

## Chairmans Report 2011

Colin Vickery

In contrast to 2009 which was the clubs 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year 2010 was comparatively quieter. Although most of our regular events such as the Woodlarks camp and the Ottery visit went ahead it was not possible for us to hold our annual interclub gala in October due to other clubs informing us at short notice that they were not able to attend. There are some issues regarding this year's gala and the availability of suitable facilities to be resolved but I sincerely hope that it will take place even if we have to try holding it on a Sunday again. We continued to participate in fund raising events last year but again there was nearly total reliance on the few who have been supporting them for many years. I would like to think that in the next year we could do a few more events (car boot sales etc) with the help of some fresh faces.

Again last year we lost a couple of pool sessions due to the snow just before Xmas and there was a further session that did take place but the minibus did not run as it was thought unsafe for our members. It is always a dilemma when we have inclement weather as to whether we cancel the whole session or just the transport. Sometimes in hindsight you wonder whether we have made the correct decision but even when the main roads are clear it needs to be remembered that most of our members are collected from housing estates in Yeovil and just getting members from their front door to the minibus can be extremely precarious. Whenever there is any doubt we do not run the club minibus. On the one occasion (11<sup>th</sup> December) when we did try leaving the session open at Goldenstones, without running the minibus, only about seven or eight people managed to turn up under their own steam meaning that the session was run at a loss and it's probably not something we would bother to do in the future.

At one of our Committee meetings around the middle of last year, Tracey and Jackie Drake mentioned that they would like to cater for our own Christmas meal rather than us going to a restaurant as we have tended to do in past years. This resulted in a really brilliant evening at Yeovilton on 15<sup>th</sup> January. What made it even more remarkable was that it had to be rearranged after it was snowed off on the original date of 18<sup>th</sup> December meaning that Jackie had to organise it twice rather than just once. Jackie was assisted at Yeovilton by her sisters (who are not even Apollo members) and Sheila Ludgate. Thank you all very much it was a brilliant evening.

I think it is fair to say that we are still finding it incredibly difficult to attract new members. I am advised that the membership figure at the moment stands at 125. Unfortunately, recently we have been struggling to replace the members we lose each year in order to maintain the level of membership. All we can do in this respect is to

make sure that every one of us works very hard to ensure that we get our message out into the community. Those of you who belong to other organisations please tell your friends there about Apollo in case we can be a service to them.

We have had some success in the past year in recruiting volunteers. Mostly drivers through the job centre plus scheme the most recent being Andy York. Tom Allaway has also joined us as a driver during the past year and is extremely popular with our members. Some of you may also know the young man that has been helping in the water at Goldenstones on a Saturday morning called Paul Lang. Paul is intending to go into the medical profession and wished to carry out some voluntary work with Apollo as well as helping the club it is work experience on his CV. For those of you who remember James O'Brian, I'm pleased to tell you that he has been training to renew his lifeguard qualification and will be available to go back on the Sherborne Apollo lifeguard rota from about the beginning of April.

Your Committee have remained as dedicated as ever in the last year with at least one meeting showing 100% attendance. Your biggest concern as a chairman is that too few people will turn up to Committee meetings making it very difficult to conduct the business in hand but I can honestly say that this has never been a problem with the Apollo Club monthly meetings. It is with regret that I have to inform you that we have 3 resignations this year. John Maunder our President has decided to stand down as has our Vice Chairman Vic Noake and Secretary Jean Crowdy. Of course Johns immense contribution to the club since it's conception back in the 1960's is well documented and Vic has also been a Committee member for many years, after first getting involved with Sarah and his family a long time ago and was awarded the MBE whilst Chairman in relatively recent years. Jean Crowdy, our current Secretary, has also been on the Committee for in excess of 10 years and although she is keen to spend more time concentrating on her art work she has kindly agreed to stay on, up to a maximum of 6 months, until we find a replacement providing we are actively looking for somebody else. Losing these three stalwarts in one go will be a tremendous blow but I'm sure they will stay involved with the club and we will survive.

I would like to personally thank all of the clubs committee for their hard work over the past year. Your loyalty and dedication never fails to amaze me and the meetings always make for pleasant evenings that I look forward to each month. Thank you again but I am fully aware that a vast amount of effort comes from people who are not on the committee but just chip in when and where they can. Iris Hoskins is an example of this in compiling the Newsletter. Your efforts are also greatly appreciated for which I thank you.

One other special mention and that is for the Clubs Protection Officer Lynda Sharp who processes all of our CRB clearances for all our new volunteers each year. No matter for how short of a period new volunteers are with us they all have to go through

the CRB process which is a great deal of work for Lynda and I would be embarrassed to mention the amount of times that I've had to go and ask for her help during the past year.

As ever, we are very grateful to Old Mill again this year for providing us with a free accountancy service and also supplying Graeme Tate to act as our Treasurer. We must never fail to recognise the value of this commitment by them.

I will leave Graeme to go through the accounts in detail with you in a moment but I need to say that at our annual accounts meeting last Monday evening it became apparent that the club has made a loss over the past year. I don't wish for anybody to become too alarmed but it will be necessary for us to raise our membership and pool session prices this year. From the 1<sup>st</sup> March the cost of membership will rise to £8 per year and it will cost £2:00 per swim for adults compared with £1:80 at present. Children will cost £1:50. Although there is no promise of doing so in the future, whenever we have raised our prices in the past we have managed to hold them for at least a second year before raising them again. The increase is mainly due to a large fall in the level of donations received this year but also due to a rise in pool hire charges and also motor insurance as well as other everyday running costs. Your Committee have held a long discussion and decided that a small increase devised to keep the cost of being an Apollo member down rather than a larger increase that would maybe allow a surplus of money at the end of the year to fund things like a replacement minibus etc is more appropriate. Just to reiterate, the small increase that the Committee are proposing is just to get us through the present difficult times rather than to increase the wealth of the club in any fashion, hopefully we will get some more donations next year which will do that for us, although we will of course endeavour to be as efficient as we can and save as much money as possible.

One issue that we must address with some urgency is a rota for the cash desk at Goldenstones on Saturday mornings. Gill Allen has assumed sole responsibility for this role for a long time now and it is only fair to her that we compile a rota of 4 members who will each only have to carry out the duty once per month. We are desperately looking for at least 2 people to put their selves forward for this very important job. This is exactly the sort of thing that keeps the club going and I would like to think that a few people could come forward before the end of this meeting and say well actually I could spare just one hour a month to help Gill in return for all the benefits that the Apollo club offers me. It is a small sacrifice to make.

Finally, Thank you to Tracey who is intending to take another party to Woodlarks for a week again in May. This year is at least the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that she has given up her time to do this and as we look forward to the start of another sailing season, whether you are a member, helper or anybody else connected to the Apollo Club I

sincerely hope that you think that it's all been worthwhile in the past year and will continue to support us in the future.

Thank you