

**THE BRITISH
DRAGON
ASSOCIATION**



**1985 CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER
NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 10th January 1986**

THE BRITISH DRAGON ASSOCIATION

1985 CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER

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* * * C A R S T I C K E R S * * *

Enclosed with this Newsletter is one free car sticker. Please help to publicise the class by using it on your car. If you do not propose to use it please return it to the Hon. Secretary, Hill House, Ranworth, Norfolk.

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BRITISH DRAGON ASSOCIATION

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held at the Royal Thames Yacht Club, Knightsbridge at 6.45 p.m. on Friday 10th January 1986.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising.
3. To receive and adopt the accounts for the year ended 31st October 1985.
4. The Chairman's report.
5. The election of officers
6. Report from the International Dragon Association.
7. Any other business.

*** ANNUAL DINNER ***

The Annual Dinner will follow the Annual General Meeting at 8.00 p.m. Dress: Reefers or lounge suits.
Cost £18.50 per ticket.

Tickets for the dinner must be booked in advance using the enclosed forms which should be sent to Christopher Dicker to arrive not later than 5th January 1986. Cheques must be sent with the forms.

(Note: Last year the dinner was fully booked and a few members who applied later were unable to obtain tickets. To avoid disappointment please book early).

*** NEW FOR 1986 ***

A limited supply of 9ct gold Dragon tie pins will be available for sale in mid December - a perfect gift for Christmas - see page 5 for details.



BRITISH DRAGON ASSOCIATION

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Honorary Officers and Committee of the Association hope that you will all enjoy reading this Newsletter. Members owe a debt of gratitude to Chris Dicker for the very hard work he has put into producing it.

Despite very disagreeable weather conditions during most of last summer, sailing activity within the Class was maintained at a particularly high level.

The season started, so far as regatta racing was concerned, with the East Coast Championship at Levington where the entry was the highest in the history of the event with 35. The full programme was completed this year and was as usual very efficiently run.

The Edinburgh Cup and Gold Cup were held in successive weeks under the burgee of The Royal Forth Yacht Club at Granton in the second half of July. The weather conditions throughout the entire period were foul, but our hosts and the joint Race Officers, Kenneth Gumley and Marshall Napier, achieved two highly satisfactory regattas, and their hospitality made up for the cold and wet conditions that Edinburgh saw fit to welcome us with!

The final main event of the season was the World Championship at Douarnenez. The weather conditions were certainly the warmest which members had had the opportunity of sailing in throughout the season, and the competition unquestionably the hottest. Most individual members of the team had the satisfaction of achieving at least one satisfactory race. By that I mean a finish a single figures out of a fleet of some 65. What was clear however was that all lacked the consistency shown by the leading German and Danish Dragon sailors.

I believe that one of the reasons for our lack of success in top international championships arises from the fact that in both Germany and Denmark they have very little club racing as we understand it. Most of their domestic regattas and weekend racing is in big fleets with Olympic type courses, an experience which only occurs in this country two or at the most three times per season. The Germans seldom race other than in what we would describe as championships.

The season has stimulated interest in the class still further since the number of new boats which are rumoured to be coming in 1986 is certainly well above the average for a normal year and includes a number of younger yachtsmen. The Class is going from strength to strength, both here and on the Continent of Europe, and the prospect for the future is most exciting.

PETER LLOYD

BOATS FOR SALE

- DK 11 POLLY 1966 Borresen. cradle. lying Aldeburgh. £4,000
Apply: P. Wilson 072-885-3523/2019
- DK 440 MISTRAL 1967 Borresen, varnished, teak deck, Borresen mast, lying Torquay. Apply: C. Ruddlesden 08043-2791
- DK 386 ODYSSEUS 1962 Borresen, repainted and refitted 1985, Sparlight mast and boom, 2 suits sails, lying Torquay. £5,000
Apply: Anthony Goodson (Office) 0803-842120 (Home) 080428-561
- DK 322 BLUE SKIES 1959 Clare Lallow. Mahogany on American elm. Good general condition. Cradle. Apply: Dr. James Robertson - 0722-20691
or Dr. M.I.D. Cawley - 0794-68584
- DK 445 ROGUE 1968 Borresen. Top racing condition, 2 Sunray spinnakers, 1 light genoa, 1 medium heavy North genoa, 1 medium light Musto main, 1 medium heavy North main. £9,000 with sails, £8,000 without sails. German trailer £1,400
Apply: M. Patten - 03744-65120. Patten Pools Limited, Bedloes Corner, Rawreth Lane, Wickford, Essex, SS11 8SN.
- DK 338 ULA 1962 Nunn Bros. New Boyce mast and boom, 3 mains, 3 genoas, 2 spinnakers, echo sounder, compass, spare mast (Holt). Good condition, including recanvassed decks. Lying Aldeburgh. £2,750. Apply: L. Fulford, 18 Kew Green, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 3BH. 01-940-4298
- DK 276 VIKING 1955 Nunn Bros. Price £2,750
Apply: John Buck, Lindons, Alton Drive, Colchester. 0206-70261
- DK 459 SANDPIPER 1971 Borresen, 2nd 1985 Gold Cup, 3rd 1985 Edinburgh Cup. Very good condition, 2 sets German North sails (recent) - lying Petticrows Burnham, £9,500 with trailer, £8,750 without.
Apply: M. Williamson 01-584-6976 or N. Streeter 048-649-244.

