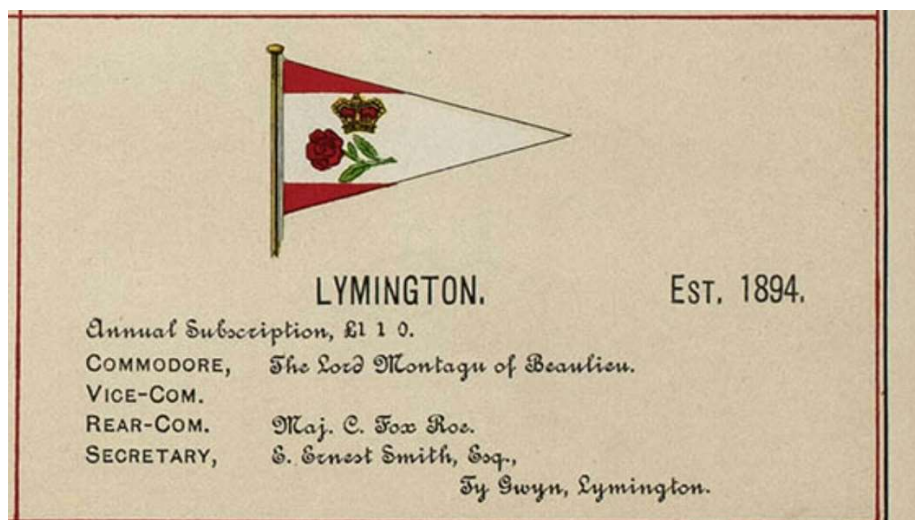


Early Club Yachting in Lymington

Lymington had been a centre for ship and boatbuilding for centuries, so it was no surprise that yachting would take root here. In its earliest days, from around 1820, there were a number of wealthy owners, who lived in or around Lymington, and this led to the rapid growth of designing, building and racing some fairly large vessels in the vicinity. It is somewhat astonishing to learn that one early Lymington yachtsman actually sailed his vessel outside the Needles – regarded then as remarkable, not for want of either his or the boat's capabilities, but because he was nearly captured by French privateers ... that near to the coast.

A number of these owners were members of the Royal Yacht Club, founded in 1815 (later the RYS) but as their group grew, it is no wonder that they wished to get together locally, so towards the end of the 19th century, the first Lymington Yacht Club was formed. It met in the hexagonal upper room of the Bath House (now part of the LTSC Clubhouse).

The driving force behind the original LYC were Major C. Fox-Roe and Capt. James Dyer; Fox-Roe was Secretary and the founding Commodore was General Sartorius (it is uncertain whether it was Reginald or his brother Euston Sartorius: both became Major-Generals and, extraordinarily, both were awarded VCs). Evidence of the existence of the LYC, founded in 1894, is seen in the accompanying entry in Lloyd's Register of Yachting: showing the list of its officers and the burgee.



Source: Lloyd's Register, with their permission

In 1896, the date of the Lloyd's extract, Lord Montagu had become the Commodore and Fox-Roe, Rear-Commodore. At that time, Ernest Smith was Secretary; his address was Ty Gwyn, in Lymington ... does anyone know the location of that address, I wonder?

It seems that after a few years, the fledgling LYC dwindled and was dissolved.

* * *

Next on the scene was the redoubtable Capt. H.H. (Henry) Nicholson, who in the first years of the 20th century, brought with him from Plymouth a 14ft clinker sailing dinghy, on which was modelled the Lymington Pram class. To provide some 20 or so of these boats some organised racing, Nicholson set about forming the Lymington River Sailing Club in 1914 – not an auspicious timing, given the imminent change in world affairs. Club sailing in Lymington languished after the Great War, until an energetic group, led by Major Cyril Potter, created (or more accurately, re-created) the Lymington River Sailing Club or LRSC in 1922. That date is taken as the origin of our Club, today, as it represents the start of the continuous period of Club existence.

Capt H H Nicholson at the helm



Sadly, little else is documented of the affairs of the original LYC. We know a little more of the original LRSC: Nicholson was its Captain (it had no Commodore); Major A.O.L. Kindersley was the Hon Secretary/ Treasurer; the Lady Member was Mrs R.L. Bayliff; Hon Starter the Rev F.S. Trevor-Garrick. There may possibly have been some carry-over of members, from the club of 1894, to the first incarnation of the LRSC, 20 years later one; there certainly was from the pre- to the post-WW1 Clubs.

* * *

Of Major Potter, we shall hear and learn more, as the preparations for our Centenary unfold, but it is from this pre-history of the RLymYC that we should remember and honour Capt. Henry Nicholson, the founder of its closest antecedent. He lived in Creek Cottage near the Salterns and sailed his Lymington Pram round to the Town Quay to do his shopping. Nicholson served on the first General Committee of the LRSC and LYC. He was a highly respected sailor and a much-valued friend and help, to all who indulged in that pastime.



The inscription reads: 'Presented to Capt H.H.Nicholson by some of his yachting friends in recognition of his unfailing help and kindness to them Xmas 1927'.

Such was the regard in which he was held, that this Silver salver was presented to him by fellow Club Members, whose 72 signatures the salver bears. That was in 1927, the year after the Club became the Lymington Yacht Club – the second LYC. The salver is to be seen to this day, in the Island Room trophy cabinet at the Club.

Graham Clarke, Club Historian

Centenary appeal to all Members – please dig out any items, photos or memories of early Club life, that may be lurking in the recesses of cupboards, lofts or minds. All will be gratefully received, carefully looked after and promptly returned, once copies taken for the archive. Please email the Club Historian [here](#) or phone 01590 671177. Thank you.

The History pages on the Club website are found here: <https://rlmyc-history.org.uk/>