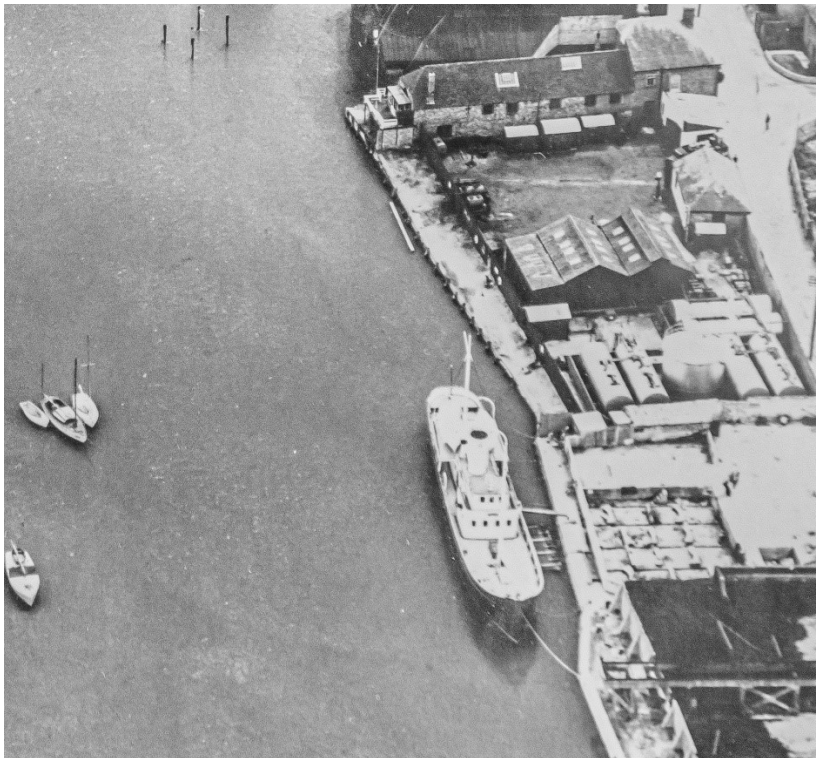


The Way Things Were

Every now and again, snippets of fascination come the way of the Club Historian: sometimes found by chance and sometimes following an enquiry from a Club Member. One such arose, recently, when a reader spotted a reference, in the list of Club Officers in the 1947 Handbook, to his Godfather.

The Officer concerned was Major Harold Hall, M.C. who was Chairman of the Sailing Committee and further investigation revealed that his “yacht”, at the time, was *Manihine*, accounting for some 212 tons, on a length of 109ft. Investigations then led to the discovery that she was more of a ship than a yacht: a long, shapely black hull, with substantial white superstructure, surmounted by a buff funnel. Not one’s average pleasure craft, even back in those days of grand vessels of considerable size.

It transpired that *Manihine* had been an ocean-going fishing vessel, well capable of holding her own, in any seas that may come her way. Where could such a vessel be kept in the river, if indeed she was Lymington based?



The answer was found in some archive photographs held by Berthon, showing the ship alongside the only place in Lymington, where such a size of vessel could berth – between the then Shell-Mex wharf and J.R.Wood’s coal-yard, now part of the public carpark.

Photo credit: Berthon

She can’t have been used too often, as to put her to sea, she required a powerful launch to take her bows round, to face down the river, along which she would proceed under her own power. Another heritage source recounts that process and also tells of *Manihine* possessing, not one, but two Engineers, also that she was used by Hall for expeditions, especially to the Red Sea, from where he brought back marine specimens (kept in the ship’s old fisheries tanks), for the British and Natural History Museums. Perhaps such resources are made possible, when one also owns the London Brick Company!

Having been Rear-Commodore before the war, and a Trustee for some years, Major Hall became Commodore from 1955 to 1958, at the outset of which, his yacht was then the rather more modest, though extremely fine, 48ft motorboat: *Ravahine*.



