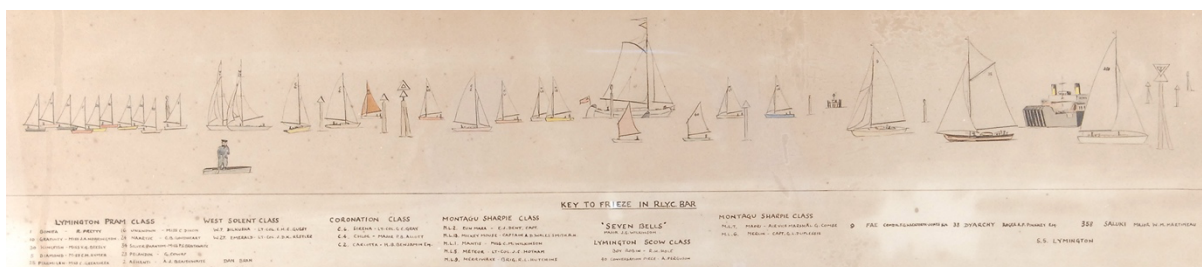


A Tale of Two Murals

It often happens that one sees something everyday and one doesn't notice it. That could be said of the two fine panoramas given to the Club by former Members. One, the very large piece in the rafters of the Island Room, started off in the slipway bar, behind the bar itself. It was painted in 1947 by Douglas Wales-Smith, whose son Patrick Wales-Smith has been a Member since 1946. The second, no longer on public view, used to grace the wall behind the old sandwich counter in the River Room and was the work and gift of Roy Coombs in 1960.



Happily, Wales-Smith provided a key to what he called the frieze in the RLYC (sic) Bar and that gives us a clue to the subjects. He lists boats by Class, Name and Owner and reserves a special place in the foreground for Dan Bran in his dinghy. It even includes the friendly presence of the much-loved MV *Lymington*, the river's first ro-ro ferry and part of the Southern Railway's fleet.



Wales-Smith depicts the popular Classes, both dinghies and keel-boats, as well as individual yachts, in this just post-war scene, which was also the Club's first Jubilee year, 25 years on from its founding in 1922. Quite rightly, the Lymington Pram class is strongly in evidence, together with its smaller sisters, the Scows. Joining them are a good handful of Montagu Sharpies, deriving their specific name from their popularity in Beaulieu. The keel-boats are dominated by the West Solent One Designs and the Coronations. Also featured, are a number of individual yachts – as much characters of their era, as were their owners. More details of these classes can be found elsewhere in these History webpages:

<https://rlymc-history.org.uk/chronicles/sailing-history/former-classes/>

And there in the background is our own Starting Platform, given its own space in posterity.

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Moving forward only thirteen years, we come to Roy Coombs' vibrant representation of racing on the river. Roy had been an active Member of the Club since 1950, sailing a range of boats and serving on Committees. In his professional life, he was a graphic artist, which explains his colourful and energetic treatment of the subject. With a twinkle in his eye, he once said that most Members would have an example of his work in their homes ... when faced with a blank expression he revealed that he was the artist who painted the fruit designs on Tesco's yoghurt pots!



Coombs' panorama contained fewer features of the river but much more content by way of classes, colour and action than its older predecessor. A factor that no doubt entertained many, as they queued for their lunches. The piece depicts the smaller craft that flourished in the 1950s, as life returned to normal but, with dinghies and open keel boats of modest cost, the sport came within the reach of many more and younger sailors. The boats featured include National 12, Firefly, Finn, GP14 and XOD classes, battling for supremacy in the River, from in front of the Clubhouse of the RLymYC. Bursting with activity, the scene displays the Club's burgee, the finishing line mark and the all-important stop-watch, as well as the starting cannon and race flags, needed to set off the action.

It is hoped that both of these works, of very different art, will find a special place in the Club's celebrations of its Centenary in 2022. Then perhaps, as we look back over the decades of development of the Club, they will be both seen and remembered, with appreciation and affection.

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/>