

2014

DRAGON NEWS 

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Notes To Members

Members contact details will be published in the White Book, distributed with the mid-season newsletter in September 2015. Not all members have supplied e-mail addresses. It would be helpful to have those, together with any other changes, notified to the Secretary at timwilkes6@hotmail.com

The membership structure and fees are as follows:

- An annual fee of £55 payable for each Dragon owned by a BDA member at the 31st March each year.
- A fee of £55 payable for each Dragon acquired during the year either by a non-owning member of the BDA or a new member.
- A subscription of £20 for each member payable on 31st March each year or on joining during a year.

Both Individual Membership and Boat Fee Subscriptions may be made by internet banking, cheque or direct debit. Internet banking details are: Bank: Lloyds TSB; Name of account: British Dragon Association; Account Number: 03090827; Sort code: 30-00-08. PLEASE give your name in the reference so it is traceable (e.g. J Smith subs).

All members are reminded that BDA trophies are to be returned to the Secretary or organising club for each relevant regatta. A small number of trophies are currently missing, presumed to be gathering dust in a member's attic; it would be appreciated if these were returned for future use too, please.

BDA Officers, Fleet Captains, Contact Details

Chairman	Ron James	07740 177038	r.james@company-doc.co.uk
Vice Chairman	Claire Sowry	07836 575932	claire@sowry.co.uk
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BDA News is designed by CE Marketing – www.cemarketing.co.uk

Our thanks to Ricardo Pinto several of who's photographs were used in this yearbook, including the front cover image. Photo on this page: Traffic at the mark – the Abersoch Fleet. Courtesy greenseaphotography.

From the (easy) chair

Compared to 2013 and the great job Martin Makey and his team did running the Dragon World's in Weymouth, 2014 has been relatively quiet, at least on the home front. Rene Nel and the Burnham fleet ran a most successful East Coast Championship and Owen Pay and the Cowes fleet put on a high quality, stand alone, Southern Area Championship which, like Cowes Week itself, was very competitive, while Abersoch hosted the Northern Areas, for which one English and two Irish boats joined the Welsh fleet. These events are written up elsewhere in the magazine, as is the Edinburgh Cup so I am not going to dwell on the details except to say that, despite the doubters and a few vocal naysayers, the Edinburgh Cup in Lymington proved to be a greatly enjoyable event. The RLYMyc was welcoming, friendly and helpful and the much debated sail through the Hurst Narrows was more lamb than lion and never took too long, except for the last journey back to Lymington after the wind switched off completely and that can happen anywhere. All those that participated said they would be happy to return in the future, Christchurch Bay providing fair racing on uncluttered water.

Against a background of slight decline in fleet racing in recent years, Abersoch continues to grow and the Cowes fleet is showing a pleasing increase in on the water activity. Perhaps this is a reflection of the economic recovery in the UK. Whether that is the cause or not, it is to be hoped that Dragon sailing and the economy continue their upward trend. Another continuing trend is the number of GBR sailors, new to or returning to Dragons, appearing on the international circuit. Numbers at some traditionally strong venues were slightly down in 2014, but the standard of competition remained as high as ever. Notable GBR successes in foreign waters included Lawrie Smith winning the Cannes Grand Prix, the Irish Nationals and at Lake Garda; Martin Payne won the Belgian Nationals and La Baule; Klaus Diederichs was first in the Coupe de Bretagne and Ivan Bradbury won Regates Royales. Gavia Wilkinson-Cox just failed to retain the St Tropez trophy on count back, while others who also made the podium included Rob Campbell in Australia, Tim Tavinor in the Netherlands, Poul-Ricard Hoj-Jensen in Belgium and the Netherlands, Ron James at Grand

Motte and Simon Barter at the inaugural Corinthian Championships in Deauville, where Owen Pay won the first race. Apologies to anyone I forgot. So GBR is holding its' own on the international scene and I am pleased to report that we are sending a full complement of 13 to the 2015 World's in La Rochelle, with four on the waiting list. I sailed there in the trial event earlier this year; the facilities are good and the old town full of interest.

It's not all plain sailing on the international front, however. At the recent IDA AGM, ISAF's proposal to drop its classification of sailors was discussed and guided by the survey of our members that Tim Wilkes conducted, we, supported by many other national associations, pressed the IDA to put pressure on ISAF to continue the scheme, but also to bring alternative proposals to the meeting next year in case ISAF sticks to its plan. It seems likely that ISAF will rethink dropping the scheme immediately, but the probability is that it will run it only for another year to give time for classes to come up with a replacement. Inevitably, that discussion expanded into the role of professionals in the class and whether it was a force for good or harm. Come to the BDA AGM & Dinner in January and share your thoughts on Corinthian classification and professionalism so that we can help shape the future of the class in a way that it can continue to prosper. Another issue that the IDA thought it had put to bed a long time ago, has resurfaced. This is the perception that certain older wooden Dragons that have been extensively and expensively refurbished are notably faster in some conditions than current GPR and cold-moulded boats. The IDA weighed and checked the hulls of six of these classics and found that they all fitted the templates and if anything, were overweight. Nevertheless, the perception remains so more work will be done in the coming year. Collectively, these issues are important because, once people start to believe they have no chance of winning races, they stop going to the big events, or worse still move away from the class. One area where the playing field has been levelled is movement of the mast at foot and deck level, where the rules have been tightened. Existing boats have a year to comply.

The Chairman in the not-so-easy-chair.

Recently Patrick Gifford and I travelled to Largs to progress the arrangements for the Edinburgh Cup there in 2015. It's a very scenic venue with the comprehensive shore-side facilities you might expect given that it is the home of the Scottish Sailing Institute (SSI). The site and marina, where the Dragons will be on pontoons, is owned by Largs Yacht Haven which is run by an enthusiastic lady clearly more interested in hosting successful regattas than just making money. It is also home to Largs Sailing Club which will run the social side with a Scottish emphasis, while SSI runs the racing. Chris Haddon, who stepped in and ran the Edinburgh Cup for us in Weymouth in 2013 and impressed, will be the PRO. It is a one mile sail out to the racing area, a five mile "square" sheltered between the mainland and the islands of Bute and Cumbrae. There is ample car and trailer parking and Dragons can be left free of charge if owners wish to extend their stay by touring the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The six strong Edinburgh fleet has already been in contact with the marina and Rob Riddell has promised that ten Abersoch Dragons will attend so, with a few from Ireland and mass immigration from England, it is going to be a great event. Learn more at the AGM.

In conclusion, I wish to thank my team and the associated 'BOGOF's; Claire Sowry for her support and attention to detail, especially her contribution to making Lymington a resounding success; Tim Wilkes for singlehandedly writing and producing the half-year news letter and for his wise council that kept my feet out of my mouth and on the ground on more than one occasion; Tim Blackwell who took on the job of Treasurer in 2013 and resigned earlier this year, special thanks for continuing in post through a truly hectic time in his day job while we found a worthy successor in Nigel Kaula, to whom we extend a warm welcome; Patrick Gifford for doing all the spade work on Largs and next year's East Coast regatta, and all your class captains who make up the committee, represent you, run your club sailing and our area regattas. These people made my job easier and without them little would have been achieved.

Ron James

Forthcoming Fixtures

2015

The East Coast Championships	Medway tbc	23-25 May tbc
The World Championships	La Rochelle, France	4-12 June
The Northern Championships	Abersoch	11-14 June
The Scottish Championships	Largs, Scotland	27-29 June
The Edinburgh Cup	Largs, Scotland	30 June-4 July
The South Coast Championships	Cowes	July tbc
Cowes Classic Week	Cowes	20-24 July
The European Championships	Båstad, Sweden	31 July-8 August
Classic Championships	Falmouth Week	7-16 August
Cowes Week	Cowes	8-15 August
The Gold Cup	Kühlungsborn, Germany	21-28 August

2016

The East Coast Championships	Levington tbc	May tbc
The Northern Championships	Abersoch/Windermere tbc	TBC
The Edinburgh Cup	Abersoch	July tbc
The South Coast	Cowes tbc	July
Cowes Week	Cowes	6-13 August
The Gold Cup	Hornbaek, Denmark	27Aug-1 Sep
The European Championships	St Petersburg, Russia	TBC



The British Dragon Association 2015 AGM and Annual Dinner

Friday 16th January 2015

As previously notified, the 2015 British Dragon Association AGM and Dinner will take place on Friday 16th January 2015 at the Army & Navy Club, Pall Mall, London. Please arrange your dinner tables and book your tickets now. Please do come and support your association. Since we have been using the Army & Navy attendance at the dinner has increased each year and there is now every chance of you being able to catch up with many friends from around the country. The evening will get underway with pre-meeting drinks at 1800. The meeting will start at 1830 prompt in the Ladies Drawing Room on the second floor and dinner will be called at 2000 in the Pall Mall Room on the first floor. There will be a cash bar for all drinks before, during and after dinner.

After dinner we shall present the Citron Trophy and have some short speeches. There will then be time for relaxed drinks before departure at 2300. Dress is reefer jacket or lounge suit. For the fourth year

running we are keeping the cost at £49.75 per person for dinner, payable in advance, preferably by bank transfer to the British Dragon Association, Lloyds TSB Bank plc, Account No.: 3090827; Sort Code: 30-00-08. Please reference your payment with your surname followed by AGM Dinner. Cheques made payable to the British Dragon Association will also be accepted. Cheques should be posted to the Honorary Treasurer Nigel Kaula at Lingwood, Eglinton Road, Rushmoor, Farnham, Surrey GU10 2DH. Please reference your payment with your name followed by AGM Dinner.

