

potter ship

Bulletin of
the Royal
Lymington
Yacht Club

No. 7 Winter 1992

Early in the season I received a phone call from Nick Potter asking if I would like to do some yachting on Thursday. When he explained that Sally had been asked by Doug to race Ada in the Thursday evening series and he was drumming up a crew, what could I say but "Yes please".

The first race was, to say the least, a bit of a shambles. With two headsails, two halyards for the main, runners, the bowsprit to rig, and no pansy aids like winches, we managed to get all the jobs sorted out. Sally at the helm, Bill Andreae-Jones on the mainsheet, Chris Ruston, Nick Potter and Doug managing the headsails and foredeck work, left me with only the runners to cope with. We were learning fast.

Thursday Evening Racing on Ada

By the following week, Doug had made several improvements, including an extra purchase and new cleats for the runners, so that Sally and I were no longer getting tied up together when going about. We had a wonderful sail in quite a wind, with an exhilarating and crowded run, followed by a fast reach ... bang! The bowsprit broke. However, the efficient foredeck crew soon had that sorted out and we carried on to achieve our first finish. Doug made and installed a beautiful new bowsprit during the week, and the series continued.

I can't remember how many races we actually finished. Sometimes we were deflated by a dying wind and contrary tide, and on one occasion by an awkward ferry skipper. But we did come second in the first pursuit race.

There were minor crew changes and guest appearances, but by the end of the series, we had settled down to a regular crew of Sally, Nick, Doug, Chris, George, Carol and Dominic Tinley and me - not all of us together every time. On one occasion just Doug, Nick, Sally and I completed a race on a lovely gentle sunny evening.

The competition will get really fierce next year when Ada has her topsail and spinnaker and will be in fighting form - everyone beware!

As Doug says, we may not win but no one has more fun than us.

Mary Follet

THE DE VERE CHALLENGE



The reputation this event has built up had assailed our ears and so with the prospect of a good evening at the RLymYC followed by a thrash of some proportions at the Grand Hotel, Jersey, we decided to enter Born Free for a race, something, as I heard cruising people, we do not often do. The advice from several sources was to enter the motor/sail division; 'this will guarantee you get there for the fun'.

Thursday evening produced a lot of people, 32 boats having entered, much champagne and excellent eats, courtesy of De Vere. I seem to remember that the briefing was for light to moderate winds from the south west. There was also a lot of talk about TCI factors under motor and sail which made me realise that I had better do some homework.

Our start was not until 1600 hrs and during the day I was persuaded to take the bow anchor off and remove our cruising genoa which was replaced by two racing sails that had been bought by Born Free's previous owner. As we motored down the river we were met by a very solid 30 knots out of the west south west. Phantom started one minute before us and First Quencher with us. Hurst Castle saw Phantom just in front of us but not gaining to our delight and First Quencher electing to use engine

time and motor out. At this stage, with the prospect of foul wind against tide seas off the Needles, I elected to go the North Channel way and we took a long port tack to just short of Hengistbury Head before heading south. Quite frankly the next few hours were bloody, and all our crew of three couples only just managed to keep their tummies intact. We were swept by a big sea at one stage that covered us completely. Apart from totally soaking me, it plonked about 5 gallons on the mate through a hatch that was under the spray hood and closed but not done up. She was not amused. The odd thing was that the wind never exceeded 30 knots but the seas were very confused.

From midnight we motored into it as the wind was down to 15 knots and progress was very slow against the tide. Dawn found us going round Les Hanois and, would you believe, no spinnaker run as the wind followed us round and went light! A genny change got the blood circulating and the mate, over her soaking, produced hot chocolate croissants. Spirits lifted. However the wind went very light and we had to use lots of engine to get round Corbiere having again missed our tide. A few miles further on we sailed past George Tinley, the only competitor we had seen since Hurst, and in hot sunshine we crossed the finish to be told that we

were the first home. This we thought was a joke so we went back and checked.

To cut a long story short, only four boats finished within the time permitted and a very few others made it later. Lots had retired due to sickness and many due to breakages, one of the biggest racing boats having split her deck and stove in a bulkhead south of the Needles. Interestingly, the four finishers were respectively an old Swan 44, a First 405, a Freedom 35 and a Cromarty motor sailor. A very diverse lot that shows how good the motor/sail RLymYC rules are.

The evening De Vere had laid on was quite simply magnificent. Lots of good champers, delightful eats (ask my crew if oysters are an aphrodisiac) a jazz band and all this under a clear warm sky with no wind! This is the sort of sponsorship that we ordinary mortals in the yachting game should encourage and one hard blow should not put people off. I can only urge the committee to consider making the course straight to Jersey and not round Guernsey if there are likely to be strong south west winds. I was making some very profane remarks about course setters at 0300hrs that Saturday morning!

David Ridout

Le Trophée de Normandie

Une Régate Extraordinaire

Tony Blachford, Captain of Racing

When approached by members of the Cruising Committee to investigate the possibility of the Club sending a team to compete in the Trophée de Normandie at St Vaast earlier this year, I did not know what an intriguing event it would turn out to be.

Unfortunately, there was little enthusiasm from most of our regular cruiser/racers, due mainly to a saturated regatta programme around the time of the event. However, we decided to take part in any case, largely to maintain the Club's close links with Le Cercle Nautique de la Hougue.

None of the crew, which comprised mainly Club members, had previously been to St Vaast by sea, so we had no idea where we would leave our cruising sails, large anchor, dry clothes etc, while we were engaged in Olympic style racing with the stripped out French racing machines. The Rear-Commodore Sailing's daughter, Charlotte, came to our rescue, bringing a car and Christopher, Smokey Four's 7 year old Shore Manager.

