

# THE YAWL

The Newsletter of the Devon Yawl Association  
Christmas 2020 / New Year 2021: Number 54



DY367 off Lyme Regis, Jeremy and Helen White, Picture courtesy of Pauline Rook.



DY360 entering the Caledonian Canal at Neptune's Steps – see Doug Williams's article



“Poppy!” – see Doug's article

## Commodore's Reflections

Mike Roberts - DY141

Hello to you all.

### Covid 19

Much of this year has been affected by the pandemic. Consequently, very few organised events have taken place, Devon Yawl events included.

The RYA Dinghy Show did take place at the beginning of March, with a very different format to previous years. All the dingy classes were together in hall 2, West Hall, whereas before they were scattered throughout the whole show. This we initially thought was going to be a major headache, not just to setup but also to break down and exit the show, but we were pleasantly surprised, everything went smoothly, the hall was well set out, with an uncrowded and public-friendly feel. It was relaxed and never felt crowded even though the show was busy. A big thank you to all those who came to help out: Tony Gray, Doug Williams, Ian Scholefield, Shane Buckley and Ed Williams-Hawkes. A special thanks to Rowan who came for the whole weekend, helping to set up and breakdown.

This was the last time the RYA Dinghy Show will be held at Alexandra Palace. It is moving to the new show venue at Farnborough. The 2021 show is scheduled to be a virtual show; how this will work, we are not sure at the moment.

### Lockdown

Lockdown has had one main benefit: more time at home has afforded the opportunity to become more familiar with the DY website and improve its content and design. We now have a member, Philip Hawker, who is proficient with software development and has expended a lot of time and effort sorting out the finer details of the site. Thanks, Philip.

### Zoom

As face-to-face meetings have not been possible, your committee has been using Zoom as a means of holding meetings. This has proved to be very useful. It has worked well, pulling together those who would, under normal circumstances, find it impractical to travel long distances to attend a meeting, but have been able to have a positive input because of the ease of online meeting. The downside is that we missed the lunch!

## AGM

Under the present circumstances, it is not possible to meet in person for the AGM. We will hold the meeting via Zoom. This does give the opportunity for those members who are far afield to log in and join the meeting. It will be much more inclusive for our members. It will be a challenge to set up and manage, but we look forward to a new challenge.

Hopefully, 2021 will be a better year for getting out on the water, with club sailing and the Nationals able to go ahead.

My best wishes to you all.

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## 2020/21 Committee

### Commodore:

Mike Roberts - michael.dawlish@mac.com

### Vice Commodore:

Andrew Matthews - matthews.a3cs@btinternet.com

### Secretary:

Helen Phillips

### Membership Secretary:

Ian Scholefield - ianbrigg@gmail.com

### Honorary Treasurer:

Ian Scholefield - ianbrigg@gmail.com

### Second Hand Boat Register:

Tim Petitt - timpetitt@btinternet.com

### Members:

Will King (South Coast Rep), James Gough-Allen (Builder), David Langley, Elly Pegg.

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## 2021 Events

### 26-27 June

National Championship – Yealm YC

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Devon Yawl Association website – devonyawl.co

The views expressed in "The Yawl" are not necessarily those of the Devon Yawl Association.

Contributions to "The Yawl" should be sent to any Committee member whose e-mail address is supplied (see above)

## A Shared History - Tim Street

The following article is reproduced with the kind permission of The Salcombe Yawl Owners' Association.

*[Ed's note - DY1 was launched on 4 May 1968. As far as we know she was created from a mould taken from Yawl 45, a Salcombe Yawl. Thus, the Devon Yawl came into being, but with a long pedigree.]*



### THE SALCOMBE YAWL

The Salcombe Yawl has a history which goes back at least 200 years to the straight-stemmed, transom-sterned, yawl rigged local fishing vessels of the late 18th-early 19th century. Certainly, the earliest print of Alston House above Widegates on the Salcombe estuary, shows such a small gaffed rigged yawl. This print is dated 1806, but further evidence is shown by the depiction of a very similar vessel in the lovely print of 1823 by W Daniell ARA, giving a view of the Grange and old Cliff House, Salcombe. This is one of a series that were done of the English coast in that and the following years. Thus,

by 1823, it is clear that the yawl-rigged fishing-boat, had become established as a common type on the South Devon coast.



©. Robert Roberts print, 1823 in Salcombe in 1823 (courtesy J. Crankshaw)

The coast creates short steep seas, on top of the long rollers sweeping in from the Atlantic and up the Channel to Bolt Head and the Start. The most suitable boats which evolved had to be able to

sail to windward out of the Salcombe estuary against a strong tide and to keep to sea, anything up to 10 miles off the coast, to carry out the long-line fishing or lobstering that the local economy required. The straight stem appears to have evolved to ease the building and to cut through the short seas. A broad stern and good sea keeping was also required for fishing with long lines and the stumpy gaff yawl rig was needed to enable the boat to sail out of Salcombe estuary against the tide, before taking off the mainsail and operating easily under jib and mizzen with only one man, or a man and a boy on board.

By 1853, when the earliest painting, now in the Salcombe Yacht Club, was made, the Yawl is clearly visible as the direct ancestor of the Salcombe Yawl of today as she is similar in all respects. Also, about 1853, we hear of the first occasion when Salcombe yawls, then known as the Licensed Watermen's Boats class, raced together in the Salcombe Regatta. These work-



10. Frank Cole sailing Y7 Choice, formerly Edra. Photograph post 1945: note Choice still has no bowsprit. (Courtesy K. Jago)

boats were yawl rigged and open or quarter decked. They were between 14 ft and 18 ft long and were all owned and worked out of Salcombe, being used for fishing and as hire boats for picnic parties.

There was one Regatta every year with usually two races for each class. There is no record of winning boats and it is believed that the first actual records, which appear to have been lost, dated from 1906 although at one time there were earlier postcards in Overbecks' Museum. In 1907 there first appears a record of a 'Class for Yawls not exceeding 15ft 6ins'. A class of four boats raced during the season with the winner being 'Handy Andy' Mr. Giles; second 'Lurline' Mr. Cyril Turner the SYC Hon. Secretary; third 'Cynthia' Mr. W. Patey; and fourth 'Frances' Mr. W. Johnson. The sailing Committee met two days before a race to determine the conditions and entries had to be with the Hon. Secretary by 10.30 am. on the day of the race, when the sailing instructions were issued. In 1908 the class was changed to the '16ft. Class' and five yawls took part with 'Lurline' Mr. Turner winning overall, 'Lillie' Mr. W. Patey, second and 'Falcon' Mr. J.N. Rodick, third. 'Pickle' Mr. Mawson and 'Still Waters' Miss Herbert, completing the fleet. Sometime around 1906 Captain A. Street, an Army Officer, had the Yawl 'Busy Bee' built by Dornom's Boatyard and Andrew McIlwraith had the 'Foam' built. It is believed that these two boats were amongst the first yawls built specifically for pleasure sailing, although the first appearance of 'Busy Bee' in the SYC racing records was not until 1911.

'Busy Bee' was 15 ft 6 in long, half-decked with a centreboard, bowsprit, gaff-rigged mainsail and sprit rigged mizzen. Although soundly built, she lasted until 1963, she was recorded as coming last in almost every race of the 1911 Salcombe Yacht Club summer series. Although she raced occasionally up until 1914, she was no match for the Licensed Watermen's boats and an engine was installed in 1922.