To reserve your tickets or for further information please e-mail the Honorary Secretary Tim Wilkes at timwilkes6@gmail.com with confirmation of the number of tickets you require and the names of your guests plus confirmation of the date your bank transfer was made or your cheque was posted.

BDA MERCHANDISE IS HERE



We have entered into an arrangement with Blackjack Design of Burnham on Crouch to provide a small select range of BDA branded merchandise. Blackjack Design have previously supplied quality branded clothing, outerwear and accessories to the World Championship and Edinburgh Cup regattas, so we know them well.

Our initial range of clothing for men and women comprises well-made polo shirts and soft shell

jackets. To the front they have an embroidered class insignia and on the back there is an embroidered full hull Dragon with sails hoisted, in outline. All items can be personalised. So for example you can have your boat details embroidered under the class insignia on the front and your sail number embroidered onto the mainsail on the back. Or you may choose a different design and script or to have none added, it is your choice.



The polo shirts are 100% cotton pique in white with dark blue and silver highlights on the arm cuffs and button tab. The styled jackets are dark blue for men and white for ladies. They each have silver highlight trim on all zips, with small orange darts at each wrist for an open or closed look. The jackets are hard wearing, warm without being too stuffy and useful both on board and ashore.

We were inundated with positive comments about the range when we modelled them during Cowes Week. You can place an order very easily via the BDA web site, under the 'About' tab. You will be automatically re-directed to the Blackjack Dragon page to complete your wishes and make your order.

Our latest addition to the range is a newly designed BDA tie. In navy blue with a self pattern, they're very smart indeed!



The Abersoch Fleet

Looking to 2015 - time to polish our act



Having built up to a fleet of fifteen Dragons since our first season in 2009, we are now mapping out 2015, our seventh year of Dragons in Abersoch Bay.

2014 included an excellent year of club racing. Jamie Peters, David Cummings and Rich Robinson annihilated all other teams and pretty much swept the board in *Yeah Baby*. Far from cheesing off the other teams, it really did set down the marker, driving other teams to push hard to improve. Julian Adams & David Coxon's *Njord* gained real traction with a steady improvement as the season progressed. George Davies' inclusion of Tim Saunders as co-owner delivered an impressive boost to their results, consistent and quick. Mike Budd's *Chinook* with Greebo and Neil Hampson ended their season with a bang; a shiny new mast arrived a couple of weeks later. Nick Whipp's constantly improving health has delivered constantly improving results with David & Barbara Miles in *Djinn*; Nick's team will probably be the ones to watch in 2015. The most improved performance of the season was

Rob Eldridge & Hugo Williamson's *Caramba*; they delivered some great results.

The Northern Championship was won by *Yeah Baby*. She beat the fastest visitors including IRL 176 *Phantom* with Peter Bowring, David Williams & Arthur Michigan, Claire Hogan's IRL 206 *Cloud* team including Hilary Williams, Simon Barter's very welcome *Bertie* team and Mike Budd's *Chinook*.

The Abersoch fleet took six teams to the Irish National Championships in Kinsale. This was a very well worthwhile effort as we want to strengthen the bond between the Wales and Ireland based fleets. Our fleet is already making plans to visit Ireland and support one of their 2015 regional championship events.

So let's look forward to 2015. We are pushing to make it an outstanding year. We have positioned the Northern Championship two weekends before the late June, early July Largs hosted Scottish Championship and Edinburgh Cup. We will have registration on Thursday 11th June, a total of six races Friday and

Saturday, with lift out Sunday 14th June first thing in the morning. Arrangements will be in place for south and east coast based boats to leave their yachts at M6 junction 16 at Knutsford on Sunday after the Northern for easy collection two weeks later on their way to Largs. Similarly, Irish boats can drop off at Bangor for an easy pick up on their journey to Scotland.

The Abersoch fleet plan to support the 2015 Edinburgh Cup at Largs in force. We would like to think we can help create a toe hold for Scotland to trigger a revived fleet, following the same 'start up' pattern as Abersoch. We recommend fledgling Scottish teams look to acquire fully maintained, low cost Abersoch boats. We now have a good fleet, we have caught the bug, and in turn we are ready to trade up.

The upshot is our apprenticeship into the Dragon fleet is drawing to a close. We have a pretty good idea how to prepare our boats and teams to compete in National fleets... my big mouth.

See you all in 2015!

Rob Riddell

DRAGONS ON THE ALDE

The Aldeburgh Dragon fleet endures. As last year, Mike and Monique Hayles represented the Club at out of Suffolk events. The Hayles/Gifford partnership is now down to "just" two boats, *Naiad* and *Basilisk*. Turnout during the season was thin, although three boats did get afloat for part of the summer, *Harkaway*, *Apache*, and *Kestrel*. Self-styled rock star Will Gibbon did occasional Wednesday night races with *Apache* and put on a master class in navigation, regularly managing to find previously uncharted bits of the riverbed. Matt Lingley on *Kestrel* was very committed and showed commendable enthusiasm, sailing with and without crew for Wednesdays. On one memorable outing he put on a bravura display by single-handedly getting his kite up and setting while the heavily manned cruisers were still faffing with sheets and guys.

The Regatta saw a full turnout of the Fleet. Patrick Gifford sailed the evergreen (but still blue) *Basilisk* to a well deserved win for the week, showing the new boats a clean transom and also winning the Vintage Cup. Rick Gillingham's strategy of leaving *Navaho*, fully rigged and ready to go over the winter paid off as he pipped Mike Hayles on *Naiad* for second place. Mike and Monique were clearly over-trained, having spent too much time at regattas on the Continent. Tim Hannon, crewed by his son Toby on board *Harkaway* had a flying week frequently getting amongst the plastics, (or white trash as they are known on the Alde) and even grabbing a famous second place on the final day. He convincingly won the Wooden Boat award and also the Handicap trophy.

It would appear that Aldeburgh is reverting to its historical role of being an inward looking fleet with scant interest in life outside our river. However there continues to be ongoing enthusiasm for sailing Dragons. The Gibbon family have rescued *Vana* from a barn in Essex and plan to restore this most iconic of Aldeburgh yachts to full trim over the next few winters. As offspring edge closer to financial self-sufficiency they are even taking over the helm from dads, so there is hope for the future.

Plans for next year are to try to get more out to race on Wednesday nights. Saturday racing seems to hold no appeal versus the reality of other things to do on the weekend. The main competition at AYC is the 40 strong Loch Long class where former Dragon helms, Simon Fulford, Rory Bowman, and James Mehew regularly appear at or near the front. For the time being we do not anticipate further defections, although Patrick has been spotted at the helm of his wife's Loch Long but assures us that is just to keep his hand in.

The excitement of professional crews has not impacted our fleet, but we continue to admire the glitz and glamour of the international circuit from our muddy base on the Alde. To repeat Patrick Gifford's annual challenge, if any of you feel like trashing your genoas with some short tacking on the Alde, you will be assured a warm welcome.

Rufus Gilday



Burnham Fleet Report

Racing lost due to too much wind – check!
Racing lost due to too little wind – check!
On water incidents to keep us amused in the bar after racing – check!
Occasional boat damage and injuries (luckily none serious) – check!
Visitors from afar and sailor travellers round the world – check!
A bit of partying – check!
Snow – not yet (thank goodness!)

Last season ended in style, with the fleet celebrating at the annual black tie dinner and enjoying a rendition of "Dragon Fleet Madness" by "Crusty, Spills, Trash and Not So Very Young" awarding the Clanger to the Page Boys for abandonment of their crew on the mooring buoy rather than the boat. After this highlight, the sailing concluded for the season with Nigel Cole as proud winner of the Peter Matthew Trophy; *Tsunami* used to belong to Peter Matthews, so a fitting winner indeed.

December saw the fleet muddying walking boots instead of boats with a 'route march' to have a pub lunch at The Ferry Boat in North Farnbridge, before retiring for a well-earned break from sailing. As Rob Campbell isn't that keen on taking a break, he headed down to Australia to compete in the Prince Phillip Cup (the Australian equivalent of our Edinburgh Cup) instead, where he managed a comfortable second place with boat and crew borrowed from our friend Sandy Anderson.

March saw the emergence of the fleet from hibernation. After a rigging lunch which was 50% successful (lunch was lovely, hail stopped play on the rigging!), the weather improved in time for the first racing of the season. Only four of the seven boats launched made the start, but were treated to perfect racing conditions in sunshine, which allowed a final check to make sure everything was attached and working as it should. It also gave the Page Boys a chance to show off their new toy, before the official launching ceremony for *Pageboy XI* – no, not their 11th Dragon or even their 11th boat, it's just the 11th one they've called *Pageboy*!

The first mini-series of the season took place just before Easter, with one welcome visitor, Nigel Kaula in *Anarchy*, joining the nine locals in close racing and testing tides. The following weekend was the first big event of the Dragon calendar, the Easter Regatta, which saw 15 Dragons, including four visiting boats from as far afield as Belgium, taking part in eight races split between club and committee boat starts in varying wind strengths and directions. Racing was certainly close with four different race winners by the end of the second day, *Storm*, *Avalanche*, *Quicksilver VI* and *Scorpio*. The weekend was however, not without incident, with our committee boat, Phoebe, sporting a sad face and a sticker saying "ouch" after a start line incident; a number of rather unconventional spinnaker drops (although no reports of landed fish indicates that trawling with a 'large brightly coloured net' isn't ideal); a few dizzy competitors from doing turns after the strong tides resulted in misjudged mark approaches and Roger the RIB earning free drinks as his services were called on to pull competitors off the mud. The last laugh was, however, generated by a local competitor who was spotted nudging Fairway 1 on the way home! On shore, the party went on with a Brugse Zot party hosted by Xavier Vanneste in honour of his brand new dragon, BEL82 *Herbie*, a bistro and dancing on Saturday night and Pimms followed by an excellent regatta dinner on Sunday night, plus all the chocolate eggs and bunny ears that are required at Easter! At the end of the weekend, *Avalanche's* consistency was rewarded with first overall, *Quicksilver VI* in second and the first visitor, *Rackham*, finished in third.



