

DRAGON NEWS



BRITISH DRAGON ASSOCIATION



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Several photographs by Fiona Brown were used to illustrate this yearbook – www.fionabrown.com

The Chairman's Message



2012 was the Year of the Water Dragon under the Chinese calendar. It marks a year of transition, uncertainty and change. For some that seems uncannily accurate. However for the Dragon Class in the UK, I think we have a more optimistic view. Attendances at most of our events were up and I sense that the class is determined to shrug off the bleakness of austerity. The Dragon has been through anything that you can imagine since 1929 and still thrives. Why is this? It all goes down to the elegance of design, the quality of build and the spirit of those who sail this wonderful boat. And not least it's a great boat to race! Although the Dragon might be more expensive to buy new than some keel boats, it has the advantage of maintaining its competitiveness for many years and thus can hold its value. The structure of the class helps maintain this value proposition - rules are firmly up held and changes are very carefully evaluated. I know that some would wish to see more changes, new exotic materials introduced and so on. However the class has survived almost uniquely internationally and still maintains a broad base of support.

The class is not only about participants who support the big events like the Gold Cup – there are hundreds more who sail locally and attend only occasionally an event away from their sailing club. It's these sailors who are the bedrock of the class and they can have their say too. The class is open and welcoming – just look at what happens in most rigging parks - there's always someone willing to lend a hand to put up or pack away a mast, put the cover on and strap up before departing. This is why we find sailing in the class attractive, not only great racing but friendly and sociable too.

The Northern Area Championships and Edinburgh Cup hosted by the Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club at Cultra on Belfast Lough was a fine example of the friendliness and quality of racing found in the Dragon Class. The event was generously sponsored by the Belfast Harbour Authority who gave every support to logistics and hospitality. The very relaxed downwind race from the harbour to Cultra showed off the fleet to the city in bright sunshine – a great start to the week. Simon Brien and his team worked very hard to lay on great racing and hospitality and the members of the club couldn't have been more welcoming. They were rewarded by the biggest entry for an Edinburgh Cup

in years - 45 Dragons. Simon Brien in KIN won both the Open and Corinthian class with past winner Martyn Byrn helming Jaguar taking second place and current world champion Lawrie Smith in Alfie in third place. Gavia Wilkinson-Cox sailing Jerboa was the victor of the Northern Area Championships.

The East Coast Championships were hosted by the Aldeburgh fleet at the Haven Ports Yacht Club at Levington Marina on the River Orwell. Racing took place in Dovercourt Bay - quite a change from the river sailing for the East coast fleets of Aldeburgh, Burnham and Medway. Conditions were superb - not a cloud in the sky and steady winds for three days. Unbelievable! Poul Hoj-Jensen in Danish Blue took the honours in a well supported fleet from Rob Campbell in Quicksilver V. I think Poul was amazed that we could find such fine open water sailing on the east coast. Mark Wade in Avalanche was third and winner of the Corinthian trophy. It has been some years since the East Coasts have been sailed in Dovercourt Bay but as the event was so successful I'm sure we will return very soon.

The South Coast Championships were hosted by the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club in Cowes and offered challenging racing for a very strong fleet. It was a most dramatic championship for fleet captains Owen and Josy Pay whose recently acquired Dragon Lawless was hit by an errant cruiser during one of the races. However after very close racing Julia Bailey in Aimee took the honours for both the overall and Corinthian series. Julia was sailing with husband Graham, Dylan Potter and 13 year old Sophie Heritage. It's really good news to see that Dragons can be competitively sailed with four up, including young crew members. Whilst in the Solent, Dragons managed to put on a good show during Cowes week with Eric Williams in Ecstatic winning the week. I hope that next year more Dragons can be encouraged to enter Cowes Week; it's en route to Weymouth and teams can have a relaxing fun week before tackling the more serious business of the World Championships.

Your past chairman Patrick Gifford volunteered to stay on the committee taking on the role of looking after our classic boats. In fact we had a Classic Championship this year during Aldeburgh Week. The entry was modest but racing tight. To quote: "the results were very consistent with Peter Thomas's Galax II always finishing one place behind Tim Hannon's Harkaway." Well done the both of you!

Last year there was concern amongst some Dragon owners about poor quality of race management at some events. I think in 2012 at the domestic championships and leading regattas race management has been first class and I would like to thank all the volunteers who give up so much time to give us quality racing. Preparation and briefing before the event is all important, so as organisers we need to take a little time out to brief race officers about the requirement and characteristics of the competitors so that there is no misunderstanding. On the competitors side we need to remember that wind and current changes direction and that race officers cannot be expected to always predict wind shifts. It's also incumbent of the fleet to be realistic about the

starting particularly on a long line. If we push it we can expect to be black flagged!

This is a busy period for those on the BDA Committee. We have two major events to organise directly in 2013; The Edinburgh Cup and South Coasts to be held from June 22 to 28 and the World Championships from September 5 to 13. Both events are being hosted by the Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy with fully fledged Olympic race management teams to give us the best of racing. The venue is superb for Dragon racing and the Academy provides excellent facilities. We have concluded the British qualifying events for selection of competitors to the Worlds - congratulations to those who qualified. We also have an enthusiastic team of volunteers for the Worlds lined up - games makers for the Dragons! Whilst on the subject of volunteers, I would like to thank all those who join their local fleet committees and in particular those who take up the challenge of undertaking the fleet captain role. Many thanks also to Class Secretary Tim Wilkes and Treasurer Charles Cronin for their contribution and time spent on behalf of the Association.

The longer term success of the Dragon class is dependent on the vibrancy of local fleets, they are our showcase. We have put a lot of effort into looking at ways of attracting new owners; Fiona Brown does a tremendous job in press coverage and managing our website for example. But the real test is to attract new owners into the fleets; witness how our Abersoch fleet has developed with their low cost entry approach. I'm sure this approach can be repeated elsewhere, either a new fleet or encouraging development of existing fleets. Let's work on growing our fleets in 2013 - Dragons will be in the news during the year and we have a chance to encourage new teams into the class.

Fleet captains have the sometimes challenging job of persuading local Dragon owners to join and participate in the British Dragon Association. Because the Dragon is an ISAF registered keel boat, the class has strict rules approved by ISAF. One of these rules is that before owners can participate in any Dragon race he or she must be a member of a national class association. So if you would like to participate in Dragon racing please become a member of the class. It's not only about racing, membership helps retain the integrity of the class, rules are strictly enforced and any changes carefully reviewed. The long term future of the Dragon depends on the long standing and well proven class organisation so I hope you will continue to give it your support.

Finally and most importantly I would like to thank our class sponsor Aberdeen Asset Management for their continuing support this year. Their involvement is fantastic for British Dragons and from a wider perspective their sponsorship of Cowes Week supports participation in the sport and past-time of sailing at all levels.

Martin Makey

Forthcoming Fixtures

May 25-27, 2013 East Coast Championships, Medway
Jun 14-16, 2013 Northern Area Championships, Abersoch
Jun 23-24, 2013 South Coast Championships, Weymouth
Jun 25-28, 2013 Edinburgh Cup, Weymouth
Aug 03-10, 2013 Aberdeen Asset Management Cowes Week
Sep 05-13, 2013 Dragon World Championship, Weymouth
Jul 05-08, 2014 South Coast Championships, Lymington
Jul 09-12, 2014 Edinburgh Cup, Lymington

Notes To Members

All members are asked to check that the contact details published in the White Book are up to date and correct. Not all members have let us know their e-mail addresses and it would be helpful if those, as well as any other changes, are notified to the Secretary at timwilkes6@hotmail.com

All members are reminded that BDA trophies are to be returned to the Secretary or organising club for each relevant regatta. A small number of trophies are currently missing, presumed gathering dust in a member's attic; it would be appreciated if these were returned for future use too, please.

Jenny Green

It was with much sadness that we learnt of the death of BDA member Jenny Green, passed away peacefully on 22nd December 2012. Jenny had struggled to resist crippling motor neuron disease for three and a half years. She bore the disease with amazing strength and inner fortitude; she was an amazing person and documented both her personal fight as well as her fantastic fundraising efforts in a blog: <http://jennygreenchallenge.wordpress.com/> The BDA will remember her with great fondness and send their condolences to Malcolm and her extended family including her five children and twelve grandchildren.

www.britishdragons.org

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email:info@lontonandgray.com

**Lonton
& Gray**

Solent Keelboat racing is organised by the CCCA (Coves Clubs & Classes Association). It has to be run through this neutral authority as there are 5 Coves based clubs who might otherwise compete for business; so the CCCA co-ordinates. This means that different clubs take turns to organise the racing on different weekends. Apart from periodic "Mini Series" weekends (like the Jubilee regatta which is run every year for the Dragons) the Solent Fleet racing has two formats:

regularly - as the results show!