4. Yawl with standing lug: pre 1914 (courtesy S. Blackaller)

'Foam', which is 17ft. 6" long, did not race with the 16ft or 15ft. 6 in. class Yawls but usually won in the large class. Under various rigs including a tall Bermudan rig, she raced with the Salcombe 'A' Class as A4 and later as A12, up until at least the early fifties and is still in existence, once again rigged as a yawl.

Racing stopped during the First World War and only re-started in 1919 when a small class of four yawl-rigged boats raced together during the season as the 'Under 16ft. Class' on a handicap basis. They were various lengths from 14 ft to 15 ft 6 in, and were handicapped according to length. Their names were 'Evelyn' (named after Miss Evelyn Pepperell), 'Carew', 'Helena' and 'May'. In 1917, the boat was built which really started the Yawl Class as a racing class. Jim Stone (then aged 16), at that time working as a shipwright with Edgar Cove and living at East Portlemouth on the Salcombe estuary, built himself a 14 ft Yawl in a garden shed owned by a Lieutenant Wilcox and named her 'Blackbird', later numbered Y2. As he had no paint she was creosoted. For several years after the war, he won every race in her and later, when sailed by either his brother Terry or his son Alec Stone, she continued winning up until 1937. Sadly, she was lost in a storm off Whitestrand in the late 1940s.

The 'Under 16 ft. handicap and yawl class', now consisting of privately owned boats totalling up to ten in number, raced on a fairly regular basis until 1935, by when they were called 'Class D, Yawls up to 15 ft. 6 in', although rarely more than six turned out. They included those named above together with Y3 Evelyn, Y4 Blonde, Y5 My Lady Joan and Y5 Elaine, and Y6 Penelope. Other boats, such as 'Beccasine', 'Sea Lass', 'Rose', 'Blue Bird', 'Handy Andy', 'Frances', 'Globe', 'Lady Jane' and Y5 'Shag', yawls of differing lengths, also raced with them. By then they had been mostly standardised on a 16 ft length, although some were still 15 ft 6 in long and they raced on a handicap basis. Although several were still completely open, by this time most were three-quarter

decked. They were all straight stemmed and transom sterned and were exactly the same in layout and general appearance as the current Yawls. They were mostly built by local yards: Edgar Cove's, Dornom's and Chant's.

Three new boats appeared in 1937, Y7 'Brunette', owned by R.E. Morris, Y8 'Boy Tom' and a converted 16ft "B" Class, Y9 'Priscilla', formerly the 'Sunbeam', owned by and sailed by various Coves. The next big step came in 1938. Over the preceding winter, three yawls, designed by Mr. Lionel Clayton of Portlemouth, were ordered from Mashford's Yard at Cremyll. These were Y11 'Edra', R.E. Morris of Batson; Y12 'Becas', Col G. de C. Glover and Y13 'Seagull', D.V. Sanders. Captain A. Lindsay Smith also bought a new Yawl from the yard of Morgan Giles at Teignmouth in Devon. Morgan Giles, famous for his Fourteen Foot Internationals and other racing yachts, had designed and built four 16 ft. boats for the Teign Corinthian One Design, which, however, were not accepted. Captain Lindsay-Smith bought one of these boats, had a 250 lb iron keel and heavy iron centre-board installed and named her 'Auburn'. She was numbered Y15 and built out of cedar, with iron fastenings. The same winter, Y10 'Marie Louise', an open boat, later lost on the rocks under the Moutl, was ordered by Miss P. Chase.

On the 6 August 1938, Y15 'Auburn' was launched for her first race, beating Y9 Priscilla into second place by 35 minutes. From her first race 'Auburn' outclassed all the other yawls then in existence, including the new Mashford's built yawls, with the result that most of the other, earlier, boats simply stopped racing. The next week, seven boats took part in the 1938 Regatta, finishing in the following order: Y15 'Auburn', Y13 'Seagull', Y9 'Priscilla', Edgar Cove, Y11 'Edra' R.E. Morris, Y2 'Blackbird' Alec Stone, Y12 'Becas' Col. Glover and Y10 'Marie Louise' Miss P. Chase. The Auburn Cup was also first presented that year and was won by 'Auburn', sailed for Captain Lindsey-Smith by Lionel Clayton. To compete the following year, 1939, Jim Stone built a new 'Blackbird II' (Y14) out of mahogany on oak frames, at Long Park, East Portlemouth and eight yawls raced. The class was split into two: Yawls (Gunter Rig), in which 'Penelope', sailed by John Cove (aged 12) beat Y4 Blonde, sailed by Commander Loftus-Jones, Y2 Blackbird I and Y10 Marie Louise and Yawls (Bermuda Rig), in which Y14 Blackbird II, sailed by Alec Stone (also aged 12), beat Y15 Captain Lindsay-Smith, Y12 'Becas', Col. Glover and Y7 Edra. R.E. Morris had bought a second Morgan Giles hull and named her Y7 'Edra'.

During the war Y15, 'Auburn' was taken to West Mersea in Essex, by No. 1 Motor Boat Company RASC, as a tender, and 'Blackbird' and 'Edra', now re-named 'Choice' and owned by Frank Cole, which was given the fishing boat number of 207, were used for fishing and as work boats. After the war, 'Auburn' was returned to Captain A. Lindsey-Smith, who had also moved to Essex. After his death, he left her to his yacht's skipper



and she stayed on the River Colne, where she is still believed to be in existence at Brightlingsea.

In 1946 racing re-started and the 16ft Restricted Yawl Class then consisted of Y14 'Blackbird II', Jim Stone; Y7 'Choice', Frank Cole, and Y9 'Priscilla', now regularly sailed by Richard Cove. They were joined occasionally by Y5 'Elaine', Y4 'Blonde', Y12, now named 'Genesta' and owned by Brigadier

Morton and Y2 'Blackbird', which, however, raced as a separate class for separate prizes. In 1947 came the first of the post war 'new' yawls, Y15 'Kingfisher', which was built by Jim Stone for a Mr R Triscott. Even Terry Stone, who helped build her, is not clear why she was given the same number as 'Auburn'. She was designed as a direct improvement on 'Blackbird' although originally, like both 'Choice' and 'Auburn', she had no bowsprit. However, during 1947 'Choice' was fitted with a bowsprit to give her better balance and later, after the death of Mr Frank Cole, was purchased by Richard Cove, after 'Priscilla' was banned from racing at the end of the 1948 season, for being undecked. It is interesting to note that, although 'Priscilla' remained gaff rigged with a sprit rigged mizzen, when sailed by Richard Cove, she still won the Championship in 1947 and 1948, with 'Blackbird' second, 'Choice' third and 'Kingfisher' fourth.

In 1948, these four were joined by Y16 'Ariel', owned by Mr W H Thorning, usually with Harris Thorning as his crew and the yawls then raced in two classes. The Old Yawls consisted of Y5 'Elaine', sailed by Ralph Pepperell who only died very recently, 'Sea Maid', Mr Roly Tyler and Y12 'Genesta', Brigadier Morton. The season points' series was won by 'Priscilla'. Second was 'Blackbird', third Y7 'Choice', Frank Cole, fourth Y15 'Kingfisher' and fifth Y16 'Ariel', sailed by B. Thorning. In 1949, 'Priscilla' was banned for being undecked and not having an iron keel, so the class virtually died out. 'Choice' and occasionally 'Blonde' raced in the Handicap Class up until the Salcombe Regatta, when they were joined by 'Blackbird' and 'Ariel'. 'Choice' won the championship that year.