Registration was completed without formality – no rating certificates to be shown, no list of entries or ratings available, probably because the club appeared not to own a typewriter or photocopier!

Around 60 boats left the marina in a thunderstorm, when the lock opened early on Friday morning, for an Olympic course race followed by 20 or so miles around the coast.

The committee boat was located with some difficulty as it was smaller than almost all the competing yachts. However, this was more than compen-

sated for by the size of the flags, which would not have looked out of place on a frigate (with the exception of code flag D – the most important, which must have been lost, and replaced by one 9 in the fly and consequently hidden by the others).

Although the equipment resembled jumble sale remnants, the organisation was slick: 10 minutes before the allotted start time, the St Vaast lifeboat took off at high speed, laid three marks and was still able to get back to watch the start. We knew that the larger boats started second, but how long behind

the small boats was a matter of guesswork. We were to discover, in the course of the verbal results announcement during the hugely successful party in the Town Hall, that Smokey Four had won the Olympic race, and was 5th in the coastal.

The 2nd day of racing was an interesting tour of the Western Seine Bay, with the racing line taking a few of us right between the Îles de Marcouf under spinnaker. The highlight, however, was a dolphin which responded to our banging on the hull and followed us for miles, almost to the harbour entrance.

The prize-giving party was superbly organised, even if it didn't start until almost 11pm. During the evening we were allowed a brief glimpse of the only copy of the hand-written results before they were whisked away to be used at the prize-giving. We were pleasantly surprised to find that we were third overall and top foreign yacht. Ruthless, a Sigma 38 owned by Club member Ivan Woolf was the second foreigner.

Our return trip, like the outward leg, was conducted completely under power in poor visibility, but this time we had the added interest of bleeding the fuel system every hour, wetting the 300 oysters which were part of our prize every half hour, and explaining to Christopher that we couldn't keep the visiting pigeon as a pet.

The engine eventually gave up in the early evening, in no breeze, 40 metres of water and two miles south of The Needles at the start of the ebb. Our depression was short lived when the Vodafone rang and we learned that Bill Andreac-Jones was on his way at high speed. We offered our rescuer some oysters as a token of appreciation, but this was declined, as they apparently don't work for him!

Our sincere thanks go to the Club's cruising division, John Woollett in particular, for the advice and loan of charts, pilots and local tidal atlas. We hope that more members will join us next year in a terrific event which will start and finish from Cherbourg, where we will try to win more oysters for the general enjoyment of the Club's diners and lunchtime drinkers.



Smokey Four at St Vaast with crew – Tony Blachford, Brent Strickland, Titch Blachford, Ken Kershaw and Graeme Love. Photo MAX ©

Etchells Fleet Gathers Pace

What a season the Etchells fleet have enjoyed. The winds have been strong for most of the year, ideal weather for the three man keelboat.

"The beauty of an Etchells is not having that Thursday night ring round to find out who is not sailing with you this weekend", says Chris Griffiths, part owner of IOR boats and current owner of a Lightwave. "You only need two other regular, reliable, guys to be competitive".

Berthon Boatyard have made available a dry sailing facility where boats are put in on a Friday night and taken out of the water on Monday, so saving the cost of antifouling and keeping the

boats down to weight. The more boats that arrive at Lymington the cheaper this arrangement should become to each owner.

Charles Cronin has done a fine job as class captain in mustering the fleet. At Cowes this year 47 boats came to the line, compared with 25 last year. I forecast that in two years time the Etchells fleet will outnumber the X class at Cowes Week as more and more dissatisfied large boat owners discover the ease and excitement they can obtain by owning one of these 31ft racing thoroughbreds.

Many of the UK's top helmsmen were seen during the season trying

their hands. Nigel Buckley, ex 470 world champion, Robin Aisher, David Howlett and many others have realised that the Etchells can provide the competitiveness and one design racing they desire.

Being an International class, the chances to travel are numerous. The Worlds this year are in Larchmont USA, and in 1993 the fleet will gather in Australia for what is recognised as the top championship fleet to gather in any class. Internationally, with the likes of Dennis Conner and Dave Curtis sailing in the class, you can guarantee top level competitive racing at its best.

Cowes has been awarded the World

Championships for 1996, so the interest in the class will gather pace in the UK for the next few seasons. At the moment the Etchells class has fleets in Cowes, Yarmouth, Lymington and Hamble, and I understand that Hayling Island want to start a fleet.

The Royal Lymington has enjoyed some success, with Peter Hepple in Mischief winning the Royal Southampton's Match Racing event in August. Barry Dunning in Venom was 4th in Cowes Week and Charlie Wallrock also in Venom won the Yarmouth Regatta. The class also had a Royal endorsement when The Princess Royal took part in a race in Faldetta on a particularly blowy day on the Solent.

Barry Dunning

Where is

Well – where is Wonderland?

Alice left Lymington on 19th June to answer this question.

In a northerly Force 7 she anchored that evening in the tranquillity of Lulworth Cove. From there she voyaged to Portland, Exmouth, the Yealm River and finally Plymouth, where the whole pace of the trip was changed. Alice's gentle mistress was to be replaced by a young and rather less genteel trio. The trip across to Brest was under topsail all the way, 46 hours long with some mist ... but the magic was in the black box lent to Alice by Alan Spriggs (a hand held GPS).

On arrival in Brest the owner put on a brave face as he turned his back on his ship, leaving her at the mercy of the "minors", a very competent bunch in fact who, in the following three weeks, were to master her peculiarities before taking on the fleet at Brest '92.

I hate to gossip about Alice behind her back, but it cannot be denied that she was seen openly flirting with the French fishing vessels, who were very receptive and made Alice and her crew very welcome.



Wonderland?