The Spring Series and South Coasts - In 2012 we started the season on the 21st April with the first of the Solent Series races with surprisingly mild weather and relatively light winds, but sadly this was not destined to continue. The Spring Series was won by a resurgent Tim Blackwell in Virago crewed by Lisa and Roger Guy, narrowly defeating the Baileys in Aimee.

The South Coast Championships were

in late May, and at the same time the British Summer decided to show us what it could do. Unfortunately we lost 8 races due to force eights, and the fleet embarked on a "lunch crawl" around the Solent Clubs. In between the gales we managed to fit in 6 races and the series was won by the Lawless syndicate who had kindly been lent Rackham by Rob Gray, closely followed by 'Judge Nick' Jones in Dilemma.

There was good support from the Solent Fleet in Cultra, for the Northern Area Championships, with Jerboa, Aimee, Dark & Stormy, and the newly purchased Seabird collected from Dun Laoghaire on the way north.

It was a great result for the Solent Fleet with Jerboa (Gavia Wilkinson-Cox, Stavros and Rui Boia) and Dark & Stormy (Buddha, Mark Hart, and Mark Daley) fighting it out for 1st and 2nd respectively, and the Bailey's coming fourth overall and winning the Corinthian Trophy in Aimee! The Baileys should also have been in contention for the youth trophy as they had young Will Heritage on board supported by Dylan Potter.

For the Edinburgh Cup itself, which followed immediately afterwards, Cool Runnings also joined the original four. The Solent Fleet did not do quite as well with the additional competitors from the international fleet - but Aimee led the way with a very respectable 5th overall.

Summer Series and Coves Week - Once the fleet returned from their travels we settled into the Summer Series, and the weather did calm to more settled conditions, although still not shorts and

Solent Fleet Report

- The Solent Series - Round the cans racing starting from the organising club's fixed start line

- Coves Keelboat Championship - two Windward leeward races per day from a Committee-boat start, normally on the Bramble Bank

The Solent fleet have then split these series up into 5 different series, within a series, so that you don't have to do the whole season to win a pot.

There have been some changes to the Solent Fleet this year with Buddah purchasing the latest Danish Blue, renamed Dark & Stormy, and selling Flawless to a syndicate of the Pays, Dave Ross, Steve Richardson, and Dr Jon. Njord was loaned to Richard Powell, who had been racing with the Baileys in Cascas. Gavia engaged in Sail for Gold put in limited appearances. Tim Blackwell, with the persuasive force of Lisa Guy, "floated his boat" much more

held on the first Spring Bank Holiday, under the flag of the RYC. We were lucky to have George Chapman as PRO because he is a very experienced Solent Race officer who has a very pragmatic approach to "getting the races in". The weather was a very mixed bag, but could not be described in any way as "mild". This event has been written about in great detail on the BDA web-site but I'd just like to highlight how grateful we were for the number of visitors who came to race against us (2 Irish and 4 UK)!

Drama came to the Class Captain's season with a nasty collision; where a Grand Soleil 43 T-boned Lawless (formerly known as Flawless). The syndicate bought IRL 205 (Seabird) now GBR 777 - just in time for the Edinburgh Cup - it was an expensive year!

Mid Season and the Solent on Tour in Ireland - The Mid-Season series kicked off

Below: The fleet skipper adds colour to an overcast Coves Week day Opposite: The Queen's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated with style in Coves



tee-shirt time. We had the now annual pleasure of racing against legendary Australian Americas Cup skipper Gordon Ingate in Whimsey. The Summer Series was won by Virago again, but with Whimsey a very close second. Sadly Gordon has had to give up racing Dragons, due to a shoulder injury, but Australia's loss is the Solent Fleet's gain as Dave Ross and Paul Kelsey have purchased Whimsey and increased our numbers. Whimsey has been renamed The Old Bailey, as she was the original Aimee GBR660.

The Summer Series is bisected by the annual festival that is Cowes Week. It is hard to describe Cowes week as it is an event on many levels and is also a social and sailing marathon. There are the long races, up to 3.5 hours (sometimes longer) which are a feat of "Yottigation" and involve rounding buoys that are new to the locals (Quod Possumus?) so local knowledge is reduced, or can even be dangerous. And then of course there are the parties!

We had several visitors this year, Ted Sawyer also joined us with Clairvoyant, and we also had French representation from Deauville with Giliat. Teresa and Tim Wilkes borrowed Njord for the week, David Crabb joined us with Seafire and Chris and Gillian Brittain chartered Bear, but it is difficult to think of any of these loyal regulars as real visitors!

For Cowes Week in 2011 the wind averaged 22 knots which was very windy. It was a hard week but enjoyable racing; especially the day we planed (yes planed!) from Norris to Bob Kemp, approximately 4 nautical miles.

In 2012 it was a more mixed with most perfect sailing conditions and a lot of variety. Sadly we did lose one day's racing due to a very big depression, but there was no depression over a very good lunch in the RCYC.

The class dinner on the Sunday night with its bling theme (courtesy of Mrs Pay and Mrs Issaia's who are developing reputations for high maintenance) had over 70 people attending including 5 guests from Aberdeen, and it was a great success. I think we have converted several Aberdonians to the delights of racing Dragons - or at least the après-sail - as we were able to convince one of them to join us on a sail in almost Mediterranean conditions after racing the following day.

Eric Williams managed to triumph in the most important part with two Burnham imports crewing, Matt Walker and Chris Dunn. Eric has dominated Cowes Week over the last 25 years managing to win the overall regatta an amazing 8 times, and



been second a further 9 times. That is an outstanding record for an event which is incredibly tough to win. Aimee was second - the Baileys also have a very impressive list of victories.

The End of the Season - Once Cowes Week is complete we move into the Late Series. This is normally when we have those glorious September/October sailing days which we have got used to in recent years; almost like a compensation for the record cold/wet Summers that Global Warming has endowed us. Unfortunately it was wet and windy again and we lost a few races once more. This series was won by GBR 777 (the yet to be renamed Seabird) with Virago snapping at their heels once again. The last four races are grouped as the October Cup series and for this series the wind tap was switched off so we could demonstrate our drifting skills; and it turned out GBR 777 could drift faster than Virago.

The Prize Giving and AGM were held at the Royal Yacht Squadron in February. At the prize giving the Class Championship was deservedly presented to Virago; congratulations to Tim, Lisa, and Roger.

Sadly the Solent fleet has been rather low on numbers, for the club racing, in recent years. But we have the addition of The Old Bailey as well as Tim and Charles Street re-joining the fleet with Chime II. Two additional new owners, who have tried out racing Dragons in Cascais, and a third new owner trying to source a 3 to 4 year old boat will join us as well. I truly feel that we have turned the corner and there is a definite buzz around the fleet, as there should be. We have great facilities and open waters less than 2 hours from London. Any one wants a sail - get in touch!

Owen Pay

2012 marked the fifth season for the Abersoch fleet – another tremendous season of sailing, characterised by a consolidation of sailing skills, continued competitiveness and a marked improvement in the fleet as a whole as we saw numerous close finishes, plenty of mid-fleet position shifting and a general compressing of the fleet spread with all boats improving their performance. As we all know, Dragon racing can be very unforgiving and you never stop learning – I recall a roller-coaster of euphoria as we went around the windward mark leading the fleet, only to see the fleet catch up and roll past on a down-wind shift that came from nowhere, as we desperately tried to re-tune the boat and get her back in 'the groove'!

The aim of starting the season early was unfortunately thwarted by the weather, with strong easterly winds preventing racing on the first weekend. Despite this, 2012 saw a total of 30 club races completed across the summer, with the full fleet of nine boats on the start line on several occasions – a fantastic sight that still draws even the most hardened drinkers out of the club bar to watch! Highlights included the well attended Dragon 4-day long-weekend, where we were able to organise committee-boat starts, plenty of après-racing 'crack' in the bar and club restaurant and the added spice of highly unpredictable heavy weather with numerous squalls!