Although as early as 1946, Jim Stone had started building yawls in his small yard above Goodshelter, in East Portlemouth, he was only able to complete a few each year. Even so, up until 1960, only two other boats, Y21 and Y29, were built in another yard, G. D. and N. Winter's, at Lincombe. Despite his steady output of lovingly built Salcombe yawls, Y7 'Choice' and Y14 'Blackbird' remained the best two yawls year in year out, in spite of constant improvement and refinements in design, and it was not until 1965,



when Y61 'Taylormaid' was built by Peter Taylor, (later the world famous builder of International Finns), as his first attempt at yawl building, that 'Choice' and 'Blackbird', by then nearly 30 years old, were outclassed. The building of Y61 led directly to the formation of the Salcombe Yawl Association at the end of 1965, under the presidency of Dr Breach of East Portlemouth. At the inaugural meeting, the following were elected to the opening Committee: Dr Breach, Major E.G.M. Pearce, Geoffrey Sutton and Terry Stone, with Norman Mallett as Secretary. Geoffrey Sutton was elected the first Chairman and Major Tim Street was invited to prepare the first draft of the Class Rules in conjunction with Jim Stone. Subsequently, at the next meeting, they were formally adopted and it was decided to formally name the class the Salcombe Yawls and to keep them as purely traditional, with wooden masts.

'Taylormaid' showed that successful yawls could be built by builders other than Jim Stone and several other yards, such as Edward Cove of the old firm of Edgar Cove, Powercraft, David Gibbens, Hughie Cater and Michael Attfield, all small specialist Salcombe boat-builders, started building racing yawls on a regular basis, intended as improvements on 'Taylormaid'. 'Taylormaid' herself was designed as a direct improvement on Y7 'Choice', with the addition of broader buttocks and much straighter and finer lines aft, to improve the downwind and reaching performance. Up until then virtually all Yawl races had been won on upwind performance and running and reaching had been of very minor importance. However, much of her success was also due to the fact that she was substantially lighter than the Jim Stone built boats.

During the Salcombe Town Regatta of 1968, the yawls raced outside the harbour for the first time and, since then have gone from strength to strength. Many of them are now built in Island Street by Michael Attfield, some of the best of which have been designed by the famous America's Cup designer, Ian Howlett. The Yawls number over 180 and race in regular series in Salcombe as well as in team races, often taking part in away events.

## **The Caledonia Canal: Transit in DY360 “Mor Bach” – Doug Williams and Poppy**

Tuesday 6 to Thursday 8 November 2012

Luckily having time on my hands, a trip was in the making for some time during the autumn of 2012. I am not sure how the choice of a transit of the Caledonia Canal came about but very early on Sunday 4 November, I and the family dog – a trusty and very woolly cocker spaniel named Poppy - set off from Newport, Pembrokeshire for Fort William, a journey of about 575 miles via the M4, M5, M6 route. Alas, I was back in bed by 6:00am for a few additional zeds as the trailer bearings collapsed just a couple of miles down the road!

New bearings fitted had us arriving close to Fort William at the start of Tuesday 6. We got our heads down for a few hours, as much as you can in a Defender. The weather, and running a day late, ruled out climbing Ben Nevis so after a very welcome fully cooked breakfast we headed to a muddy and murky slipway managed by *The Lochaber Small Boat Owners Association*. If you want to use their slipway you have to subscribe for the year, but you do get the added bonus of somewhere to leave your vehicle, trailer and keys safely.

Twenty-nine locks, ten swing bridges, six aqueducts, running in a northeast direction for 60 miles from Loch Linnhe (Fort William) to the Beaully Firth (Inverness) lay ahead of us. Twenty miles are manmade canals, the remainder being The Great Glen Lochs - Lochy, Oich, Ness and Dochfour. An Act of Parliament dated 1803 authorised the building of the canal and it was completed in 1822 under the guidance of the Chief Engineer Thomas Telford. It allowed vessels to transit from the east and west coasts, avoiding the longer passage around the top of Scotland's Pentland Firth.

From the end of October, the canal is only open during the working week which left me with just four days for the transit. This was plenty, as the facilities stations available to those making passage are situated so that a three-day transit will fit in nicely. I had decided to do a West to East transit, entering at Loch Linnhe, stopping off at Gairloch for the night before pushing onto Fort Augustus on the second day and tackling Loch Ness to my exit slipway at Caley Marina. I didn't venture out into the Beaully Firth mainly as the most suitable slipway I could find to haul out the yawl was at Caley Marina.

Back in 2012 the transit licence fee was £92 for the yawl. It's well worth the cost as all locks and swing bridges are manned and opened for you, plus you have a key to make use of the excellent facilities situated at either end of the transit and at Gairloch and Fort Augustus. When I say excellent facilities these include warm, clean shower and toilet blocks, stainless steel basins for washing your pots and pans and washing and drying machines for your clothing. If that was not enough there was underfloor heating throughout – great for drying your wet sailing kit overnight!

At each of the two stops I ensured (as requested by the Canal Authority) that I was on the right side of the lock gates to resume my journey. This enabled me to set off at any time in the morning and not be waiting for the lock operator, probably giving him a few more minutes in bed. It was generally miserable weather - cold, rainy, and foggy - but it was November. A 'pea souper' on the second day had me resorting to using the

compass. The fog was so thick I did not get to see Invergarry Castle! A shame as when things did clear the surrounding hills are amazing, breathtakingly beautiful in fact.

Sleeping arrangements were probably better for Poppy than myself. She had a slightly raised suitably sized draft proofed dog crate with insulated flooring, sheep skin bedding and a waterproof top (matching the sail covers, of course). Meanwhile I had a fold out plywood platform which sat on the side bench / thwart with foldaway legs, camping mattress and a good sleeping bag. Neither of us complained to each other, it was fun, and we were kept dry by a well-made over boom tent.

We were suitably provisioned for the few meals we cooked, proper breakfasts, lunchtime snacks including hot soup and an evening meal for the first night. At the Fort Augustus stop I treated myself to steak and chips in one of the local pubs: very nice grub, good beer, warm, and dog friendly.

When you enter at Corpach it's not long before you tackle the Neptune Steps – eight locks on the trot, then a stretch of the canal, a swing bridge and on to and through Gairloch lock for the evening, a mere 7 miles. Day two was a longer stretch to Fort Augustus, about 20 miles. As previously mentioned, the fog was so thick, I started the day under motor making way through Loch Lochy then Laggan Lock. This was followed by a small stretch of canal which lead into Loch Oich before entering the canal again to Fort Augustus and its five locks and a swing bridge. When possible, I sailed under jib and mizzen with a following wind, not just on the lochs but also in the canal. On occasions approaching a swing bridge the operator would be ready for my arrival, stop the traffic, open the bridge and I would sail through. Easy. Going through locks, with the required shorelines ready, we would be under motor although I'd leave the mizzen up. If you thought sailing along a canal might be dangerous with other vessels, I saw just one in the entire transit, and that was heading in the opposite direction!

