

Hello, for those who don't know me, my name is Michael Webb, a friend of Doug and his family for many years and it is my honour and privilege to have been asked to say a few words about his life. DOUGLAS JAMES BEVERLY BAVERSTOCK, Beverly was one he didn't use.

He was a well-respected man who was a legend and a special part of Lymington River, the Western Solent, the Yacht Clubs and Lymington Lifeboat, spanning many years.

He was born at Gordleton Mill Farm on 13th November 1927, to Tom and Adeline, brother to Norman, Betty, Veronica, Marion, twins Doris and Dorothy and Margaret. Betty, Veronica, Dorothy and Norman predeceased him, after a fishing boat accident in the Solent.

After two years at Gordleton the family moved to Ashley, Arnewood Farm, and by all accounts it was an idyllic life, with lots of space to play and roam. The farm had chickens, milking cows, arable farming and all done with horses and ploughs. Later on, came the first tractor and a steam engine, towing a threshing machine. It was a different world: the grocer would call on a Thursday for the order and it was delivered Saturday, when Doug would go to New Milton, to the cinema called La Scala and later to the Waverley after it was built.

Doug's father Tom worked for Farmer Browning, alongside his two sons but in 1936, when they moved to Lower Pennington, this was where his calling to the sea began. He joined the Oxy Pennington Sea Scouts joining a number of friends: Ted and Jack Blachford, Fred Galpin, Ray Stone, Geoff Phillips, Derek Dashwood and their Scoutmaster was a Mr Bill Smith at that time.

The school was at Upper Pennington, run by School Master Mr Tillet, who was free with his cane, but according to Doug, a Mrs Torah was much nicer; school uniforms were purchased from Bennett's in Lymington. Recreation was hand-lining flounders off the seas wall, digging bait, collecting winkles and cockles, ferreting for rabbits and other such country sports.

When the time came to leave school Doug went to work at Beesley's shipyard above the bridge at Lymington, serving his apprenticeship alongside Bob Cook, during the war, and gained his shipwright's ticket. They built boats like 27ft Montague whalers, motor boats, tenders, dinghies and work for the Navy, War Department and Air Force, repairing numerous small craft. They also had the chance to go into the heavily mined Solent, on delivery runs, but it entailed getting a daily two-flag signal from Yarmouth because up at Sowley there was boom, laid right across the Solent, with two gates (two ships made a gate). They got their flags and moved up to East or West Solent.

He then moved with the family in 1946 to Lymore, at Everton, where Farmer Bacon employed his father. For pleasure in 1949 Doug and two friends ferried a Lymington Scow to le Havre and sailed the Seine to Paris, the following year they hiked from Cherbourg to Concarneau but the Lymington River and the Solent was Doug's life and his passion.

From 1950, he shared three fishing boats over the years, with Arthur Renouf: the Saraïd, Bay Queen, the one I remember well was Handy Billy, which I saw him build and fit-out at Bill Smith's boatyard on Lymington Quay. In 1951 he then went on to work at Captain Adam's Boatyard in Keyhaven.

The family then moved to Tithe Barn in 1952. In 1957, the Keyhaven Boatyard were experiencing a downturn and had to lose a shipwright and the yard's loss was the Yacht

Club's gain, starting a happy association over many years, when Doug was employed by the then Sailing Secretary, Commander Brown, starting at a £7 10s wage, rising to £8 if he passed the grade, which maybe he did.

Doug was Mr Royal Lymington Yacht Club personified, a jack-of-all-trades in those days, from ferrying Members, replacing oil drum pontoon floats every year, stoking the coal fires every morning in the winter, to helping in the bar with the then Secretary and wife, George and Vi Edwards. Many flag officers, Members and Secretaries have gone but I'm sure not forgotten the encouragement, the wit, the knowledge and the caustic comments from Doug. His legacy lives on, in the guise of a launch bought by the Yacht Club as a Committee Boat and was named Baverstock, now owned by the LTSC and still moored at the end of the river and still being used for dinghy racing starts and finishes.

Doug was also past chairman of the Keyhaven and Lymington Wild Fowlers Association that boasted over 80 members, at one time. He also had a punt with an extremely long and heavy punt gun, which he used in Hawker's Lake, shooting duck. He later passed it on to St Barbe's Museum.

His Club workshop was the hub of the banks, with locals Harry Eales, Jack Smith, Arthur Renouf, Alf Claridge, Charlie Perriton the Customs Officer and many more, calling in for a chinwag. Doug also advised and assisted hundreds of Members during his 35 years at the RLymYC, becoming an Honorary Life Member when he retired.

