

TONY BOWDEN

3 March 1932 - 16 January 2020

We regret to announce the death of another of the “old guard” of the club. Tony Bowden died peacefully in his sleep at home in Rock, where he and Joyce retired after selling the family jewellery business in Plymouth.

Tony had taken his first (and only!) ski lesson in Rock in the early '60s and bought his first boat in 1964. With no wetsuits, he and Joyce persevered until they'd mastered the sport and when he discovered that some people mono skied, Tony simply tried deep water starts until he cracked it - no-one had told him you could drop a ski!

He was an active member of Rock Ski Club, though in reality the club was little more than a collection of like-minded enthusiasts who also loved summer days camped out on Cassock beach behind windbreaks. When Padstow Harbour Commissioners threatened to ban skiing on the estuary, Tony lobbied hard and successfully to persuade them otherwise, but the Commissioners then tasked the club with “policing” skiing on the river. Approaching ski boats without a crew of two, or who were going round in the wrong direction, needed a degree of tact and diplomacy, but ultimately led to the continuation of safe skiing on the estuary, that endures to this day.

In the early 1970's, the sailing club invited the ski club to amalgamate, anticipating that a greater membership would help swell the coffers for the renovation of the old customs house, but some of the skiers resisted. Tony always supported amalgamation and within a few years, seeing the new facilities of bar, showers and galley that the sailors were now enjoying, the skiers were finally persuaded to join forces and the two clubs amalgamated formally on 1 January 1980.

Tony had been instrumental in the negotiations with Vice Commodore Power Boats, Sidney Hill, and took over from Sidney as the newly titled Vice Commodore Water Ski, a post he held for many years. When the ski boat numbering system was introduced, it was his privilege to have boat number 1!

Tony was always keen to encourage others to ski and would happily take friends and family out to have a go. He promoted the Fly Navy Cup day for many years, as a skier, driver and latterly as a friendly supporter on the beach, despite the fact that it was often windy and rough on the day. Tony continued skiing with his family until he was 80 and loved nothing more than a great slalom ski on a sunny day on the estuary.

A service to celebrate Tony's life is to be held at 2.30pm on Friday 7 February at St Minver Church