'Try a Dragon', always a popular event, was a great day for showing interested people what a Dragon looked like, and how attractive the club balcony is in good weather. Unfortunately, not a breath of wind meant that no sailing was possible – fingers crossed for more success next year!

The Burnham travellers were out and about in force again this season, with six teams heading south to the Edinburgh Cup in Lymington at the beginning of July. *Avalanche*, *Ganador*, *Hands Off*, *Page Boy XI*, *Quicksilver VI* and *Storm* all featured in the top ten in one race or another but the prize winners were *Tigger* with Tim Taviner as crew 2nd overall, *Avalanche* with Mark and Mandy Wade and Duncan Grindley 7th overall and 2nd Corinthian and *Storm* with Jono, David and Lyn Brown 11th overall and winners of the Jordan Bell for the highest placed boat without a top five result.

August saw *Ganador* and *Seafire* competing in Cowes Week (plus a few guest crew). A number of boats also headed across the Channel. *Tsunami*, *Flame Again* and *Quicksilver VI* went to Belgium for the Brugse Zot and Open Belgian Championships, where they were joined by *Danish Blue*, while the Tigger team in *Alfie*, headed further south to the French Nationals in Cazaux.

Despite all these travellers, Burnham Week (luckily minus the torrential downpour we'd experienced last year) was well attended, with ten boats taking part over the Bank Holiday weekend. Midweek saw five boats racing, with a well-deserved win going to *Humoresque*, managing to sneak past *Beauty and the Beast* after the course was shortened.

More partying followed with the annual fleet party held in autumn this year in the RCYC boat shed. Luckily the torrential downpour of the afternoon cleared in time for 60 sailors and friends to enjoy a hog roast and music provided by Aiesha Pease. While some took to the dance floor, a small group enthusiastically adopted Chair Dancing instead.

Unfortunately, the Pat Burnett Trophy for the crew's race, traditionally held the same weekend as the party did suffer due to the weather, and had to be decided on a single race (as is typical in sailing, there was too much wind on Saturday and barely enough of Sunday). The trophy was defended successfully by *Quicksilver VI*, helmed by Jonathan Hill this year.

The party was closely followed by the cancellation of racing for the weekend (unheard of though that may be) as a large party of Burnham Dragon sailors headed over to Hamburg to take part in a team racing event at the NRV's impressive new club. After a start to the weekend that was hardly incident free (road works, passports, thunderstorms and missing luggage all featured), the team made it in time for the scheduled racing, which was upset by the light and shifty winds. Despite some good individual results, Burnham was resoundingly beaten by the NRV team on their home waters, but all enjoyed the excellent hospitality of the NRV and we look forward to hosting them for a rematch in Burnham next year.

Sadly, the fleet has been unable to race the scheduled four mini-series, as May had to be cancelled due to too much wind and September eventually got cancelled as well, this time as there was no wind. We did however manage to complete a second mini-series in October in another day of close competition, run by Edwin and his team.

As I finalise this report, the fleet still has a few weekends of racing to go plus the end of season dinner to look forward to. While many of the fleet have had a mention, those stalwarts on the Crouch, without whom we could not be complete and racing would be a lot poorer, certainly deserve a mention – our oldest and only wooden Dragon, *Logie*; the boat that probably completes more club races each year than any other, *Hat Trick*; *Furie Jacket*; and the *Magic* team, who are celebrating a joint age of 200 between them this year. I would also like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has helped to make this season successful, as we look forward to more action packed sailing in 2015, when we would love to welcome visitors to join us on our much loved "muddy little ditch" for Easter Regatta (or at any other time you may be in our area!)

Rene Nel



The 2014 Edinburgh Cup, Lymington



Photos on this page at opposite: top LPD Aerial Imagery; opposite bottom: Rupert Holmes

The Edinburgh Cup at Lymington, supported by Aberdeen Asset Management, served up another tantalisingly close regatta raced in challenging conditions.

Graham and Julia Bailey, crewed by Keith Tippell and Will Heritage, won both the Edinburgh Cup and the Corinthian title, with a day to spare. Lawrie Smith took second overall and Quentin Strauss third. His top result on the final day saw Sawyer retain fourth overall, two points adrift of Strauss. In the Corinthian Division a 10th place was enough for Mark Wade to take second overall, while Eric Williams secured third.

"There's something really special about the Edinburgh Cup," said a delighted Graham Bailey, who won the event on his 13th attempt. "It's an iconic trophy, one of the three classics in British yachting, along with the Burton Cup and Prince of Wales Cup. I won the Burton Cup

when I sailed National 12s and I don't sail International 14s, so I'll never get the Price of Wales Cup, but it really means a lot to have won this."

Going in to the final day, Laurie Smith having craned out, two helms dominated the front of the fleet – Ted



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Sawyer and Tom Vernon. They were never more than a few seconds apart until the end of the final beat. Quentin Strauss's *Rumours* started the day as the only boat that could beat Smith into second place. Strauss had shown good speed earlier in the week, but wasn't able to pull away from the pack and finished eighth, just hanging onto third place overall, two points ahead of Sawyer. Vernon's *Excite* led at the first top mark, but having been



OCS on two occasions earlier in the week he was not in contention for a podium spot. The leaders split tacks for much of the last leg and it was only close to the finish that it was clear that Sawyer had extended his lead in the light airs to win. Sawyer, an 81-year-old from Captiva

YC in Florida, has been sailing for less than 30 years, but certainly doesn't allow age to slow him down. As soon as his boat reached the dock he zoomed off to dinner and a show in London, leaving crew member Martin 'Stavros' Payne to pack up.

The Crew's Trophy was won by Rory Paton sailing *Ecstatic*, with Lisa Guy second on *Quicksilver IV* and the Bailey's 13-year-old Bowman and genoa trimmer, Will Heritage, third. Heritage also won the Under 30 division - a trophy that has the potential to have his name engraved on it for many years to come. The overall results of the Chairman's Decanter handicap series, run for the first time this year, saw the winner Selina Dicker with three points, with Mike Foster second on four points and Jenny Stutley third with seven points.

At the prize giving Graham Bailey praised the race organisation at the Royal Lymington Yacht Club, saying: "...we owe special thanks to PRO Roger Wilson and his team, who made use of every inch of Christchurch Bay to give us great courses." BDA Chairman Ron James thanked sponsors Aberdeen Asset Management, Pantaenius, Harken, Zhik and Williams Shipping. After a successful 2014 event, the class is enthusiastically looking forward to 2015s Edinburgh Cup in Largs, Scotland.



2015 The Scottish Championships

27-29 June & the 2015

Edinburgh Cup

30 June-4 July

at Largs in Scotland

- Come and enjoy this scenic venue
- Comprehensive shore-side facilities at the Scottish Sailing Institute • Wonderful marina with pontoon mooring at Largs Yacht Haven
- Full social programme at the welcoming Largs Sailing Club
- Only a one mile sail out to the fabulous racing area • Ample car and trailer parking, boats can be left free of charge if you wish to extend your stay in Scotland

See www.edinburghcup.britishdragons.org for full details

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**Lonton
& Gray**

I think this season can be summed up as hot and windless; very good for topping up the tan but a bit disappointing for anybody who likes sailing in more than twelve knots. We should have known that this year was going to be different when sailing in shorts and tee-shirt in mid-May and in fact the sea temperature was up to 19 degrees centigrade by late June, usually that temperature is not seen until late July. The high temperature of the water had a significant impact on the wind, as we will discuss in a moment. There weren't too many movements on the boat front except *Anarchy* (nee *Dilemma*) had given up class racing to become a trailer sailor, only to be replaced by Oliver and Francesca Morgan with *Christiana*; and poor Mike Issais was confined to the bar after a painful cycling injury. We were also joined by Hamble based *BBB* for the early part of the season, in the build up to the Edinburgh Cup, as well as for Cowes Week and saw a lot more of *Chime II* as well. Finally Bill Daniels and Steve Richardson arrived, with GBR800 *Corinthian Spirits*, just in time for Cowes Week.

Even though numbers were only slightly up, the turn-out was definitely improved, although that might have been down to the unusual high temperatures. We opened proceedings on the last weekend in April, as usual, with a couple of club races in blustery conditions, which fitted with normal spring-like conditions in the Solent but the following Bank Holiday weekend was more an omen of future outcomes with the first day lost due to no wind. The weekend of the Commodores Cup was one exception to the light winds when it gusted 40 knots, but that was the last "real" wind to be seen in 2014. Even though we lost 50% of the races, the Spring Series (26th April – 18th May) continued and was won by *Ecstatic*, with *Furious* in second, followed by *Christiana*.

The racing continued through May into June with a series of champagne sailing days with a little bit more wind and more races completed. There was a welcome shake up in the results for the Mid-Season Series (May 31st to June 29th) with *Chime II* taking first place, followed by *Christiana* in second, and *The Old Bailey* making their first placing in 3rd. This is a great result for *Chime* with Jenny Stutley and Richard Cullen taking turns to helm or crew, it's nice to see Richard back club racing and Jenny having some well-deserved success!

Solent Fleet Report

Some of the Solent fleet ventured to Aarhus in Denmark, in late May, to participate in the Silver Dragon team racing event. The Solent sailors were representing the Royal Yacht Squadron captained by Graham Bailey. Needless to say the weather was hot with very light winds, the hospitality was marvellous and everybody fell in love with Aarhus the town. Sadly the racing was not quite as successful with the Danes breaking the RYS winning streak, pushing them into second place. The one consolation was that Bill Daniels was able to perfect playing the ukulele. The next event will be held in Cazaux.