In 1991 Doug bought the hull of a Falmouth gaff cutter and fitted it out at Chris Deveulle's Aquaboats, where it was launched by the then Rear Commodore Sailing, Sally Potter. I remember sailing 'Ada' with him, Chris Devalue and Duncan Hall one evening, after firstly me being shouted at to tie the correct bit of rigging on to a cleat. It went on to be a most memorable evening, sailing up to Hurst passing the Castle so close, you felt you could touch the beach. A pint at The Gun was followed by the most beautiful sail back, on a June evening, though the lakes and coming out at Pennington; it was unforgettable. Doug sold 'Ada' in later years and bought a motor day boat, calling it 'Katy May', and after it got a bit difficult for him to get to, he sold it to his dear friend Derek Smith.

Doug's knowledge of the Western Solent area, and Lymington River, was legendary, a man who could lay a mark or buoy without any new-fangled apps or what have you, but take a bearing from a landmark, tree, lined with sway tower and then you awaited for the order drop the anchor and it was in the right position.

In the 1960s a gentleman called George Power invited some of those original Sea Scouts of 1937 to join with him and his fleet of powerboats, which were called 'Torshent', 'Seeker', 'Maid of Baltimore' and 'McLannahan to be members of Lymington's first rescue service for Lymington river and district. There were four volunteer watches of crew, of which Doug was a founder member. The first call was at a grounded yacht off Pennington and the rescue crew were Bill Smith, Doug Baverstock, Jack Blachford and Keith Bacon.

In 1965 the RNLI were approached to take over the inshore lifeboat rescue service, for Lymington and the Western Solent, and this started another happy time with Doug being a founder member of Lymington RNLI rescue service. He served with the D class lifeboat and B class, as Coxswain, until he retired, and remained at the station, as Honorary Bosun. Doug, as everyone here knows, was old school but his advice and encouragement to new crew, many of who were related to him, was always listened to. There are too many old

crew members who I could mention and I know their memories of him will always be in their thoughts.

Doug was also the force behind the annual Sprat Suppers held at the LTSC but previously it was held at the Masonic Hall, where in 1981, 197 diners consumed 9 stone of sprats. I remember that well as I cooked them, but £200 was raised for the local Fishermans Association and the RNLI, a fairly hefty sum in those days.

Doug was mentor to many, especially at the Yacht Club, and those here today have special memories of him, as I do. He encouraged youngsters and they in turn respected his advice. He also had three special favourites, from the many who came and worked as weekend or holidays boys. Two still working at the yacht club, Barrie Smith and Phil Baker and one he thought of as a second son, who hearing of Doug's illness and his demise rushed over from France for the day. He saw Doug, the day before he died, and had a reunion and fond chat; Kevin Smith, I know Doug really appreciated the gesture.

Doug advised the Members, he admonished them as well. He could be an acerbic commentator on the waterfront and would have the ability to strip away pretension and puncture pomposity, with a few well chosen words. A tale goes, that one day a Member was having a frustrating afternoon, trying to get his boat alongside and with each pass, found it increasingly unlikely to succeed, until a lull in the wind came and the unmistakable Hampshire lilt came over, "tell you what Sir, you stay right there and I'll bring the pontoon over to you". This was plagiarised from an article by Joff Hutchinson.

One aspect of his caring nature was recounted to me by Alan Coster. One day, Alan and Malcolm Smith borrowed the sailing boat Doug had gone to France in and sailed over to Yarmouth. By all accounts, and not unsurprisingly a few jars, they were drunk. On the way back in the darkness, it was a balmy evening with no wind, so the boys were forced to row the dinghy back to Lymington. Doug must have been concerned, as they encountered him at the Platform and, after he ascertained they were alright, they then asked for a tow back into port and received the answer, "NO you got yourself in the mess, carry on as you were doing" ... and then left them.

Doug had many encounters with the Patron of the Yacht Club, the Princess Royal, taking her out in the Club launch to various yachts, during regattas, and memorably ferrying her and Commander Lawrence, as he then was, to their yacht on the trots, opposite the Band Stand, so avoiding the paparazzi, who had camped out there and never got a picture.

In 1990 Doug was so pleased to receive the BEM, for services to the community and the Yacht Club. He retired in 1992 and lived with his sister Margaret, still enjoying life, going out in 'Katy May', having a few drinks with friends on the pontoon, and in later years, still coming down to the banks in his new vehicle: an electric buggy, although I am sure he was a safer driver on the water.

Doug knew his end was near and said he had no regrets and requested the type of funeral he wanted, his ashes scattered in the Solent and a wake at the Yacht Club; all adhered to, except the addition of the Plonkers band.

Doug: we will all miss you but you left us with many memories, which we can all relate over a glass of wine at the Club. In closing, one person I must mention, is Doug's sister Margaret, who has looked after him for many years, with great caring and love, and I am sure we all appreciate and thank her for that.

Doug is now looking down at us, probably having a large scotch with John Turner and Chris Deveulle; and we will raise a glass to you later, in remembrance of a fine person and friend to us all.

RIP old friend.

Michael Webb, 28th February, 2018.