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

2 Borresen runner winches - 6 months use only - £250 o.n.o.
Apply: C. Ruddlesden 08043-2791

FIXTURE LIST

1986	3rd - 5th May 30th May - 1st June 16th - 21st June	East Coast Dragon Championship Scottish Championship English Speaking Union Yacht Racing Trophy Edinburgh Cup	Levington Forth Vancouver Strangford Lough (Killyleagh Yacht Club)
	23rd - 28th June <i>7th 13th</i> 15th - 30th July 24th - 29th August	European Championships Gold Cup *****	Ostend Enkhuizen (Holland)
	Late April	Coupe Vasco de Gama	Arcachon
1987	August June 9th - 16th January	Gold Cup (50th Anniversary) Edinburgh Cup World Championships	The Clyde Lowestoft Geelong, Australia
1988		Gold Cup European Championship	Belgium or France Denmark
1989		World Championship	England

SELECTION FOR CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

1986 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

The qualifying events are:-

- 1984 Edinburgh Cup
- 1985 East Coast Championship
- 1985 Edinburgh Cup
- 1986 East Coast Championship

3 out of 4 events to count in accordance with regulations set out in 1985 Christmas Newsletter. Any helmsman wishing to be considered for selection should contact the Hon. Secretary by 31st January 1986.

1987 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Any helmsman wishing to be considered for selection for the 1987 World Championship in Australia is asked to contact the Hon. Secretary as soon as possible.

1986 ENGLISH SPEAKING UNION YACHT RACING TROPHY

The British Dragon Association hopes to be represented in this event which will be held in Vancouver from 16th - 21st June. It will take the form of a match racing series and there will be only one crew from each country. Boats and sails will be provided. Anyone interested in being considered for selection should contact the Hon. Secretary as quickly as possible.

CLASS RULES

At the I.Y.R.U. meeting held in November a new set of class rules were approved. The new rules, which have been completely redrafted are not supposed to represent any major change in substance (although it is clear that some amendments have been incorporated) the intention being to update and clarify the old rules.

The following amendments were also approved by the I.Y.R.U. and are to be incorporated in the redrafted rules:-

- (a) Rule 2.4.10 - GRP Hull

Delete:

"Beams shall be laminated to the outer (upper) deck laminate prior to placing the deck core material".

- (b) Rule 9.32 - Genoa

Delete Rule 9.32 and insert:

"The distance from the head to the mid-point of the foot shall not exceed the average of the length of the luff and leech. The mid-point of the foot shall be found by placing the centre of the clew cringle over the tack."

- (c) Genoa and Headsail Zips

Add to Rule 9.34 and 9.35 "A sail enclosing the forestay shall be measured with the zip closed and the width of the luff pocket so formed shall not exceed 40 mm."

- (d) Rule 9.55

Insert new rule:

"Not more than two spinnakers shall be on board while racing".

- (e) Headboard of Mainsail

Change the measurement diagram to show maximum horizontal and vertical measurements of the headboard of 120 mm.

The new rules become effective from 1st March 1986. Copies of the rules will be available from the R.Y.A. (and not the class secretary!).

DRAGON TIES, TIE PINS, SWEATERS AND CAR STICKERS

TIES	Dark blue with all over motif (in stock)	£ 9.50
TIE PINS	9ct Gold - limited stocks - available mid December	£32.50
CAR STICKERS	In stock	.75p
SWEATERS	V neck - Sky blue - 100% lambswool sizes 34" - 48" - see note below	£16.50

* * *

Prices include VAT and postage. Payment with order please.

* * *

All the above are available from:

Christopher Dicker, Hill House, Ranworth, Norfolk, NR13 6AB.

* * *

SWEATERS

The lambswool sweaters will not be available until mid February 1986. An order will be placed with the manufacturers immediately after the 1986 Boat Show - it would therefore be helpful to receive orders by 12th January 1986 so that the right quantities of each size can be obtained. It may be possible to obtain other colours (red, black, navy, maroon, grey, natural, bottle, off-white) if ordered prior to 12th January 1986.

1 9 8 6

E A S T C O A S T D R A G O N C H A M P I O N S H I P

We are very glad that the Haven Ports Yacht Club have agreed to host this event again in 1986. As members will know, they are only able to receive us early in May and so the regatta will be held at the Bank Holiday weekend on Saturday 3rd, Sunday 4th and Monday 5th May.

It is expected that the "formula" will be generally the same as the previous excellent regattas, that is, two races on Saturday, two on Sunday and one on Monday. Further details will be issued as soon as possible.