Six Solent boats ventured to Lymington to participate in the Edinburgh Cup. The Baileys made a clean sweep with a day to spare, ably assisted by Will Heritage and Keith Toppel (or Tripple as he is now known – following the celebrations), winning both the cup and the Corinthian trophy. *Ecstatic* was 8th and *Bertie* a creditable 9th. I'm sure that this will be covered in much more detail elsewhere.

Meanwhile the Summer Series (July 5th to August 31st) opened, with a minor event somewhere in the middle called Cowes Week. The light winds continued and we lost 50% of the series again, but somehow it did not seem so bad when a good lunch sitting in the sun at the Royal Corinthian was the alternative activity. *Christiana* won the series, followed by *The Old Bailey* in second and *Furious* in third. It was nice to see Oliver and Francesca Morgan being rewarded for their commitment during their first season of Dragon ownership.

The South Coast Championships were held over the weekend 19th – 21st July and once again it was a hot but light affair. I won't cover this here now because there is a more detailed article elsewhere in the magazine but would like to congratulate Eric Williams on his fourth win for this event.

The wind came out to play for Cowes Week and we had varied conditions from almost drifting to a couple of Force 5s; wind at last! We had 16 participants this year, which is a steady improvement over our low point of 12 entries in 2010 and there were four visitors including three regulars (*Naiad*, *Ganador*, and *Seafire*) and a newcomer Andrew Vernon

sailing his son Tom's *Excite*. After many appearances in the top three in previous years Gavia Wilkinson-Cox finally took the top spot, ably assisted by Mark Hart and Tim Tavinor in *Jerboa*. Cowes Week is always a tough week to win because the competition is intense, and good Yottigation is paramount. Gavia had to beat Eric Williams, The Baileys, and Stav who are all frequent winners in previous years. Socially it was an excellent year with seventy people attending the Class dinner at the RCYC on Sunday, with a "Sensational Seventies" theme. Thanks as always to Mrs Pay for all of her hard work organising the dinner and decorating the dining room, and additional thanks to "DJ Dave and the New Musical Experience" for the post dinner dancing. You should have seen the outfits.

The final series to be completed is the Late Series (6th September to 12th October) and once again we had plenty of sunshine and high temperatures but no wind. We lost 50% of the races again but *Furious* managed to take the series, with *Chime* in second and *The Old Bailey* in third. The majority of our races are excellent "round the cans" racing but six weekends are dedicated to windward/leeward races on the Bramble Bank, which is treated as a series within a series. *Christiana* triumphed in these races, followed by *Furious* and *The Old Bailey* in third.

So, you are all asking yourselves who won the overall series? Congratulations go to our new champion *Christiana*, not bad for a first season! Returning to the conditions this year this is my short analysis:

- 1) The prevailing wind was a north-easterly due to the high over Scandinavia (which gave us our high temperatures)
- 2) The sea was warm very early due to a mild winter and high temperatures early in the season

In conclusion we had light north-easterlies with not enough temperature differentials to produce a stable sea breeze early enough to race. North easterlies are very unstable winds in the Solent; a bit like sailing on a lake.

Owen Pay



South Coast Championships

at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, Cowes

demonstration of how to lead a race from start to finish; with the rest of us scrapping over the minor places with *Ecstatic* second and *Aimee* in third.

The second race of the day was sailed in similar conditions but *Aimee* showed their characteristic lightning speed to win this time, with *Full Speed* in second, and *Excite* in third place. For the third race of the day the south westerly sea breeze appeared to have filled in and it looked like some wind stability at last! The PRO set us a standard length course for the first round followed by a long second beat to finish at the second windward mark and, more importantly after a long day, closer to home. There were three OCS boats including *Aimee* and *Jerboa*, who both returned and had a long climb to get back to the front. And with *Ecstatic* in first and *Full Speed* in third place there was all to play for. The 'stable' south westerly then showed it had a few tricks up its sleeve with massive holes on the right hand side of the long last beat; *Ecstatic* held their nerve to retain first with *Full Speed* moving into second and *Aimee* had a magnificent last minute charge to pip *Furious* into third place.

After three mentally tiring races the fleet decided to call it a day and headed home; abandoning any prospect of running the lost race from Saturday. After four races there were four boats who could still win the event with *Full Speed* on five points, *Jerboa* and *Aimee* on seven points and *Ecstatic* on eight points with discard. The fleet had a wonderful dinner at the RCYC and all were focussed on the final two races on the following day.

For the final day the wind was back in the north-west, at approximately six knots again, but the sea was absolutely flat. Once again the tide said left but the wind was hinting at a right shift from Southampton Water so which way to go? Yet again *Jerboa* absolutely dominated the race with a great start and conservative middle left beat; the only time *Jerboa* was under threat was on the last short beat when the wind de-stabilised

allowing *Ecstatic* to look threatening. But *Ecstatic* had their own problems holding off a turbo-charged *Aimee*, who they only beat by one second in the end. That one second would end up quite pivotal for the final result.

The wind became a bit less stable for the last race with the event still wide open but *Jerboa* was in a strong position. The new guys in *Excite* had a blistering first beat going hard right and seemed untouchable, but the wind dropped on the run and strengthened from each side of the course leaving *Excite* in a hole in the middle with the usual four protagonists attacking from each side. The second beat was dominated by tide; there was a steady foul stream east on the right hand side whereas the tide was doing the swirly transition thing on the left. To complicate matters the wind appeared to be coming from the right and tempted *Aimee*, *Full Speed* and *Jerboa* to that side of the course, but *Ecstatic* stuck to the left and sailed round the front of *Excite* and the other three contenders for the series. *Ecstatic* was first round the windward mark and managed to hold on to the lead to the finish to clinch the series.

At the prize-giving Eric Williams crewed by Matt Walker and Owen Pay (AKA Tim Tavinor, who had to go back to work) collected the prize and tribute was paid to the hospitality of the RCYC, as well as the fabulous weather that blessed the event. Special thanks were given to our PRO, Gill Smith and her race team who managed a fantastic series of races in very difficult conditions.

Gavia Wilkinson-Cox then pointed out that eight of the twelve boats racing had female crew and they were all called to the front to collect a bottle of champagne, courtesy of Gavia and Julia Bailey. A great weekend of quality racing and marvellous socials.



Owen Pay

It is always a pleasure to read other Dragon fleets reports so I hope I can make the Medway one similar. We started the year with a supper and AGM where it was voted to have earlier starts to the Saturday racing and thus longer races. We also decided to trial trackers fitted to our boats.

The start of the season was marked by a coach trip to France for a splendid lunch overlooking the English Channel. My grateful thanks go to Bruce and Pepita for their hard work organising this event and trialling the trip numerous times to check that we had the correct balance of shopping, eating and drinking!

The overall winner this year is Bruce Boyd and Jono Ratnage in *Fit Chick* followed by Chris Brierley and David Harris in *OCD* and Wendy Howland in *Whistle*. Sometimes winners just happen. This year for example *Moonshine* made a guest appearance on the river for one race with Jasper Wright at the helm and emphatically won. Our oldest boat *Royalist* also made a few appearances much to the delight of the fleet. The 2014 series has gone well although the number of boats sailing each week has been variable. Winds have been difficult at times but fun was had by all.

We were delighted to be joined by a new Medway boat *Roka* with Andy Eakin at the helm. Edwin and Sue Hannant have embarked on the second leg of their world tour so this year they have left *Gandalf* at home in her barn.

We missed only one Saturday race due to lack of wind. We finished one race down river on count back due to lack of wind when *Dax* with Mike Lutener and Johnny Walker aboard took the opportunity to be towed back by the beautiful Thames Barge the *Edith May*.



As usual in addition to our points racing on the Medway, we also enjoyed windward leeward races. Philip Clarabut made an excellent race officer and provided his cruiser as committee boat. My grateful thanks to Philip, Alex Booth and Sue Harris for making this event a success. We had an excellent regatta won by Stewart and Catriona Coltart with Peter Booth in *Valkyrie*. As last year the fleet took part in the Medway River Festival. Sadly the wind was so light that a certain number of collisions occurred around the start line. Fortunately no great damage was done but my boat was seen haring down the river on the tide, not necessarily pointing in the correct direction. *Fit Chick* won this event which could be considered a version of Dragon pooh sticks.

Commodore's Day was held in good weather with excellent food supplied by the galley and a great deal of fun was had. *OCD* was triumphant with David Harris and Chris Brearly but maybe Robert Sheppard and Don Macmillan in *Esoteric* had the moral victory going from second to last but managing to rescue a small child on a Topper, who had become entwined in a cruiser.

Social events included four casual suppers which were all well attended. In July the Kenny Ball trophy was raced for and the winning crew that day were Bruce Boyd and Guy Clarabut. In early August we had the Saturday morning crews race (with a regular crew helming), which was won by Edward Hobart Smith in *Valkyrie*. The following day the annual Dragon picnic was held in Stangate Creek, now the location for a lot of the filming of Timothy Spall and Mike Leigh's 'Mr Turner'. This occasion was enabled by the friends of the Medway Dragon class, with many of them turning out in cruisers. Our grateful thanks go to Phillip Clarabut and Alex Booth, the Ridsdill Smiths and Wrights for supporting this event. *OCD* won the race to Stangate Creek. The Medway Dragon fleet was the recipient of a new trophy for the race, kindly donated by Toby Atack.

Sailing has now finished and we have already enjoyed our traditional

bike ride in Romney Marsh (photo opposite).