A storm blew through that Wednesday night and there were breaking waves the following morning on Loch Ness. All sails up for the first quarter of the big loch until conditions got a bit hairy for me, so the main was dropped and we journeyed on comfortably under jib and mizzen, the dog curled up on the main sail. Loch Dochfour and the canal up to Caley Marina was a gentle sail after Loch Ness. In all the distance was about 33 miles.

I'm not ashamed to say I needed a bit of a rest having done Loch Ness – it is quite a formidable stretch of water. Looming dark and forbidding, there is no question it is very deep, you can just sense it. After a quick haul out at Caley Marina we were off to stay with some friends locally, a good way to comfortably end the adventure before the journey home.

I would definitely go again, perhaps early summer or in September, taking longer on the transit and walking some of the surrounding hills. But before I do so I need to find a new loyal companion to share the journey with. RIP Poppy (2006 – 2020).

*[Ed's note – Doug is the Fleet Rep for the "North Pembrokeshire" fleet based at Newport on the North coast of the beautiful Pembrokeshire peninsula. In 2004 I had the very great pleasure of joining them for what was, in those days, the annual "Leo Williams Devon Yawl Race". You would struggle to find a nicer spot or a warmer welcome.]*

## **“Daisy’s” drop keel difficulties - Jeremy White - DY 367**

Lyme Regis harbour is a busy place packed with boats. But within a minute of leaving the harbour mouth you're in one of the most terrific sailing waters of the southwest.

Meandering through the moored boats in the harbour requires careful outboard motor control, an alert crew (Helen) fending off and the plate at least half down to give bite amid-ship. Preparing to leave for what could have been our last sail of the summer, I tried lowering the plate and the strop went slack. It was stuck in its lifted position. I gave the front arm a tug for encouragement and the keel disengaged from its pin and shot down, hanging on the strop shackle across the teak box top. We had a problem!

We needed to lift the keel with the hope of swinging it forward to re-engage the pin into its slot at the front. Fitting the boom onto the gooseneck, we supported the aft end with the mizzen halyard, having tied the main halyard to the boom directly above the keel strop shackle. Then, we used the mainsheet tackle to try to lift the keel. Despite its 8:1 pulley system with a great deal of effort, the plate wouldn't budge. I was puzzled!

We cast off our mooring lines and motored over to the fishing fleet in the hope of using their davits to give her a bit more 'welly'. Luckily (I'll explain), there was nobody about to help. We moored up again.

Being a bear of very average brain, I've learnt that when I hit a wall it's as well to step back, say a prayer and think it through from a distance over a cup of tea. Moreover, Helen was not feeling brilliant having had the flu jab the day before. We made Daisy safe and, paddled the tender in, and went home.

The tide was ebbing, the keel was hanging down through the slot, low water in a drying harbour and the boat would be leaned right over tangling the mast and shrouds in the rigging of my neighbouring boats one side or the other; and it was getting late: I had to do something! I phoned a sailing friend, Rob, and we met in the early evening at the sailing club.

“You're going to have to take the pin out,” he said. “The shoulder of the keel is bracing against the pin when you lift it.” (Just as well I didn't use a fisherman's crane!) “But, if I take the pin out, it's below water level on the boat, we'll fill up and sink,” I said! “Then, we'll have to work fast,” he replied. With considerable misgivings, I agreed.

Having lifted the floor boards, ensured that the lifting gear was sound and in place, we undid the two stainless nuts and drove the bolt through with a rubber mallet and rod. Filthy water poured into the bilges. Urgently I pulled right up, block to block, on the mainsheet tackle and, true enough, the plate lifted easily into a vertical position head, neck and shoulders out of the keel box. We shoved the pin back into position, leaving off the nuts at this stage. Rob pulled on the keel-haul capstan rope which drew the plate forward whilst I slowly lowered it back into the box with the main sheet. Prayers were answered as we felt the keel slot engage with the pin which we secured then with the nuts. The keel was back in position and Rob wound it forward so that it was fully raised. We pumped her dry.

However, she was still taking in water. We didn't want to over tighten the nuts. We had a stainless washer, but clearly it wasn't bedding properly and it needed a rubber washer which I didn't have in my toolkit! What we did have was pvc tape. So, we created a wedge of tape through which we made a cross cut and forced it over the bolt to bear upon the box bulk-head before tightening it up again with the washer, primary nut and locking nut. The flood was reduced to a drip. Maybe, the silt would finally seal the gap! It was getting dark. We were hungry and Daisy would survive the night. We covered her and went home.

The following day, I cut a rubber washer from an old car floor mat and found a non-ferrous washer in my workshop, and secured the bolt with the nuts and fresh washers and it was sealed: Not even a drip! But there remained the important question, 'what caused this problem in the first place?' 'Why didn't the plate lower, as it has done through the summer?' I'd be interested to hear what folk think via the forum. My theory has to do with the nature of the harbour bed which, at Lyme Regis, is sludge.

Like many, we couldn't launch during the Spring lock down and I took the opportunity to replace the slot gasket. I used the Hawk Marine 75mm gasket with new, brass keel bands each side. It made for a very tight, tidy finish. Now when water flooded into the bilge from the box through the pin holes in the tale above, it was thick with silt. My theory is that silt builds up inside the box as the boat rises and falls with the tide onto the harbour bed. When dried out, the silt becomes compacted making a barrier which is slow for the keel to penetrate. If lowered a little and left to its own devices, then it will work its way through under its own weight. However, I made the mistake of pulling it back to encourage it on its way which caused it to lift from its supporting pin. Of course, once under way water should clean the slot out. Raising and lowering the plate is no problem whilst sailing.

Finally, the good news is that solving this problem was achievable afloat with equipment on board. But it is important to keep a good tool-kit on the boat! I've written this in response to Ian's request for articles without having gone for a test sail. Hopefully that won't snap back and bite us. If you don't read a sequel next year, then you'll know that our first sail after this saga went well!

*[Ed's note – Wow. I think this may be a first. The problem described by Jeremy has happened a few times in the past. The more usual cause is a grounding lifting the plate off its pin. The "first" is recovering the plate through the casing. The standard procedure is to get into shallow water and dump the plate in sand/mud for recovery later. The problem with a leak around the pin was, I believe, originally addressed with lead washers that "gave" a little when tightened. Where they are still found in Yawls, they are now mostly shot. An excellent alternative is a greased leather washer. When replacing the pin, I use stainless and leather washers. Tighten fairly hard, then go back a quarter of a turn. Jeremy's diagnosis of the cause of his problem is almost certainly right. Yawls on drying moorings often have this problem, slot gasket or no slot gasket. As Jeremy says, it is a good idea to make sure the plate box is thoroughly cleaned out once underway.]*

## America's Cup 1934, the year we nearly won - and 1937

Roger Johnstone

*Just a couple of years ago - with significant help from Sir Ben Ainslie - the Americans came back from 8 - 1 down to the Kiwis to win the America's Cup on San Francisco Bay. They also needed a comeback to stop the Brits from winning in 1934....the closest the Cup has ever been to coming home....*

June 1934, off Newport RI. Railroad tycoon Harold ("Mike") Vanderbilt is not a happy man. At 2-0 down and trailing by over six minutes half way through Race 3 it looks as if his J class "*Rainbow*" is about to lose the America's Cup to "*Endeavour*". Then, as now, the America's Cup was driven by big personalities and big budgets: Vanderbilt for the mighty New York Yacht Club - which had held it since 1851 - and Tommy Sopwith as the gallant British hero. And, in 1930, '34 and '37 it was raced in awesome 120-135 ft. J class cutters. Ever since she arrived in company with Sopwith's motor yacht "*Vita*", dock talk has reckoned the British Charles Nicholson-designed cutter to be the more technically advanced and faster boat. Now it's for real. "*Endeavour*" wins Race 1 by 2 min. 19 secs and Race 2 by 51 seconds. And it looks as if the aircraft magnate whose Hawker Hurricanes will later help to win a rather different contest could take the Cup back to Britain.