Meanwhile we would ask in particular Class Captains and Secretaries to make sure that all members have entered these dates in their diaries. We had thirty-five boats at Levington this year and we would like as many or more next year. Incidentally, it should be noted that this will be the qualifying event for the European Championship at Ostend.

KENNETH BUSHELL

EGYPTIAN DRAGON CHAMPIONSHIPS

A 3 crew reconnaissance unit from the B.D.A. recently visited Aboukir Bay to investigate its suitability as a possible future venue for the World or other Dragon Championships.

Our generous and charming Egyptian hosts made their fleet of 9 elderly Russian-built wooden Dragons available for competing in the "October 1985 Dragon Championships" by 3 crews from U.K. and 1 each from France, Germany, Norway and Greece - the remaining 2 boats being sailed respectively by Dr. Mokhtar and Captain Luxor who both represented Egypt in the World Championships at Douarnenez.

Nelson would have approved of the way we sailed over the top of the French on every occasion, but might have been less pleased about our performance relative to the German crew who won every race and the Norwegians who were runners-up.

Lots were drawn for the boats and as the numbers were displayed our agreeable hosts would take us on one side and congratulate us each on drawing the fastest boat and tell us how lucky we were not to have drawn so and so. The series consisted of 5 races of which one could be discarded. We might have been back in England again for the first day there was little wind and we finished in the dark lighting matches to see how to unhook the halyards. The second day was ideal, the third windy. On the fourth day it blew F.6 gusting 7 and the Committee cancelled the race after the first round and one broken mast. The morning of the fifth day was about the same so racing was abandoned and the winners decided on the results of 3 races.

Aboukir Bay has most things a Dragon sailor would want - wind of varying strengths, sun, water sheltered from the prevailing westerly, pontoons for mooring and competent and enthusiastic organisers.

The problems arise from its location - it's a long way and would take a long time to get our boats there. As yet no chandlery exists and items we consider as essentials are treated to a luxury tax of 150% - 200% and are not in any case obtainable locally. One would certainly need as well to be proficient with a telurit splicer and also perhaps sail repairs.

The racing itself was first class. There were mysterious windshifts of an oriental nature which seemed to hold back those in front and miraculously allow those behind to recover from impossible positions. After full length Olympic-style courses the finishes were very close indeed.

We were accommodated in a modern hotel at the East end of Alexandria - about 5 miles exciting drive from Aboukir Bay. In the opposite direction lay the Yacht Club - some ten miles even more exciting drive distant, near the centre of Alexandria. The Egyptian taxi driver makes Brands Hatch seem a listless affair - the journey as it were being both an end in itself as well as a means.

On the final night presentation of prizes at the Yacht Club was a theatrical affair with bright lights and T.V. cameras. The winning crews received Olympic-style acknowledgment and medals to hang round their necks, as well as prizes. The evening closed with an energetic performance by a belly dancer with a beautiful head of hair.

It was a pity Nelson was temporarily blinded during his visit - he would have enjoyed that!

BOB MELVILLE

Edinburgh Cup 1986

21st - 28th JUNE - KILLYLEAGH YACHT CLUB

Arrangements are well under way for the 1986 Edinburgh Cup. We have our major sponsors and some minor sponsors. We have arranged for moorings and committee boats. We have very good dormitory type accommodation arranged right beside the Club, and we have a full programme of entertainment including several nights on the house!

We have arranged concessionary travel rates with Townsend Torresen and Belfast Car Ferries and also a Travel Grant Scheme whereby visitors from outside Northern Ireland can receive a grant of up to £400 from travelling. The rates are £400 Europe, £200 Britain, £100 Cork, £50 Dublin. The number of grants will be limited so when entries open in March, please send them in quickly.

Strangford Lough is an almost fully enclosed tidal lough about 18 miles x 3.5 miles. There are many islands and pladdies. However, the racing area is relatively clear and any natural obstacles will be well marked and shown on a small large-scale chart to be given to each skipper. Because of the relatively restricted area we are using a 4 buoy course.

o W

Gybe (1) o

o Gybe (2)

Round 1) L,W,1,2,L,W.

Round 2) L,W.

Round 3) W,1,2,L,W.

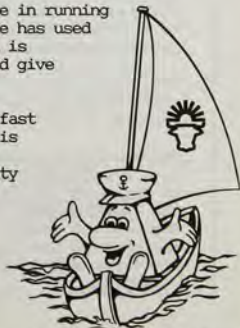
o L

The purpose of the 4 buoy course is that beat will always be sailed up the centre of the course. This keeps us further from tidal effects and also enables swings for wind shifts to be accomplished more easily. It also enables us to use more of our restricted area.

John Russell, our Race Officer has many years of experience in running International events, both in Strangford and elsewhere. He has used the 4 buoy course for the Flying Fifteen Championships and is convinced that it will enable him to start more Dragons and give fairer courses.