The Abersoch fleet are nearly all kept on moorings throughout the season – the launch trips are a constant source of pre-race banter and post-race diagnosis, but mooring the boats does dictate regular pre-race in-the-water hull cleaning if you are to remain competitive – a source of bravado for those without wetsuits and amusement for those with! This year's weather proved a good test of the boat-covers and automatic bilge-pumps that have proven to be well up to the challenge.

Two boats went through pre-season refits – Amazon went down to Petticrows in Burnham-on-Crouch and was fitted with a new mast, as a consequence of its predecessor deciding to topple over when being de-rigged on the hard at the end of last season! Gitane, the oldest boat in the fleet, went winchless, thanks to 'yours truly' spending many winter days designing and constructing new systems!

Boats worthy of particular mention include 'Mystere' who, under the skilled helmsmanship of Jamie Peters, remained

a very difficult boat to beat, winning 17 races in total throughout the season and coming first overall for the 5th year on the run. Two boats had a very close fight for second place overall, with Rob Riddell helming Merlin to take second by a whisker, with third going to Chris and Selina Thomas in Phantom. We also welcomed Rob Eldridge and Hugo and Isabel Williamson to the fleet who, in Caramba (the name comes from a term used in Spanish to denote surprise), achieved admirable boat speed for their first season – Isabel used to sail in the original Abersoch Dragon fleet back in the '1970's.

This season was sadly marred by the tragic death of Paul Kearns in April, before it had begun. Paul, a keen sailor whose tremendous energy, enthusiasm and humour were at the heart of the fleet, will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him.

Five Abersoch boats took the ferry and made the journey to Belfast for the 2012 Edinburgh Cup – an exciting and entertaining foray, both on and off the water! Our thanks go to all those involved in hosting and supporting the event and who managed to get all boats back safely to the moorings after a day hindered by thick fog!

In addition, Jamie Peters, Rob Riddell and Dave Cummings took part in the Gold Cup at Kinsale on 'Mystere' and experienced how sea-worthy a Dragon is in heavy seas and wind!

After five years as Class Captain, Rob Riddell has now handed the reins over to Jamie Peters. During his reign, Rob has done an absolutely fantastic job in establishing and growing the fleet to its present size. His enthusiasm,



Abersoch sailing at its best



Nockie (Marcus Sandy), Paul Kearns & Mark Halliwell on Muskateer

determination and organisational skills have been a constant factor in developing the fleet and in achieving his vision of bringing back the Edinburgh Cup event to Abersoch last year, which was a huge success. We welcome Jamie Peters, who we have no doubt will do a first class job in taking the fleet forward.

Early 'intelligence' suggests that we may already have three additional boats joining the fleet in 2013, taking it up to twelve in total, which is very encouraging. South Caernarfonshire Yacht Club is also hosting the Northerns from the 14th-16th of June and we would encourage all Dragon sailors to come and enjoy the fantastic sailing conditions that the Tremadog Bay offers.

Neil Brown
South Caernarfonshire Yacht Club

Accounts of the British Dragon Association

Fiscal year end 31st October

Income Statement

| | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Income | | | |
| Subscriptions | 9,934 | 11,109 | 11,725 |
| Advertising & Sponsorship | 23,500 | 20,700 | 9,250 |
| Annual Dinner | 1,352 | 960 | 2,043 |
| Rebated Event Support | 0 | 3,500 | 0 |
| Bank Interest | 12 | 11 | 11 |
| Total Income | 34,798 | 36,280 | 23,029 |
| Expenditure | | | |
| Annual Dinner | 1,575 | 2,000 | 2,423 |
| IDA & RYA subscriptions | 1,566 | 1,376 | 1,381 |
| Handbook, IDA & BDA Newsletter | 1,732 | 2,166 | 2,520 |
| Advertising & Promotion | 2,451 | 916 | 1,909 |
| Class Administration & Travel | 0 | 0 | 153 |
| Web Master | 730 | 6,783 | 793 |
| Postage, telephone & stationary | 307 | 429 | 1,202 |
| Public Relations | 5,520 | 4,688 | 4,048 |
| Committee Room Hire | 100 | 50 | 550 |
| Sundries | 84 | 0 | 30 |
| Bank Charges (BACS) | 40 | 4 | 56 |
| Event Support | 21,213 | 20,000 | 2,000 |
| Equipment | 480 | 0 | 0 |
| Depreciation | 312 | 192 | 192 |

Balance Sheet

| | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Fixed Assets | | | |
| Equipment (Scales/Laptop/Printer) | 813 | 501 | 309 |
| Depreciation | -312 | -192 | -192 |
| Total Fixed Assets | 501 | 309 | 117 |
| Current Assets | | | |
| Total Debtors | 1,041 | 980 | 1,000 |
| Bad debt provision - subs | 0 | -980 | -1,000 |
| Current Account | 1,235 | 1,226 | 2,689 |
| High Interest Account | 29,489 | 27,500 | 31,511 |
| Total Current Assets | 31,765 | 28,727 | 34,201 |
| Total Assets | 32,266 | 29,036 | 34,318 |
| Current Liabilities | | | |
| Creditors | 50 | 125 | 35 |
| Forgiven Credits | 0 | 0 | -35 |
| Accruals | 0 | 0 | 95 |
| Total Current Liabilities | 50 | 125 | 95 |
| Net Assets | 32,216 | 28,911 | 34,223 |



What The BDA Does For You

D The most important reason for the existence of any class association is that it controls the rules of the class and the BDA is no different in this respect. The Dragon is an ISAF accredited, International Class and the International Dragon Association (IDA), to which the BDA is affiliated, controls the class rules. Without such control all kind of modifications would creep into the class and very soon racing would no longer be fair and equitable. All Dragons would be devalued and the market for used Dragons would disappear! The BDA has a direct input into the IDA and is actively involved on your behalf whenever rule changes are being considered. A guiding principle here is that changes to keep the Dragon class attractive to today's sailors should not make older Dragons uncompetitive.

D Administering a class inevitably costs money so, recognising the importance of maintenance of the class rules to all who race Dragons, the Dragon Class

Rules state (Rule 1.81) that the owner of a Dragon must be a paid up member of their national association, so if you race you must join the BDA otherwise your Dragon does not comply with the Class Rules and is technically not a Dragon. This is an ISAF rule that is applied to all International Classes.

D The BDA holds its AGM in January each year. This gives members the opportunity to influence the direction in which the Class moves and the things the BDA Committee (made up of Officers elected at the AGM and local fleet captains) does. The Annual Dinner held the same evening allows Dragon owners to meet like minded enthusiasts from all over the UK.

D The BDA organises the National Championships (Edinburgh Cup) and Area Championships each year and is the custodian of the trophies for these events. It also seeks and obtains sponsorship

for these events thereby keeping entry fees to a minimum. It also organises International events (Worlds, Europeans and Gold Cup) when these are awarded to the UK by the IDA.

D A variety of news and promotional activities are undertaken by the BDA to keep members informed and to attract new sailors to the Class. These activities include an annual magazine, newsletters, the web site and interaction with the sailing and national press.

D The BDA maintains contact with the Class Builders and Sail Makers, without which the Class would grow old and die.

D Finally the BDA is the keeper of records and archives on all UK and Classic Dragons

D The BDA needs your support; if you have an interest in Dragons, whether or not you own/sail one, please join.

Medway Fleet Report



It seems hardly yesterday

I was writing this for the 2011 Magazine, so another season has flown by on our river, the Medway. To begin with, we worried if the river would ever have the benefit of flow from upstream down, such as the drought, and it was a month or two before the Almighty redressed the balance big time, and it rained so hard for so long that it was late summer before all the water dispersal restrictions were lifted and we could once again wash off the boats with fresh water, let alone bath or water the flowers.

Meanwhile in 2012 we lost 3 races from our 25 race Saturday afternoon series from April to end October, two for too little, and 1 for too much wind; it could have been worse! At the beginning of our season it seemed to howl all the time, as for you all, but later on, apart from the odd exception, the weather was fine, with good wind.

We had excellent turnouts generally with a good average being 10 boats for the starts from our 14 boat fleet. Our various mini-series through the season were won by a good cross section of the fleet. The first of these the no discard Proton Cup was won by Tia GBR 591 Geoff Taylor /Jon Moon from Gandalf Edwin & Sue Hannant & Scimitar Julian & Claire Sowry.

