

BRITISH DRAGON ASSOCIATION

Newsletter No: 2.

May, 1977.

This News Letter will be enclosed with the 1977 Year Book. It is unfortunate that the Year Book could not have been produced earlier, but only now have full lists of boats and members been received from Fleet Secretaries, and obviously there is no point in going to the expense of production until correct information is available.

You will note that the White Book is restricted slightly in form this year in an attempt to cut costs, and it is hoped that not too many members will object violently to this action, which was taken in preference to an increase in subscription this year.

It is likely that some sponsorship will be available from the R.Y.A. this year for those attending the World and European Championships but to date the Sports Council have not decided on the allocation of grants. Decisions on allocation of the money, if and when received, will be made at the time of the next B.D.A. Committee Meeting during the Edinburgh Cup, but obviously the prime reason for obtaining this grant, and attempting to raise other money through the Fleets, is to send as many crews as possible to the World Championship in Australia in January, 1979.

It had been hoped that the Edinburgh Cup next year would be held in Northern Ireland, but the organizers feel that in view of the general political situation the holding of such a regatta would be unwise. Thus the Solent Fleet have been approached and have agreed to organize the Edinburgh Cup, probably in June, 1978.

The plans for 1979 are that it is our turn to hold the Gold Cup but in view of the diminishing size of fleet on the Clyde it has been decided to hold the Gold Cup and Edinburgh Meeting on the Forth at Granton. The Royal Forth Yacht Club will be organizing.

Peter Evans.

FLEET REPORTS

FORTH FLEET's highlight of the season was, as ever, the Annual Dinner of the Scottish Dragon Crews Union held in the Royal Forth on the eve of the Murrayfield encounter between the Scots and the Irish. A 'minor international', to quote Davies the Drink from Abersoch, who despite such characteristic abuse, had been invited back as honoured guest for the second time in a row. He was magnificently bedecked in highland evening dress and made a fine sight - and indeed a fine speech. He did, however, somewhat distract his listeners by the way he kept fiddling with his sporran. He claimed to be wearing three pairs of Y-fronts, but didn't disclose the reason.

Jim Robb in the chair, handled proceedings with his customary skill, fining and issuing refunds with great impartiality, and controlling the speeches, authorised and otherwise, as best he could. Kenneth the Rhymer amazed us with his limericks and Ninian Sanderson provided a new slant on the services of a Goblin Tease Maid. Other guests from south of the Forth included Jim Robertson from Burnham, Stevie Mackinnon (jnr.) from the Clyde and an itinerant Irishman who wandered in on the proceedings halfway through.

And so to the season ahead - both David Young and Marshall Napier have been showing real interest in rejoining the Class. They finished first and second respectively (with less than a point between them) when the Edinburgh Cup was last held in Torquay - could it be an omen for 1977? Ken Gumley is looking for a partner to take a share in BAWBEE, but denies it's because he can't find a crew. Though his order for new masts was slashed by 5%, it hasn't been delivered yet and nor has that for TOVE (John Mackinnon and Robin Laidlaw) or NYMPH (Brian Tunstill). All are coming from the same southern builder - is it an English Plot or simply incompetence?

On the "for sale" front Class Secretary Mackenzie is prepared to make available what he refers to as his fundamental orifice - for a price - to a wealthy or ambitious owner. It was bought only a year ago and hasn't been used - not he claims - because KIS's bow won't stand the butchery necessary for its insertion. There is also the excellent Pedersen & Theusen SPINDRIFT (Bill Munro) - but it is hoped that a local buyer will emerge.

The Fleet, then, seems generally in good heart. Nine or ten boats should be racing locally, at least KIS and BAWBEE will be at Torbay and Gil Manuel is taking TARKA to the Gold Cup at Kinsale. Tune-up weekends over Olympic courses are planned, Forth Week races will be held in the afternoons this year (more time for parties) and thoughts are already

drifting ahead to 1979 when the Edinburgh Cup and Gold Cup will be sailed from Granton.

Hamish Mackenzie.