It never happened. "*Rainbow*" won Race 3 by over three minutes and a hugely controversial Race 4 - of which more later - by 1 min. 15 secs, bringing the score line level at 2-2. Race 5 was taken by "*Rainbow*" with a winning margin of 4 min. 1 sec. - although she narrowly avoided a DSQ. Poor calls by the "*Endeavour*" afterguard then gave the Americans Race 6, although by less than a minute; "*Endeavour*" may have been out-sailed at critical moments, but certainly hadn't been outclassed. But it was game over: despite losing four out of six starts, the slower boat had simply been sailed better. The America's Cup wasn't coming home after all - and Britain has never come as achingly close to the "*Auld Mug*" again.

### **Beginnings....**

Tommy Sopwith had moved into J class racing in 1931, two years before co-founding what was to later become Hawker Aircraft. He had two seasons as owner of Sir Thomas Lipton's unsuccessful 1930 challenger for the Cup, "*Shamrock V*". "*Shamrock V*'s" designer Charles Nicholson - part of the Camper & Nicholson family - was then the go-to designer for big, fast yachts. He had also notably been responsible for, among many others, the admired 23m. class racing yachts "*Astra*" (1928) and "*Candida*" (1929) - and the J class "*Velsheda*" (1933). "*Candida*" and "*Velsheda*" are both still sailing - as is the 23m. class "*Cambria*" (1928), currently undergoing a 12-month refit at

Southampton Yacht Services. Nicholson and the Camper & Nicholson yard in Gosport were therefore the natural choices for Sopwith's intended challenger for the 1934 Cup, while C & N Gosport yard had already built two motor yachts for him. In America, Cup defender "*Rainbow*" was hastily built from an updated 1931 design by Starling Burgess, originally conceived to face a potential sixth challenge from Sir Thomas Lipton. In a country not yet fully out of the 1929-33 recession, campaign funds had been tight. Some sails, winches and other gear first used on Vanderbilt's victorious "*Enterprise*" in the 1930 Cup found their way aboard "*Rainbow*". And, in the selection trials, "*Rainbow*" had only narrowly beaten the older "*Yankee*". By contrast, her challenger "*Endeavour*" was very much a state of the art yacht: indeed, until "*Australia 2's*" winged keel in the 1983 Cup, the 1934 match was unique in the modern era as the only time a challenger has come to the line with superior technology. Innovative features included the first quadrilateral jib (copied by "*Rainbow*"), four-speed winches, an advanced backstay tensioner, electric windspeed indicator and rod rigging designed against a background of aviation technology. In the run-in to the Cup matches, both syndicate bosses had crew disputes. Vanderbilt would solve his; by contrast most of Sopwith's well-honed professional racing crew would be replaced by amateurs and it will inevitably make a difference.

### **The crucial Races 3 and 4**

Back on the water in Race 3, the clearly faster "*Endeavour*" is now half way round the 30-mile course, with a lead of well over six minutes at the final mark. Her afterguard knows that if they can close out this third race to go 3-0 up, Tommy Sopwith will have a clear psychological advantage - and one hand firmly on the America's Cup. Winner over Sir Thomas Lipton in 1930, Harold Vanderbilt on "*Rainbow*" is beginning to have doubts. In the first of two crucial moments in the series he gives the helm to Sherman Hoyt, wondering if he can: "... *Make the darned thing go*". Expecting to lose, he goes below. Hoyt has raced Sopwith in England and knows he will always cover an opponent's move. He luffs. "*Endeavour*" follows suit, sails into a light patch, makes a couple of panicky manoeuvres - and loses the race by three minutes. (In the final race, with "*Endeavour*" leading, Hoyt will again successfully bluff "*Endeavour*" into a covering move that will ultimately cost Sopwith the race and give "*Rainbow*" a series-winning 4 – 2 score line).

### **Decisive**

But the series - and the controversy for which the 1934 AC is always remembered - was all about what happened in Race 4. Trailing by 23 seconds after the start, "*Endeavour*" had rounded the first mark on to the reaching leg 24 seconds ahead, but with "*Rainbow*" carrying more speed and reducing the challenger's lead. Sopwith

then luffed "*Rainbow*", but Vanderbilt did not respond, despite Hoyt's cry: "*Luff Mike, for God's sake luff*". Vanderbilt would maintain that he was under no obligation to luff; Sopwith that risk of collision forced him to bear away. How far apart were the yachts? That rather depends on which account you believe – pick a number of feet between 10 and 50. Was Sopwith in the right? Many commentators then and subsequently thought so. What Sopwith definitely did NOT do was to "promptly" hoist a protest flag. The protest was disallowed; "*Rainbow*" won the race by over a minute to level the series at 2-2 and the famous quote: "*Britannia rules the waves but America waives the rules*" was born.

The near-collision and the controversy it triggered are certainly the most recalled aspects of the 1934 Cup. But it wasn't quite so simple. The Race Committee decided that "*Endeavour*" had fouled "*Rainbow*" in the pre-start of Race 4. "*Endeavour*" protested this pre-start incident as well as the near-collision. The Committee were minded to disallow the first protest, which would invalidate the second. But to avoid controversy they deemed failure to "promptly" protest in order to avoid hearing either. Could Sopwith have won the Cup from a 3-0 or 3-1 score line? In 1934 he was a better starter than Vanderbilt and "*Endeavour*" was clearly the faster boat, albeit an advantage offset by evident tactical weaknesses – so yes, probably. Yet, "*Oracle*" came back from 8-1 down last time.... The consensus must be that Harold Vanderbilt "got lucky" in 1934. And he knew it. For the 1937 defence he would leave nothing to chance....

### **1937 - A second Endeavour....**

June 2015: Cowes, Isle of Wight. Dressed overall, her white paint gleaming in the sunshine, the 1,600-ton Norwegian Royal Yacht "*Norge*" lies at anchor - present for the formal start of the Royal Yacht Squadron's 200th anniversary celebrations.

With the elegant proportions of a mini liner and distinctive knuckle bow reminiscent of a 1930s British cruiser, she is arguably one of the best looking motor yachts ever built. "*Norge*" is no stranger to these waters, having been launched by Camper & Nicholson in early 1937 as "*Philante*" - mothership for Tommy Sopwith's "*Endeavour 2*", challenger for that August's return America's Cup match with Harold Vanderbilt's "*Ranger*". But in the September, she will tow a defeated "*Endeavour 2*" back to England, on a voyage marred by the passing of the challenger's skipper, Captain Williams, of Hamble.