The next trophy the late David Dann's wonderful 'Quaffing' 'Dragon Flagon' was won by Valkyrie, Stewart & Catriona Coltart with Peter Booth, followed by Gandalf & Scimitar. The Dragon Flagon lost a race, to too much wind, so 5 races one discard. In the latter, Suti, Scimitar, & Tia started, but all retired, either right away, after the first beat, or in Suti's case after a few 'excitements', for Trevor, Toby & Kevin, all part of the learning curve, Toby assured us! There was some carnage on the river that day with late 20's knot wind, but no damage to Dragons luckily.

Next up was the Medway Council's Queen's Diamond Jubilee Race, when as one of our point's races, we raced up river towards Rochester, rounding a river buoy & a laid mark, to commentary from ashore, flag waving and general excitement from lots of people on the embankment. We completed 2 rounds, a little challenging in the higher reaches, I must say. A very grand cup was awarded by the Medway Council, to the first boat in each racing class to round the first mark, which after the short leg up river and quite a tussle in the lighter patches, your Captain managed to win. There is a strong rumour it will be held annually!

In between times Fit Chick Jono Ratnage / Bruce Boyd & Scimitar travelled to Cultra Belfast for the BDA Northern's & Edinburgh Cup, where the rain and wind continued unabated, and so hard that on the penultimate night the wonderful old committee boat broke it's mooring and was found in the morning on the sea wall! The race from Belfast Harbour (the sponsors) after the launch was memorable, (lovely sunny, windy evening!) as was the last day's wind, fog & rain (!) and I think later FC's introduction to Guy Clarabut to Dark & Stormys! We were very fortunate to sail with the reigning Miss Northern Ireland, the very lovely Tiff Brien, interviewed on the boat and taken off for make up (sorry comfort!) breaks pre start, so I have an excuse for getting distracted. I wasn't allowed to drive, as I kept seeing her face on posters all over town! Called away for Miss NI duties Juanita Brien, her lovely mother filled in with great style. We all had a wonderful week's racing with some sore heads to match from the legendary hospitality however. In 2013 on this front, we can all consider and I hope you will be attending the BDA Edinburgh Cup to be held in Weymouth at the WPNSA Olympic Regatta Centre followed later by the IDA Dragon Worlds in September.

Hot back from Titanic country, (great museum) we were straight into the Medway Regatta, 4 races, Friday 'deep' east into the Thames Estuary & back over the North Kent flats off Sheppey in good breeze & sometimes less than 0.5 metre under the keel. Valkyrie crewed by Len Jones & Philip Catmur won, after the statutory 4 hours or so, followed by Scimitar & Tia. Our 2 excellent in river races on Saturday were very wet (we even saw a twister!) but with good wind. Sunday had great beating legs between Stangate Spit and Buoy 13 with Esoteric slipping past Scimitar to win the Kittiwake weekend Trophy & Scimitar the Overall Trophy with Valkyrie 3rd. There was some good close racing all through our fleet, and I think everyone enjoyed our regatta.

Sadly we had no visitors in 2012; however we do welcome them, with a lovely trophy to be won, as well as a shot at the other trophies, & I can assure anyone of a warm welcome & strongly recommend attendance in 2013, to sample the delights of our varied & wide river in Kent & only 20 minutes from the M25 /A2 interchange, so access really is easy for many of you! The club will launch your boat with our 'Wise' hoist, so do come on down.

On that note, a plug to not forget the BDA East Coast Regional Championships, to held on the Medway River over the second



May Bank Holiday 25-27th May. Check the MYC website soon! We do look forward to seeing you.

David Harris & Chris Brealy purchased & re-launched Gadabout 675 & hosted a wonderful 'Dragon Party' on the end of the pontoon in fine style in early September (see above)

We sailed the Medway Autumn Dragon Sonata (MADS) windward leeward Saturday, in October, only one race in very light wind, & which was won by OCD. 45 or so dined later at a Lebanese restaurant in Rochester, with thanks to John & Lizzie Shilling who kindly arranged this.

Back to the racing front, the winds seem to have been lighter in this middle/ latter patch and we enjoyed some good turnouts. The lovely Dragon model 'John Field Trophy' was won by the Fit Chick team from Valkyrie, followed by Gandalf, Whistle & Dax, so well done to everyone.

Our last series, the 211 Cup up to the end of our season, was won by Fit Chick, followed by Dax, then OCD & Whistle.

For our Season's Overall's, congratulations go to Valkyrie (Coltart's) closely winning from Scimitar (Sowry's) and Fit Chick (Ratnage/Boyd).

With the season over & after our end of season 'drinks & canapés' & with the boats packed & 'barned' away, many of us enjoyed our annual bike ride in November, kindly organised by our good Dragon friends Robin & Chris Ridsdill-Smith, now happily sailing their lovely cruiser.

After Christmas we had our AGM in January, when my Deputy John Shilling took over, and our Annual Prize Giving Dinner in March, so this is my last Captain's missive. Happy racing to you all.

Julian Sowry





The British Dragon Association
Invites you to...

East Coast Championship 2013 Medway, 25-27 May

Northern Area Championship 2013 Abersoch, 14-15 June

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For the first time

in several years the East Coast Championship has returned to Levington and Dovercourt Bay which are where it all started in 1976. Unlike the freezing gales of earlier years the weekend saw splendid sunshine, with Force 4-5 Easterlies. Haven Ports Yacht Club, Suffolk Yacht Harbour and the sponsors, Aberdeen Asset Management and Pantaenius all collaborated to make it an excellent event.

Seven AYC Yachts made the trip. The newly refurbished Harkaway, sailed round with Tim Hannon and Gonz in a brisk 3 hours. The rest went by road and probably took several hours longer if packing and unpacking time is included. So Timmy was on the moral high ground.

A sixteen boat fleet, containing some national and international hotshots did battle over a three day weekend. Friday it blew old boots and three races seemed to last forever, even the trip back through Harwich Harbour saw some vicious gusts to test the tired crews. The Aldeburgh fleet divided into the White Boats, Mike Hayles in Naiad, Patrick Gifford in Nereid, Ricky Gillingham in Navaho. The Yoofs Nick Hayles in Basilisk, occupying no mans ground in the middle. The Coloured Boats were Team Gibbo, in Apache, Timmy in Harkaway and Rufus in Orion.

The white boats battled each other and the other hot shots but were up against some crack crews and boats and even with the odd moment of brilliance had to settle for midfleet. Mike was thrilled to just pip Patrick on the points. The Yoofs went well from time to time, but eventually Timmy emerged at the head of the Coloured Pack. After a few unpleasant experiences trying to mix it with the big boys on the start line and being spat out the back, the Coloured

Aldeburgh Fleet Report

boats evolved the technique of hanging about the committee boat and darting out just after the gun, which worked until the last race when team Gibbo decided to shut the door on Timmy. Tsk tsk.

For all three days we enjoyed a heatwave. Not a cloud seen all three days. Basking in the sun on the way back to the harbour, and doubtless reliving each golden tack, team Harkaway found a shallow ledge just off Shotley and parked for a spell. "It was hot and we felt like a dip" seemed a lame excuse.

Every boat on the roster was either there or crewing. Patrick sailed with his Waldringfield team, Mike and Monique had Duncan, Ricky had Angus and Balloo, Will Fennell had Nick Hayles and Amber, Gibbo and Caz had Will, Timmy sailed with Gonz and Matt. Rufus had Pete and Mickey on Friday and then Dr Clive. The only boats missing were Rory who was on "Oppie Duty", and the Hunts who were en route to the River Pageant on the Thames. The AYC fleet rose to the challenge and had a very exciting out of Aldeburgh experience. However, one seasoned River Sailor was overheard remarking, "I can't wait to get back to the Alde, these two tack beats are just so boring."

Postscript: Timmy had a rather longer return trip from Levington and required "outside assistance".

After that massive effort the fleet slumped until August. The weather in June and July was vile, and it was not tempting to be on the river. Mike and Patrick went abroad to the Edinburgh Cup in Ulster and the Gold Cup in Kinsale, where they did well in the Michelin Cup. Patrick also went to Austria for the Europeans on the Attersee. Team Hayles flew the flag in France at La Boule and regularly at Cannes in the off season. Where they continued to SKI (spend kids inheritance) and SAIL (sailing and indulgent living). They are to be commended.