LOWESTOFT FLEET held their A.G.M. in February, which was well attended by Owners and Crewmen. Discussion on the coming season plus the astonishingly high costs of keeping Dragons at Lowestoft, which no doubt is in line with other fleets. In spite of the problems we hope to be represented by three boats in the Edinburgh Cup at Torbay.

Tom Gill was unanimously elected as Class Captain for the season, Tom is a genuine Dragon Man, who just loves his racing, especially in a good old blow, he has experienced the lot, from broken masts, split sails and was overheard to mention to his crewmen that the next time the spinnaker is lowered, always open the shute door first, otherwise you have to go through that terrible business of getting it back from underneath the keel in pieces. Club Series racing will be held every Saturday and every alternate Sunday with the usual short weekend regatta worked in with Bank Holidays.

Lowestoft Week will be held late August, early September and this season we are hoping for closer liaison with Aldeburgh and Waldringfield Fleets. Club racing is expected to be as keen as ever this season, the object being to prevent FALK from repeat performances of last season - in fact, news has leaked out that our local sailmaker has been churning out sails for very keen Dragon Owners - so FALK had better watch out. Talking sails, our local man who adores the Dragon thinks it is about time the Spinnaker Rule should be amended to produce the sail it ought to be, and to those who are against change, try running downwind in force 6 with a following sea at Lowestoft; he would like to hear your reactions!

There is no change in the number of boats this season, but a small change in ownership. Jack Dewing has decided to retire from active participation (which is hard to believe) and has relinquished his share in SKAL III to Col. G.H. Dicker and Chris Dicker. Young Chris is a cracking good helmsman and we expect good results from SKAL III at Torbay. The everlasting Jack will, of course, be available between fishing trips into Northern Britain, as a spare helm, force 3 to 4 on a nice sunny day for preference, says Jack. Nick Truman has definitely made it known he will not be active in Dragons as previously, but his expertise will be available as and when he can spare the time.

E. McArthur.

BURNHAM FLEET has been reduced this year by one or possibly two boats with the result that we have 9 actively competing boats, seven turned out for Easter and the racing was keen and competitive with VANA winning the Trophy - a fine performance.

Gary Harrison is the new owner of FLAPJACK, which when it was helmed by Mike Patten achieved so much. Gary has started in fine style - PUFF, his other boat is still for sale.

Sailing at Burnham, as every reader who has knowledge of Burnham knows, is always keen, and this year we are organising mini Olympic courses during the Jubilee celebrations, which will also act as preparation for the Edinburgh Regatta at Torbay - a most popular event with the Burnham crews. We hope to have six or seven boats competing from which we will select our team for the Citron Trophy, which we last won at Torbay (I believe). Burnham Week (27th August) will be as active and pleasant again this year as ever, with a great number of social events this year in evidence. We then go on racing until late November, which will be good news for those who enjoy making good use of their Autumn weekends.

Raymond C. Dodd.

MEDWAY FLEET spent the winter lay-up period rather quietly, only to be disturbed rather noisily when Stewart Hamilton returned from his trip to New Zealand - Stewart's presence was noted at our Annual Dinner not only from his vocal authority, but also by the grand assistance he gave to our Fleet in beating the Medway Cruiser Class's alcoholic consumption at their Annual Dinner earlier in the winter.

There is little change in our Fleet for the coming season, PEGASUS has been sold to Oswald Johnston at Dublin and we welcome Colin Stortor with DJINN. We shall be well represented at the Edinburgh Cup with five boats, namely, ISIS, CARRONADE III, ROYALIST, MESTENGO & WIZARD, there is also a possibility that WHY, GALATEA & LINTIE may join in at the last minute.

In July we shall be sending a team to Ostende for a weekend regatta with the North Sea Yacht Club Dragon Fleet.

Ken Richardson.

SOLENT FLEET report that the S.C.R.A. racing season is from 23rd April to 25th September this year. It looks as if the Fleet is going to be much the same this year as last. We are, however, sorry to learn that JOANNA is not to be raced.