In November we enjoy Medway Yacht Club fireworks, then Dragon Christmas festivities including a trip to the Chatham pantomime (Aladdin).

During the year we trialled the use of radio trackers on the river with advice from Toby Atack, having seen their use in Weymouth. We have decided to pursue their use next year.

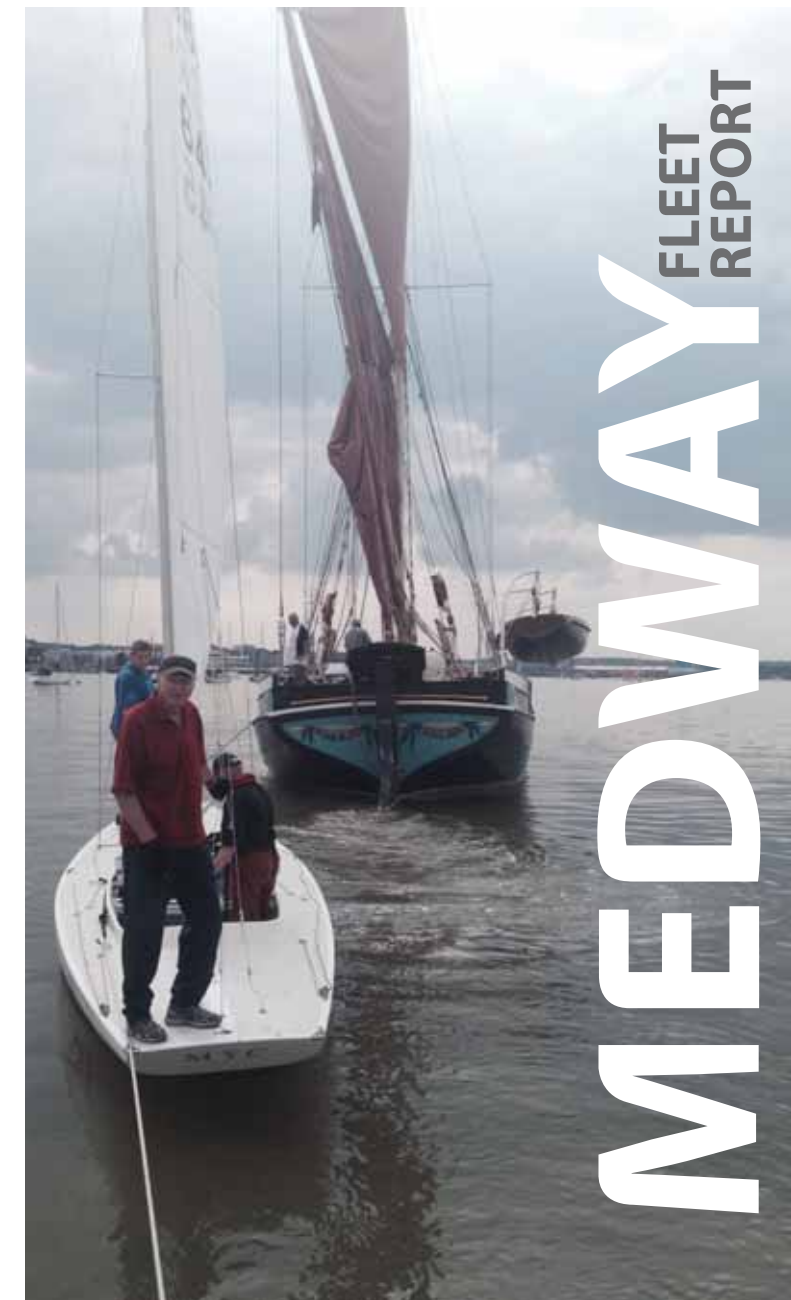
Our AGM and prize giving dinner is held in January as was agreed at our last AGM, the former occurring shortly after the BDA dinner. The January AGM sees the end of my time as Medway Dragon Captain. Lizzie and I have enjoyed every minute of this honour and know that my successor Bruce Boyd will equally enjoy the role.

Julian and Clare have taken their Dragon to European climes at the tail end of the season and we are proud that they are much more influential in BDA matters.

There have been a few boating problems on the river recently and one I thought worth reporting. A dredger came down river in dense fog during a night three weeks ago and severely damaged a number of boats moored in the river and their buoys. Fortunately no Dragons were involved. We feel very sorry for the owners of those boats involved. Despite this I truly believe that the Medway offers the best tidal sailing less than an hour away from London. We always welcome new or visiting Dragon sailors.

I know that all sailors will enjoy a small break over Christmas and during the winter but will look forward to the new season and we at Medway wish everybody a fantastic 2015 sailing season.

John Shilling



A small but perfectly formed fleet of 12 Dragons entered the South Coasts over the weekend 19th-21st July. Two races were scheduled for Saturday 19th, but this always looked optimistic with rain and thunderstorms forecast for the day. Our esteemed PRO, Gill Smith, managed to get the first race away after a short delay. The wind was an unstable 6 knots from the ESE with two rounds of a windward/leeward course of approximately 90 minutes, tidally it made sense to go left towards the North Channel and Hill Head. The leaders to the first mark went furthest left and there were five leaders very close together followed by the rest of the fleet after a short gap.

On the first run the left paid marginally due to slightly more pressure allowing *Full Speed* to break through and take the inside berth at the bottom mark, with *Furious* and *Ecstatic* alongside. The second beat was dominated by a right shift which allowed *Ecstatic* through *Full Speed*. At the final top mark the same five were still leading the pack but *Aimee* had taken a small lead. The run was dominated by an aggressive attempt to gain/hold the inside berth by the top 4 allowing *Furious* and *Naiad* to join the leading pack in the rapidly destabilizing wind. The short beat to the start/finish line showed that the wind was on the left hand side of the beat allowing *Full Speed* and *Jerboa* to slip pass *Ecstatic* and *Aimee*; the battle had commenced.

The wind had dropped below 4 knots so the PRO rightly delayed, hoping for some stability, but eventually we conceded defeat and headed home for beer after 15:30. We joined the XODs for a BBQ at the RCYC where the food was up to the normal standard, and basically enjoyed the lovely warm evening that we have got used to this summer.

Day Two meant a 10:55 warning signal so an earlier start and at 08:00 there was not much wind about. Fortunately the forecast north westerly appeared and we were able to start the first of three races only five minutes late, with 6 knots. Going left looked attractive tidally but there was the variable of the wind being channelled down Southampton Water. Anyway the wind went right leaving the tide seekers on the left struggling to get out of their corner. *Jerboa* set off initially but did not overcook it and carried out a masterful

The Classic Dragon Scene

The Classic Dragon scene in Britain rather resembles a flock of ducks, paddling hard under water but without much visible sign of activity. The Classic Championship took place within the Aldeburgh Regatta and was won easily by *Harkaway*, sailed by Tim Hannon, from *Kestrel*, sailed by Matt Lingley. They were the only two to compete but *Harkaway* showed much improved form in the Dragon fleet as a whole to finish fourth overall and win the personal handicap series. She is a 1947 Nunn boat and has been extensively and lovingly restored and improved, benefiting this year from a new (and un-sleeved!) mast, courtesy of the chairman of the BDA, and some new(er) sails. In the Alde at least she is now highly competitive and notably points very high, a great advantage in a river. Elsewhere Ivan Bradbury's pair of classics, *Debutant* (ex-*Ratpack*) and *Blue Haze* distinguished themselves with wins in the European Championship and the Regates Royales and the ex-British *Troika*, now owned by Pieter Heerema, won the Dutch Championship and placed high in other major events.

At a more mundane level both *Harkaway* and *Kestrel* figured regularly in the Aldeburgh Wednesday evening racing. Alan Dale's *Snap* raced in Falmouth Week and Dick Rycroft's *Logie* appeared for her 55th consecutive year of racing, always on an East Coast estuary. I am sure that others did in fact race elsewhere but my spies have failed to report their sightings. Internationally there are now a number of events for Classic Dragons, particularly on the European lakes and in Italy.

There is continued activity on the restoration front and a number of boats have changed hands. *Galax II* has been sold by Peter Thomas and is now in Hamburg. *Vana* has been bought by the Gibbon family who owned her previously for several years in Aldeburgh and the intention is to restore this historic, Edinburgh

Cup winning boat to her proper state. Martin Payne (Stavros) has bought *Rapier*, a 1956 Pedersen and Thuesen boat, and moved her from refugee status under a motorway bridge to the luxury of David Heritage's yard. A number of boats are available on the market ranging from the top end with *Josephine*, a Pedersen and Thuesen Gold Cup winner, lovingly restored by Petticrows, to *Karen II*, another restored Edinburgh Cup winner, to various "projects" which are nevertheless capable of reappearing as attractive boats either for racing or for cruising.

There is unambiguous evidence that fully restored and revitalised Classic Dragons are capable of competing successfully at the very top of the class internationally. Interestingly, while the boats in question were undoubtedly very competitive when new, they were by no means the only winners of that time and many boats should be capable, like *Harkaway*, *Logie* and *Snap* of giving an excellent account of themselves, possibly in surprisingly serious company.

Next year the BDA Classic Championship will be within Falmouth Week, which is from Friday 7th to Sunday 16th August. Alan Dale, the owner of *Snap*, is keen to welcome as many Classic Dragons as possible to the excellent sailing and shore facilities of Falmouth. I know that travelling, and particularly trailers, can be a problem for Classics which often don't travel much. If help is required in this area please contact me and I will try to mobilise help from the class.

Finally, I am sure that there is more going on on the Classic front than reaches me. I would really encourage anyone involved with or interested in Classics to keep in touch in order to develop a wider awareness of these lovely boats.