With the help of a visitor from Harwich, Galax II, we managed to field 10 entries for Aldeburgh week. Our newest recruit Chris Mannion with Tamerlane was introduced to the delights of river sailing, and found it a challenge. Patrick dominated the week on Nereid. There was a major tussle going on behind him between Mike on Naiad and Nick Hayles on Basilisk. The yoofs just squeaked it to their delight and Dad's chagrin. Good to see there is still life in the older boats. Timmy had a good week and won the Classic Dragon prize from Galax II

So although the turnout during the season was sparse, we had good numbers and close racing for the Regatta. There was also encouraging support from younger sailors, who appear to enjoy the delights of Dragon racing on the Alde. This coming season, we pray for better weather to encourage turnout.

Rufus Gilday



Burnham Fleet Report



At the Dragon prize giving dinner 2011, the culmination of our first year as the Burnham-on-Crouch class captains, we took the approach that 2012 would be another opportunity for us to develop the fleet and influence a few changes. We are pleased to report that we implemented quite a few changes and developed the fleet in more ways than one!

The Burnham Dragon fleet races from The Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, Burnham-on-Crouch, March to November, so through the season most sailing weather conditions are experienced... 2012 was no exception, but more often than not unseasonal! With fewer boats travelling the fleet enjoyed a good turnout for club sailing, particularly noticeable in the summer when numbers are often reduced. We are proud to say that the Burnham Dragons have raced throughout the season both Saturday and Sunday, Bank holidays and Burnham Week with adverse weather as the only reason for cancellation/postponement. It was also a very sociable year; to name but a few we have relived a trip on the Titanic, danced in shorts and wellies, partied in the rain by pumpkin light, wined and dined, shared a drink or two...all in all enjoyed ourselves.

March was one of the warmest on record with a welcome taste of spring for the 'rigging brunch', the first real get together of the season for the fleet. We were pleased to welcome new members and two new boats into the fleet, the Brown family, David, Lyn and Jono with 'Storm' and David Lenz with 'Furie Jacket' and also the return of Nigel Cole in 'Tsunami'. After a hearty brunch, a catch up and a chat about the forthcoming season it was a pleasant change to be getting the boats rigged and set up ready for the season in mild conditions.

The following weekend in March was the first race and tune up for the fleet on the River Crouch. It is by tradition a champagne race, so it was a pleasure to present 'The Browns' racing 'Storm' with a bottle of champagne for not only winning the race, but also for the first win in their new boat. By the end of March there were 10 boats racing so there must be something to be said for global warming!

Whilst March was one of the warmest since records began, April was to be the wettest for 100 years. In what was to be the last of the fair weather for a while, Tim Tavinor put the fleet through

their paces with a training session the week before Easter. Tim made use of the light conditions with on shore coaching followed by on the water starting practice in preparation for the first event of the season, the Dragon Easter Regatta at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, Burnham.

The fine weather attracted 18 boats to enter the Easter Regatta, 14 local boats and 4 visitors from Medway and the Solent. It was pleasing to see that the helm and crew entrants were a mixture of young (the youngest aged 12) and old (dare we say?), male, female, experienced, novice, friends and families, a good indication that the Dragon is a good boat to sail and race. By the end of the regatta the competitors had encountered contrasting conditions for their varying abilities. So with the first races sailed in light and shifty conditions and the last races in rain and wind, the winner, counting a very credible six 1st places, was Robert Campbell with Matt Walker and Jonathon Hill in 'Quicksilver V'.

May saw the return of the popular 'Try a Dragon Day', a day dedicated to introducing the Dragon to both experienced and inexperienced sailors. As a direct result we have been pleased to welcome several new crews to the fleet and potential new owners and members of the British Dragon Association. What was particularly significant is that they were surprised at how conventional the Dragon was to sail (despite so many ropes), how passionate Dragon sailors are about their boats and welcoming to newcomers. Our thanks go to all those who assisted by offering themselves and boats to encourage others to join the Dragon class.

The spring series continued through May with on occasion up to 16 boats racing from the club line, again in a mixture of weather conditions to test the skills of the teams. The overall winner for both the Saturday and Sunday series was Ian Gray in 'Scorpio' with a combination crew of Rene Nel, Bob Tranter and Alex Burnett.

At the end of May five Burnham Dragons competed in the BDA East Coast Championship at Levington, hosted by the Haven Ports Yacht Club and Suffolk Yacht Harbour. It had been many years since the Dragon had raced from the club and although initially there were reservations about the unseasonal weather and distance to the course, it turned out to be an amazing weekend of sunshine, with ideal wind, racing and hospitality. It was a good event for the Burnham fleet with Poul Hoj Jensen, Tim Tavinor and Matt Walker in 'Danish Blue' 1st, Rob Campbell, Andrew 'Noddy' Norden and Katie Cole in 'Quicksilver V' 2nd and Mark and Mandy Wade and Simon Cash in 'Avalanche' 3rd.

In June Burnham boats, 'Hands Off', 'Quicksilver V', 'Avalanche', 'Ganador' and 'Danish Blue' with respective helms and crews plus Tim Tavinor crewing in Alfie, travelled to Northern Ireland for the Northern Area and Edinburgh Cup Championships hosted by the Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club in Cultra. It was the first experience of sailing in Northern Ireland for many of the competitors and certainly one to remember for the racing and Irish hospitality. The top Burnham sailors for the Northern Area were the Wades and Simon Cash in 5th and for the Edinburgh Cup, Tim Tavinor in 3rd, Poul and 'Noddy' in 7th and Mike Holmes in 'Hands Off' in 12th.

The crews' race for the Pat Burnett Memorial Trophy was sailed in July with a two race series allowing two separate crews to have the opportunity of helming. Karen Robinson and Matt Walker

jointly won the series helming Beauty and the Beast with Rob Campbell as the 'able and willing' crew. There was a close finish for the Summer Saturday series with Martyn Fogg in 'Hat Trick' and Rob Campbell and Katie Cole in 'Quicksilver V' both on equal points, Hatrick was just pipped on count back. Just two entrants in Cowes Week were from Burnham this year, 'Seafire' sailed by David Crabb and Teresa and Tim Wilkes who were loaned 'Njord' by Owen Pay. Both finished the regatta on equal points but David was the highest placed on count back.

The annual Dragon picnic sail in August attracted over 40 people to the Plough and Sail at Paglesham. Most went by river in Dragons, Tolerance (a large motor cruiser), 3 RIBs and a few travelled by road to join the lunch in the pub garden. The Roach Sailing Association very kindly loaned their moorings for the period we were at the pub and Derek and Dwilla on Tolerance acted as the committee and passenger boat. It was a nice surprise seeing David and Yvonne Hall, who normally sail round on 'Flame Again', arrive by road in a 1958 Rolls Royce Silver Wraith that has been in the family since 1962, there were a couple of the Dragon sailors who remembered seeing it at the RCYC in the 70's.

Eleven Dragons competed in the Burnham Week Regatta this year in what was now normal windy weather. The first Bank holiday was the most popular with Mike Holmes crewed by Tim and Teresa Wilkes in 'Hands Off' as the winner of the long weekend. 'Magic' sailed by Nick Hyde, David Andrassy and Roy Roberts won the mid week and 'Scorpio' sailed by Ian Gray, Bob Tranter and Rene Nel won the last Saturday. However, 'Magic' was the overall winner of Burnham Week, demonstrating that time on the water does make a winner!

Whilst the fleet wound down after Burnham week, 5 boats with RCYC Dragon helms and crews competed in the Gold Cup in Kinsale, Southern Ireland. With very close competition and all races to count no one knew who the winner would be until the last race. Tim Tavinor sailing with Lawrie Smith sadly lost the lead held overnight and finished a very credible 2nd. 'Danish Blue' with Poul and Noddy were 6th, whilst 'Quicksilver V' sailed by Rob, Justin Waples, Rene, 'Tigger' crewed by Thomas and Nicky Wilton and 'Hands Off', Mike with Peter Marchant, Andy Biddle all finished quite close together in the 30's.

Two mini series events of four races in a day, were sailed in autumn this year with Edwin and Pat Buckley and their team on 'Phoebe' running the committee boat. Both the race committee and the Dragon fleet braved the elements for an exciting series of races that kept the fleet on their toes with boat handling skills

and teamwork. It made for interesting conversation back in the bar recalling moments of amusement and excitement on the water and discussing lessons learned! The overall winner of the series was 'Beauty and the Beast' helmed by Rob.

Numbers were up again for the autumn series as the class reunited after away events and holidays. Nigel Cole sailing 'Tsunami' won the Carlton Platter and Beauty and the Beast the Petticrow Open. In October Dick Rycroft celebrated 25 years of ownership of his classic Dragon 'Logi' built 50 years ago with champagne bucks fizz toast. Unfortunately the adverse weather curtailed Dicks racing this season as it was not ideal for Logi's more fragile build.

