



2017 DRAGON NEWS



BRITISH DRAGON ASSOCIATION

Forthcoming Fixtures 2018

Regatta	Date (2018)	Location	Contact
Burnham Easter Regatta	30 March – 2 April	RCYC, Burnham	burnhamdragons@gmail.com
Grand Prix Guyader	8 - 12 May	Douarnenez, France	www.grandprixguyader.com
European Championships	26 May – 1 June	Balatonfured, Hungary	www.dragoneuropeans2018.hu / info@dragonclass.hu
Northern Championships	8 - 10 June	SCYC, Abersoch	www.scyc.co.uk
Classic and Vintage Championship	15 - 17 June	Aldeburgh	www.aldeburghyc.org.uk / Patrick@kinnordy.com / Matthew_Lingley@hotmail.com
South-West Champs & Edinburgh Cup	30 June – 7 July	RTYC, Torquay	www.edinburghcup.org
South Coast Championships	21 - 22 July	CCYC	omorgan@omarchitects.co.uk / dave@theccp.co.uk
Gold Cup	20 – 28 July	Helsinki, Finland	www.helsinkiidgc2018.com
Cowes Week	4 – 11 August	Cowes	www.cowesweek.co.uk
Scottish Championships	18 - 20 August	Edinburgh	Cathy_Sedgeworth@blueyonder.co.uk
East Coast Championships	15 - 17 September	RCYC, Burnham	burnhamdragons@gmail.com

The BDA 2017 AGM and Annual Dinner

The 2017 British Dragon Association AGM and Dinner will take place on Friday 12th January 2018 at the Royal Thames Yacht Club, Knightsbridge, London. Please arrange your dinner tables and book your tickets now. After popular demand the dinner is returning to the RTYC which we expect will boost numbers. Anyone with any involvement in Dragon sailing, including non BDA members, will be very welcome at the Dinner. The evening will get underway with pre-meeting drinks at 1800, the AGM will commence at 1830, then pre dinner drinks are scheduled for 1930 with dinner commencing at 2000. There will be a cash bar for all drinks before, during and after dinner.

After dinner we shall present the Citron Trophy and have some short speeches. There will then be time for relaxed drinks before departure at 2300. Dress is reefer jacket or lounge suit. We have managed to reduce ticket prices to £47.50 per person for dinner, payable in advance, preferably

by bank transfer to the British Dragon Association, Lloyds TSB Bank plc, Account No.: 03090827; Sort Code: 30-00-08. Please reference your payment with your surname followed by AGM Dinner. Cheques made payable to the British Dragon Association will also be accepted. Cheques should be posted to the Honorary Treasurer Bruce Boyd, Gables Lodge, 30 Christmas Lane, Rochester, Kent, ME3 8SN. Please reference your payment with your name followed by AGM Dinner.

To reserve your tickets or for further information please e-mail the Honorary Secretary at Britishdragonsec@gmail.com with confirmation of the number of tickets you require and the names of your guests plus confirmation of the date your bank transfer was made or your cheque was posted. Lastly if any of your dinner guests have any dietary requirements can you please also notify the Honorary Secretary.

A note from your Treasurer

It's a bit unusual for your Treasurer to have input into our yearly magazine. I hope that my report goes some way to providing an insight to our finances. 2017 has been a stable year for our income and expenditure; I expect to report a small surplus at the January AGM.

Many of you will not know that we have been generously supported by a very significant £10K annual subsidy from Aberdeen Asset Management (AAM). Patrick Gifford has been the instigator of this, as well as further sponsorship for the revived Scottish Championship from Baillie Gifford. The Committee are very grateful for this, however, the agreement with AAM is now in its final year and the budget for 2018 doesn't look quite so stable unless we make some changes.

Your Committee has recently had a brain-storming meeting to address this and other issues on the way forward for the BDA. Our Chairman has mentioned in his report that we hope to significantly raise the Dragon profile via improvements to social media, website and exhibiting at the Dinghy Show next March. These moves are considered to be essential if we are to attract the new sponsorship that we intend to seek later in 2018.

In the meantime my job is to balance the books. Our Chairman rightly advised at last January's AGM that we would be looking at further increases to subscriptions next year. At the next AGM I will have the questionable pleasure of updating members on proposed subscriptions for 2018.