Strangford Lough is out in the country, well away from Belfast and other large towns, yet access from the ferry services is excellent. Dublin is 4 hours away, Belfast 3/4 hour and Larne 1 1/2 hours (towing a Dragon). It is a natural beauty spot so why not bring your family? There are literally hundreds of islands for picnicking, good fishing and several good restaurants in the area. We intend, if there is a demand, to organise a tennis tournament for wives during the event.

DAVID LINDSAY



"It is cold, wet and windy and there are awful tides. When I go back to Denmark no-one will believe that you sail in Scotland". That was Borge Borresen's opinion of the 1985 Edinburgh/Gold Cups on the Forth. However the conditions didn't stop this gentle Viking from making off with a good haul of loot. We in the Forth Dragon Fleet would like to assure Mr. Borresen and all the other competitors that this year was exceptionally bad and occasionally in mid July the snow thaws, the sun comes out and the wind drops to a moderate force six.

We were all lulled into a false sense of security on the first day of the Edinburgh Cup by bright sunshine and a moderate steady breeze blowing Rory Bowman in Logie into first place. In the second race Borresen's nose for wind shifts resulted in his victory in variable winds over John Thornton in Flapjack and Nick Streeter in Sandpiper. This saw the start of this trios battle for the top three places.

Race three on Tuesday saw the survivors of the 'home hospitality' sailing out to be met by the type of weather we were rapidly becoming accustomed to, gusty westerlies and short seas. Flapjack took the honours in a very hard race which saw the start of gear failures with Terry Wade in Avalanche losing a forestay.

Wednesday and race four was a washout, with westerly force sevens, there was a sigh of relief from crews hiding in the beer tent when the race was postponed until the next day.

Two races were organised for the Thursday but it was a long wait until race four was finally started at 6.00 p.m. in a gentle force four with sunshine (no it wasn't a hallucination). Borresen had another first with J. Taylor in Tarka romping up in the second round from seventeenth to sixth place.

The fifth and sixth races were thankfully fitted in on the Friday in a brisk south westerly and crews were kept going by the vision of a good prizegiving at the Sherraton Hotel where they could top up their alcohol level. Race five saw 'local lad' Eric Thompson in Seigline second at the weather mark, but he was overtaken by Ken Bushell in Smaug who took a first. Borresen was back on form for race six and after a poor start due to a line incident he finished third, with Andy Cassels in Ganymede IV the victor of the final race.

Results for the week saw Borresen well out in front with J. Thornton in Flapjack second and Nick Streeter in Sandpiper third, and to show that the 'auld yins' can still do it Logie (1960) sailed by Rory Bowman came fourth and took the prize for the best placed vintage Dragon. The oldest crew prize went to the crew of Panacea, still gybing spinnakers at 81.

Many yachts and crews took a welcome rest on the Saturday and did a little sightseeing, while the 'new boys' for the Gold Cup tuned up in the practice race. We were all happy to welcome Prince Henrik of Denmark, although we did wish he hadn't moored his royal yacht half way up the first beat.

The first race on Sunday saw us back to normal with force six squalls and heavy seas. Borresen now had competition from fellow Viking Bandolowski in Nordjylland who took a first.

Monday saw a shocked fleet drift about in a north easterly force two until the race was finally started in a fickle wind at 4.00 p.m. The wind dropped and began to swing on the first leg and spinnakers eventually had to be hoisted to reach the 'weather mark'. Hamish Mackenzie is Kis and a few other local lads had gone inshore and this paid off with Hamish first round the mark with a good lead. Hamish kept his lead and much to his relief the race was shortened after the first round and we all retired to carouse with local councillors at the civic reception.

Bandolowski was out front again in the third race and was well round the mark and up the first beat when the wind dropped. The rest of us spent a very frustrating time trying desperately to make the mark against the tide. Everyone on the Committee Vessel heaved a sigh of relief when Bandolowski made it through the line with only 21 seconds to the time limit.

Wednesday saw John Sisk in Intruder making a bid for an Irish first, unfortunately he got involved in a covering match with Borresen and lost his first place to Prince Henrik.

The fifth race saw one of the best sailing days of the fortnight, with Rory Bowman in Logie coming home first followed by Kleine Brise (H. Schmidt) and Bandolowski. However after a marathon protest committee meeting Nick Streeter won his protest against Bandolowski, who he maintained had been sailing below his proper course. Not only did it cost Bandolowski the race, it cost him the Gold Cup as well, as he dropped from a comfortable first to sixth, making Borresen the overall winner without having won a race in that series.

None of us thought the weather could get worse, we were wrong. Friday saw rain, wind, thunder, lightening and jokes about earthing your wellies. The race officer Kenneth Gumley who had coped with weather conditions which would have driven a weaker man to the Beefeaters Gin, said 'enough is enough' and cancelled the final race.

Despite the weather, I for one thoroughly enjoyed myself and the Forth fleet would like to thank all of you who came up to 'bonnie Scotland' for the excellent competition you gave us. I just hope that the Irish can have a wee word with 'himself' and get us some better weather for the Edinburgh Cup next year.