The final highlight of the season was the prize giving dinner, the awarding of the prizes and trophies for the racing and the 'Clanger' trophy presentation by the previous year's winner. Along with the large array of trophies for series racing, special achievement, crew and the over 60 was a new trophy, the Hobbs Dragon. The Hobbs trophy for the overall points of the season with (a 54 race series with no discard) was awarded to Martyn Fogg in Hat Trick, a testament of his dedication to racing his Dragon on the Crouch! Tim Tavinor (who had been re awarded the Clanger by his wife Kay and Thomas and Nicky Wilton in his absence last year) awarded the Clanger trophy, with the music and dance movements of 'The Village People', to Dick Rycroft for his misdemeanour going aground and catapulting his crew over the bow earlier in the year.

The season came to an end on the 18th November with the final race for the Peter Mathews Memorial Trophy won by Katie Cole helming 'Beauty and the Beast' with the customary celebration 'season end' Champagne. To be strictly true, not quite the end ...a few decided to have a go at one more extracurricular race on 24th November!

At the end of our second year as class captains it was satisfying to look back and take account of just a few of the events of the year. Needless to say it would not have been possible without the helms, particularly the unmentioned crews competing and the help and support we have had from so many. Our sincere thanks to everyone involved. However, a report that includes every event and everyone by name would be almost impossible to write so if there are omissions or errors we will hopefully rectify that in 2013!

As ever...visiting 'yachtsmen' (men, women and children!) are welcome to join the Burnham Dragon Fleet!

Mark and Mandy Wade



Tuning Tips

Sailing a



REACHING: Norwegian Dragon Pan carries a kicking strap. Note how far aft her runners are led

[Beken]

of Dragons closehauled, all with their masts sagging to leeward.

I remember once, Mr. Yule-Oldham when he was Commodore of the Cambridge University Cruising Club, talking to a group of enthusiastic young men, and explaining forcibly while making a shaking movement with his hand "You should be able to do that with the rigging!" This is the old-school of thought and certainly does not hold good with the new rigging plan of the Dragon. The upper shrouds especially must be tight but it pays to have the lower shrouds a little slacker than the upper ones, so that the weight of the wind in the sail will tend to push the lower part of the mast to leeward, and thus bring the unsupported top of the mast up to windward.

It is perhaps unnecessary to stress the importance of having the same shroud tension on either side, but many people forget that this also applies to the runners. Many Dragons in this country use the old-fashioned method of having

SHIPS are sentient beings, and it is not easy to generalize on how to get the best out of a boat of a class with a One-Design hull, but taking a cross section of the Dragons in this country, four points stand out:—

- (a) The majority are too heavy.
- (b) Not enough care is taken with fore and aft trim.
- (c) The mast is stepped too far aft, and not enough care taken to keep it straight.
- (d) The crews are not experienced enough and often have to work with out-of-date gear.

When Johan Anker designed the class, he had in mind a pleasant little cabin boat which, apart from being raced, could be used for week-end cruising. Unfortunately the rules regarding the size and accommodation of the cabin are so elastic as to permit, on the one hand a beautifully fitted cabin, and on the other a small shelter on an otherwise open cockpit. For first-class racing, it is obvious that weight is at such a premium that the cabin has to be kept as small and austere as possible, and so it is necessary, regrettably, to depart from Anker's original intention of a racing-weekender and concentrate on saving weight.

Apart from keeping the construction as light as possible, every piece of wood and every metal fitting should be carefully considered as to whether it is absolutely necessary, and if so, whether it could not be lighter. This may seem to be going too far, but unnecessary weight is a heavy penalty in light weather.

In order to make the most of the inherent qualities of the hull, great care must be taken with the fore and aft trim. The Dragon is somewhat like a see-saw, and it is thus necessary to concentrate a great part of the weight, including that of the crew, near the centre of the boat, that is, at the forward end of the cockpit. The only sure way of knowing whether the boat is trimmed correctly or not, is, of course, by trial and error over a series of races, although it is possible to judge fairly accurately by seeing how she lies on the water. Another useful guide when on the wind is that the leeward quarter wave should leave the hull abreast the rudder head.

Most Dragon owners I have talked to have complained that their boats have a tendency to be hard mouthed in a breeze. With my own boat *Robelia* I found the same thing, and no amount of alteration in the rake of the mast would cure it. The answer is that although the mast is positioned according to the plans, it is too far aft. The rules do not specify the position of the mast in the fore and aft line, and moving the mast a few inches forward would help to reduce this tendency.

The Scandinavians (especially the Danes), have been bending their masts into odd shapes in order to get a better aerofoil; but in this country, where undue strain on the mast is undesirable owing to the frequency with which we race in rough water, it is wiser to keep the mast as straight as possible. This, I admit, is not easy in a Dragon with the short spread at the base of the shrouds, and it is not uncommon to see a huddle

By

B. H. Coleman

their runners on a wire span, and I defy anyone to ensure equal tension on the runners by this method. One way of overcoming this is to lead the runner through a block on the covering board to a Highfield lever. With the aid of a rigging screw, it is possible to adjust the tension on the two runners exactly, and when the Highfield lever is set up, the tension will be correct. It also pays to lead the runners as far aft as conveniently possible so as to increase the angle between the stay and the mast.

Many keen helmsmen are inclined to accumulate a large number of racing sails. This is not really necessary but it pays to have two racing suits; one cut full, for light weather, and the other flat for heavy weather. The light weather spinnaker should be made of the lightest possible material. The rules only allow one suit of sails to be carried during a race, so to have more than two only gives the helmsman a greater headache before the race, wondering what the weather is going to do.

Before discussing the difficulties of the crew, it is worth mentioning the surface of the boat's bottom and in fact of any part of the topside which is immersed when under way. Although this applies to all racing yachts, it is ignored by a surprising number of owners. The hull must be kept as clean and as smooth

1940's Style

Dragon to Win

*"Why didn't thou leave the trodden path of men
Too soon, and with weak bands though mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?"*

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

as possible. Many people try to reassure their consciences by telling themselves that a few days growth of slime makes the bottom even smoother, but then the ostrich thinks he cannot be seen when he has his head in the sand.

The other day a friend of mine suggested that I crewed him in his Dragon for the first race of the season. I pointed out to him that I would very much like to, but that as I had never been on board his boat before, I would probably not be very much use. "Oh, never mind," he said, "we will have some fun anyway." Have some fun we did, and I enjoyed myself, even though I did tear his spinnaker trying to get it up smartly, but we didn't win the race. If you intend to race seriously, it is essential to have a well-trained crew and always to sail together.

A Dragon does not like beating under mainsail alone, and many seconds can, therefore, be lost each tack if the genoa is not sheeted home at the right moment. The best drill when tacking is for one member of the crew to cast off the lee-

ward jib sheet just as the genoa is caught aback, while the other with three or four turns round the sheet winch gets in as much slack as he can. He then lays back on the sheet while the first man gets the last bit in with the winch.

When beating it is important to have the genoa sheet lead in the right place. As this varies according to the strength of the wind, it is useful to have a movable lead. On my Dragon I have fitted a track running from the shrouds right to the counter on each covering board. Each track carries two light snatch blocks for the genoa, and two for the spinnaker, and the trim of both these sails can be adjusted quickly and easily. With the genoa, the leach is tightened by moving the lead forward, and the foot is tightened by moving it aft.

In normal circumstances, the crew have their hands full with the genoa, and it helps if the helmsman can operate the runners. With Highfield levers this is not a difficult operation, especially if, as on some Dragons, one Highfield lever is used which works both ways and in

one operation sets up one runner and casts off the other.

There seems little need to stress the importance of speed and efficiency in spinnaker drill. The spinnaker should be up and drawing in ten seconds after rounding the mark, but it is surprising how many crews make heavy work of it, and I have seen boats take as long as ten minutes. Provided a few main principles are kept in mind, the spinnaker work in a Dragon is not difficult.

On paper the sequence in which the various sails are handled seems only too simple: immediately after rounding the mark the spinnaker is hoisted and made to draw, and the genoa lowered. When handing the spinnaker, the procedure is reversed. There is nothing difficult in that, but it takes a crew a little while to be able to hoist a spinnaker in ten seconds, let alone make it draw.