At this stage I am budgeting for the following in 2018

- 1 Some savings to Event Support
- 2 An increase in revenue from advertising on the website
- 3 An increase in revenue from an improved interest rate on cash
- 4 An increase in annual subscriptions

Event Support has been essential to ensure that any fleet providing a Championship event has the comfort of BDA back-up. It is not unusual for us to have to underwrite an event with

£10K. I hope that we will be able to encourage a better return of any un-required subsidy in future.

Advertising on the website is to commence next year. This is an un-tapped form of revenue to us. It will be a most useful source of additional income.

Bank interest: I have recently set up a deposit account with an improved interest rate.

As to subscriptions, I am recommending that we increase the Members Subscription to £35 each, and the boat Subscription to £95 per boat. I have suggested that we might give a reduced rate of £25 to new members for the first year or two. This should encourage short-term support for crewing at events. Additionally I intend to propose that all the new subscriptions (except new member subs) will be collected by direct debit. Currently 80% of members pay this way. If any member wishes to pay by alternative means I am proposing a premium of £10 for each subscription. The table below gives an indication of how we compare with other classes this year. There are variables, but we currently appear to be middle of the road on subs

Etchells	Owner £243	Associate £56
SB20	Owner £115	Associate £40
Melges 24	Owner £105	Associate £20
J70	Owner £70	Associate £40
Dragon	Boat £65	Associate £25
J80	Owner £50	Associate £20
X One Design	Owner £50	Associate £20
Flying Fifteen	Owner £35	Associate £20

I sincerely hope that I will be able to report some good news this time next year!

Season's greetings to all members

Bruce

Chairman's Review

2017 has provided us with another grand season of sailing and racing our beautiful yachts. We are so fortunate to enjoy all that sailing a Dragon gives us, especially membership of a like-minded community, friendly competition and shore-side fun and frolics! The weather has not always been kind to the racing this season, but then it was always so. Anyway, we tend to recall the sunny days of good winds and champagne racing better than those windless or wind-full days that may preclude us from enjoying our sport to the full.

As was the case last year, our regattas this year all fell within the three month period of July through to September, thus producing a busy time for all our fleet captains, the wonderful volunteers and our clubs. I am, however exercising some license, since the East Coast Championships took place during the last weekend of June at West Mersea. What a splendid place it proved to race at, too! We were well served by the Race Officer and his dedicated crew of volunteers and enjoyed some smashing racing. Mark and Selina Dicker were right to have us add West Mersea to our list of East Coast venues. Let us hope that we can revisit soon. We then had two weeks off before a large contingent of sailors from home and abroad descended on Cowes for the South Coast Championships and the Edinburgh Cup. This was most admirably run, at rather short notice, by Gavia Wilkinson-Cox and her team of volunteer helpers. What a fabulous regatta it was too. We had a wonderful turnout of members with 35 boats, some spectacular racing around the Bramble Bank and the most memorable social programme, the highlight of which was undoubtedly the black tie prize giving dinner, replete with three wonderful opera singers, who all sprung from tables around the room and gave us some terrific performances. Thank you very much indeed Gavia and the team for a scintillatingly wonderful week.

We stayed on to compete the following week in the Cowes Classic Week. Tim Street had arm twisted a wonderful collection of our precious classic Dragons and a fine sight they provided. Matt Lingley sailed all the way around to Cowes from Aldeburgh, won the Classic Championships and then sailed all the way home again. A terrific show. Fortunately we had a much needed week at work before journeying back down to Cowes to compete in Cowes Week. This was another wonderful regatta with a full racing and social programme, with a turnout of fourteen Dragons racing amazingly closely around the Solent cans.

The Scottish Championships at the start of September were this year incorporated as part of the East Coast Sailing Festival, run by Forth Yacht Clubs Association, hosted by the Royal Forth Yacht Club in Edinburgh. By all accounts this was an excellent regatta, incorporating sunbathing as well as blustery wind and showers, so many thanks to fleet captain Cathy Sedgeworth for getting the series in and continuing to champion our fleet north of the border. Two weeks later and it was the turn of Abersoch to host the Northern Championships. Two days were blown out but still the irrepressible Rob Riddell and his race team managed to get the series to bed. Talking of Rob, we wave goodbye to him as fleet captain as he journeys off around the world for the next few years. Rob almost singlehandedly re-established the Dragon fleet at Abersoch and the Association, its members and many others owe him a huge debt of gratitude for the hard work and enthusiasm he has brought to the class. Nick Whip has some large shoes to fill!