After four frenetic and extremely entertaining days at Brest for the festival, a rather jaded crew were very glad of a sunny drift down wind and tide to pick up the festivities in Douarnenez.

The journey home was a leisurely cruise enjoying the hospitality of friends old and new. Thick, thick fog in the Chenal du Four brought another round of "thank yous" to Alan and the GPS (and a few Hail Marys). L'Aber-wrach was entered in zero visibility and with about as much experience of the harbour by the crew, who were a little shaken by the lunar landscape of islets and rocks that emerged at low tide the following morning.

A tranquil night was spent in the shelter of Ile de Batz and then on to Ploumanach. Alice spent her last few days with friends on Ile de Brehat before a 48-hour return trip to Lymington.

Somewhere along the way her port of registration was changed from Southampton to Wonderland.

Kate Rogers.

Photos Brian Macnamara & Kate Rogers

Commodore's Note

In Webster's dictionary a club is described as "A group of people associated for a common purpose"; it also describes it as a "mass of anything". In our case the common purpose is to encourage and promote yachting in all its aspects, as stated in our agreed rules. It is the mass of anything which is of concern!

Our membership is wide, with interests from junior sailing to world class match racing and everything else in between. This is unique and I do not know of any Yacht Club in the country with this range of activity.

At the moment the categories of membership are being actively studied by the Vice Commodore and the membership sub-committee with a view to bringing these up to date and getting rid of the ambiguities which have built up over the years. With this data and the assistance of our computer systems we can better assess the sailing needs of the whole range of members. From this we can judge the fairest and most efficient way to distribute the Club's resources and finances for the benefit of all.

Leading on from our membership structure, I hope that we will be able to encourage a natural progression from all membership categories onto the senior committees and

by this method ensure that future committees continue to understand the principles and the type of operation required by our Club. I am pleased to say that a complete Junior committee is now formed with elected junior Flag Officers to carry forward these agreed principles as and when they get older and take our place. Our Junior Sailors have always acquitted themselves well at sea and are a credit to our Club, so they should also know about the responsibility of running a club. The Junior Committee is as follows: Commodore Alex Dingwall; Vice-Commodore, Saski Green; Rear Commodore (Sailing) James McEwan; and Rear Commodore (House) Kate Maudslay.

Finally, please remember that participation is a part of the enjoyment of being a club member.

So! If you would like to help in any capacity please come forward.

Peter Wilson



Seamanship Foundation Trusteeship for Rear Commodore Sailing

At the last meeting of the RYA Seamanship Foundation, our Rear Commodore Sailing, Mrs Sally Potter, was elected a trustee and was given a seat on its management committee.

The Foundation, an independent charity, was established over 20 years ago. It is funded solely by public donations and does not receive any direct support from RYA members subscriptions. It is recognised as the yachtsman's charity and works closely with the RYA.

The Foundation provides sailing opportunities for three distinct groups of people – young sailors aged between 17 and 23, the disabled and the blind. Two flotillas of Hunter Duette yachts sail from Plymouth and Southampton giving practical experience to young people through the 'Young Skipper' scheme. For the disabled people, there are over 100 specially designed Challenger trimarans based all round the country, at clubs and organisations for the disabled where the necessary training and supervision is available.

The Foundation also pioneered sailing for the blind. Our Club supported this activity last year by providing a weekend of coaching and team selection using members' Contessa 32s. The British Blind team competed at the

world championships for the blind in Auckland earlier this year and one of our members, Richard Hawton-Fawkes (with some small amount of sight) helmed his boat to victory in his category and was assisted by Peter Bruce as his sighted crew member.

The acceptance of the trusteeship by our Rear Commodore Sailing continues the link between the Club and the RYA Seamanship Foundation.

Sally would be pleased to hear from any member who would be willing to help strengthen the Club's link with the Seamanship Foundation.

Editors Note

Rolly Staffer, also a club member, has just completed his five years as a trustee and our congratulations to him on the award of the OBE in the Birthday Honours this year.



Junior Sailing 1992



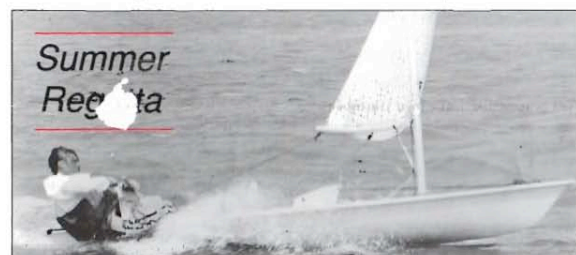
After much support and a great deal of plotting and planning Junior Sailing has had a most successful year. Annabel Nurton, who was Captain of Junior sailing for the last 3 years, looks at a few club events and classes.

Wednesday Sailing

Geoff Scott tells me that an average of 80 children check in each Wednesday, making a total of 1,600 since Jonathan Rogers began the scheme eight years ago.

This year a substantial number have moved on to sail regularly at weekends as Optimist helm and Cadet crews. This ensures the continuation of these fleets and that they remain of a suffi-

cient size to promote a high level of dinghy sailing in the Club. The success of Wednesday sailing depends (to a large extent) on the personal commitment of sufficient members, to whom we are immensely grateful. We would welcome more help both on and off the water, particularly with the regular maintenance of some 30 dinghies which we have at our disposal.



Horse shows, carnivals and picnics suffered terribly from the weather this summer, and the Junior Regatta was no exception.

However, you would never have known this from the record entry and obvious enjoyment of all involved. The success was largely due to Ken Kershaw whose great experience provided such a good week in such difficult conditions – and to the devoted team of helpers on the water, on shore and at the barbecues, under the astonishing management of Peter Burchell.

We have once again been delighted by a visit from our Spanish friends –

Above: Rory Hern in the passage race to Hurst. Below: "Ken Kershaw whose experience provided such a good week in difficult circumstances". Right: Regatta lunches were so successful they had to be tied to the pontoon!