Many ingenious methods of setting the spinnaker are used, such as hoisting it in a paper bag, in stops, or from a canvas bag on the fore-deck. Since a Dragon spinnaker is comparatively small, all these methods are really rather superfluous, and it is much easier to hoist the spinnaker straight up from the fore-deck to leeward of the genoa where it will remain quiet until it is made to draw.

When the mark is reached, the spinnaker should be lying on the fore-deck, with the sheet attached to one clew and set at a predetermined length. The other clew should be led round the forestay and attached to the spinnaker boom and guy, and the leeward halyard clipped to the head. When I talk about leeward and windward, I mean what will

(Continued on page 168)



(Left) INCORRECT TRIM: With crew's weight too far aft, *Toss II* is down by the stern. Crew should be below to avoid causing unnecessary windage when on the wind



(Right) GYBING: *Robelia* (R) has just gybed and keeps her spinnaker drawing all the time. *Yola's* spinnaker is beginning to collapse

[F. J. Armes]

MAN OVERBOARD! (Continued)

scious when taken on board, she survived.

This is a digression, but makes the point I wish to stress—the rescuer very sensibly made sure that he was not throwing his life away in a hopeless attempt before he dived so gallantly to the rescue.

If you are under sail and power, the manoeuvres may be carried out just the same, but the propeller will give you additional control. Under power alone, a different procedure may be advisable. With a big, powerful cruiser it may be better to bring her to a standstill and make the rescue by boat, if one is available and a crew can be spared to man her, but the engine of an auxiliary is seldom really powerful and it will take time to stop her, while when she does gather sternway she will probably refuse to answer her helm. It will be far better to put the helm hard over and circle round, as you would in a gybe, but see that you make the turn the way the ship swings most quickly. Practically all boats, and more particularly auxiliaries, turn more readily in one direction than the other, and you should know your own boat's preference. If you don't, waste no time in finding out.

Approaching a man in a heavy sea

requires judgment. You must not run him down, or the plunging bow may thrust him under, yet you must be close enough to reach him. It will be easier if you are straightening out as you near him as you will then have more control than if you are still swinging with helm hard over. If you have too much way and have to use the reverse to stop her, remember that a single propeller will tend to swing her bow one way or the other, either to port or starboard, according to whether it is right- or left-handed, and you must allow for this or you may find the bow swing away and put him out of reach of the boathook. A strong beam wind may have a similar effect, especially if your ship has a high bow which, as soon as she loses way, may blow off to leeward.

A bow on approach gives you margin enough to work your engine to the last moment, but see that the lever really is safe in neutral, for even if you do not overrun him you will probably have to drag him aft to the lower freeboard alongside the cockpit, and so into the danger zone, to lift him on board.

This lift may provide another problem, for a helpless man, maybe heavy enough in the first place and wearing oilskins and seaboots, is made all the

heavier when his clothing is waterlogged. If he is too much for you, hitch a rope under his arms, though not, as I said before, across his chest, and make him fast alongside while you rig a tackle to help you with the lift. An alternative plan is to parbuckle him on board. To rig a parbuckle, make one end of a rope fast on board, pass it under and round him and haul away on the outer end, when, if you have lifted his head and shoulders reasonably high with the first rope, you may be able to roll him on board. If this fails, rig a second parbuckle. With one round his thighs and the second round his chest and arms, you should, by hauling on each alternately, be able to manage it; but keep the line under his arms fast until he is safe inside the rail.

If his condition calls for it, you will have to render first aid. If you do not already know how, make yourself familiar with the approved methods without delay, for you may not be as lucky as the Flushing waterman who, having pulled a boy out of Falmouth harbour, was able to run up the steps to the waterman's shelter, unhook the printed instructions from the wall, and, with them propped up in front of him, carry out the treatment as he reads it up.

SAILING A DRAGON TO WIN (Continued from Page 165)

be leeward and windward after rounding the mark and steadying on the next course. As soon as the helmsman orders "up spinnaker" the inboard end of the spinnaker boom is clipped to its fitting on the mast, the spinnaker is run up and the halyard made fast round the jamb cleat. The fore-deck hand can then bring the spinnaker boom, which will still be lying in the fore and aft line of the ship, round to the required angle, while the slack of the guy is taken in by the other member of the crew. As soon as the spinnaker catches the wind, and provided that the sheet has been pre-set fairly accurately, it will draw straight away. While the cockpit hand trims the spinnaker, the fore-deck hand can lower and stow the genoa.

When handing the spinnaker, the genoa must be hoisted first and sheeted home. Then the spinnaker sheet is let fly, and the boom is detached from the mast and sail and thrown aft into the cockpit. With a judicious pull on the guy, the spinnaker collapses and at the same moment the fore-deck hand casts off the halyard, and lets it run, taking care that the tail does not disappear up the mast. If properly timed, the spinnaker will fall in a nice little heap on the fore-deck, and even if something does go wrong, the spinnaker will only blow against the genoa and not overboard.

To save time and unnecessary movement in the boat both sheet and guy should remain rove throughout the race,

being hooked to the forestay when not in use. Incidentally, in light weather, particularly, the crew *must* avoid unnecessary movement because this reduces the speed of the boat.

The position of the spinnaker when set should be as high as possible. A useful fitting is a ring which slides on a track on the leading edge of the mast, reaching from the deck to a point about 6ft up. This not only allows adjustment to the height of the spinnaker boom, but also allows the ring to be slipped down to the base of the mast when not in use, so that the genoa sheets do not catch on it.

The actual trimming of the spinnaker can only be attained with practice, and it takes both members of the crew to do it properly, but it is not an uncommon sight on some Dragons to see one of the crew perched on the main boom to keep it down. His time is wasted up there, and it is much better to fit a kicking strap, or boom-vang as our American contemporaries call it. I admit that this is not so easy to fit as in a dinghy, and it is usually better to hook the bottom end to an eye bolt on the

side deck, only remember to let it go before gybing, or else!

So far, I have merely referred to hoisting and lowering the genoa, but obviously the quicker this is done the better. On *Robelia* there is an eye in the halyard which, when the genoa has been hoisted, slips over a hook on the mast, the tension on the luff being obtained by having a downhaul on the tack. This downhaul runs through the fore-deck, through a block and aft to a Highfield lever on the cockpit floor. When hoisting the genoa, all the fore-deck hand has to do is to run it up, hook the eye over the hook on the mast; the cockpit hand then sets up the Highfield lever, and there you are. When lowering, the procedure is reversed.

One last point which is, of course, not solely applicable to Dragons, and that is the question of practice. It was painfully obvious during the Olympic Games and the final trials that the majority of British helmsmen and crews were sorely lacking in practice and experience. Whereas in England we race once, or at the most twice, a week, the Danes, Norwegians and Swedes race four evenings a week, and spend the other three tinkering about or having private duels. I am not blaming English helmsmen, because they have neither the time nor opportunity to race more often, but the fact remains that if we want to sail to win, we must get as much practice as possible.

I.Y.R.U. 1949 DRAFT RACING RULES

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2012 Edinburgh Cup Report

Sadly fog meant there could be no racing for the 45 competing teams on the final day of the 2012 Dragon Edinburgh Cup sponsored by Belfast Harbour and hosted by the Royal North of Ireland Yacht club at Cultra on Belfast Lough. The day three results therefore stood with five of the six possible races being completed and the 2012 Edinburgh Cup Champions declared as Simon Brien, Mark Brien and David Gomes from Cultra sailing IRL214 KIN, the second time they have lifted this historic trophy. In second place was Martin Byrne from Dublin sailing IRL201 Jaguar with Pedro Andrade and Adam Winkleman, and in third was reigning Dragon World Champion Lawrie Smith from Lymington, sailing GBR763 Alfie with Ossie Stewart and Tim Tavinor. Monaco's Jens Rathsack, sailing MON2 with Stefan Waak and Mario Wagner finished fourth with the Solent Fleet's Julia Bailey, Graham Bailey, Dylan Potter and Will Heritage in GBR720 Aimee fifth, and Gavia Wilkinson-Cox also of Cowes, sailing GBR761 Jerboa with Martin Payne and Rui Boya sixth.

Local boys all, the KIN team's performance is all the more remarkable when you bear in mind that Simon was also the regatta's organiser so he had to contend with both tough competition on the water and a very considerable organisational

challenge ashore. Their win also stands out because KIN is an all-amateur Corinthian team in a fleet that includes many of the world's top professional sailors including 7 Olympians, several America's Cup veterans and multiple World and Continental Champions.