### **A promising start**

For Tommy Sopwith, the 1937 campaign to avenge 1934's defeat by the slower but better-sailed "*Rainbow*" had started well enough. His previous challenger "*Endeavour 1*" had been chartered (for £1) from her new owner and taken across the Atlantic as tune-up partner for the new "*Endeavour 2*". The new yacht had regularly beaten her older sister



and, in trial races, “Endeavour 1” had in turn beaten both her old nemesis “Rainbow” and her new sister’s rival “Ranger” (twice). A good omen, surely? But “Endeavour 2’s” apparent superiority over “Endeavour 1” flattered to deceive. The 1937 competitors were both “third generation”, so-called “Super Js”, built to the class maximum waterline length of 87ft. But where Vanderbilt had been out-designed in 1934 there was no such risk for his second contest with Sopwith. Charles Nicholson’s second “Endeavour” was, in essence, a longer and heavier version of the 1934 yacht, whereas Harold Vanderbilt’s “Ranger” was the direct result of a tank testing programme.

### **“You show me yours, and I’ll....”**

In what might seem astonishing today, and under an exchange after the 1934 Cup, American designers Burgess and Stephens also had access to the line plans of “Endeavour”. And tank test models of “Endeavour” and “Rainbow” showed that “Endeavour” was indeed the faster boat upwind. In the event, and with a scientifically-proven and more efficient hull form - one of eight candidate designs to be tested - the new “Ranger” showed clear superiority upwind. She was the first Cup yacht with mast, boom and spinnaker boom all in aluminium. As well as a faster hull than “Endeavour 2” - and perhaps crucially - she had far more effective and powerful sails, especially headsails/spinnakers. Unlike 1934, the rival crews were reckoned to be pretty equal, but the performance margin between the yachts was dramatic. In succession, the defeats inflicted on “Endeavour 2” by “Ranger” were: 17 mins. 5 secs.; 18 mins. 32 secs.; 4 mins. 27 secs. and 3 mins. 37 secs. The Americans had firmly re-taken the design and technology lead and there would be no more British challenges until the equally ill-starred “Sceptre” in 1958.

### **A new chapter**

No class of large racing yacht has been written about and photographed as much as the Js, and their well-documented revival would take up several articles. As for the yachts from the Sopwith/Vanderbilt years, none of the six American Js survived the war. “Rainbow” was scrapped in 1940 and the mighty “Ranger” in 1941. Here, a forlorn “Endeavour 2” was finally broken up in Southampton in 1968. Many, many £ millions later, the others are still with us. Sopwith sold “Shamrock V” - the first ever and only wooden J - to fellow aviation magnate Sir Richard Fairey, who re-sold her to an Italian in 1937. She spent World War 2 hidden in a barn and eventually returned to the UK in 1974, for a six-year restoration by her original builders. She has had two major refits since. Laid up on the Hamble in 1937, “Velsheda” was heroically re-activated in 1983/84 by businessman Terry Brabant, prior to a re-build and re-launch in 1997. After storage and early work at Calshot, a partly-restored “Endeavour” was definitively rebuilt in 1986. She had an 18-month refit in 2012 and was recently for sale for just

under £20m. (Also thought to survive is the ex-“*Vita*”, the 1931, Krupp-built motor yacht which Sopwith purchased to act as tender to “*Endeavour*” in 1934. Many names later in 2013 - as “*Santa Maria Del Mare*” - she awaited yet another rebuild in an Italian shipyard.) Today, the J class is booming, with eight sailing and two in build. A replica of “*Ranger*” was built in 2004, “*Endeavour 2*” replica “*Hanuman*” in 2009 and a new “*Rainbow*” was launched in 2012. In her first season, “*Hanuman*” beat “*Ranger*” 2-0 off Newport. Sir Tommy Sopwith - who died in early 1989, aged 101 - would doubtless have approved.

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**Note:** Key sources for this article included Ian Dear’s *Enterprise to Endeavour* (fourth edition 1999); The *America’s Cup – An Informal History* (same author 1980) and Tony Fairchild’s *The America’s Cup challenge: There is no second* (1983). This also gives highly readable accounts of the British challenges in 1958 (“*Sceptre*”); 1964 (“*Sovereign*”); 1980 (“*Lionheart*”) and 1983 (“*Victory 83*”)

For the 1986/87 challenge in Freemantle with “*White Crusader*”, see *Cudmore and the America’s Cup*, by Malcolm McKeag (1987). This and both Ian Dear titles are currently (August) available via Amazon.

## Fleet Report - Exe - Don Macrae - DY92

So where do you begin when the season has been non-existent? Perhaps Ed Williams-Hawkes' ("Y'All White" – DY351) suggestion of sending in a blank page would be the answer. In fact Ed's enthusiasm has been such that he turned his boat over in his garage in January to redo his Coppercoat and there it has lain ever since unworked on.

One skipper who did get to grips with Coppercoat was "Blackbird's" (DY352) owner John Bradley. A gang of us turned his boat on its side in his garage and over the winter months he scraped it back to the gel coat and applied the requisite number of coats. He was hoping to prove that it had been the awful state of his antifouling that resulted in mediocre results in 2019 but again Covid prevented this.



Due to Covid and the need for social distancing there has been no official or unofficial racing of Yawls at Topsham this year. The fleet was emailed to sound out interest in running the Bottoms Cup in September to November but there was no enthusiasm from the seven boats on the water.

Both Peter Gray in "Blew Melody" (DY59) and myself in "Hull A B'lue" (DY92) did manage to get out single handed on numerous occasions. On my part there was a steep learning curve on the need to make sure everything was in order before leaving the mooring. With a strong tide, little or too much wind, it's too late to discover that you haven't got the plate down, rudder down, sheets twisted etc. after you have detached from the mooring and you have no crew to help you sort these things out before you encounter a moored boat or go aground on the mud!! I did discover that reefing the main when there was a decent wind made life less hectic. At the end of September, I cut down an old jib to a smaller size but only had one excursion to test if it was any good or not (the jury is still out on this). *[Ed's note – the original old jib was a much more balanced sail.]*



Another notable event in the Topsham fleet is that Andrew Hattersley and Willie Hamilton have bought Richard Babbage's Yawl "Blue Note" (DY100). Although afloat there has not been any opportunity to discover if it will be significantly faster than their old boat "Amadeus" (DY184). *[Ed's note – It won't, but I bet it is not as tatty!!]*

Let's hope for an end to all of this and a bit of competitive sailing next year.

## **Fleet Report - Newport, Pembrokeshire - Doug Williams - DY360**

As soon as we were allowed by the local mooring association, Yawls were on the water and onto their moorings in the River Nevern. It is excellent to report that our fleet has grown by two this summer so we now number seven boats, probably the largest class in Newport. Bruce Gardiner (DY332 / Bombay Blu) and Jay Williamson (DY304 /Proper Job) join us, and DY369 / Pandora has changed ownership being purchased by Tim Ross. Five out of seven yawls managed to get onto the water and out into the Irish sea for general sailing, fishing, checking lobster pots and a bit of racing.

Restricted conditions (Covid or tides) did not stop Newport Boat Club putting on races in the weeks prior to the August Bank Holiday, weather conditions did though! Storms Ellen and Francis swept through taking the Club marquee away and wrapping it around the club's flagpole like a very badly set spinnaker. Another insurance claim to be submitted which hopefully will be paid without too much quibble by underwriters, unlike the submitted Business Interruption claim. I digress into a subject yet to be finalised.

The annual Sandra Thomas passage race from Parrog to Cwm yr Eglwys and back to a Club finish (made harder with no flagpole!) was a quiet affair, the storms had past and light wind lead to a gentle passage. Excellent sailing skills demonstrated by Jay and Rosie Williamson overhauled Doug and Victoria Williams and crew to win the race.