Patrick Gifford

East Coast Championships

Friday evening saw a flurry of activity in the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, Burnham-on-Crouch with registration and weighing in of the 20 competitors in the Dragon East Coast Championship. Thirteen local entries were joined by five visitors from around the UK, BEL82 *Herbie* from Belgium and JAP50 *Yewis II* from Japan.

Competitors were treated to typical Burnham racing with plenty of close quarters tacking against the tide, which resulted in a big spread of the fleet across the course. The wind remained relatively constant and no general recalls were required, so all three races were completed in quick succession, which meant the fleet managed to get back on shore before the hail and thunder hit. By the end of the first day GBR722 *Avalanche* (Mark Wade, Mandy Wade and Andrew Norden) were leading with a 2nd, 1st and 3rd, followed by GBR708 *Rumours* (Quentin Strauss, Pedro Andrade and Mike Claxton) in second with two firsts and an 8th due to an unexpected swim by the helmsman in the second race. A daily prize giving was held to

award glassware for the day's racing, which was followed by a draw for prizes provided by Harken and Marinestore. At the dinner that evening, the Japanese visitors stated that they felt like they'd done three years' worth of tacking in one day.

Sunday morning dawned with more sunshine, very similar conditions to Saturday and a further three races scheduled. The day was not entirely incident free with a number of groundings, plenty of close encounters, a few competitors on the wrong side of the start line in the final race, and an unfortunate incident which left BEL82 and JAP50 with their masts tangled, but despite this, all three races were completed with ease. After race 5, the discard kicked in, which left GBR722 just 2 points clear of GBR708 going into the final race. After a very close battle, and some tactical manoeuvring, *Rumours* managed to sail *Avalanche* back to third and thus into first, leaving him the overall winner on count back.

The event concluded with the prize giving dinner on Sunday evening. After a lovely

meal and some light entertainment in the form of a poem from "Roger the Rib", it was time to move on to another daily draw for more goodies from Marinestore and a spinnaker pole from Petticrows. After thank yous to the craning team, registration team, the mark layers and the race team, it was time to move onto the prize giving. The East Coast Championship trophy was awarded to GBR708 *Rumours* (Quentin Strauss, Pedro Andrade and Mike Claxton), with GBR722 *Avalanche* (Mark and Mandy Wade and Andrew Norden) in second overall, also winning the trophy for first Corinthian. Third place (and second Corinthian) went to GBR788 *Quicksilver VI* (Rob Campbell, Jonathan Hill and Lukasz Malissa). A big thank you to Waples Wines and Blackjack Design for providing prizes for these competitors, and Marinestore, Petticrows and Harken for providing daily draw prizes and Aberdeen Asset Management for their sponsorship through the BDA.

Rene Nel

K144 Valhalla & K145 Clare, both Camper & Nicholson's from 1947, together with another unidentified Dragon, battle it out on the River Crouch at Burnham.



Dragon changes in the last 20 years



When I was asked to write this article it took a while before it sank in that in actual fact, yes, I have been racing Dragons for just over 20 years, firstly as an amateur and more recently, for 17 years now, as a professional. It all started in Torquay, where I was teaching at the local boys grammar school. At the Royal Torbay Yacht Club in 1992 I was asked if I would helm a Dragon for a friend of mine from my home town of Salcombe, in the annual Torbay Regatta. Although I had a National Solo dinghy title under my belt along with numerous Flying Fifteen and Salcombe Yawl event wins, the thought of helming a large keel boat was certainly a challenge I relished and I took to it immediately. Not only did we win that Torbay Regatta, but in 1993 Poul-Ricard Hoj-Jensen teamed me up with the lovely Anne Garrett from America, who was looking for a helm for her recently purchased Dragon Lady, a 1991 Petticrow.

After a few open meetings and a little practice Anne and I, along with my school sailing captain, Adrian Stanislaus, set off for the 1993 Cowes Week. With the Solent tides all new to a West

Country boy, followed by a collision with the Commodore of the Royal Yacht Squadron (Peter Nicholson) in the first race and then, to cap it all, a DSO it came as a great surprise to us that we ended up winning the Week! Looking back I think we all thought the pressure was off to get a good result overall, so we sailed without fear, enjoying every day. Those days in Cowes it was all mainly amateur sailing, with boat builders such as Poul-Ricard having a slight edge, (apart from the fact he had won two Olympic gold medals), mixing it with Andy Cassells and Eric Williams,



who all sailed brilliantly with their local crew each weekend, enjoying every minute. As we all know Poul-Richard was and is the master, his skills and knowledge are legendary. The boats were all very well maintained but a suit of sails needed to last a season and most had antifouling as they were kept on swinging moorings most of the time. In Cowes the moorings were open to severe weather, like many locations and it was not uncommon to hear of Dragons sinking overnight. With no automatic bilge pumps any pitching would let water in through the spinnaker hatch. Eventually if conditions did not improve the Dragon would begin to sink, leaving an owner with the nightmare of re-floating or an expensive insurance claim.

During the rest of the 1990's the Dragon Class went from strength to strength, mainly due to the hard work and promotion of Poul-Richard and Sophia at Petticrows. Boressens in Denmark were also building boats, but Petticrows had the majority of the market and were making things happen! For me I was able to continue sailing these beautiful boats thanks to two generous owners; Anne Garrett *Dragon Lady* and David Hall *Flame Again*, who allowed me to helm for them and win

many North, East and South Coast Championships. My major international breakthrough came in 1999, when I won the Princess Sofia Trophy in Palma de Mallorca, crewed by Michi Lip and Martin Dazler, in a fleet of 42 boats that included Poul-Richard, the late Glen Foster, Harm Muller Sprier with Vincie Hoesch and many other top names. By now the class had more professionals, who were mainly crewing and helping to raise the racing standard to a higher level. We also had a fantastic World Championships in Martinique during the Christmas period in 1999, organised primarily by Sophia's son Adrian Patton. It brought together the whole world of Dragon sailors and proved that these boats could be transported and raced anywhere on this planet. It was a fantastic event.

With the boats staying mainly on trailers during the week and only launched for weekend races, there became less need for antifouling. Sailors would take pride in their gel-coat boats, giving a good polish to the hull just as it was craned in. Over the years we have also seen the international fixture list grow on the European and indeed world circuit, offering a wide choice of events and the opportunity for sailors to sail the whole year round. With a full winter programme in both Cannes and Cascias, it's now possible to sail nearly every week of the year! In 2014 I have participated in 32 events, winning in La Baule, Belgium and Lake Cazaux. I believe that shows I nearly have the hang of it!

With many new boats still being built each year and a lot of older boats being restored, the Dragon fleet is no doubt the top One Design keelboat in the world. I personally now own six Dragons, with my latest acquisition being one of the older Pedersen & Thuesen boats. I found her under a motorway bridge in Devon and realised it was a 1956 boat from Torquay that I had raced against in my first event back in 1992. As I knew its history I just had to buy it, so it is now being lovingly restored on the Isle of Wight by David Heritage and Trevor

Pearce. The boat *Rapier* was originally bought by John Day and called *Scimitar*, as new she was all varnished and won Cowes Week in 1956 and was 4th in the Edinburgh Cup. When she was sold to Norman Vanscolina of Torquay, she was re-named *Rapier* and as the wood started to show signs of ageing, subsequently painted red. It is my dream to return her to her former glory but there is a long way to go...

Regarding international events I wanted to mention Douarnenez and the great Louis Urvois' vision to make his small home town in Brittany come alive each May Bank Holiday. Louis started off his Grand Prix's in 2000 and through various sponsors offered a brand new Dragon on a Harbeck trailer as a lottery prize. This was pure genius as Douarnenez is now the premier Grade 1 event of the year and will be Louis' Legacy forever... But all the organisers of both major and smaller Championships all work hard to give the visiting sailors the very best both on and off the water.

Those of us within the IDA try hard to keep a healthy balance between Professionalism and Corinthian, offering equal opportunities to all sailors, both young and old.

It's great to see younger blood coming into the class with more and more teenagers and 20 year olds racing with parents and friends. Likewise it's terrific to see 81 year old Ted Sawyer (USA) and 85 year old Gordon Ingate (AUS) out there doing their stuff at the front end of the fleet. The Dragon holds no boundaries and is a Keel Boat with Elegance and Class. I sometimes wonder if Johan Anker only knew back in 1929 what joy and pleasure his design would give to so many sailors all over the world, he would have died a happy man... which on reflection, I am quite sure he did.

Higher, Faster, Longer...

Stavros



British Dragon Builders

by Tim Wilkes

Following on from my article in the last edition of the BDA Magazine about the beautifully built Pedersen & Thuesen Dragons (more at www.pedersentandthuesen.com) I thought it would be interesting to have a look at which boat builders in Great Britain have turned their hand to building our yachts in wood.

Over the years there must have been many yards attracted to the lines and popularity of the Dragon. Some yards built only one or two, whilst others developed a name for themselves and turned out many more. I have endeavoured to identify most of these yards, but am happy to have any omissions pointed out to me! For a handful of yards I have been unable to track down any information. I do not pretend to have it all right, but I hope I have come close to it; again, I'm happy to hear from anyone who has additional information.