The international regatta circuit has been as busy as ever and some of our members have taken full advantage of the opportunities to sail in foreign waters, meeting new friends and enjoying new cultures. Whilst the Association is naturally focussed on providing for British based Dragon sailors, we acknowledge the importance of the considerable fleet of international travellers within the membership. We especially value their ability to impart their experience and knowledge amongst our own fleet members as a result of their time spent abroad.

There are many different sailors who enjoy Dragons and it behoves us to embrace them all. Not un-naturally we

tend to concentrate on racing, for our yachts were primarily designed to do just that. Yet there are many members who enjoy cruising their boats, either as a day boat, or for an occasional overnight. Some are happy to work on them in a barn, lovingly restoring the boat to the condition they wish. Yet others enjoy handicap racing, timing themselves around the cans and hoping they come out ahead. An early example of a Borresen glass Dragon, which had been growing a small garden in its bilge whilst stuck on an old trailer in a field on the Isle of Wight, was this year rescued and is now being refurbished. This diversity is an attractive element of the class.

As we contemplate another season of BDA regattas I wish to express both my personal and our joint thanks to the unsung volunteers who help us to enjoy ourselves on the water. The fleet captains, race officers, mark layers, race teams, club members and the many supporters of our class around the country, all prepared to give us their free time; I only hope that they get as much fun out of what they do as we ourselves do in our yachts. Thank you all. In addition I would like to record my continuing gratitude and admiration to my fellow committee members, including my successor Julia Bailey, our hardworking secretary Selina Dicker, our diligent and knowledgeable treasurer Bruce Boyd, as well as all the fleet captains; thank you all for the time you devote to our class. Selina has decided that she will be standing down in 2018 and we shall announce her successor shortly. Fiona Brown has provided us with over ten years of PR and media support and she too wishes to stand down. Fi has been a very good friend to us and especially helpful to both me and Selina over that time. On behalf of you all I want to thank her for her enthusiasm, professionalism and commitment.

During this year the committee has been looking at ways in which we can promote the Dragon more widely amongst the sailing community and to appeal to new owners, crew and enthusiasts. One idea that we felt merited consideration was that of obtaining a Dragon which could be used by fleets, in turn during the season, to provide the opportunity for potential newcomers to the class to enjoy a sail and race with us, the better to understand the attractions of the class. We also felt that we could more effectively make use of part of our financial reserves by having them professionally managed, thus obtaining a better return than the desultory interest available on

deposit. These potentially large changes demanded a special meeting, which was held in July. Whilst members were not supportive of the Association obtaining a Dragon, they did support the financial initiative and our treasurer is putting into place our plan, which should help the income stream. Meanwhile, we have spoken to multimedia experts about the ways in which we can improve our reach to the wider sailing world, increasing traffic to our web site and engaging more effectively via multimedia channels with a larger audience than at present. We have thus begun working with the Fresh Approach consultancy and are developing some exciting new initiatives with them. In the long run we anticipate this investment will result in attracting new owners and sailors to our class.

At the Edinburgh Cup we employed a measurer to inspect competing boats. It was a matter of some concern to the race committee, as well as to the Association officers, that a handful of home boats had not complied with technical rule changes that had been bought in two years ago. Owners have responsibility for ensuring their boats continue to measure and it is beholden of us all to stay abreast of rule changes during ownership, as it is in any racing class.

At the International Dragon Association Annual General Meeting this year we bid to run the Gold Cup at Abersoch in 2022. Subject to a vote of support from other countries at the 2018 AGM, we shall be doing so. In 2019 it will be the 90th anniversary of the Dragon and there is to be a celebratory regatta in Cannes 13-20 April. Those of you who witnessed the amazing 75th Anniversary Regatta in St Tropez will know that these rare events tend to be the most wonderful gathering of worldwide Dragon friends, not to mention the thrill of racing in a fleet of over 200 boats, if thrill is the right word! Expressions of interest are already being invited, so you are all encouraged to start planning for what will be a stupendous event. It was also pleasing to note that our good friends in the North American Dragon community are hoping to organise the 2023 World Championships, either in Newport or Biscane Bay. It will be a terrific boost to the class on that continent and it is hoped that it may coincide with the building of new Dragons in the States.