Optimist Class

Peter Moore writes of the many new faces swelling the ranks – particularly on Sunday mornings.

The Spring Points Series was won by Philip Smith and Nicholas Phillips. A number of our Optimist sailors went to South Wales for the Nationals. It proved to be an eventful week, as a storm on the day removed 60 boats from a race with waves rolling in up to the top of their sprits.

One of the highlights of the summer was the Optimist Camp on Pylewell foreshore with barbecues on the shore and swimming in the Balmes' pool.

Pom Green was selected to represent England in the European Championships in July, and Nicholas Rogers is again chosen to go to the Optimist Worlds in Argentina in December.

Rebecca Lees, Katie Tunage and Sophie Moore, babes in the wood at Pylewell. Photo Peter Moore



264 Squadron Activities This Summer



Jamie McEwan and Robbie Watson at the 1992 Nationals in Plymouth

Our Cadet fleet powers on! Of the seven boats selected from the indicator trials to represent Britain at the World Championships, three came from the RLymYC (all three boats were built by Dr Jonathan Rogers, drawing on years of experience with the class). One of these, Pocket Battleship, sailed by James McEwen and Rob Watson, had already won the National Championship at Plymouth in July. Nicholas Rogers and Pom Green, Ben Bailey and Simon Collier, all went to Lake Balaton, in Hungary, in August for the

World Championships. With air temperatures of 40°C and extremely light and fickle wind, we took on the best – the Argentinians – and Nicholas and Pom came a creditable 4th overall in a fleet of 60. The experience of sailing against Australians, Dutch, Poles, Argentinians and Russians, (see Youth Sailing Success on page 7) will stand these sailors in good stead in future. Richard Lovett has eight new helms coming up to replace the older ones as they move into other classes.

Roll on 264 Squadron RLymYC.

What do race officers really do?

Nick Potter explains



Our Club has a reputation for having one of the country's best race management organisations – a reputation of which we are proud, and one which relies upon contributions from a wide variety of members and Club staff in many different ways.

We run local club racing for yachts and dinghies, international and national match racing, women's international keelboat racing, open club regattas, X boat racing, national championships and of course the junior training programme. You might be surprised to know that, this year, all the different sailing activities run by the Club adds up to over 200 days, but obviously not all on separate days.

The race officer has to be a versatile person: duties on the committee boat include radio operation, course setting, mark and line laying, flags and sound signals, timekeeping, safety considerations and keeping a continuous watch on the competitors. We are lucky in having a good number of volunteers who fill all these jobs in all sorts of conditions. Turning out of your warm bed at 0600 on a dark, cold wet and windy December morning is not always attractive!

For every event we run, we aim to provide the best possible racing for the competitors. To achieve this, we have to give thought to what the wind and tide are likely to do, what sort of courses to set, and how long to keep the boats out on the water. Contrary to popular opinion, we don't run racing to fit in with the bar opening hours, but having said that, the post race pint and food are really just as important for many people as the actual racing, so we do think about it! Some classes want Olympic type course (triangles and sausages), others prefer windward/leeward courses and a third group want racing round the cans. This last group is often the most difficult to satisfy: they don't want boring two sail reaches, they do want reasonable length beats and they want their runs to be as square as possible. It would be quite easy to achieve

all these requirements if we sailed in non-tidal waters with a steady wind from the same direction. As you know, that just does not happen in the western Solent or even in Christchurch Bay. Our first problem is the starting line: how long should it be and what, if any, bias should we put on it? The perfect line is achieved when the fleet starts all the way along it and not bunched up at one end.

The Sailing Instructions are the 'Bible' for any racing – if well written there should not be any problems. Nowadays, the RYA provides a set of standard SIs from which we work with local alterations to suit our conditions. Race officers need to know the International Yacht Racing Rules (IYRRs) in some detail, especially the rules about starting, flag signals, shortening course, protests, finishing and sound signals. We all know that someone on the committee boat can make a mistake – how do you correct it? Postponement or general recall? Which flag and how many guns? What effect does a general recall have on the other classes not yet started? Do we use Flag I and go 'round the ends'? What happens when an individually recalled boat does not come back to start correctly? How long does Flag X stay up? Is she given a finishing time and signal if she doesn't restart? The race officer sees an infringement of a racing rule between two boats: what does he do? Do you disqualify one of them (almost certainly not)? Protest one of them, or treat them as finishers and sort it out afterwards?

The Officer of the Day and the results team in the Club need to know which boats started and at what time the race began, so they can prepare their computer results programmes, and then they need accurate finishing times

Having supported the full summer sailing season with back-up for all the major regattas and events, the House Committee is now looking towards the winter programme of social evenings which is likely to be just as energetic.

During the summer the Dining room and Club bar facilities have been well used by members with an average of 50 diners per weekday evening and many more at weekends. These same facilities will be available over the winter months, and it should be noted that bookings for the Dining room may be made for Fridays and Saturdays for both Carvery and Bistro meals. Bookings direct to Michael on 672290.

November and December, which will be informal, with no entry charge. Come along for a simple Bistro meal and listen to some traditional Jazz.

The Solent Circuit racing is now in full swing and runs until Sunday 6th December, which means that the Clubhouse will be fairly active during the late Sunday lunch period.

We are pleased to see that the Juniors have now formed their own Committee and elected a Junior Commodore. The Junior Regatta was a great success and the Clubhouse well used on the days that racing was cancelled. A Junior Quiz was planned for Wednesday 28th October and we look forward to suggestions from the Junior

House Matters

by
Martyn Wheatley

The winter lectures, followed by a Club Supper if required, start on Wednesday 4th November and full details are shown on the Winter Programme Card, a copy of which was distributed to all members in the August mailing.