McGruer

Location: Clynder, Scotland

Dragons built: 46

Years: 1936-1951

The first yard to build Dragons in the 1930s; indeed, UK Dragon number 1 *Ta-Yen* was built by them in 1938 for Mr ASL Young. However, by one of those quirks that are now lost to the mists of time, the yard had already built numbers 2 to 7 and 9 to 11 in 1936! The last Dragon we know of built by them was *Bintyra* (K239) for Mr JM Miller & Mr D Moffat in 1951. The McGruers moved from Tighnabraich to Hattonburn at Clynder in 1914 to establish themselves for the first time in their own yard. Having access to powered hand tools slung from overhead cables must have made the work less arduous and uncomfortable. One of the most useful tools was a spindle cutter set in a workbench, on which planks could be cut out to conform to a pattern. This was operational when the yard started to build Dragons. They would cut complete sets of planks for a Dragon, three copies of each plank, so that they were always left with patterns for the next boat. The hulls were planked up on standard moulds, an early version of mass production. Although innovative, McGruers did not try building boats



upside down, which is much easier than right way up. Shadow moulds would be set up in traditional



fashion, the hulls planked up, then the stringers and any steamed frames put in. Old-growth pitch pine, which is excellent for hull planking, was imported from Canada up to 1939, when supplies stopped during WW II and did not resume thereafter. Enormous teak and mahogany logs, up to four feet square, would arrive by sea and would be rendered into workable boards at Gilmour & Aitken's yard in Jamestown. Around the time the boats were built the workforce would have numbered about thirty permanent workers, local residents and usually the family of older employees. In spring local painters and labourers would swell the ranks to deal with fitting out the fleet of racing and cruising boats that wintered at the yard. Many of these were paid hands on the yachts. Although conditions must have been hard, working through the winter in sheds only partly protected from the weather, the workforce is reputed to have been extremely happy. When a boat was reaching an interesting stage everyone would be desperate to get in to work in the morning. Of course at the same time ship-building in the Clyde yards was going on entirely in the open, so perhaps McGruer's men felt themselves lucky. Both types of activity involved exciting creative work which sometimes had to substitute for proper pay. McGruers' workforce could also reflect that they worked for one of the best-known yards and even in bad times there would be a reasonable order-book and job security for the permanent employees at least. At one of the smaller yards in the area it was not uncommon for there to be no wages at the end of the week and the local publican had to offer an informal banking service. When the original company finally went into liquidation at the end of 2001, having not built any new wooden boats for about ten years, they were the last of the famous Scottish yards to shut down. (That company is not to be confused with a new company of the same name, which carries on surveying and other services.)

Robertson

Location: Argyll, Scotland

Dragons built: 5

Years: 1936-1952

Alexander Robertson started repairing boats in a small workshop at Sandbank, Argyll in 1876, and went on to become one of the foremost wooden boat builders on the Clyde. The 'golden

years' of Robertson's yard were in the early 1900s when they started building some of the first Metre Class racing yachts. Robertson's was well known for the quality of its workmanship and was chosen to build the first 15-metre yacht designed by William Fife III. In 1922 Alexander Robertson & Sons (Yachtbuilders) Ltd Sandbank, was formally structured. In 1929 designer David Boyd left Fife's of Fairlie to begin work at the yard. In 1934 they began building lifeboats for the RNLI. There is some discrepancy about a couple of the Dragons built by this yard and we haven't yet got to the bottom of the puzzle! Alexander Robertson died in 1937, aged 86. During WW II the yard built some of the fast Fairmile ML/MGB/



MTBs. Then in 1949 came the first of the one-design Loch Longs built at the yard. In 1965 the Robertson family sold the business.

Bute Slip Dock Co

Location: Argyll, Scotland

Dragons built: 2

Years: 1947-1949

In 1912, Alfred Mylne and his brother Charles Mylne took on a small yard at Ardmaleish Point which was to serve as the main build yard for Mylne yachts for the next 65 years. It was close to their family home on the Island of Bute. Alfred operated his design business from Glasgow, supplying designs to yards around the world, but the Bute Slip Dock was where the alchemy could take place, where new ideas could be developed and put into practice. Though no longer connected to the Mylne design business, the yard continues in operation to this day as the Ardmaleish Boat Yard, and serves both commercial and yachting interests.



Woodnutt

Location: St Helens, Isle of Wight

Dragons built: 18

Years: 1938-1959

In 1899, Alfred Westmacott formed a new boatbuilding and engineering firm, Westmacott Stewart & Co, with premises on the Duver at the site of an established yard, Kirby Bowen. After three years Westmacott formed a new company to run the yard and to buy out the old-established sailmaking business of Woodnutt. The new firm, Woodnutt & Co designed and built craft and marine engines, continued sailmaking and established a chandlery store. Seaview Mermaids, Sunbeams, Victors and X-One Designs were all designed and built by the remarkable Alfred Westmacott. After the war Woodnutts closed their St. Helens' yard and moved to Warsash (where they suffered a disastrous fire), and finally sold out and closed down. In the course of these events many of their records were lost or destroyed. A year before WW II began, Woodnutts built the prototype Fairmile ML. During the war, employing about 200 workers, they built 26 Fairmile classes A, B, C and D fast patrol boats. The timber was pre-cut on the mainland. They also built the Uffa Fox designed Airborne Lifeboats which were carried underneath aircraft and dropped by means of drogue chutes into the sea. These ingenious boats saved the lives of over 600 Allied airmen during WWII. The other yards in the harbour were involved by either sub-contract from Woodnutts or by their employees moving over to Woodnutts to work.

Camper & Nicholson

Location: Southampton

Dragons built: 19

Years: 1947-1959

This yard dates back to 1809, when Amos Nicholson took on his great nephew William Camper, a young London shipwright. Camper took over the yard in 1824 when Amos died. When the 41 ton Breeze won the Kings Cup in 1836 it consolidated Camper's position and led to him becoming known as "Yachtbuilder to the Royal Yacht Squadron". William Camper died in 1863 but just before that the yard had become Camper & Nicholson. When yachting recovered in the 1920's the years leading up to World War II marked the heyday of Camper & Nicholsons. The America's Cup campaigns of 1930, 1934 and 1937 brought international fame with the design and build of *Shamrock V*, *Velsheda*, *Endeavour* and *Endeavour II*. For all his successes, it is perhaps for these few, fragile, over-rigged and utterly outrageous J class yachts that Charles E. Nicholson is best remembered. Camper and Nicholsons also undertook the alterations and re-rigging of King George V's yacht, *Britannia*. It is a tribute

to the standard of Camper and Nicholsons' original build quality that, with the exception of *Endeavour II* and *Britannia*, which was not originally built by Camper and Nicholsons and which was scuttled after the King's death, all of them are still sailing. In spite of racing successes and the production of such high profile boats as the Dragon *Bluebottle*, the company's situation was precarious and it received a further blow when the Government's demand for minesweepers and other small craft dried up in the late 1950's.

Nunn Bros

Location: Waldringfield, Suffolk

Dragons built: 10

Years: 1947-1964

Harry Nunn along with his brother Ernie Nunn started Nunn Bros Boatyard in 1921 at Waldringfield on the River Deben. The firm has remained in the family and now trades as Seamark Nunn. It took over from Nunn Bros in 1961, emerging as a boat building and chandlery business to support the sailing community on the Suffolk and Essex coast. From its inception, the company built a solid reputation for fast racing dinghies in wood and later GRP, and during the late 1960s and 1970s was a favourite builder for the OK Dinghy, Solo and Optimist.

Tucker Brown

Location: Burnham on Crouch

Dragons built: 6

Years: 1948-1959



Tucker Brown was founded in 1906 by Andrew Bigmore, George Brown, Joe Cole and Stan Tucker, who bought land adjoining the sea wall. The firm then

supplied moorings in the river and fitted out yachts. Many of the best know local characters were connected with this boatyard. After World War I Stan Tucker left the firm to found Crouch Engineering. In the 1930's Tucker Brown absorbed J King who were neighbouring boat builders and began boat building and design. The business continued to expand taking in Coronations Hall as well as small units in Coronation Road and Kings Road. During WW II the original partners retired to be taken over by Sonny and Bob Cole. The yard were well known for building many of the Stella class cruiser/racers. With the arrival of fibreglass the traditional shipwrights and their expertise were no longer in demand; in 1980 this led to the sale of the firm.

Lallow

Location: Cowes

Dragons built: 20

Years: 1949-1969



Clare Lallow's was established in 1867 and even now combines traditional techniques and craftsmanship with modern materials and technology. They continue to be specialists in the restoration of classic wooden boats such as Ted Heath's *Morning Cloud*. The yard also built many well-known boats including X One-Designs, being one of only two yards left with a licence to build the class.

Robson

Location: South Shields

Dragons built: 1

Year: 1951

Robson Boat Builders Ltd, were a well-respected shipyard in South Shields. At their yard in Commercial Road in this photo can be seen the framework of a coble fishing boat being built.

Burnes

Location: Chichester

Dragons built: 8

Years: 1952-1964



Burnes Boatyard was based in Bosham. Before the war they built the Chichester Harbour 18, first launched in 1939. They became the lead builders for the popular South Coast One Design cruiser/racers, with more than half the SCODs built coming from their yard, 62 in total between 1956 and 1967. The yard was well respected for their quality of construction and attention to detail and their yachts are still considered amongst the best of the SCODs. They also built National 12 dinghy's with the renowned Charles Curry actively building them in the yard, where it is rumoured he put in a few tweaks of his own. Later they built some early Nicholson 26 to a high quality finish, the hulls of which were moulded by Halmatic.

Autoyachts

Location: Gillingham

Dragons built: 1

Year: 1958

Autoyachts Ltd was started by Ron Parham in 1953 as a car garage and marine engineering

business. The premises were built a few inches above the level of the highest tide to ensure they were not flooded. The firm is still in existence at Pier Road.

CH Lavis

Location: Exmoor

Dragons built: 2

Year: 1959

CH Lavis & Son are still listed as a boatyard, run by a Lavis family member. They describe themselves as yacht, launch and boat builders with winter storage facilities and the ability to carry out repairs in wood and GRP. Although we only know of one Lavis Dragon, on which I had my first sail in the class, I recall being told that the yard had built 2; so I'm hoping this might jog someone's memory!

