none of us can remember previously being in the harbour. The seaweed can best be described as looking like green cotton wool and it grew proliferately throughout the harbour, threatening to swamp everything else. Apart from possible ecological damage, a serious problem was that the weed was so dense and tough that it actually stalled outboard engines when it became entangled in the propellers. The staff embarked on a programme of raking the weed from the water, a task which was extremely difficult and arduous, not the least because care had to be taken not to damage “friendly” sea growth, and particularly not to disturb the sea horses. Over a period of a few weeks, literally tonnes of the weed was removed and dumped. We approached Sanparks (who, to the best of our knowledge, did nothing), and the Knysna Basin Project, who immediately responded and carried out an investigation and sent an informal report to LIBC.

The report concluded that once again we were dealing with a type of algae which is actually not that uncommon, and it stated that the best remedial action was to continue to remove as much as possible, which was encouraging. Even more encouraging is the finding that this particular type of algae is actually beneficial in that it assists with the removal of harmful nutrients from the water. The report also suggested that as the water temperature started to rise in summer, the algae growth should reduce, so it was with a huge sense of relief that we discovered during October that it died off as rapidly as it had first appeared. What is interesting is that a cursory inspection of the harbour indicates that the water and marine growth is now looking very healthy, and perhaps this proves how nature is sometimes able to heal itself. It will be interesting to see how things develop during the summer months.

For those of you who are interested, the full report from the Knysna Basin Project is reproduced below. LIBC hugely appreciates their assistance and we thank KBP for the support and generosity.

Some members have expressed concern about possible silting of the harbour, something which the committee has been monitoring for many years. We have no direct evidence of silting, but the growth and subsequent decomposition of all the marine growth must deposit material on the harbour bed, and will eventually result in gradual silting.

This year the Knysna lagoon has experienced extraordinary low equinox tides which have seen the low water level as much as 300mm below normal, and which has caused the water level in the harbour to reach alarmingly low levels, during which time the harbour and approach channels were essentially not navigable. These unusual events may have created the impression that the harbour is silting up, but this is not necessarily so.

It is worth noting that Thesens Islands appear to be suffering from the same problem and we have had some very informal discussions with them, as it seems inevitable that we will eventually have to deal with the problem. This will be a massive undertaking as there are huge environmental concerns and practical engineering problems related to dredging, which make it difficult to contemplate how we will be able to address the situation. We assure you that the committee will continue to monitor the situation in the future and we will work with other roleplayers to come up with a solution.

### **CHAETAMORPHA LINUM WITHIN THE LEISURE ISLAND SMALL BOAT HARBOUR**

*LIBC is most grateful for the time and effort spent by the Knysna Basin Project in assisting us to identify the algae which appeared in the harbour recently, and particularly for their remarks about the action the Harbour Management was taking and the effect of the alga on the harbour ecology.*

*The following is a summary written by Ms Louw Claasens of the Knysna Basin Project:*

The algae currently causing some problems within the Leisure Island Small Boat Harbour has been identified as *Chaetomorpha linum*. Plants are bright to dark green, forming entangled masses of very long filaments; attachment structures are absent. This alga occurs along the entire South African coast from Table Bay to northern Kwazulu Natal and is usually found in sheltered environments such as harbours and estuaries (information received from Prof. John Bolton).



*Chaetomorpha linum under the microscope. Thin unbranched strands of filaments.*

These types of algae are usually found in high densities in environments with elevated nutrient concentrations (nitrates and phosphates). A harbour environment, with limited tidal flushing, creates a perfect environment for growth. The high nutrient levels currently found in the Ashmead channel (owing to anoxic sediment and stormwater inputs) may also contribute to increased nutrient levels within the harbour – although nutrients have not specifically been measured within the harbour.

A reduction in nutrient levels is the ideal solution to prevent these algae blooms – bear in mind that doing this is quite difficult and complex. A short term solution is to remove the algal masses from the water – which is currently being done by harbour management. According to Prof Allanson, the increased water temperatures in summer might help decrease the algae densities as well.

*Prof Brian Allanson sent us the following:*

1. I spent some time with Margie assessing features of the water column in the harbour that would contribute to the richness of the macroalga *Chaetomorpha linum*, a water plant world- wide in distribution and prefers shallow water bodies in which tidal exchange is poor.

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2. Over the years since the building of the harbour and later its extension, we have experienced other macroalgal blooms: an equally difficult one was *Codium tenue* which covered the harbour floor while providing a home for seahorses and caused considerable difficulty in manoeuvring boats in and from berths. The present abundant growth of *Chaetomorpha* is causing the same difficulties in harbour management.

3. Both plant types require warm sheltered water areas and harbours such as LIBC in which the tidal range is marked although tidal exchange is limited, nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphate are retained in the water column and sediment. *Chaetomorpha* is frequently used in large marine aquaria to remove nitrogen salts from the water. The increase mass of weed is removed from the aquaria so leaving the water cleaner with respect to ammonia (nitrogen) and phosphate.

4. Keep in mind that the Ashmead Channel has seen an increase in nutrients over the past year – floods bring about increases in nutrients due to poor land management and storm water drains capturing poor CBD and weak suburban housekeeping; a feature of Knysna townships. And while tidal inflow into the harbour is largely fed from the tidal flow up the Ashmead Channel during flood tide (springs) the slow accumulation of nutrients in the sediments of the harbour, ensures that a source of nutrients is available, even if the tidal flow is not, directly, a nutrient source.

5. In effect this is what Margie and her labour are doing at present: manual removal, and later collection and disposal of the mounds of weed by Dial a Drum must gradually reduce the weed mass. There is a reasonable likelihood that as water temperatures rise in the harbour the sensitivity of weed to temperature will contribute further to decrease in weed mass. I have no direct evidence to support this other than the generalised growth model in which many weeds that bloom, eventually over-reach the nutrient availability and collapse.

Brian Allanson  
KBP

### **LIBC WEBSITE**

Another reminder to make use of the LIBC website (<http://www.libcknysna.co.za/>) and that there is an opportunity for advertising on the website. Anyone who is interested is urged to contact Clive Davis for details ( [clivegd@webmail.co.za](mailto:clivegd@webmail.co.za) ).

**THE BACK PAGE**

It was very early one morning, with low misty cloud and sea fog lay lightly on the lagoon. Everything was quiet and peaceful and in the background the disembodied sail of a boat added to the surrealism of the moment.

And all I could think of were the slightly modified words of a well-known song written by a famous singer, words which often rang in my mind all those years when we lived far, far away from Knysna and I couldn't wait for the holidays and time to return home.....

*Knysna Lagoon, oh mist rolling in from the sea  
My desire is always to be here  
Oh Knysna Lagoon.....*

For those of you who will be travelling from afar to be here in Knysna during the festive season, remember that half the fun of a holiday is the anticipation and preparation! Don't forget to pack your sun tan lotion, water skis, and fishing rods! Most of all, travel safely and we are looking forward to seeing you all again soon, in a few weeks' time!

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