It has been decided to hold three additional points series this year - early season, mid season and late season. It has further been decided that a slightly modified form of the Olympic scoring system will be used for all points series this season, including the Class Championship and the Ganymede Bowl, for which one discard will be allowed for the first time. The Island Sailing Club Round the Island Race is to be held on the 25th June - the number of Dragons taking part is likely to be small as a number of boats will be away in Torbay for the Edinburgh Cup.

With ships assembling for the Silver Jubilee Review of the Fleet on 28th June, the Solent will be a big congested and those taking part in the race will be required to stay on the Island side

Cowes Week will be from 30th July to 7th August - as the Edinburgh Cup is to be held in the Solent next year, it is hoped that a number of boats from other Fleets will take the opportunity to come and have a preview of the waters. It is, of course, an Admiral's Cup year with all the added excitement that this brings with it. Anyone from outside the Solent Fleet intending to take part should be sure to send their entry to the Hon.

Secretary, Solent Dragon Fleet by early July. The earlier the information is received the easier it will be to fix suitable moorings.

Anyonw coming to race in the Solent this year should note that International National and Solent Classes will be required to fly racing flags while racing.

Peter Henson.

TORBAY FLEET now have thirteen Dragons racing - the highest number for some years, in fact way back in the Fifties saw the highest number ever of fifteen boats. Martin Parry (Dragon representative at the Tokio Olympics in 1972) is looking for a boat in order that he may compete in the Edinburgh Cup this year.

Entries are coming in quite nicely for the Edinburgh Cup - the first entry was MISTRAL!, - maybe first to finish as well!! The Fleet would welcome visiting Dragons to take part in weekend races for Edinburgh Cup practice - assistance would be forthcoming with moorings, accommodation etc. It is still hoped that H.R.H. Duke of Edinburgh will present the Edinburgh Cup at the conclusion of the week's racing.

We shall be visiting Deauville in early September to take part in the Annual Phantom Trophy and we are hoping to be able to organize some team racing against an Irish Team, whilst we are participating at Kinsale.

John Lewthwaite.

STRANGFORD LOUGH FLEET are running the Irish Championships from 2nd to 5th June inclusive and races will be sailed in Strangford Lough. The event will be a little inconvenienced by the building of our new Clubhouse, but the Sailing Centre nearby will be able to offer accommodation. Fleet numbers remain steady at fourteen boats, having lost one and gained one.

R.W. Fitzjohn.

CORK DRAGON FLEET, which at the time of writing numbers approximately ten boats, is based in Kinsale Harbour, Co. Cork, Ireland. It is appreciated that a newsletter of this nature should not normally be used to advertise or emphasise the successes of ones own Fleet, but I feel that on this particular occasion the motives will be understood.

As you all know the Dragon Gold Cup is being staged in Kinsale, from 16th to 23rd July and naturally a very large entry is expected and being catered for.

Our small Fleet includes ALPHIDA sailed by Conor Doyle, winner of the Edinburgh Cup in 1975, again in 1976; winner of the Salamander Trophy and Yachtsman Trophy in 1975 and third in the Dragon Class at Palma in 1976. TRITON sailed by Courteny Good was placed 3rd in the Edinburgh Cup in 1975, is a previous winner of the Neptune Bowl and Irish Dragon Championships. GALAX sailed by Tony O'Gorman has also won the Neptune Bowl, Irish Dragon Championships, 2nd Edinburgh Cup 1976 and winner of the Yachtsman Trophy in 1976. Conor, Courteny and Tony as a team won the Citron Trophy in 1975. If you come to Kinsale to compete in the 1977 Dragon Gold Cup you will be assured fair competition, good sailing and no "small measure" of Irish Hospitality, as the event is being sponsored by Jameson Whiskey.

Dermot A. Conway.

HOWTH FLEET's 1976 season ended with YSOLDE (W. Lacy) having won ALL the club races; oaths, prayers and fervent wishes for improved skills can be heard amongst the also-rans. However, an hour's run around the Bailey Lighthouse takes the Fleet into Dublin Bay, where the resident Dragons offer friendly hospitality and a chance for some placings in hot competition with approximately thirty boats. The six-member Howth Fleet turns up 100% strong for these invitations.