ANNIE HUTCHISON



Tony Clare's Dragon 'Green Cockatoo'

picture by Collyer

STEPHEN RATSEY SAILMAKERS

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1st, 2nd, 3rd Torquay

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THE FLEET'S IN!



PRODUCED BY JAMES BURROUGH plc SPONSORS OF THE 1985 DRAGON GOLD CUP

BURROUGH'S
MIXED
DOUBLES

Sixty-one boats from 14 countries took part in this years World Championship held at Douarnenez, West Brittany from 24th - 30th August. The sailing conditions were ideal with very little tide and winds varying from force 6 - 7 in the early part of the week to force 2 - 3 in the later races. The race area comprised a small part of the huge bay of Douarnenez which must be considered as one of the best venues in Europe.

The competition was of the highest standard and included many top helmsmen from other classes. The overall winner was Wolfgang Rappel from West Germany who sailed consistently well throughout the seven race series.

The first two races were sailed in strong winds and produced notable victories for the Danes. Vladimar Bandolowski won the first race and David Holm the second, the last downward leg of this race saw exceptionally exciting conditions and tested both crews and boats to near their limits. Ten boats retired including 3 with broken masts.

The third race was sailed in lighter winds and was won by Rappel. Terry Wade in Avalanche (Burnham) sailed an excellent race and finished fourth. The fourth and fifth races were won by P. Hoj Jensen (Denmark) and Rainer Wolf (Germany) won the sixth race. The results after 6 races showed only 16 points between the first 7 boats - Hoest Stroeh (German) 39.7, Bandolowski 44.7, Rappel 45.4, Hoj Jensen 48.7, Marcus Glas (Germany) 49.4, Holm 54 and Paul Aoufir (France) 55.1.

In the last race, sailed in force 2 - 3 winds, Rappel took an early lead up the first beat which heavily favoured those who started at the starboard end of the line. Rappel's covering tactics were perfect and he maintained his position throughout the race. Chris Dicker in Skal III (Lowestoft) held second place for most of the race but lost 3 places on the final beat to finish 5th.

Sadly, Nicky Streeter's Sandpiper (which had performed so well earlier in the season) was badly damaged in the practice race and he had to borrow another boat (Jerboah) for the series. It was disappointing that the 10 British boats did not show better form although Terry Wade did well to finish 10th overall with 5 places in the first 15. The British team left Douarnenez in good spirits (and Rory Bowman from Aldeburgh with Borge Borresens new boat) and more determined than ever to produce better results next time.

We all learned a great deal from this regatta and our disappointing results have led us to examine carefully how we can compete effectively in the future. We spent a lot of time looking over the newer boats which appeared from Germany and Denmark and undoubtedly we all came away with new ideas for equipment and sails. Our performance on the water has prompted Nicky Streeter to write an article on starting techniques (in this Newsletter). Some of our team spent many hours with Sandy Goodall finding out how Borresen made his boat go so fast - and he gave us a lot of valuable advice.

Sadly the Yacht Club de Douarnenez has lost its old clubhouse (the roof finally caved in) and a marquee had to be erected in the middle of the square by the yacht harbour. The social events were typically French and enjoyable. The best party was given by the British team at Peter Lloyds rented villa - there were 160 guests and we consumed 120 bottles of Muscadet (we cleared out the complete stocks of 3 supermarkets) and a variety of other alcoholic beverages to which the British and Irish Dragon sailors are more accustomed. The Germans also gave a party on the pontoons (with most guests sitting on their own or more likely other peoples boats!). Whilst our performance on the water left something to be desired we are confident that the British are undoubtedly the best at organising parties.

CHRISTOPHER DICKER



Ganymede IV - K502

- 1985 DRAGON GOLD CUP - 3rd overall
 - 1985 EDINBURGH CUP - 6th overall
 - 1984 EDINBURGH CUP - SALAMANDER TROPHY
- For best boat over last 3 days

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With these results in the GOLD CUP and EDINBURGH CUP and the previous successful results of *Storm DK487* there can be no doubt that our hulls are competitive.

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For details contact

Peter Wilson, ALDEBURGH BOATYARD COMPANY LTD.,

Fort Green, Aldeburgh, Suffolk IP15 5DE Tel: Aldeburgh (072885) 2019

A wet windy and unpleasant summer has passed since the East Coast Championships held at Levington on the 4th, 5th and 6th May, and, having only recently been asked to write this report I find the memory has lapsed. You will therefore only be reading about my vague recollections of the event so I apologise now for any historical inaccuracy.

The event attracted 35 entries from as far away as Torbay and Scotland and for the first time for several years all the races were sailed out at sea and we were spared the nerve racking thrashes up the Stour. There was no gale, and I have no recollection of shivering - both firsts in my experiences of Levington.

The racing, as has become the norm in recent events, proved to be extremely competitive with a healthy mixture of old and new faces at the front of the fleet.