We look forward to our 2018 season with anticipation. After ten years involvement with the Association, as secretary and then chairman, I hand over the reins to Julia Bailey, not only our first lady chairman, but also of course our first lady winner of the Edinburgh Cup. Please continue to have fun and support this wonderful class.

Tim Wilkes



EDINBURGH CUP REGATTA REPORT 2107

The Solent and the Island Sailing Club is arguably the spiritual home of the Edinburgh Cup. Presented to the class by the Duke of Edinburgh it was first raced for in 1949. This 69th Edinburgh Cup was the fifth time the club has hosted the event and its twelfth visit to Cowes and what a superb event it was. It combined serious competition with a full social programme culminating in an absolutely stunning prize giving dinner dance at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club (RORC).

As Solent Fleet Captain I'd like to say I organised the whole thing but nothing could be further from the truth and I hope everyone will join me in extending my thanks to and congratulations to Regatta Chairman Gavia Wilkinson-Cox. Assisted by a team of more or less willing helpers but especially by her great friends Phil and Sue Cracknell she enlisted sponsor partners Visit Isle of Wight, Destination Cowes, Red Funnel Ferries and Shepherds Marina as well as Sponsors Oliver Morgan Architects and Stoneham Construction Ltd and a host of local businesses to ensure a really gold plated event.

Not only was Gavia active in Cowes but she was also busy on the European circuit where she tirelessly advertised the event attracting entries from Russia, Turkey, Switzerland, Germany and Ireland as well as from across the UK. The 39 teams assembled in Cowes enjoyed four days of superb windward leeward competition.

Whilst the event opened to grey skies and a brisk south-westerly wind ranging from 12 to 25 knots and pouring rain the racing was absolutely outstanding. After the first two races on day one reigning world champions Andy Beadsworth, Simon Fry and Ali Tezdicker sailing Provezza Dragon TUR 1212, five times Edinburgh Cup winner Pol Richard Hoj-Jensen sailing Danish Blue GBR813 with Hamish McKay and Paul Blowers and Martin Payne sailing Full Speed GBR 585 with Chris Brittan and Gillian Hamilton were all tied for overall lead on six points.

What a difference a day makes! After the opening day's torrential rain and strong winds day two produced light airs and brightening skies. By the time Race Officer Gill Smith had the fleet under starter's or-

ders for race three the wind was generally 10 knots but with 17 knots in the gusts down to 6 in the lulls with big shifts around a mean nor-nor-east. The wind continued to fluctuate all day and with an exceptionally big spring tide the committee did well to achieve two excellent races. In race three Solent racing legend Eric Williams sailing Ecstatic GBR683 with Katie Cole and Rory Paton led the fleet at the weather mark with Dimitry Bondarenko sailing Hanschreke GBR422 with



Vadim Statsenko and Alexander Shalagin in second closely followed by Graham Bailey sailing Aimee GBR782 with Julia Bailey and teenagers Will Heritage and Will Bedford. Along with Igor Goikhberg sailing Murka RUS 98 this group fought it out for the remainder of the race with Bondarenko eventually gaining the upper hand from Bailey, Goikhberg and Williams all of whom crossed the line within 30 seconds. World Champion Beadsworth came in fifth.

At the start of race four a big right hander which appeared only to affect the left side of the line in the closing seconds of the start sequence favoured the pin end with huge advantage to Gavia Wilkinson-Cox sailing Jerboa GBR761 with Mark Hart and Andrew Norden followed by Rob Gray sailing Tarka II GBR448 with Kay Tavinor and John Greenwood as well as Williams in Ecstatic. Crossing the fleet on port these three round the weather mark first, second and third respectively. At the finish Bondarenko won the race with Hoj-Jensen

second, Wilkinson-Cox third and Martin Payne fourth. Jono Brown in Storm GBR770 crewed by David and Lynette Brown and Frances Wood finished fifth. Back down the pack Beadsworth, badly affected by the big right hander at the start tried everything but finished 20th.

With the single discard not coming into place until race five Payne led the fleet from Hoj-Jensen with Goikhberg third and Beadsworth fourth.