By now the End of Season Party (formerly the Laying Up Supper, but somehow we never seem to stop racing these days!!) has come and gone. This year it took the form of a Caribbean Evening. I would like to hear any constructive feedback on that evening and your views on theme evenings in general.

Following the success of our local Jazz Band Force 6 at the Club Regatta Dance in July, many members had requested their return and we have organised three further sessions. These will be on the first Friday of October,

Committee for future social events.

One matter which the House Committee addresses periodically is the question of smoking. On one hand the opinion is voiced that there should be a total ban within the Clubhouse whereas the other extreme request is that members should not be dictated to on a habit of a lifetime. After much discussion in committee we have recommended to the General Committee that members should be asked to refrain from smoking in the Dining Room but smoking should be allowed in the Bar area. Practically, it is almost impossible to impose a strict ban on smoking, but generally it has been found over the last few months that our smoking members are being considerate to others in the dining areas generally and there does not appear to be a problem. We will however continue to monitor the situation.

as soon as possible after boats have finished: they need to know about protest flags observed by the committee boat.

I am sure you all know how much importance the Club attaches to safety, particularly for dinghy events where we have a strong team of rescue boats and mother ships. Safety in keelboat racing is just as important, and we have a safety boat at sea for events like the Spring Series. The Race Committee monitors the weather all the time and will not hesitate to shorten course for worsening weather: it can insist on life jackets being worn, disallow spinnakers and cancel racing before the start for some classes if there is a gale blowing.

I have tried to describe just some of the matters which have to be resolved by the race team when we are out on the water. We can only do our job because of the support we get from the Club office staff, the chief boatman and his team, the member volunteers who help ashore and afloat in so many ways, the committee boat owners and the com-

petitors themselves. Without them, there wouldn't be any racing to run. Note. If any member is interested in race officer training, please contact the office.

This is the down side! Sally Potter and Jane Pitt-Pitts, race officing in the cold



Just How Many Needles are There?



The forecast on leaving Braye harbour at 05.55hrs, promising a Force 4 SW with fog patches, had proved spot on. Visibility had never been less than 1/2 mile – and there was the Needles light itself, bathed in bright sunshine just four miles off, fine on the port bow.

No one noticed the dense fog bank rolling up astern.

Mariette of Meon, a ketch-rigged Contest 38, was returning from the 1991 Clipper Power-Sail race to St Helier. (Power-Sail? a form of mathematical torture when Mac moves the goal posts as soon as the players get used to the pitch!)

The fog enveloped Mariette whilst still three miles south of the Wight. Visibility dropped to 50 yards or less but both the shore-line and the Needles themselves stood out clearly on radar. Course was maintained to secure the originally intended landfall and, about 1/2 mile short of the island, changed to 280 M. Now adjusted to two miles, the radar showed substantial sea-clutter – where the ebb met the new flood as Mariette sailed westward towards the Bridge buoy in visibility which had deteriorated further.

Suddenly, a towering brown-red

steel cliff shot across Mariette's bows from starboard to port doing at least twenty knots, totally filling the available field of view. Almost simultaneously the ship's siren blew in shattering proximity, adding consternation below to that prevailing on deck. Then, she was gone. She had come down from Hurst Castle totally unrecognised on radar – and unheard. Why?

There was no way Mariette's crew were now going to use the Needles Channel. What if our brown-red friend had an equally silent pal? From the SW Shingles buoy, a course of 300 M was set to clear the southern end of the bank and gradually changed to a little east of north to secure the shallower waters of Christchurch Bay and the approaches to the Hurst shingle, North Head, hastily programmed into the Decca, was clearly visible on radar and came up on the nose in the now 100 yard visibility. The fog cleared nearer to Hurst Castle – to reveal a braver soul to starboard right in the middle of the Needles Channel happily Solent-bound without – it seemed – a care in the world.

What were the lessons learned from this incident?

1. The worst decision was prob-

ably made before leaving Alderney in the forecasted patchy fog. Nothing was gained by aiming for a landfall in Scratchell's Bay. An insignificant adjustment to the intended track would have taken Mariette straight to the shallower waters west of the Shingles Bank and out of all possible conflict of the kind experienced.

2. It may be a little exotic to think of radar-assisted decisions as akin to radar-assisted collisions but they have their inherent defects, nonetheless. How many of us say to ourselves "we have radar so we'll go"?

3. Murphy's Law really gets up steam when lots of things are happening at once. Why was the ship not recognised on radar as it proceeded down the Needles Channel? There are some innocent (and less innocent) explanations. The high ground at the end of the Island or the Needles themselves could have masked the ship. Who counted the echoes supposedly from the Needles? Including the light, was there one echo too many? Given the speed of the ship, was radar range selection a factor? Crew work-load at the time was high. Those on deck were sail trimming as the ketch came on the

wind and those below, supposedly on radar watch, were rescuing the supper which the sea-state responsible for the sea-clutter had deposited on the cabin sole!

There are no prizes for dismissing or supporting any of these theories, or assuming downright carelessness, given the opportunity afforded by the near mile of open water between the Needles light and the Bridge buoy for clear radar recognition of the ship.

One mystery will never be resolved – why was it that the one and only blast heard from the ship was when she was right upon us? Was her siren in some way blanketed by the high Wight cliffs? Was the fog bank so localised that she had had no earlier obligation to announce her presence? Were we lost in the sea-clutter on her radar? Or was it simply an unfortunate combination of circumstances with all concerned being in the wrong place at the wrong time. For Mariette, however, there was one worse place to have been – just fifty or so yards further on!

Eric Hill

Photo © Peter Bruce – with apologies for the variations!