The new faces both come from Aldeburgh with Simon Fulford sailing a very consistent series in U1a to finish fifth overall and Rory Bowman showed signs of things to come by winning the last race in Logie.

Terry Wade hasn't quite been around long enough to be considered an old boy but he quickly demonstrated that his direct line to God was working by several times going what was obviously the wrong way up the first beat and arriving at the weather mark before everyone else. He won two races and went on to win the regatta.

The old form of Sandpiper with the Streeter/Williamson combo won the other two races and they finished second overall.

For Chris Dicker the pressure of organisation finally affected his sailing performance but he still managed a creditable third place overall to follow last years victory.

Mike Patten, another who usually excels at Levington managed fourth overall. This year he sailed Rogue but he had an early insight as to what the rest of his season was to be like when, in a couple of races, he had trouble in catching his 'other' boat.

The social side was once again well organised with the now traditional mix of 'Lightship' activities, school parties and formal dinner.

Proceedings once again opened with the annual 'liquid reunion' on the Friday night. This was followed by the party, at Orwell Park School, with food (again beautifully prepared by Gail Dicker and Karen Campbell).

The dinner was once again held at Dedham Vale with the entertainment provided by Chairman Lloyd and 'Windward Side' McKeag, who gave a vivid description of his visit to the leeward side on the end of Philip Tolhurst's spinnaker pole.

Our thanks are again due to the Haven Ports Yacht Club who provide such a warm welcome and excellent racing and to Chris Dicker for his organisational ability not only this year but for the previous two.

Next year the event will be under new management, three years being enough even for Chris, and Ken Bushell has taken on the difficult task.

Good luck Ken!

John Standley

P.S. Note to Ken's Chairman - please don't sack Cathy before the organisation is complete!

The results achieved by British Dragons over many years at overseas events have shown generally that we are sailing to a high standard but lack the flair or ability to match the best from other countries. Most of us are sailing boats that are far from new and next year should prove whether this is a major factor. My own view is that we suffer from a lack of participation in large fleet races where the quality of opposition in the top half is better than would be met in the U.K.

There is no real substitute for competing abroad to raise our own standards. The particular area where it seems to me that we are weak is at the starting line where so often we are left after only five minutes racing with a recovery situation. This poor starting is aggravated by the larger fleets now allowed in the major Championships and with the propensity for race officers to set an unduly biased line so that only a small proportion of the fleet can hope to get a reasonable start.

Unless we can match the ability of the better sailors who will be at the favoured end of the line, the result of the race for us is almost certain in that we are not going to win.

How then can we do better? Possibly a checklist may help.

1. Be out early so that there is no doubt as to how the sails should be set for the prevailing conditions and take note of the wind direction at regular intervals (in writing) to establish the limits between which it is swinging.

2. The often almost impossible decision should be taken as to which side of the course is likely to be favoured having noted the land configuration, the tide over the course, cloud build up, what happened yesterday etc. If the starboard side of the course is favoured and the line is biased to port, a start two thirds along the line will more likely allow an early tack onto port. If there is a considerable bias it may well pay to start at the pin and take the whole advantage.

3. Do attempt to identify a transit between the ends of the line and the land. Often in the middle of the line there is a concave bow and it is possible to find oneself a couple of boat lengths ahead of those around one and still be confident of not being over the line.

4. Having assessed the wind direction at probably six minutes to go against the bearing of the starting line, the amount of bias and therefore which is the right end will be apparent. Try to do this in the middle of the line clear of other boats to get a clear wind and have your options still open.

5. When the line is biased to port, rather than join a queue at the five minute gun it is often better to come in on port tack from the far side of the pin and tack into a gap at around one and a half minutes to go. It is all important to make a slot to leeward into which you can accelerate and to avoid the boat to port getting into a safe leeward position. If possible avoid being next to a former World Champion or similar hot-shot!

6. When there is a decided starboard bias many boats will be at the committee vessel early and thus be hardly moving, especially if there is a fair tide. Either start a little way down the line or come in late, say ten seconds going flat out. If you cannot keep above the boat going slowly ahead you can always tack away.

7. Start accelerating at between 45 - 30 seconds to go with the sheets not too pinned in. Sail as free as possible consistent with keeping well above the boat to leeward. Make sure that your crew don't disturb your concentration but keep you informed as to the progress of the boats near you.

8. If the news is disastrous pray for a general recall! If that fails don't fret but look for an opportunity to sail in clear air.

9. In conclusion, good starts are a result of a team effort, let your crew know what you hope to do and put the onus on them to advise as to how close you are to the line. You can't do everything but you must sail fast!

N.J. STREETER

FLEET NEWS

BURNHAM FLEET

Overall, as is usual, the Burnham Dragon Fleet has been racing for more than seven months having started prior to Easter and finishing on the second weekend of November.

On a particularly stormy Saturday afternoon in early April one of the Dragons sank. This pointed to the clear importance of life jackets being worn as well as adequate sailing gear against the cold and also the problems of rescuing people from the water when no motor boat is available. Fortunately on this occasion Skipper and crew were cold but unharmed and the boat suffered surprisingly little damage.

