

*The Wivenhoe Ocean Racing Club*  
*1st Annual General Meeting*  
*29th December 2007*

Commodore's Report

Ladies & Gentlemen, it is an enormous honour to give this first Annual Commodore's Report; the trepidation with which I give it merely attests to the weight of the honour. The Wivenhoe Ocean Racing Club was born in less than salubrious circumstances, in a fit, if you like of Wivenhoe Saturday-afternoonness. Whilst fun was at the basis of our initial thinking, the altruism of the founding constituents could not be overcome by our enthusiasm for that fun. A "Raison d'Etire" had to be found as indeed it was in the bricks and mortar of The Royal British Legion building where we have since had so much of the originally intended fun. Saving the RBL building was, however, an essentially selfish notion; somewhere for a rather ephemeral "us" to have our fun without the bother of an equally ephemeral "them". Joining the Legion was necessary and, indeed, desirable for a core of the original founders but that was given much greater impetus on learning that the Wivenhoe branch of the Legion would in all likelihood close unless the membership increased significantly. Further to that, joining the Legion and accepting its precepts lead to a much greater understanding of the positions of avoidable hardship placed upon serving and former members of Her Majesty's Forces and their families. You have all, at sometime or another, been subjected to my monthly "Sunday Sermons" and

been aware of a degree of enthusiasm for recruitment to the Legion, a degree of enthusiasm, Ladies & Gentlemen, that I had thought I left in Hong Kong. Your support for all this is deeply appreciated, and not only in this room, for the Wivenhoe Branch of the Legion has won the shield for the fastest growing Branch in the County - a shield of which I was blissfully unaware until the announcement of its award. And there is more! The collection for the Poppy Appeal by The Wivenhoe Branch was, this year, up 25% on last year to the tune of £7694.61. And all this on top of the fun we have had!

I will not go into the all parties and gatherings of the past year, save to say that despite all the misgivings, nerves, hard work and wild, last minute questions in the order of "did anyone remember to bring a corkscrew?", they have been enormous fun to put on. Neither will I comment on future events in the recently published 'Diary of Events'. What I will comment upon, however, is the enthusiasm of the membership for these events and the help and overwhelming offers of help that the committee has had the great good fortune of receiving in all its endeavours. Whilst our monthly Sunday gatherings have become a norm you have all been aware of some rather more ambitious events, some of you rather more aware than others and have suffered the consequences. I must state, nevertheless, that it has been Committee policy to avoid, where possible, any clash with other settled Town events, it has been our hope that we have only added to them.

Ladies and Gentlemen, The Wivenhoe Ocean Racing Club's membership now stands at 149, more than twice the original gathering a year ago. This is far more than even the most ambitious of us foresaw and puts a great deal of pressure on the administration of the Club. It is not , however, intolerable, yet, but I would ask your indulgence if things occasionally do not run with Teutonic efficiency. Your committee is part-time and meetings are slotted in when we can draw everyone together. You will shortly hear from Hon Treasurer with, I hope, encouraging news, also from Hon Secretary with whom you have all had amiable dealings throughout the year. Dilly Meyer, who was co-opted when we had already had several meetings revolutionized our thoughts on catering. But without naming all Committee members, it is they, as a team, who have shaped the Club and, I hope, been very alive to the wishes of the membership, for we do not forget that you are the Club. If I am proud of the Wivenhoe Ocean Racing Club then it is you the members who make it so. As we look forward to the New Year I hope the community spirit which we have all created here will be maintained and grow throughout 2008. I wish you all a very happy New Year.