Biggest talk of the moment here is of the Gold Cup. With those magnificent men (and women) of Cork and Kinsale running the show, we can't wait to appear and benefit from their efforts - the Howth Fleet makes up in enthusiasm for what it lacks in numbers! A larger mooring allotment is our basic need; there's no shortage of enthusiastic applicants to join the Howth Dragon Fleet, but so far, that prayer too goes unanswered.

J.R. Post

DRAGONS FOR TRAILING????

Dragon owners should not be put off buying a trailer, because of the awe inspiring sight of such a long, large load behind their car. The fact is that whether by manual gear change or automatic, as long as you have about three litres under the bonnet, trailing your Dragon to Munich, Thun or Barcelona is a cinch. Just point down the motorway at a steady 50 - officially 40 and that's all there is to it - much easier than towing a caravan, because the rear visibility is so much better and it's amazing how considerate other road users can be when they see you coming! The German trailer which cost us £600 delivered in 1973 is now somewhere between £2,000 and £3,000. However, the English version taken from our trailer was about £700 last year and can't have gone up very much since then, if at all. If anything it can be towed even faster, but at a steady 45 m.p.h. it's amazing how the miles slip away, and from Prestbury to Abersoch only takes 4 hrs. 15 min., compared with a normal 3 hr. car journey. The trailer can be manoeuvred by hand at a pinch with two people and of course, has the advantage that when you reach your destination you just uncouple and you are completely mobile with your car. So much better than arriving at a Cocktail Party in a 3 tonner!

Another advantage of the trailer is that the mast on the Continent is allowed to overhang the rear by a few feet, but does not overhang the front of the car, thus avoiding (a) DANGER and (b) those irritating £80 fines that some countries impose on the spot, when your mast overhangs the front of your lorry as it is bound to do. Lastly, when the season is over, just load onto your trailer and uncouple by the side of your house or in some convenient place, thus avoiding expensive storage costs. So easy to work on too, without having to first get your lorry fitted with a new engine or something like that.

Fiona and I share the driving on long journeys and we have towed our Dragon some 8,000 miles in Denmark, Germany, Holland, Belgium, France, Spain and the U.K., not forgetting Scotland! - all with a 3 litre Capri Ghia Automatic. Petrol consumption reduces from 22 m.p.g. to 17 m.p.g. when towing, but sleeping in lay-by's compensates for added fuel costs. Our last trip from Zeebrugge to Munich was 600 miles - 1600 hours Tuesday arriving Munich 1450 hours next day.

Gordon Mellor

N.B. Gordon has given us the name and address of the trailer builder, but has asked that we point out he is NOT ON COMMISSION!!

Alexander Motors Ltd., Anaconda Works, Springfield Lane, Manchester.
The price quoted at the beginning of May 1977 was £750 plus V.A.T.,
spare wheel and carrier £37 extra.

ARGEE BARGE

Next time you have a feeling that it's time someone else in the fleet had a chance to hear the winner's gun (or be tail-end Charlie?) - be magnanimous, leave your yacht on the moorings and arrange to hire a Thames Barge one weekend for a change. The contrasting handling characteristics of Dragon-v-Barge are such that you will not need your adjustable backstays, tweakers or barber haulers, just an interest in yachting of yore and a bunch of well practised drinking friends.

As well as many other features of the trip on which I was included, two things stick in my mind - Bread and Mud! Friday night we set off on our adventure, a weekend's

watery mystery tour of S.E. Essex. The Mud? - Well we encountered that first thing on Friday evening; it was what the jolly boat which was to be our adventure playround was sitting upon when we arrived to join ship at Muddy Maldon.