Again, as is usual, the fleet went almost en masse to Levington where Terry Wade won the championship. As is often the case during the summer months the racing fleet at Burnham was reduced by trips to other regattas, particularly Edinburgh and Douarnenez. At Edinburgh, where most of the fleet stayed only one week, Mike Patten came fourth in the Edinburgh Cup itself.

It was very good news for the fleet that four members, Philip Tolhurst, Terry Wade, Mike Patten and Bob Melville, were amongst those chosen to represent Britain at the World Championship. Presumably the British on the whole were disappointed with their performance at Douarnenez but again it was pleasant to note that Terry Wade led the British contingent with a position of tenth finishing ahead of Borresen. Due to the number of regattas and the timing of Douarnenez the whole fleet was very under-represented at Burnham Week which was a great pity since after the storms of Cowes Week and the Fastnet, Burnham Week had some good weather and generally a large turnout of boats in other classes. The event was won by Tony Clare, a newcomer to the fleet, in his boat Green Cockatoo.

The season ended with two months of very pleasant sailing with some of the best wind and sun conditions of the year. We are pleased that Nick China of China Town and John Brim of Yankee Doodle were able to join us for some of the races.

For the coming year at least one and probably two new boats will be joining the fleet and we shall hope to start once again at Easter 1986 and have further weekends of racing so that the fleet is in good trim for Levington and we extend a welcome to anybody who would wish to join us for that period.

We would stress that in particular the four-day Easter regatta is an excellent moment at which to start tuning your boat for the year.

Finally, the stalwarts in the fleet expect to be sailing again in 1986. Some are beginning to suffer increasing stress as to whether they should sail in a plastic boat or a wooden boat, or perhaps both. They all hope that the argument does not spill over into metal masts versus wooden masts!

KENNETH BUSHELL

MEDWAY FLEET

The 1982 season to date has been marked by high winds and rough weather. Only 3 races of the 24 sailed to date have been in force 3 or less. Despite this, turnouts have been excellent. In a fleet of 21 boats our best entry has been 19 which shows the healthy state of the class. At the time of writing "Royalist" is leading on points with the next four close behind.

There was an excellent entry for the Medway Regatta and we were pleased to see "Rascal" from Burnham, sailed by David Blain, take the weekend trophy. We hope to encourage more competition with the Burnham fleet. Of our own travellers, "Royalist" braved early season weather to go to the East Coast Championship at Levington and had good results. "Fenrir" sailed Burnham Week and won the Visitor's Cup. The Edinburgh Cup venue was in fact Edinburgh and the distance, combined with Scottish weather, deterred any Medway entries.

We hope that the excellent class racing will encourage new owners and crews. The new courses, giving more emphasis on sail changing and tactics, have been a great success. For the first time for some years we only have one boat in the fleet waiting for moorings and there is no doubt that the older boats, if well fitted-out, can hold their own with more modern craft.

The social scene has not been neglected with monthly suppers averaging 50 members and a notable champagne party to watch the Tall Ships Race. There is no class which can enjoy better sailing and claim larger contributions to the bar profits.

DAVID DANN

ALDEBURGH FLEET

The fleet reached fourteen boats this year which has given some very good racing. The fourteenth boat was Matilda from Torquay, now in local ownership, and Ganymede III went to Patrick Gifford and changed her name to Chaos. Peter Wilson produced Ganymede IV, the first all G.R.P. boat from St. George's Dragons moulds. We sailed three team races during the year, all on home ground, against Cambridge University the result was slightly inconclusive, we claimed a draw, Oxford University were well beaten and our annual event against Lowestoft was once again won by us! The morning race was very close but the R.N.S.Y.C do not seem able to concentrate properly after the port.

Both Rory Bowman in Logie and Simon Fulford in Ula showed well at Levington. Logie, Chaos and Ganymede IV all went to Edinburgh although Peter Wilson opted to crew while Andrew Cassell drove. Both Logie's and Ganymede IV's results were impressive being respectively 4th and 6th in the Edinburgh Cup and 6th and 3rd in the Gold Cup, Chaos also had her moments of glory.

Rory Bowman went off to the Brittany and World Championships in Douarnenez and left Peter Wilson to clean up the Aldeburgh Regatta. Vana with very consistent results took the season's points.

We think that we have had more than our fair share of collisions this year and there is little doubt that twelve or so boats on a short river starting line with close racing demands a good knowledge of the rules and intelligent give and take if collisions and consequent damage is to be avoided. There used to be a ready market for Dragon masts broken at deck level but when broken at the lower spreaders neither bit is much good for anything!

PETER WILSON

STRANGFORD LOUGH

The 1985 season has been one of mixed blessing. Certainly it has been the wettest we remember but also the wind really blew on all our major events for once.