The forecast for day three was for a north-westerly but instead the fleet was presented with an extremely shifty south easterly of 10 – 12 knots which persisted throughout the day constantly pushing boats down snakes and up ladders. Picking their way through this and first to the weather mark was Martin Byrne sailing Jaguar IRL216 with Pedro Andrade and Conor Byrne closely followed by Bailey with Goikhberg a very close third. Meanwhile Beadsworth and Hoj-Jensen rounded just within the top ten. As the boats crossed the line at the end of the third and final beat it was a comfortable victory for Byrne from Bailey with Tom Vernon sailing Badger GBR 810 with Oliver Spencer-Corfield and Adam Blowers in third. Beadsworth made fourth followed by Bondarenko, Hoj-Jensen and Goikhberg but in a frustrating race Payne was unable to do better than 20th.

Going into the final day Bailey topped the leader board with 12 points followed by Hoj-Jensen on 14, Beadsworth on 15 and Payne on 16. All four had everything to play for on another day of shifting winds between 6 and 16 knots. With a strong tide taking the fleet across the line it took 3 attempts, 2 under a black flag to get the race underway and unfortunately Payne fell foul of the black flag on the second attempt and his chances of victory were over. Bailey opted for the Committee Boat end of the line whilst Beadsworth and Hoj-Jensen were together at the pin end and looked good until a massive right hander turned the tables. At the weather mark it was Williams who rounded first but of the contenders Bailey rounded fifth with Beadsworth and Hoj-Jensen safely behind him. The second beat and another big shift and by the second weather mark Beadsworth had overtaken Bailey as the two rounded nearly overlapped whilst Hoj-Jensen had dropped down the fleet. To win Beadsworth now needed three boats between himself and Bailey but Bailey never gave him a chance to get away. On the line Williams won by a comfortable margin followed by Brown and then Vernon with Beadsworth in fourth with Byrne fifth and Bailey sixth and secure as the 2017 Edinburgh Cup Champions.

Whilst we were treated to a daily prize giving after racing with drinks, a raffle and the hospitality of the Island Sailing Club the big ticket was undoubtable the black tie('ish) prize giving dinner and dance at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club (RORC). It was absolutely superbly hosted by Gavia who paid tribute to the sponsors and to all the volunteers who had helped to make the



regatta not only possible but a huge success. She particularly praised the terrific work of the race committee led by Gill Smith who provided excellent races despite the challenging conditions.

All in all it was a fabulous regatta with a hugely popular winner in Graham Bailey with Andy Beadsworth second and Tom Vernon in third place. Team Bailey also took home the Corinthian Trophy with Jono Brown, David and Lynette Brown and Frances Wood second and Simon and James Barter and Donald Wilkes third.

To round off the evening there was a surprise programme of popular operas which had everyone on their feet singing along. A truly fitting end to a marvellous week.

Thank you Gavia.

Oliver Morgan



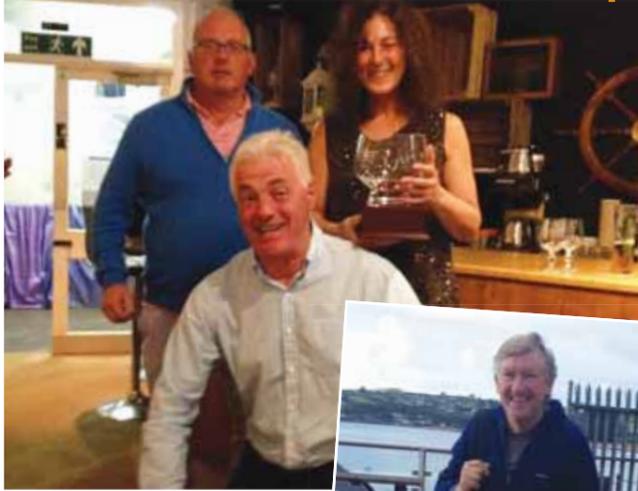
Abersoch Fleet Report

Abersoch was all about the three Rs in 2017, Racing, Romance and Retirement.