St Vaast 1992

Our links with Le Cercle Nautique de la Hougue (CNH) go back to 1983 and our annual meet at St Vaast-la-Hougue has been consistently popular. This year their visit to us took place at the end of July, and as well as the reception and Dinner we were able to take them to the New Forest Show. The usual inter-club Scow race with complex rules designed to favour the home team was won by the CNH, contrary to tradition, but as they had forgotten to bring the Challenge Cup it was not recorded.

Unsettled weather was forecast for our meet at St Vaast, and those who set off on Thursday 20 August encountered rain for most of the way, at times so heavy that visibility was down to 100 yards, and radar was obscured. After an overnight stop in Cherbourg it was a fine clear day for the 25 mile

passage to St Vaast, in time for the gate opening.

Most Club boats were accommodated on neighbouring pontoons and there was much visiting, and renewing contacts with our French friends. The town of St Vaast is attractive, duty free is available (for the last time perhaps?) and local oysters can be bought near the quay. Full use was soon being made of these facilities as well as the local restaurants. The dinner on Saturday at the Fuchsia with the CNH was as usual efficiently organised by Janine Davy, and was a most cheerful and friendly evening. Bernard Cadeau, the President, welcomed us in English, and our Vice Commodore, Ted Hawkins replied in French. Sunday morning was clear with light and variable winds. The inter-club race in 320s was held in the harbour where wind eddies and

local currents caused much confusion and amusement, to the spectators at least. The RLymYC team, organised by Kate Beattie, who had sailed over with her parents in Squander, and led by the Rear Commodore (Sailing) Sally Potter, won in a nail-biting finish. This second break with tradition was further compounded at the prize-giving at the Vin d'honneur which followed. Alban Davy told us that we had won at Lymington the month before, and that the Challenge Cup had been engraved accordingly. On Monday morning we went over to Ile de Tatihou in a 4-wheel drive amphibious vehicle which swam to the little harbour and drove back through the oyster beds at low tide, when we returned. The Island, which many of us remember from the BBQ two or three years ago, is now an organised tourist attraction. There is a museum and guided tour of the defences and forts which are being restored.

By now the continuing bad fore-

casts were causing concern about the Courseulles meet which was due to follow. A number of well lubricated conferences were held aboard each others' boats and it was reluctantly decided to abandon it. Claude de Fole-nay was told, and he drove over on Tuesday from Le Havre to see us and discuss plans for next year. The majority of yachts left on Wednesday morning in the north-going eddy, with the aim of catching the flood at the Needles. The wind increased up to Force 7 (as forecast) as we crossed, but it was an exhilarating reach for the most part – Cymbeline averaged 6.5 knots, her fastest for a channel crossing. We kept in touch by radio and most were able to enjoy supper together at the Club after arrival.

Put a marker down for the CNH visit in 1993, 26-27 July, and for the St Vaast meet, 21-23 August, and try to include some young active sailors in your crews, who can get the best out of the 320s! John Woollett

Lymington X Division in 1992

The X Class has been indulging in a little triumphalism in the testing times of the latter half of this sailing season. The summer seemed to end with Cowes Week, not least the Monday when there were two fatal accidents but not in the X class. Wind speeds of over 35 knots were recorded with gusts of over 40. Forty-five of the X class entrants set out and 41 of them finished. The race was creditably won by Richard Webb in La Mouette and eight out of the first 12 finishers were from the Lymington Division. A comparison with the results of other day-boat classes provides a convincing tribute, if such is needed, of the sea-keeping qualities and weatherliness of X-boats, designed in 1909. Of the Swallows, one finished, completing the last lap under jib alone. Of the Etchells, generally considered as tough as they come, 20 finished out of 40. Three Squibs finished, three Sunbeams finished, and half the Victorys were reefed, and few finished. The X class were racing with full mains, jibs and spinnakers. Once again Lymington failed to win the Team Race Shield, losing to Parkstone on a protest, but they retained the Philipson Shield awarded for the best overall results of the week. The Shield will therefore stay in its rightful place on the pillar in the Club Bar. After the ferocious days at the beginning of the week, winds deserted the Solent at the end. A down-tide running start on Thursday resulted in the White Group, the day-boat classes, merging into a solid raft when they got to the leeward mark where they had to round up. This was repeated when they got to the next



Lone Star (Chalky White) La Mouette (Richard Webb) and Tortoise (J.R. Lacy) at Cowes 1992

mark. It was not long after this that the much reported incident occurred when Sillhouette got run over by a container ship.

Weekday racing on Wednesday, Thursday evenings, and Saturdays has been well-supported and extremely competitive. A race in the X class at Lymington can be won by anyone and a punter putting his money on any competitor would stand a good chance of losing it. There are several X-boats which have been or are being done up. Sir Arthur McDonald's Mollymawk has been given the full epoxy treatment by Stuart Jardine since which she has been raced with great elan and considerable success. Bill Dunsdon and John May have been giving their old Jewel a really thorough working over from keel to coaming, epoxy inside and out, keel overhaul, the lot. We wait with baited breath to see how she performs next season. She will either go like a bomb or not!

The main rule change in the class this year has related to weight. An X-boat without sails and loose gear must now weigh more than 2875 lbs. Before this there was no minimum weight but boats planked in mahogany were required to carry 64lbs of lead as inside ballast. Now underweight boats may

have to carry even more if they have underweight keels. Oddly enough, the new weight rule doesn't seem to have affected performance.

The X class, with such a long history, has a number of mores and customs which it tends to guard somewhat jealously. Amongst these is its class flag, international code flag X. The RYA in its wisdom, and without consultation chose flag X as the signal for individual recall (See Rule 8.1). As a result the Cowes Combined Clubs selected and assigned naval numeral pennant 5 as the identity flag for the X class. Fortunately this alien banner of yellow and blue has now been ethnically cleansed and the X class reverts to Flag X. How any unfortunate race officer is expected to hoist flag X and then signal individual recalls to a fleet of 20 to 60 day-boats has not been revealed.