Fairlie Yacht Services

Location: Scotland

Dragons built: 1

Year: 1959

Despite having a name that has been around a good while, this yard has no connection to the current well-respected Hamble based Fairlie that I can find.

R & W Clark

Location: Cowes

Dragons built: 1

Year: 1960

R & W Clark must be one of those yards that come and go, set up by brothers or father and son, which turns out good work but is not commercially successful. It would be unkind to call them hobbyists, but we must assume their enthusiasm for boatbuilding outweighed their business ability. However, they have left behind some wonderful craft for us to enjoy.

Danegeld was conceived and built in 1958 by David Cheverton for Bobby Lowein, a well-known Cowes sailor with an enviable race record and later Max Aitken's sailing master. With her long overhangs, she was hailed by the yachting press as one of the "nicest and most shapely vessels produced in this country" and "something of a wonder boat." With the success of the design *Danegeld* was promoted as a class of its own. Only four other boats were built, including *Soraya* for Richard Carr and built by R & W Clark. Allegedly Clark's built her to such a high standard that she bankrupted the company. We also know the yard built four Trident motor cruisers; some dozen Force 8 class built in 1960 to 1962 with cold moulded hulls; Robb 38 sailing cruisers; Vertue 32 Aux Sloops and a Moreland 38, powered by twin 300hp Cummins diesels, which raced in the 1966 Cowes – Torquay.

Morgan Giles

Location: Teignmouth

Dragons built: 3

Years: 1960

I found an enthusiastic following for this yard: 'It has been over 40 years since the Morgan Giles shipyard in Teignmouth has been in operation and yet interest in the yard and its products remains high. This is because of the singular quality of the designs and boats produced and because of the number of boats still in use today. Francis Charles Morgan-Giles was born in 1883. He became a keen and competent sailor and a boat designer and builder of note. Even before he started up the Morgan Giles shipyard in Teignmouth in 1920 he was a household name in the dinghy world, particularly in the West of England and West of England Conference classes. The



yard was extended in 1939 with new sheds and slipway, mould loft, steam kiln, drawing office and administration offices. The Admiralty chose Morgan Giles Ltd. as one of the firms that could carry out construction and repair work to naval craft. "With the death of Morgan Giles, the world of yachting has lost one of its best known characters. He was perhaps the last survivor of the almost legendary band of great English yacht designers from the early years of this century - from the days of Fife, Nicholson and Mylne." His son, Captain Michael Morgan-Giles, became Managing Director on his father's death and the yard was run by him for a few more years. The yard closed in 1969. The name of Morgan-Giles however, lives on in the many superbly crafted boats which he and his highly skilled staff designed and built. The yard built many cruiser/racers, Dragons, Eight Metres, Salcombe 'A' Class, Six Metres and West Channel One Designs. Teignmouth and Shaldon Museum holds an extensive archive of the many boats designed and built by the Morgan Giles yard as well as other items such as photographs and tools.'

Cowes Boatbuilding

Location: Cowes

Dragons built: 2

Years: 1961-1962

The Cowes Boatbuilding Co. Ltd was based in premises that became the Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club. It is known they built three of Uffa Fox's Flying Fifteens and a well-known classic, long keeled wooden sloop Franz, still being raced, having been designed for JOG races in the 1960s. The firm closed in 1968.

Over the years there have been several books produced that concern our beautiful yacht. But not everyone currently sailing a Dragon may have heard of some of them. In an effort to help fill your library with more excellent Dragon related bibliographies, here are some suggested titles for you. If you know of other books not on this list, please let us know.

The Royal Dragon by RL Hewitt, first published in 1958.

Bluebottle (K192) is perhaps the best known Dragon of all. She still belongs to HRH Prince Phillip, though she is now at the National Maritime Museum in Falmouth. After she was given to the royal couple by the members of the Island Sailing Club in 1948 as a wedding present, she was raced on a regular basis throughout the 1950s, winning a Bronze medal at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. A succession of Royal Navy Sailing Masters were responsible for the yacht, Hewitt being one of them. His easily read book is a wonderful evocation of Dragon sailing in the 1950s, both on home waters and abroad. Many other famous Dragons and their owners are frequently mentioned. This is a must-have book for any keen Dragon racer.

Gerda's Sea Saga Cruising in a Dragon Yacht from Scotland to Norway by Morin Scott, first published in 1950.

In 1948 Morin Scott and his friend Cornelis van Rietschoten hatched a plan to sail *Gerda* (K15) from the Clyde, around the south coast to Harwich and thence across the North Sea and up the European coast to transit the Kiel Canal and reach the Danish and Swedish waters of the Kattegat. There they went racing, turned around and came back. The book is an interesting insight into the disregard that Scott's generation had for danger and discomfort as well as being a fascinating story of a small boat cruise, sometimes in very rough weather. Coincidentally, every entrant at this year's Gold Cup at Medemblick received a reprint of this book in their goody bag.

Dragon by Bernard Cadoret, first published in 1996.

This slim photographic book was produced by the organisers of the Douarnenez Regatta to celebrate the class racing there. There is limited dual French/English text giving a brief overview of the history of the class. Most of the photos are from the Regatta that year. They do capture the excitement of close one-design racing and show an interesting mix of Dragon yachts competing at that time.

Dragon Seventy Five Years of Tradition and Development by Bent Krebs & Helle Bak Klausman, first published in 2004.

This large book was produced in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Dragon. It is very well produced and researched, with English, Danish and German text. Alongside the comprehensive history of the class, the boat builders and the racing competition there is an excellent selection of modern and period photographs. A copy was given to each of the 250 boats that took part in the unforgettable 75th Regatta at St Tropez and included a list of all those boats as an insert in the brown coverall slip the book comes enclosed in. This is a superb addition to the bookshelf.

75 Years of Dragon by Heinrich Hecht & Jochen Halbe, first published in 2005.

This is another large book published with backing from Hanseatic Lloyd to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the



Dragon. Over 150 fine illustrations alongside German text fill its 200 pages, making it a superb book to leave on your library coffee table.

Tuning a Racing Yacht by Mike Fletcher & Bob Ross, first published in 1972.

This volume has a chapter devoted to getting the best from a Dragon rig... in the 1970s! Things are a bit different today.

Johan Anker Master of Yacht Design by Elin Kragset Vold & Ole Engen, first published in 2013.

This review courtesy of Classic Boat magazine: "This beautiful book offers a complete and detailed technical account of Johan Anker's life's impact. It is illustrated with images from the great Edwardian photographers and they are works of art in themselves. The narrative is often told through the diary of his second wife, Nini, whose insight and affection shine through. This is the best gift you could give to a sailor who has read everything. For technical detail and fascinating yachting tales, it is a cracking read. I couldn't put it down and have returned to check a thought a hundred times since. The book is so many things: reference work, biography, a sensitive romance and a history of yacht racing. Be warned, it has such broad appeal that you might find someone else in the family walks off with it. I have already had to retrieve my copy twice!"

Classic One Designs by Jack Coote, first published in 1994.

A book that looks not just at the Dragon but at a number of beautiful one design racing yachts, some of which will be familiar still to Dragon racers in Burnham, Aldeburgh and Cowes. Furthermore there is a strong Dragon connection with the author, who for many years sailed his classic Dragon around East Coast waters gathering information to publish many editions of his river pilot and cruising guide. In another link, his daughter Janet Harber, who often accompanied him, helped edit the BDA Magazine for several years.

Wooden Boat Building: How To Build a Dragon Class Sailboat by Nick Loenen, published in 2012.

Recounts the joy of acquiring new skills, such as working with brass flat bar and stainless steel; how to melt 2,400 pounds of lead wheel-weights to pour the keel; how to roll a hull effortlessly and craft beautiful blocks, almost entirely out of wood, yet strong enough to take an enormous load. Practical advice and helpful hints gathered over a life time of wood working and illustrated with professionally drawn sketches and pictures are useful to all who love to work with wood, whatever the project.

Please help to invigorate Dragon *Bluebottle*

Well known Dark & Stormy Dragon racer and bon-cocktailer Buddha is a trustee of the National Maritime Museum Cornwall (NMMC) and keeps an eye on *Bluebottle*. This special Dragon has been reported as being in a somewhat sad state. Recently Buddha was fortunate enough to be able to speak directly with HRH Prince Phillip, who declared it his express wish that *Bluebottle* did not sail again. Buddha has been tasked with raising £10,000 to restore her into showroom "display" condition and has agreed to start this process by making a generous £1,000 personal donation. On behalf of the NMMC Buddha would be delighted if the BDA, some of its members or indeed any IDA members would consider making a contribution towards the appeal goal.

The NMMC has a permanent loan arrangement with HRH Prince Phillip regarding *Bluebottle*. However, since HRH The Princess Royal is a Patron and regular visitor to Falmouth, Buddha believes this arrangement will continue for many years to come. The NMMC now has the responsibility for the upkeep of *Bluebottle*. As far as we are aware, *Bluebottle* is the only Dragon class yacht on display in a museum anywhere in the world. She thus has an important educational value, a reference value to the class and boats of her time, as well as being representative of Great Britain's successful Olympic sailing heritage.

So it is time for all Dragon sailors to do their bit to keep an important part of our class heritage in the best condition, the better to show off her beautiful lines to the many visitors to the NMMC. We should be seen to care about her; it is the right thing to do for future generations. Buddha has provided us all with a very fine example by making his wonderful donation; let us now resolve to make our own.

Donations can be made directly to the BDA Treasurer, who will forward them to the NMMC.



Bluebottle being transported in the approved manner in the 1950s



Bluebottle at AAM Cowes Week 2011

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