Photo credit: Laurent Giles Archive

She was designed by Laurent Giles in Lymington and built at Port Hamble, and the accompanying model shows off her beautiful lines. Despite her length, she had minimal accommodation: the space between the wheelhouse and midship cockpit was filled with two large diesel engines, while belowdecks, forward, were at most two single settee berths, with galley and heads facilities. It is most likely that that was for crew, rather than owner's, accommodation. Not a bad runabout, for a day's excursion.



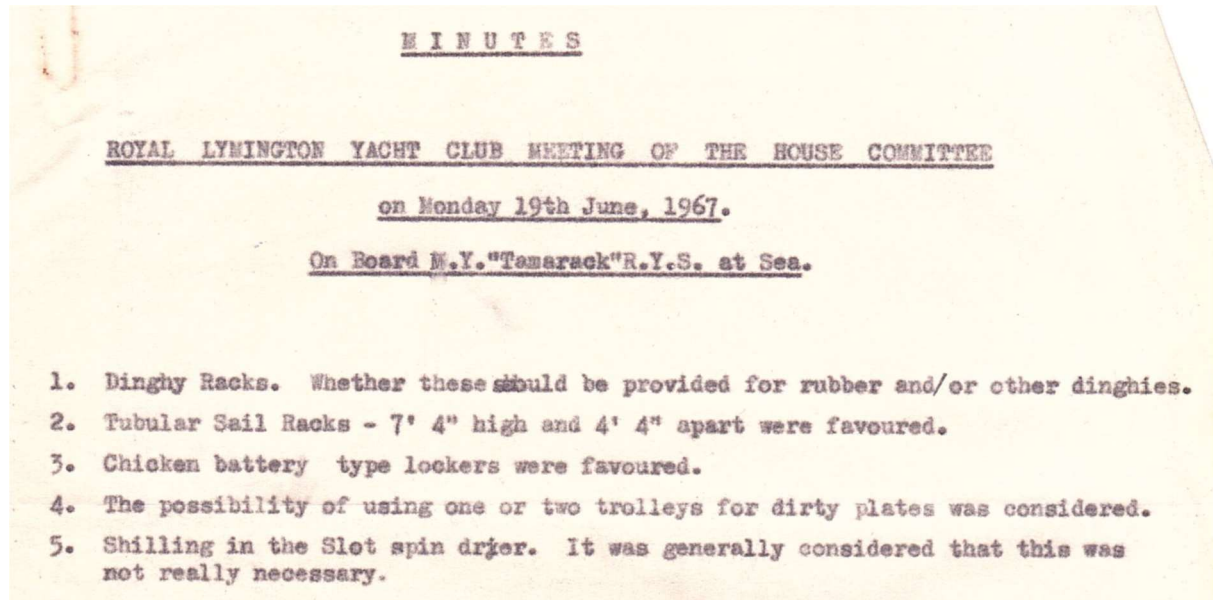
Photo credit: Laurent Giles Archive

Above is the Club's atmospheric sketch of Major Harold Hall, O.B.E. M.C. as Commodore, wistfully regarding his pride and joy, *Ravahine*, as she shows her paces in Hurst Narrows, while flying his Commodore's pennant.

Any readers who would like to learn more of the heritage of Laurent Giles designs is welcome to follow the link to their archive: <https://laurentgilesarchive.com/>

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Another whimsical insight into life, as it was in the Club, over fifty years ago, is found in the following extract of the Minutes of the House Committee (the entire Minutes ran to 23 line-items, yet did not fill an A4 page). Of particular note is that the Committee met at sea, aboard the M.Y. *Tamarack* (RYS) ... which belonged to the then Commodore, P.J.B. Perkins, Esq., who presumably hosted the meeting, *ex officio*.



Well, that certainly was "The Way Things Were" – or at least on some occasions and for certain people. One wonders what future generations may find as remarkable, from today's archives, when they look back on us and our time.

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 from here: <https://rlymyc-history.org.uk/contact-page/> or phone 01590 671177. Thank you.

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