If any Yawler is in the west of Wales next sailing season please do not hesitate to get in contact, you will be most welcome at Newport Boat Club.

Good to see sails out in Newport Bay this challenging summer.

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## **Fleet Report - Dart - Mike Bennett - DY102**

Well what a year!

Because of Covid there has been very restricted racing by the small keel boats at Royal Dart Yacht Club . Neither Bob Thomas or Mike Bennett took part in the Wednesday evening racing. It is just not possible to get the correct social distancing in a yawl! The larger yachts turned out in greater numbers but with reduced crew numbers.

The Devon Yawl numbers have remained fairly static with about 10 boats kept on the Dart with most kept at Dittisham. Although Mike Bennett managed to launch DY 102 in the spring most of the boats were not able to get afloat until early summer by which time the weather had deteriorated.

Jonathan Dimpleby sold his yawl during the year and DY sailor Mike Harvey not satisfied with one Yawl, bought it "on a whim" The good weather in the main part of summer brought out a number of Yawls with Jenny Colls-Hammond to be seen most week ends heading for Start Bay.

Peter Poland's excellent article on the Devon Yawl produced some interesting developments for Mike Bennett. As a result of the piece in Practical Boat Owner two old friends who had lost contact, made contact with him, one from school days and the other an old friend with whom he had sailed over 30 years ago. The power of the Press!

We all hope for better racing in 2021 but we may have to wait a little longer for conditions to improve. The irony is that numbers of single handed dinghies racing at Dittisham SC have increased to record levels over the year.

mandpbennett@btinternet.com

## **Fleet Report - Yealm - Tim Petitt - DY186**

Once the initial limitations on use of the harbour were lifted in May, a few Yawls were launched in the hope that some form of racing would be permitted. However, under guidance of the RYA this was not going to happen.

By July, still with no organised racing in sight, a rumour was heard that some Yawls may be sailing around the Mewstone, to starboard, on the coming Wednesday evening. Apparently, they were leaving the Yealm's Mouthstone start line area at precisely 1830hrs. This was enough of a lure for 6+ Yawls to appear and have a very pleasant ~~race~~ cruise in company. Such was the success, that it was agreed that this may happen again the following Wednesday.

Miraculously, during the week, some buoys with flags appeared in Wembury Bay. When the 6+ boats turned up the following Wednesday, rather than sailing around the Mewstone, it was decided to have a leisurely sail around these 3 buoys. Unfortunately, the cruise in company was ruined by one or two boats trying to get ahead of the others, much shouting and the uttering of odd phrases, such as 'water' and 'Starboard'.

Such was the mayhem on the previous Wednesday, that the following week a small motor launch appeared with a serious looking man aboard. At precisely 1825hrs he hoisted some flags and sounded a horn. The confused sailors, not sure what was going on ignored this and set off on their leisurely sail at 1830hrs as per the previous week. One vessel even set off a few seconds early in order to avoid the other boats that seemed to be in the way. The skipper was heard to say it was important to keep 2m away from the other boats and it did not matter as this was a cruise in company, not a race.

As the weather and situation improved during the Summer the fleet increased to 8+ yawls and the Wednesday evening sailing continued into mid-September.

I am not sure who completed the most numbers of getting back to the starting position (previously known as the finish) after three rounds of Wembury Bay each week. Maybe I should have asked the man with the flags and hooter?

Whatever happened to the other 25 yawls that never made it onto the River this year, I'm not sure. Rumour has it they have been 'drying out' their GRP hulls so as to be lighter next year. I haven't the heart to tell them this is an urban myth and won't make a blind bit of difference.

The big news of the year is that DY11 has been sold. This boat was one of the very first yawls on the River and has been under the same ownership since the mid-last

century. Luckily, (or more likely planned), the boat was sold to a local owner so will remain on the river and maintain its position in River Yealm folklore.

On the subject of new boats arriving, two other yawls have been bought over the last few months, DY121 and DY38. Hopefully these will be joining in the Wednesday night series in 2021.

It must be noted that all three of the above boats have been bought by relatively young sailors, this has had the effect of reducing the average age of the Yawl fleet skippers by about 30 years!

I have, and am sure a lot of people have very much, missed the close racing (was going to say crash and bash, after the last race in 2019) that the yawl fleet generates on a Wednesday evening on the Yealm. So, fingers crossed that the Wednesday Night Warriors will be allowed out to commence combat and avenge all wrongdoings next year.

Cheers

*[Ed's note – Good effort Tim – if somewhat embellished! There is no truth in these scurrilous rumours about Wednesday Nights, although Bob and Alison Jeffery, Caroline and I did happen to be going around the Mewstone at the same time during the Summer. Our respective crews were in our “bubbles”. For posterity, it should be recorded that Rodney Carter recovered DY 11 from the Bar (sandbar that is!) many years ago. The following press release was made at the time of his retirement from Yawling.*

#### Yealm Yawls' Newsflash

*News broke on the Yealm today that has stunned the sailing cadre.*

*Rodney Carter (the oldest Boatman left on the Yealm and Devon Yawl Guru) is selling his Yawl. When asked why, Rodney muttered something about his age next birthday. That is obviously untrue as Rodney's birth certificate was mislaid many years ago and Rodney has no idea how old he is. Your correspondent believes that, in an act of selflessness, Rodney has decided to retire to the Wednesday Night Committee Boat from where he will be able to share his wisdom with the whole fleet. Rodney observed “The standard of Wednesday Night Racing has never been worse. In a quiet way I want to help improve things by offering competitors my thoughts. I have never done this before.”*

*In a desperate attempt to keep the iconic DY11 on the River, the Devon Yawl Association's “Pre-loved Boat Sales Secretary”, Tim Petitt, has refused to let Rodney advertise her except in the local Post Office. It is understood that DY11 will be sold complete with the three Fisherman's anchors and twenty cables of chain she has always carried. As Rodney observes “You never know when you might need to stop*

for a pint during a race.” DY11 will also come with two nearly new suits of Ullman sails. Rodney commented “I bought them twenty years ago but you don’t want to wear them out, so I usually use the old Mackillop’s.”

Many members of the Yealm Yawl fleet have rushed to comment.

Tim Petitt (current National Champion) said “I think I will probably give up Yawling. What’s the point going out on a Wednesday Evening Race if I haven’t got the challenge of racing against Rodney.”

A sobbing Elly Pegg could only utter “Surely it cannot be true!”.

Dan Fellows was unavailable for comment. The news broke after 5 pm and Dan was in his usual spot in Cellar Bay getting the Barbie on (No – that is BBQ!).

Andy (It’s only a matter of time) Williams commented “Rodney taught me everything he knows about a Devon Yawl. I’m still trying to work out if that was a good thing or not.”

The Wednesday Night Race Committee was unavailable for comment but Rodney’s son, Phil Carter, was heard to mutter “Bugger” when he heard that Rodney will be joining the Committee Boat. Chris Matthews was seen to break down at the news.

Andrew Matthews said “It’s a nuisance Rodney waited so long. On that basis I won’t be able to sell my boat for another eight years.”

Scott (I can’t remember my way to the Dolly anymore) McCready commented “I would never have bought my Yawl if Rodney hadn’t shown me how to capsize it first.”

On a dissenting note, local sailmaker Jon Pegg said “Makes no odds to me. He only ever bought a suit of sails every fifteen years.”