Firstly Racing saw full support for the dragon racing circuit with no less than seven boats supporting the Edinburgh cup in Cowes. A creditable result of 9th by Mike Budd sailing *Harry* having been up there in both 2015 & 2016. I am told a good time on and off the water was had by all Abersoch boats despite not being used to the tidal vagaries of the Solent. Two boats traveled to the World Championships being Mike Budd, *Harry* and Rob Riddell, *Billie Whizz* again both reported great sailing in top end conditions and top competition.

Domestically a quieter season than most with the travelers being sorely missed but none the less great racing in the idyllic bay and utilising gate starts and windward leeward courses for some events and committee boat for others saw number of different winners and individuals finding the speed button. Early speedster was *Vixen Davies* and Saunders with the doc showing us the way in the shakedown regatta with *Billie Whizz* aka Riddler second and *Caramba* Rob Eldridge third.

The Mounsey Trophy was cut short but never the less showed a trend as *Seafire* (Lamont/Atkinson) found speed in abundance to win from *Njord* (Adams/Hawkins/Coxon) with early pacesetter *Vixen* (Davies/Saunders) third. The Wannup trophy featured *Vixen* winning with *Tsunami* Second and *Njord* third. All boats were back except Mike Budd for the Captains Cup from their travels and a great turnout but benign conditions



resulting in Rob Eldridge getting his name up on the board as winner followed by *Seafire* and *Tsunami*. The Aberdaron Cup was won by *Billie Whizz* with Raissa (Price/Cope) second and *Caramba* third.

Then the big one, the Northern's postponed until September and despite losing a day to gales, very close racing was enjoyed, with *Seafire* holding on to their first day two bullets, to draw on points with *Harry* and *Djinn*, Nick Whipp, a close third. Romance was in the air for the Fleet with no less than four marriages through the season featuring Sarah & Rob, Georgie & Simon, Belinda & Jamie and Susie & Patrick. All postponed honeymoons to race their beloved Dragons in Abersoch!

Finally retirement as Rob Riddell plans to bid us all fairwell. Known affectionately as the Riddler and famed for his enthusiasm on and off the water and founder figure of the current 19 strong fleet. We all wish him well and will be tuning in to his world travelling blog especially as he often confuses port and starboard or can't tell

right from left Rob drive safely on the correct side and we look forward to welcoming him back for the Gold Cup in one of the best racing bays in the World, Abersoch.

Nick Whipp
Fleet Captain

Aldeburgh Fleet Report 2017



The highlight of the Aldeburgh fleet's year was undoubtedly Aldeburgh Week. Seven Dragons took part in a fleet consisting of two reasonably recent Petticrow boats both built this century, three Vintage boats and two Classics. We enjoyed some interesting racing. It was a difficult week for the Race Officer because the Home Reach south of the club, which is normally the mainstay of course setting, was never a beat in either direction. However, intelligent use was made of the bends in the river lower down to provide varied courses. It did, however, remain the case that attentive sail trimming on a reach became a critical skill, at which the varying team, largely from Waldringfield, aboard *Basilisk* proved to have an edge. The other key skill, practised to a very high degree by several crews, lay in the starts, both in picking the right side of the river against the tide and starting at full speed on the line. Overall *Basilisk*, in Patrick Gifford's hands, proved a convincing winner of the week. She showed again that age isn't a bar to success provided the boat is cosseted lovingly. Behind her, the most striking performance was shown by *Harkaway* at the age of seventy, sailed by Tim Hannon, which threatened on several occasions to disrupt the normal pecking order. She does remain strikingly fast with a particular gift for pointing a very few degrees higher than the rest of us can achieve. It's a great gift on a beat against the tide!

We welcomed back Rick Gillingham in *Navaho*, fresh from backpacking across the former Soviet Union. *Navaho* herself had been for a wash and brush up courtesy of Matt Lingley at Demon Yachts (aka Aldeburgh Boatyard) which she needed after a few years idleness. *Tamerlane* was the other new contender. She is an early Borresen GRP boat, potentially certainly capable of being competitive in our fleet but still on a learning curve.

The rest of the season has seen rather patchy participation by the Dragon class. *Kestrel* and *Harkaway* have been seen on Wednesday evenings and *Basilisk* has also appeared when her owners are not in either Scotland or France. We do need to try to improve in this area, since there is no doubt that the more we are seen the more likely it is that others will be attracted to the class. There is no shortage of boats to borrow to see why Dragons are interesting and attractive to sail.