At the prize giving Simon Brien paid tribute to his fellow competitors and his crew. "What can I say - we're just absolutely so dumb struck that we've won it. Winning in 2000 was great with 22 or 23 boats and we had quite a few of the good guys. This year we have all of our friends from Ireland and England all over the world here and a lot of the really good guys that we look up to so much. To be in there mixing it with them has been just fantastic for us and we've had to pinch ourselves a little bit to be sitting there racing alongside Lawrie Smith and Poul-Ricard [Hoj-Jensen] and everybody else. I just have to say thanks to Mark and Davey who are my best friends. We have raced Dragons together for 20 years and we just have fun from the minute we step on the boat to the minute we step off, into the bar, whatever, and I just love sailing with you guys so thanks very much."

In the Corinthian Division for the all-amateur sailors second place behind Simon Brien went to Julia Bailey in Aimee and third place was claimed by Owen Pay

of the Solent Fleet sailing IRL204 Seabird with Jon Mortimer and Steve Richardson, who were 11th overall.

Simon Brien also praised the way that the class brings together the professional and amateur sailors. "The Corinthian spirit and the professional mix throughout the class is just superb. I think without the professionals we wouldn't have the standard of racing that we have. Keeping that balance and keeping the Corinthians on our toes just makes for the right thing. I know there has been lots of debate about this over the years, but I really think the class made the right decision to keep welcoming professionals into the class."

Alongside the main prizes the Edinburgh Cup also has a number of additional perpetual awards. The Jordan Bell is presented to the highest placed team in the competition who did not finish a race in the top five and this year it goes to Ron and Julia James and Nigel Young in GBR633 Fei-Lin's Flirtation who finished the regatta in 13th overall. The Puffin Plate for boats over 25 years old was presented to GBR436 Sou'wester sailed by John Simms, John Gunning and Alan Morrison. Sou'wester was built in 1967 and finished 3rd in that year's Edinburgh Cup and the entire fleet was delighted to see her racing once again and putting in some very credible results, even leading the fleet at times during the racing. The Travellers Trophy for the boat travelling the furthest distance was jointly awarded to Bocci Aayama from Japan and to Gordon Ingate and Sandy Anderson from their crews who between them will have clocked up over 30,000 miles to attend the regatta.

When collecting the Jordan Bell Ron James took the opportunity to thank sponsors Belfast Harbour, Brewin Dolphin, Petticrows, North Down Borough Council, Sebago and Stena Line for their most generous support noting "We wouldn't have half as much fun without them!"

Special prizes were also presented to two young men who represent the next generation of Dragon sailors, 11-year-old Will Heritage sailing with Julia Bailey aboard Aimee and 12-year-old Harry Strauss sailing with his parents Quentin and Nikki aboard GBR708 Rumours who finished in 14th. It was great to see such young crews not just sailing in such a strong international fleet, but having the skills and expertise to truly contribute to their teams and finish so well in the regatta. Harry and Will would without doubt jointly have won the keenest hiker award if there was such a thing and the sight of both boys revelling in the windy conditions was a joy.

We look forward to following their progress and welcoming many other youngsters to the class in years to come.

At the prize giving Martin Makey, Chairman of the British Dragon Association, thanked the Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club for their hospitality saying, "I lasted visited Belfast 32 years ago in 1980 when I worked for a short while at Harland and Wolff Shipbuilders and it was a very different place then than it is today. But one thing has remained and that is the warmth of the welcome that the people from this part of our country gave me and have given us. So I'd like to say a very big thank you to all the members of this club and to everybody who has been helping us from Northern Ireland for the warmth of the welcome they have given to our members of the British Dragon Association and our visitors over the last two weeks. Its been a great championship, we've had an outstanding turnout and we're going home very happy sailors."

The Northern Area Championship and Edinburgh Cup in Cultra formed the first two events in the 2012 Brewin Dolphin Irish Grand Slam. From here the crews move onto the Irish Championships in Dun Laoghaire, Dublin from 4-7 June, then the Irish South Coast Championship in Kinsale from 1-2 September and the final event in the series is the Dragon Gold Cup, also in Kinsale, from 8-14 October.

The 2013 Edinburgh Cup will take place from Portland and Weymouth Sailing Academy from 26-30 June and the 2013

Dragon World Championship will also be raced there from 5-13 September.

Fiona Brown



Top Five Overall

| | | | | | |
|---|--------|--------|---------------|----------------------|----|
| 1 | IRL214 | KIN | Simon Brien | 4, (26), 3, 1, 3 | 11 |
| 2 | IRL201 | Jaguar | Martin Byrne | 8, 3, 1, (39), 8 | 20 |
| 3 | GBR763 | Alfie | Lawrie Smith | 11, 2, 5, (26), 4 | 22 |
| 4 | MON2 | Jeanie | Jens Rathsack | 2, 6, (46 OCS), 9, 6 | 23 |
| 5 | GBR720 | Aimee | Julia Bailey | 1, 1, 20, 2, (22) | 24 |

Classics Report

A STATISTICAL SUMMARY of the Classic Dragons in Britain reveals the following presumed facts. All facts in this report are highly subject to change as new information arrives! There are 23 Dragons owned by BDA members and a further 13 known to me though not within the BDA membership. The build dates of these boats ranges from 1937 (Svalan GBR 16) to 1969 (Galax II GBR 615) and they represent the efforts of 15 different builders, which shows how many builders have worked in the class over this long period. The boats are widely distributed throughout the country and there are no obvious hotspots for them. 16 of them are actually sailing or racing or are immediately capable of being used. The other 20 boats are in varying states of restoration. Some would only take a few days to prepare, others need considerable work. Seven of them are for sale, covering the full spectrum from beautiful completed restoration of a highly competitive boat to "project". I have no doubt that there are more boats around, probably either in obscure barns or the back parts of boatyards. If anyone knows of them it would be much appreciated if they could let me know.

In Britain the central event of the Classic racing scene was the Classic Championship. This was held in August within Aldeburgh Week, which is the kind of relatively light-hearted event on smooth water that suits Classic owners and boats. There were two entries within the total fleet of ten boats. These were Harkaway, built by Nunn Bros in 1947 and owned and sailed by Tim Hannon, and Galax II, built by Pedersen and Thuesen in 1969 and owned by Peter Thomas and sailed by Josh Major. They kept close company throughout the event with Harkaway always finishing one place ahead of Galax II usually in the middle of the fleet. Tim is therefore the current British Classic Dragon champion. There were other appearances by Classic Dragons in racing in Britain. Harkaway came to the East Coasts at Levington, Sou'wester with John Gunning was conspicuous at the Northerns and Edinburgh Cup in Cultra

and Logie took part in Burnham Week. I'm sure there were others but my news gathering doesn't extend that far. On the international scene, Ivan Bradbury was very successful in Blue Haze in Cannes and there were other Classics in the hands of such as Peter Heerema, Frank Berg and Frederic Gourlaouen which also performed well. There are a number of events, especially in France, Italy and Switzerland which are designed to appeal to Classics though they aren't necessarily always restricted to them. Details can be found on the IDA website.

Restoration is a major activity for Classic owners. At the moment, the most active country in this respect appears to be Italy where it seems that the style of the wooden Dragon appeals. I have photos from several restoration programmes in Italy which I will forward to anyone who wants to see them. They are both frightening and very impressive. In this country it often seems to be a slow moving process as funds allow. However, I'm trying to act as a conduit for advice if required.

Looking ahead, the future of Classics as racing boats in this country is bound up with the strength or weakness of club racing. It is definitely possible for a Classic to be successful in the top flight but this does require renovation to a very high and expensive standard. At the club level it is much less of a problem. The boats can be competitive and second-hand equipment is often available to achieve an upgrade to both kit and sails. A nucleus of enthusiasts has to develop who really value the individuality of wooden boats and who can tap into the reservoir of goodwill towards them. The future as cruising day sailers is there already and can be seen both in the Netherlands and on the European lakes where there are significant numbers to be found. The appeal in this country will always be greatest where there are cruising grounds with variety within a day's sail.

Dates for the diary in Britain: The Classic Championship will again be during Aldeburgh Week and Cowes Classics Week will be from 15th to 19th July.

Patrick Gifford



K1 'Ta-Yen', a 1938 McGruer being sailed on the Crouch by owners RF & RW Brittain, Burnham Week Winner 1949.
Courtesy Chris Brittain



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