

# PRESS RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

## **New Year's Beach Day 2024**

(For immediate release) Ferry on the hour, or sail there yourself. Destination? Hap Mun Bay, just around the corner from Hebe Haven and a favourite of members recovering from New Year parties the night before. Actually, more than a favourite, it's a tradition that goes back many years with the terrace at the far end of the beach 'reserved' for the club's barbecues and bar.

Support staff arrive early in the morning with supplies and equipment and, by the time the first members and their guests arrive, the barbecues are lit and the mulled wine simmering. By the way, Eugene, who ran the bar this year, did an excellent job of quenching thirsts and served possibly the best mulled wine in the club's history! Lovingly prepared in a big copper pot, his bubbling beverage released aromas of cloves, lemons, cinnamon, honey and red wine which wafted around the beach and provided a defining memory of the New Year's Beach Day 2024.

There was more happening at the other end of the terrace where a guitarist had set up his amplifier and opened his first set with Rod Stewart's *I am Sailing* – very appropriate for a yacht club function. Surprisingly, most people knew the words, thanks mainly to the lyrics on their mobile phones. Then he went on to entertaining his 'fans' with popular Cantonese songs. He had much vocal support while former commodore, CK Chan, was moved to give everyone a display of his ballroom dancing skills! Meanwhile, the ceremonial pig had been roasted to perfection and was ready to be shared among all present in celebration of the new year. A fine – and delicious – tradition that the club must make every effort to continue.

On the other barbecues, the range and variety of food being prepared was quite amazing – prawns, satays, potatoes, corn, peppers, sausages, eels, sweet potatoes, garlic bread and more. Budding chefs tended to the food while club staff made sure charcoal was replenished.

Gradually, more and more people arrived, some by the hourly ferry from the club, and others in their own boats. At one point, there were eight boats anchored off the beach – both power and sail. The club's yellow P4 sampan worked hard ferrying members and their guests to the pier at the northern end on the beach. From there, it was quite a hike to the terrace, especially carrying supplies through the sand. But, in the end it was worth it. Altogether, some 60 people made it to Hap Mun Bay and a lot of fun was had by all in glorious conditions making for a great start to 2024.

After lunch, there was a general slowing down as people let their food settle, some reclined on beach deck chairs, some even took a swim while others visited the conveniences built and maintained by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. This is one of the big advantages of Hap Mun – a place to shower and brush up before leaving.

As the afternoon drew on, event organizers Juliet and Mark Ashton decided it was time to have some fun in the sand. Able-bodied sailors and members were summoned for the first of the races – the wheelbarrow race which went well for some, not so well for others. After that it was an egg-and-spoon race which seemed to favour the younger crowd. Then came the sack race which saw some spectacular wipe-outs but, because of the soft sand, there were no scratches or bruises. Coach Alfie put in a great performance to win his heat.

The three-legged race is a crowd favourite and this time there were some heavy weights weighing in. Trouble is, the race track being soft sand didn't allow for much 'traction' and there were thrills and spills a plenty.

Next came an unusual 'game' where two lines of people threw eggs at each other. Well, probably better to say 'between each other'. The two lines would get further apart and the idea was that the two 'throwers' with the last unbroken egg were the winners. If you were good at cricket, you probably did well in this one.

The tug-of-war was as popular as ever, everybody joined in. With Dion Houghton blowing his whistle, the two teams tugged and tugged and tugged. There was a lot of heaving and sweating and, in the end, it didn't really matter who won because the teams were supplemented by 'supporters' and other observers.

The games moved on to more organized events such as cricket but, sadly, with the light fading, it was time to pack up and head for home. And so ended a great start to the Hebe Haven Yacht Club's 2024 programme of social activities.

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#### About Hebe Haven Yacht Club

Hebe Haven Yacht Club is a private members club established in the Pak Sha Wan, Sai Kung area in 1963. The Club provides first-class yacht racing and boating facilities for members. The Club also works closely with local schools and organisations, to offer training facilities and professional instruction to develop youth sailing in Hong Kong. In addition, as a 'Caring Organisation' member, the Club proactively contributes to the local community with regularly organised events.

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