The Bennett Trophy was held in May again, with very strong winds on the second day. Mike Cotter from Dublin won. After that meeting we discussed with John Russell, our Race Officer, the maximum wind strengths for sailing Dragons. The consensus was that 25 knots of wind at deck level is about the maximum for starting a race, and 30 knots is probably the point at which a Race Officer should consider stopping a race on grounds of safety.

Only David Lindsay went to the Irish Championships in Kinsale this year, where once again there were several heavy days including one cancellation. But unfortunately the wind was offshore so the sea was relatively calm.

Denis Bennett and Mervyn Beers both attended the Edinburgh Cup and enjoyed themselves thoroughly. We also sent our Race Officer for next year and Club Secretary to view the administration of the event.

DAVID LINDSAY

CONSTRUCTION RULESPETER WILSON DISCUSSES CONSTRUCTION METHODS AND PROPOSALS FOR COLD MOULDED HULLS

If we are going to consider changing the construction rules to 'Anything goes' then I believe that we should first of all look at the background to the present rules.

When the Dragon was designed there was, effectively, only one way of building a boat of this nature and the Rules were formulated around the designer's original specification. As long as this method of building remained the norm with only minor variations such as glued seams and the use of hardwood planking the only substantive rule changes have concerned rig and measurement, mainly in respect of the fore end of the keel. Construction rules for double diagonal planking were included for a number of years although I have never found a Dragon thus built.

In the late sixties it became apparent that conventionally built wooden boats were becoming prohibitively expensive and if the Class were to survive then it would have to turn to G.R.P. construction and to this end rules were formulated with the assistance of Lloyds and Borresen which produced a boat that is comparable to the wooden boat in weight distribution and stiffness.

In order to build a boat to comply with the G.R.P. construction rules it is necessary first of all to invest very heavily in the requisite tooling of plugs and moulds.

The number of builders willing and able to invest in this manner is plainly very few and whereas the total number of builders represented in the British Dragon Class is 59, believe it or not this is not a misprint, since 1970 only five different builders have been represented in the fleet.

When I formulated the rule for cold moulded boats in 1977 it was with the intention of making it possible to build a boat with a lower level of shipwright's skill and less expensive materials. In so far as I built the boat as an amateur I do believe that I succeeded in my aim, it is however a very labour intensive method and therefore, unless one has low wage labour available for the more unskilled work, then it will be expensive.

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FAST SAILS THAT LAST



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If we wish to free the Class from the constrictions of too few builders and/or to high cost then I believe that we have to open the available construction methods. One would hope that the vested interests of the existing G.R.P. builders would not prevent this from being possible.

Cold Moulded Construction

Wood is a material that is strong in both tension and compression along the grain but across the grain although strong in compression it is relatively weak in tension and thus, when subjected to stress in this direction it will try and split.

In a conventionally planked boat the frames or ribs to which the planks are attached look after the stresses across the grain whilst the planking gives a large proportion of the longitudinal strength of the boat.

In strip plank construction very narrow planks are edge nailed and glued to each other. The edge nailing is usually done with barbed nails which are very resistant to being pulled out and they considerably strengthen the wood across the grain and make it possible to reduce the number of frames to half or even less of the usual number.

Cold moulded construction carried out with several layers of veneer laid diagonally to each other and glued together has equal strength in both directions when laid at 45 degrees to each other. This makes it possible to leave out the frames altogether although in practice one would usually put some in at major stress points. By varying the relative angles between the veneers it is possible to alter the relative strengths making it a very versatile form of construction. The other main advantages of cold moulding are the relatively low skill requirement for most of the work and the economy in the use of veneers as opposed to the long timber used in conventional building. The disadvantages are the necessity of a well built plug to build off and the large number of hours spent in pulling staples. It takes about 1200 hours to build a Dragon in this manner and taking into account the lower skill requirement and material costs I believe that a cold moulded boat can be built about 20% more cheaply than a planked boat.

If we wish to really get the best of all worlds I suggest that we look at the possibility of a three skin moulded boat. The thickest veneer that we can bend through the tight curves in the tuck by the keel is about 3mm. We therefore have to think in terms of combining the virtues of strip planking and cold moulding. We have a further advantage with strip planking that it is not necessary to have a substantial plug but only normal moulds.

In order to achieve a similar skin weight to other forms of construction of 12 kg. per sq. metre we would need to have a skin thickness of 20mm. made up with two 3mm. veneers and 14mm. of strip plank. The strip planks are laid up over the moulds which can incorporate any frames wanted in the hull. Unless these frames are at about 600mm. centres then about 25% of the skin thickness should run diagonally. If non ferrous staples are used in the moulding process they could be left in. The hull would then of course have to be painted and not varnished. Assuming that all the staples are removed and the hull is varnished there would still be a time saving of at least 200 hours as compared to a Dragon built in accordance with the present rule and this, together with the savings in glue and staples should reduce the cost of a boat by about £1,750 in this country and bring the cost of a wooden moulded boat much closer to that of a G.R.P. boat.

PETER WILSON



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