Earlier this year the RYA published a book entitled *RYA Appeal Cases, 1962-1991* (Price £10). These are by no means all appeal cases but an expurgated version. Members may recall the little problem that arose at Cowes Week in 1986 when Heyday crossed the finishing line of a shortened course in what the other 60 competitors considered the wrong way. Heyday protested and won. The protest and appeals dragged on and on and the Captain's Cup result was finalised the following February. There have been at least 10 appeal cases on this theme since 1962, which would seem to indicate that the existing definition of finishing is imprecise and for this reason flawed. Case RYA 1992/1 decides that if a competitor is unable to tell in which direction to cross the line because it is in line with the last mark, he may cross it in either direction. This could make things interesting.

Anyone who has read the booklet *History of the X class* will recall that between 1948 and 1960 Woodnatts built ten X boats out of teak. They were exported to Kuwait for oil company staff at the Cumberland Yacht Club. Four of these have survived the war. Two are in quite good condition and two are not. They are sitting in someone's garden waiting for a sponsor to ship them back to England. Anyone interested in furthering this worthy cause contact Richard Field.

Nick Dover

Youth Sailing Successes

This year has seen another busy and successful season for our youth sailors.

Optimists

At the Easter Regatta at Brassemeur in Holland, Stru Rogers finished 2nd overall. Robert Watson won the Weston SC Southern area Championship. Pom Green competed in the Optimist Europeans in Denmark. Seven R Lym YC members competed at Mumbles in Wales at the Optimist Nationals.

Cadets

At Rutland Stru and Pom (fresh from Denmark) won the Inland Championship followed by James McEwan and Robert Watson second and Ben Bailey and Simon Collier 15th.

The Torbay Indicator resulted in a win for James and Robert. Frensham Pond Open put Ben and Simon in third place and Parkstone YC gave Sarah Watson and Amy O'Kelly third. At the Exe Sailing Club, 264 Squadron of the R Lym YC collected the top three places. James and Robert once again took the honours followed by Stru and Pom in second and Ben and Melanie Way third. At the final Cadet Indicator at Rutland the winners were Stru and Pom followed by James and Rob and Ben and Simon. These six were to be included in the Cadet UK World Team. The Cadet National Championships saw 17 of our Cadets travel to Plymouth where James and Rob took the Championship. Ben and Simon finished fifth and Stru crewed by Owen Ashton came sixth. Sarah Watson and Hamish MacAlister's claim to fame was to see a basking shark. Nicholas Osmond finished 21st, which qualifies him for the Cadet Squad in 1993. Hungary's Lake Balaton was the venue for the Cadet World Championships, where Stru and Pom put up an extremely good showing by finishing fourth.

The RYA Ladies Championships at Grafton Water saw a very close finish with any of the first three able to win. Sarah Watson and Stephanie Smith eventually finished third.

404 dinghies

The Hermes Challenge was a knock-out event held in 404 dinghies, with regional heats and a final at Cowes. Stru crewed by Miles Lovett and James with Mickey Haines on the wire qualified for the finals. Stru finished third and James was fifth.

420

Success at the 420 Weymouth regatta for Sarah Dent and Belinda Kerridge together with Mark Jardine and Alex Knight earned a trip to Israel for the World Championships. No great success there, but terrific experience. Kate Nulton and Camilla Mynors came third in the RYA Ladies Championships.

Stuart Watson



Photo John Woollett

Behind the desk...

Most members will be aware that Doug Baverstock retired at the end of May. This precipitated our first staff change for some time, and it was fortunate that Kevin Smith was available to step in. Kevin, as most pontoon users are no doubt aware, first came to work for the Club in 1984, and spent 5 years serving an apprenticeship under Doug's direction. He left for a civilian job for a while, but is now back and running the waterfront team whose other members are his brother Barry and Philip Baker. Kevin's first task was to help Doug to clear out his collection of maritime mementoes, assembled over 35 years and ridding the Beaulieu Boat Jumble in scope. Some of them were probably unique; together, they are a small fragment of Lymington's maritime history.

The changes on the waterfront have again put the spotlight on a long-standing concern, summed up in the often-heard question "where are the boatmen?" I wrote about this a year or more ago. The logic is unchanged: if the boatmen are to have weekends and holidays, they can only be present as a threesome on three days of the week. Add in concentrations of work such as regattas, and exceptions such as Thursday evenings, which cause changes in the basic routine, and it is more likely than not that there will only be one boatman at work on most summer weekdays. If he is working in a boat, he is almost certainly not to be found. Working-in-a-boat may also include

lifeboat duty: all three are members of the Lymington lifeboat crew, and are usually among the first to respond to a call during working hours.

Significant changes have taken place in the boatmen's work in recent years. There are more river moorings, meaning more movement of members between clubhouse and yacht. Six years ago we had two launches, one inflatable and two rowing tenders: now we have two launches, four inflatables and seventeen rowing tenders. Then we had a small junior sailing programme; now we have a whole Optimist fleet, a very successful Cadet fleet and an undiminished Scow fleet. Certain changes are in train in the way the boatmen work. A note of their planned hours is displayed on the sailing notice board. An hourly availability board is being prepared for display on the waterfront near the workshop. Ways are being discussed of making it easier to book crane lifts – as a by-product of which records can be kept, helping to determine the need for preventive maintenance and with luck reducing the number of unscheduled breakdowns. But it is surprising just how little we know about the needs of members for boatman services. It may be that there are just not enough boatmen, or that they are asked to do the wrong things, or by the wrong people. In the hope of finding out more, we have put together a questionnaire which is enclosed with this mail shot. Please complete it and return it to the office.