Away from home the most striking result was Matt Lingley's success in *Kestrel* in the Classic Championship in Cowes. Not only did he sail the boat there and back from Aldeburgh (of which more elsewhere in this magazine) but he was a convincing winner of the event. Mike and Monique Hayles spent much time in France, Italy and Switzerland with great enjoyment. Patrick took *Basilisk* to La Baule and Dun Laoghaire and proved again that the only bar to greater success for *Basilisk* is the increasing age of the helmsman and his lack of practice. We got some good results but weren't very consistent.

Altogether it has been an encouraging season with growth in the number of boats and people involved. We hope to build on it with the Classic and Vintage Championships in Aldeburgh in June next year. This will be the first time that Aldeburgh has staged a BDA event. We can often provide windward-leeward courses but above all we plan to stage a variety of courses to demonstrate why the Alde estuary is an interesting and entertaining pace to sail.

Patrick Gifford



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Kestrel flies south – 2017



THIS YEAR MARKS TEN YEARS since I first sailed 'Kestrel' – a 1949, Tucker Brown built dragon. She appeared one day in the boatyard where I worked at the time in Warsash, in 2006, I asked too many questions about her and ended up owning her. She was a bit of a wreck! I was introduced to Peter Wilson by a friend at that year's Cowes week, and to cut a long story short, early 2007 found Kestrel taking up a large portion of my mother's back garden whilst I spent the week days working for Peter in the Aldeburgh Boatyard, and trying to learn what I could about wooden boats and Dragons. By mid August, and to mum's great relief, Kestrel left the garden and joined the Aldeburgh fleet.

Ten years later and things have gone full circle. I'm working in the Aldeburgh boatyard again, having taken over as one half of Demon Yachts with Euan Seel. This gives Peter much more time to concentrate on really important things like restoring his own classic boats and a 1924 Alvis car! Tim Street has been making a concerted effort over the last few years to get a Solent based fleet of Classic Dragons together, centring around Cowes Classic week. My inbox was fairly bombarded by him the last two seasons asking me to bring Kestrel down, so this year I relented and said I would come. I had taken Kestrel to Cowes before, in

2009 when I was somewhat struggling to find a proper job after finishing a degree in yacht design, just as the financial crisis was at its deepest. Plenty of time to spare and a lack of cash made sailing down sound like a good adventure, so Kestrel came down on her own bottom, with little real drama or difficulty. 4 days down, 3 days to get back, stopping in Brightlingsea and Dover each way. This time I probably could (should!) have borrowed a trailer, but still fancied the adventure...

I could only spare weekends this time around. James Looker volunteered to crew the deliveries, having sailed with me the year before when we delivered the 8 metre 'If' from Copenhagen to Aldeburgh. We left moorings at Aldeburgh at 6pm on Friday the 7th of July, aiming to reach Southampton by Sunday night. High water at the Orford Bar at the mouth of the river was about 11:30pm and we hoped to cover the 11 miles to the Bar with an hour or two of flood to spare, and hopefully still at least in twilight. Unfortunately (and probably predictably) the wind eased almost as soon as we dropped the mooring and completely failed us a mile short of the mouth. High water passed and we were at a point in the river where anchoring wouldn't be an option, as it would have just dragged, so all we could do is let the ebb run us out of the mouth. It

was now completely dark, with the most light coming from our paddles stirring up mad green phosphorescence. We needed to paddle to keep in the main channel and not get pulled over the shallower parts of the Bar. The phosphorescence did a very good job of showing us those areas by making the breaking waves glow bright green! It was possibly the most nerve wracking half hour or so possible on a sailing boat in no wind, but we managed to pick out the two unlit buoys that show the way out to the clear water around the Orford Haven Buoy. Once we were clear of all the shingle nasties we threw the kedge over...there was still not a breath of wind.

Within minutes of the kedge hitting the bottom a new breeze filled in, so we hauled it up and made a course almost due south, sailing dead downwind with just the main up, aiming for the outer tip of the Sunk Sound. After that things got easier, the breeze stayed fair at a Force 3 to 4, we nipped through Fisherman's Gat with the spinnaker up, ran down inside the Goodwin Sands and passed Dover by mid-afternoon. The breeze started to go patchy past Dover, but we made Dungeness by late evening. At this point it went flat calm for a while, and we watched porpoises hunting a shoal of fish next to the boat. James compared the Bolognese I made for dinner with tinned

mince beef and onions to dog food, although I thought it was quite good! Kestrel, like most Dragons does not have extensive galley facilities. We carried a single burner camping stove with a pan and a kettle.