The crews of DAWN and MARJORIE, who were to cruise in company were not unduly worried by the excess of mud and negative water at the berth, as we had known the tide would not be ready for sailing until 5 a.m. Saturday. This was no inconvenience at all; in fact, to have been setting off at any time before 11 p.m. would have robbed us of our opportunity to make and/or improve acquaintances with our shipmates in the quayside hostelry in the traditional fashion of seafarers. On this occasion we followed it up with a less traditional, but very necessary visit to the local 'chinky' and returned noisily to our vessels bearing containers of Chop-sueys, Chow-meins etc., which smelled most enticing and consequently much did not survive the 3 minute passage from shop to ship.

We ate what was left on one barge for the sake of sociability. We of the DAWN had to admit the saloon of MARJORIE was larger than that on our dream ship. The meal is memorable, if only hazily, for being the only one at which we did not consume large quantities of bread.

We discovered the BREAD on rising at 7.30 a.m. on Saturday morning to find the barge well on her way down river on a superb morning under full sail (The crews are not required to work the ship, as the 80ft monsters were crewed even in their trading days by a man and a boy, but crews could lend a hand if they felt so inclined). The previous evening we had let slip that our willing but inexperienced caterer, having a healthy respect for outdoor appetites, had included 14 loaves, while the 'old hand' on MARJORIE had only bought 5. From the moment this admission was greeted with hoots of amusement, it became our bounden duty to consume the BREAD before 7 p.m. on Sunday

Even the breakfast, which consisted of an obligatory slice of fried bread with the bacon and eggs, and at least one slice of toast (with reduction in dishwashing duties for those who ate more), we hadn't even polished off two loaves. We had also discovered, by dint of putting out 14 cups of tea and having one left over that a minor marine catastrophe had befallen us - we had a ships complement of 13. Our tame ship's Doctor was full of gloomy prognosts and all for at least one soul over the side straightaway, but as that would have lessened our chances still further in the Great BREAD Race, we defeated that motion vociferously.

Our passage making on Saturday was totally enjoyable and totally uneventful. Every meal had its ration of BREAD - we began to have a problem with the 3lb tin of biscuits which stayed very full, but MARJORIE didn't know about it, did she?

We anchored overnight up the same creek, so to speak, and had a combined party in MARJORIE's large saloon. Thus DAWN did not get rid of any more BREAD, but we did establish that their beds were slightly damp, their gas pressure pathetic, their cold water was warmish, they had little coal to stoke their saloon fire and no beer. By this time we were well satisfied with our 'cosy' saloon and inferior sailing speed (what would you expect with all that BREAD!). The appropriate tide was at 9 a.m. Sunday, so we had a bready breakfast at the civilised hour of 8 a.m. before giving a hand to get all sails set for the return journey in a stiff breeze. The MARJORIE was off just before us and we were soon both sluicing down the river with the tide.

After only an hour or so, a number of clues, such as the increasing distance between the MARJORIE and ourselves, the proximity of the lark and a stream of traditional and circumstantially familiar language from the skipper, combined to give the unmistakable impression that we had gone aground - stuck on the MUD on a falling tide. There being nothing else to do, we spent the next two hours watching more and more oozy MUD appearing all round our barge and a further two hours watching the tide slip back over the same infuriating MUD. By that time some more of the BREAD had been consumed in a sandwich lunch and one deserter had 'jumped ship' to make sure he got back to work on Monday morning, leaving us with only twelve after all, so the Doctor was smiling again.

We set sail once more in the afternoon, but with an increasing wind 'on the nose' and the tide in full flood against us we were making no progress at all as we zig-zagged across the river, so down went the hook into the muddy ooze below, while we waited for the tide to run slower nearer the turn again. Many hands of cards were played and the stocks of beer fell as the wind rose and the tide flooded in unabated. By this time we reckoned the MARJORIE would be back in Muddy Maldon, but we were not really envious, we were getting our money's worth of barge life.....and anyway we'd not starve.