Tony (the Best Pharmacist in the World) Tubb commented “About time too. I always wanted to be the oldest person sailing a Yawl.”

The Derriford Team of Sean Cochrane, Charlie Gozzard and Bob Jeffery were unable to take time off from Covid-19 duty but released a statement: “If it’s a new leg he needs, we can sew one on.”

Jane Carter (no relation) said “I hope it won’t stop him going down the Club on a Wednesday Night.”

As this went to press further comment was flooding in – much of it unprintable.

Rodney’s last words to Yealm Yawlers were “I hope to see you all down the Club on Wednesday Evenings where you can buy me a pint.” Martyn Cawse, Commodore of the Yealm Yacht Club, commented he hoped so too.]

## **Ed's musings - Andrew Matthews - DY100A**

It's a different sort of Newsletter this year. With almost no racing activity, the emphasis is on cruising together with an excellent piece by Roger Johnstone on the Sopwith America's Cup campaigns and the evergreen article on the roots of the Devon Yawl's big sister, the Salcombe Yawl.

From my biased point of view, we are lucky to live on the River Yealm. This year we have been especially lucky. Once through the initial lockdown, waterborne activity down here went berserk. Most locals got a boat on the water, although much of the Yawl fleet stayed ashore. Racing for Yawls was mostly confined to unofficial activity, although we had one end of Season mixed fleet race, observing Covid-19 restrictions. We did manage an almost normal and very refreshing Autumn Series for Yachts. Despite the limited racing activity, there was plenty of cruising, fishing, swimming, water-skiing and "beach" for the locals. Personally, I rather enjoyed the break from racing, which freed up time for pottering.

The big "happening" in the Westcountry, however, was the influx of visitors looking for access to the water. On the Yealm, paddleboards were a particular feature as were waterborne day visitors to our small shingle beach in Cellar Bay and South Coast cruisers who would normally have been abroad. And, who can blame them? The water was an oasis from Covid-19 restrictions. The influx caused a bit of bad temper but the income saved the Harbour Authority's finances for the year and, contrary to the dark mutterings of some, there was no resultant Covid-19 upsurge. In fact, in the Summer, I don't think we had any cases locally.

From the DYA's point of view, Covid-19 had some upsides. Members had more time to communicate and our membership rose slightly for the first time in a while. As Michael writes in his piece, Zoom means we have better attended Committee meetings and Zoom AGMs hold out more possibilities. I have no doubt these things are here to stay.

Just as I was putting the Newsletter to bed, I heard that our doughty Committee member in charge of the "pre-loved" Second Hand Boat Register, Tim Petitt, reported no Yawls for sale! Although this lasted only a few days (Cullen Sea School have just put one of their ex-Gordonstoun Bermudan rigged Yawls on the market), it is another indicator of Covid-19. It was noticeable in this part of the World that, during furlough, many people dug out old boats, refurbished and sold them. The second-hand small boat market down here was very active.

There is plenty of reason to hope that 2021 will see better things and I hope it does for you.





“What we did on the Yealm this Summer – Ed’s first “keeper” Pollack – later consumed with chips!”



“A long time ago on the Yealm – Two DDs – picture courtesy of Ted Timberlake”



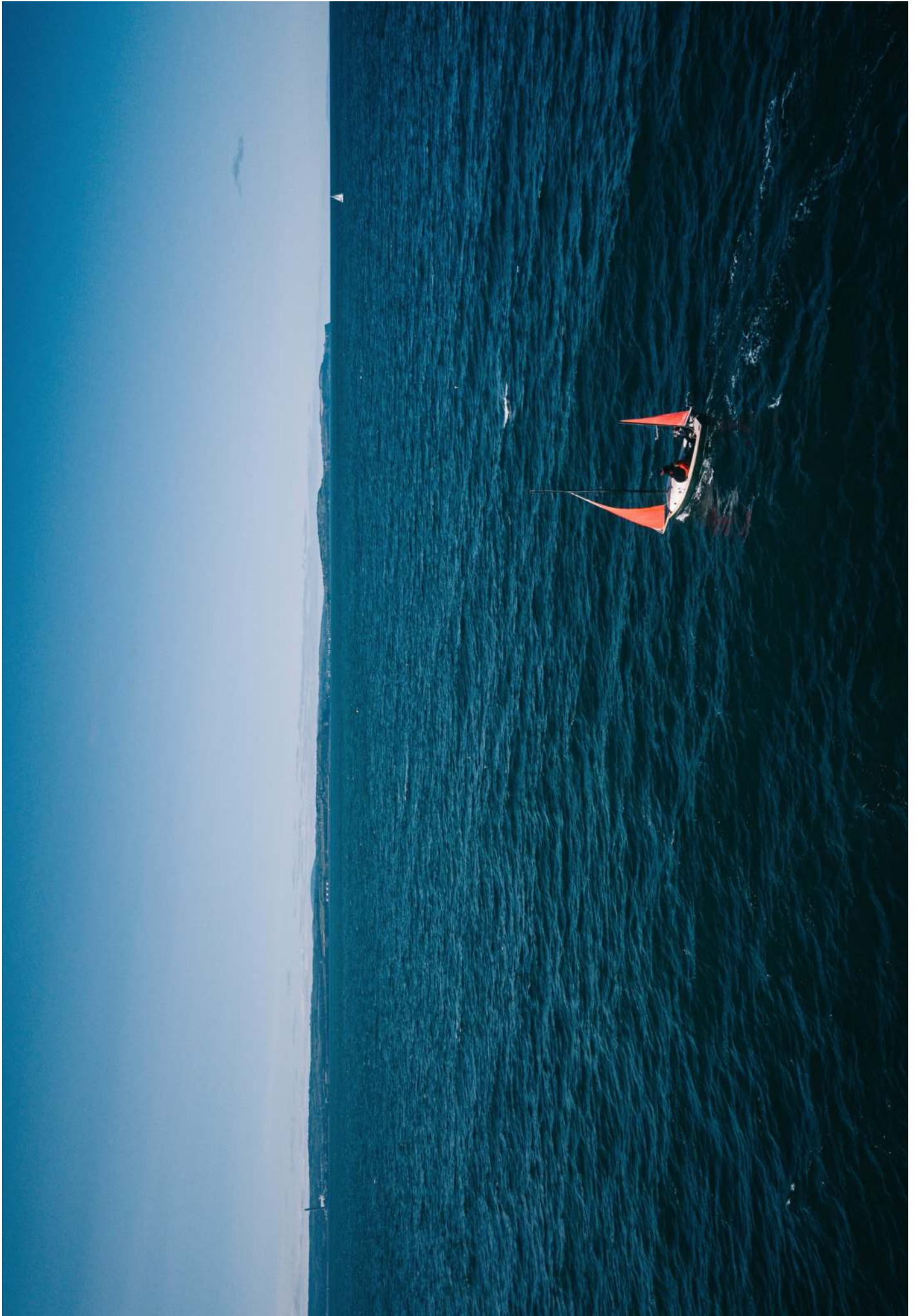
“Sailboat – Ally Pally - Rowan Roberts takes a tech-break!”



DY110 on the Fal - Woodwork!



DD85 – David Langley with Viola and family in Langstone Harbour – The People’s Memorial – Ever wondered what happened to that squared off DD?



DD25 - Tim Parr - At Sea!