Another subject – but related. Some recent work to try to find out more about the pattern of membership threw up some interesting results – and some tantalising hints.

The main aim was to find out how many *family units* are contained within the membership. A family unit was taken to mean a husband and wife living at the same address, with or without children. From there it was possible to find out how many members are not part of a wider family, and to gain an idea of the yachting activities of each group.

Total membership on the day of the survey was 3249. Of these, 47 were known to be leaving on 31st October, 1768 members were in 884 two-adult family units, and 665 members of this group claim an interest in the ownership of 581 yachts or boats. At present we know little about what sort of boats they are. The group as a whole was responsible for 356 under-21 family members, 28 of whom claimed to own a boat. Putting the figures together, 2124 members (65.37%) are part of families, who probably go sailing together. 274 members among the whole family group were in the 60+ subscription category, 84 of them (30.66%) having an interest in 77 yachts.

The next largest group of members was the single full member group. There were 974 such members, 326 of whom claimed a share in 298 yachts. This proportion is significantly lower than in the family group (ie 33.47% of full

members claim an interest in a yacht as against 65.72% of families which share ownership of one) but this is probably not surprising. Cruising is a family pastime; those without families have less incentive actually to own a boat. 213 of this group (21.87%) were in the 60+ group. 51 of them (23.94%) claimed an interest in 50 yachts, compared with 33.47% for the whole group. 118 (55.40%) of this sub-group were women, and 14 of those own boats.

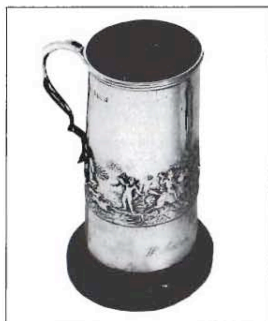
The third membership category is that of juniors, of whom there were 61. No fewer than 30 of these (49.18%) claimed to own a boat. Of course the numbers don't add up exactly. The difference is accounted for by honorary members and by a few grey edges to our information which date back to the days of cardboard records – some of which the sailing questionnaire is intended to help colour in.

Finally, as by now every member must know, I was silly enough to put a chisel through two of the tendons in the middle finger of my left hand last June, and a month later Mary fell from a Committee boat and dislocated her shoulder. Two operations and three months later, my finger is starting to respond again to orders from the bridge, and Mary's shoulder is edging back too. I would just like to say how grateful we both are to those many, many members who have offered sympathy, help and encouragement during the difficult months when we were both unable to get around. Thank you all.

Jonathon Hutchinson

Trophy Watch UK

The Royal Lymington Yacht Club is looking for the Andrea-Jones Cups. Please look in your lofts, attics and other secret places and if you have seen, or know the whereabouts of this trophy, please let us know on 0590 672677



The Andrea-Jones Cup is a silver tankard, dated 1903, mounted on a black base, the sides embossed with a band depicting stag hunting scenes. Enquiries of recent past winners have drawn a blank. The Club is wondering if any past-member readers have this cup by mistake still in their possession. If so the Club would be delighted for its return.

Early in September, the Club organised an afternoons sailing for the disabled. Nine Club members with their boats and crew entertained 15 mentally and physically handicapped people together with helpers. Once the boats had embarked their special guests, they made their way to the end of the river. The weather was by no means clement however, it gave them a good reach over to Yarmouth. Rosamund Brunnett, who has cerebral palsy, sailed with Sharon Roberts aboard her Contessa 32.

Catherine. Rosamund wrote "I tingled with excitement. Here we were skimming along.....No special facilities, no ramps, no disabled signs. It was good to feel free and ordinary." With the wind freshening, Sharon called for a couple of slabs in the main and the number 3 jib. Rosamund

describes this as more like a "Chinese take away and a slice of Madeira cake" Both she and Claire, who is mentally and physically disabled, were given the helm. Rosamund's remark to this was "this isn't going to be as easy as it looks, is it? But then I'm no judge. I can't even steer my own carcass straight"

In her letter to Desmond Dewhurst, who organised the event, she said, "so many people have told me in the past that such experiences are not possible for me and people like me. Thank you so

much for giving me the experience and the ability to say, "I've done that. I know what it is like." As she departed, Rosamund said, "Smashing afternoon, thanks, I loved it." "Nothing to do with me," said Sharon. "Thank the Yacht Club" The venture was a great success!

Sail in the Solent for the Disabled

The Social Scene

RNLI Ball The RNLI have chosen the RLYYC for their annual Ball, to take place on Friday 2nd April 1993. Tickets £30 from Annette Ridout on 675334 and Marie Mudie on 673473.

In addition to the winter season lectures (check the notice boards for these) the House Committee invite you to join them on the following evenings:

November

Friday 6th Jazz evening **Saturday 7th** Annual Business Meeting **Saturday 14th** Annual Dinner **Thursday 19th** Beaujolais Nouveau and French Supper

December

Friday 4th Jazz evening **Saturday 5th** Goose Supper **Saturday 12th** Italian Supper **Wednesday 16th** Carol Singing and Christmas Dinner **Thursday 31st** New Year's Eve Party

January

Friday 22nd Game Supper

February

Saturday 6th Roast Beef Supper **Friday 12th** Steak Supper **Saturday 27th** Cruising Dinner

Potter Ship

Editors: Rachel Nuding and Carol Tinley

Potter Ship ©

The Royal Lymington Yacht Club
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The Editors would like to thank all those who offered articles and photographs. Our next Potter Ship will require informative and interesting articles, with photographs. Please send these to the Editors c/o the Club by February. We will use as many as possible – space permitting.

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