Our speculations about the MARJORIE seemed confirmed shortly when our beady eyed skipper (who could not get over the fact that he had not been aground all

season and had to do it on this the last trip) spotted a steam tug on it's way to rescue us having evidently got the message. We were soon romping along under tow in the gathering gloom caused by the retarding of the clocks the previous evening, but the energetic motion of the barge through the waves with no sail to steady her, nearly led to our exposure to the greatest of all dangers at sea as the brightly burning Tilley Lamp swung down from it's rusty hook in the deckhead bouncing on the head of the unfortunate and imprudent crew member beneath and shattered to a halt on the deck hissing paraffin fumes of the most odious kind - not 6 feet from the saloon stove-well stocked with our ample supply of fuel. No holocaust ensuing (of course not, we had got rid of the unlucky 13th) we cleared up the mess by the dim light of the remaining Tilley, and began to worry about the BREAD again. We needn't have - the dreaded MUD struck again and left our tug nestled in the fold of slimy ooze, which lurks beneath the innocent face of the tides. We were only 4 miles from Maldon, but helpless till the next tide. We took back all we had said about our shipmate who had the foresight to abandon the vessel, congratulated our Stores Officer on the increasing accuracy of her estimation of rations and after one last lingering malevolent glance at the MUD, we turned into bed.

Thanks to the combined nocturnal efforts of both the tide and our skipper, we woke at 6 a.m. to find ourselves securely tied alongside at Maldon in time for more toast to be consumed at breakfast and for all those who really had to go to work to be robbed of the excuse for a day off. We saw MARJORIE of course, tied up and long since deserted right on the inside of the 5 deep fleet. We really felt her crew had missed many interesting experiences: they certainly hadn't seen as much MUD as we had, but then neither did they see more than one member of the DAWN's crew slink off along the quay to the car with a large loaf securely tucked under each arm!

Angela McKeag.

AT THE BAR WITH PINT POT'!!!! "Did you go to the Boat Show this year? Blimey, inflation's hit the new Dragon" - the number of times I've heard either this comment or a similar one since January is more boring than being filled, lifted, partially emptied, tucked under the arm, finally emptied and then refilled and repeat the whole series until the shutter slams. Seriously though, it looks as though things have gone a bit far - fellows with the 'old new boats' thought they were onto a good thing, but I gather they set their sights a bit high and are still proud owners of the 'old new boats'! The new Chairman, Pat Dyas has set a few tongues wagging with his ideas about raising funds for supporting up and coming young Dragoners to get to the International Meetings. Generally, the idea of a National Lottery is popular, but as you might imagine you get the few who don't think special support should be given, with such comments as 'if you can afford to get the equipment to get into the first ten at the Edinburgh Cup, you can afford to get yourself to the International Meetings - personally, I reckon this is a lot of sour grapes. If these people, few as they are, kept themselves up to date and read Vernon Stratton's reported comments regarding qualifying for an R.Y.A. grant, they would see that one has to be a very serious contender on the water with plenty of preparation ashore - especially leaving the likes of me alone to rest! That boat at Medway, that had the Teak undulating deck last season is now ready for the season - heard Keith Best saying that the deck had been removed and a new deck had been fitted very carefully down at Burnham, nice to hear somebody's getting satisfaction from a Supplier!

PINT POT.

FOR SALE

D/K 267 "ELYANKA" Built Kulbjernsuik Vert & Slip, modernised boat in full racing trim, metal mast, full width main traveller, three suits sails, ready to race - £2,000 ono - Nick Sumner on 'phone Newport(IoFw) 3779

D/K 408 "JOANNA" Built Pedersen & Thuesen '64 - good condition, wood spars - Contact: Owner as B.D.A. Year Book.

D/K 454 "FLAPJACK" Built '70 by Borrensen, recently repainted and varnished in full racing condition - three suits sails. Price £4,500 - Contact: Gary Harrison on Chelmsford 66833 (day) or 360608 (evenings).

D/IR 5 "SCAMPI" Was originally D/K287, built '56 by Burnes yard, has Elvstrom sails and spars, Borrensen runner winches, chute, barbers and all ready for competition. Runner up Irish Championships '72 & '73 Price including Borrensen cradle and delivery to Liverpool £2,500 Contact: Oswald Johnston or Dublin 322613.