From that calm patch progress was desperately slow through the night and we were barely past beachy head 12 hours later. By mid-morning it was clear we had no option but to make our way in to Brighton as we both had to be at work on Monday morning. Even this proved a task as we spent an hour on the kedge off Brighton's burnt out old pier waiting for enough wind to appear to let us make it into the marina. My wife Niamh made her first 'support car' trip to pick us up...it was not to be her last!

Next weekend Niamh dropped James and I off in Brighton with the plan that we would sail to Cowes on the Saturday and have all of Sunday to sort the boat out before racing on Monday. Unfortunately this was not to be, the weather had it in for us again but this time the symptom was not glassy water but waves breaking over the western arm of the marina! The wind was much harder than expected, comfortably blowing a force six and more. So, we spent the day in Brighton with the plan of going at 5:30am on Sunday, by which time the breeze was due to have eased. This it did and we set off with the jib up rather than the genoa, as there was still a good force 5. By leaving at first light it did mean we had the tide against for six hours but, given we now had a bit of a deadline, we had little choice but to go for it. Beating around Selsey Bill, with the tide against was especially hard work and pretty wet. The tide eventually went fair just before the forts, and the wind had one more laugh at us by going completely dead for ten minutes. We made it to Shepherd's Wharf, Cowes, by 7:30pm... nearly 14 hours to cover just over 40 miles. Kestrel looked a bit worse for wear after this with lots of seams showing in her topsides... never mind, I don't think she was ever in the running for the concours d'elegance!

The Regatta itself was good, if a little spoilt by too much wind! It was nice to

have a fleet of classic Dragons together, with windward leeward courses. I'm still at a loss to understand how, but Kestrel seemed to fly during the first day of racing, giving us two comfortable firsts. The second day Rupert Street with Tschuss found his groove, and won races 3 and 4. Race 5 was around the cans back into Cowes in a building breeze. My crew Tom Kiddle won this race for us by navigating us to the right marks with little more than a soggy piece of A4 paper and a vague idea of where Osborne house was! Thursday and Friday's races were called off due to too much breeze, which was a shame but probably kind on old boats. We were very happy and extremely surprised to come away with first prize.

I had been watching the forecast and it looked like if we left Saturday we would fly east with a south-westerly Force 4 to 5. James was due to sail back with me but could not due to his sister making a surprise visit from New Zealand. Given the forecast looked good for a quick passage, especially with the tide turning at Cowes just an hour before dawn, which would give 10 + hours of east going tide if I went fast enough, I decided I would go anyway singlehanded. This may sound pretty rash but I have quite a bit of singlehanded experience. I have raced across the channel singlehanded a couple of times and done a fair number of singlehanded deliveries... not in a Dragon obviously, but I have cruised her on the east coast by myself a fair amount, so I thought it might be a bit of a challenge but achievable. So, I slipped out of Shepherd's wharf at about 4 am. Rapid going it was and Kestrel was through the Looe channel by half six, going through a wall of water in the overfalls with over 10 knots showing on the GPS. Beachy head was passed by lunch time, with the predicted force 4 to 5, with perhaps a little more at times. However, by about 4pm we were a couple of miles away from Dungeness when a big squall caught up with us. Kestrel was going far faster than a 68-year-old dragon should ever go, when there was a gentle 'ping' and the boom snapped at the vang attachment. The squall hung around long enough

to cause me trouble as I took the main down, and then eased off as we were left with just the genoa. To cut a long story short it took until about half ten at night to run the 19 miles from where the boom snapped to getting into Dover's yacht haven. Entering Dover's western entrance in the dark with just the genoa to push through the breaking overfalls that were lumping up there was the most unpleasant few minutes of sailing I can remember, several waves broke more or less straight into the cockpit as we were beam to it for a while. Even once in the outer harbour it was difficult to pick out the route into the marina against the shore lights from the town and docks. Niamh, now definitely qualifying as a long suffering wife, was waiting in the marina to catch my lines, having turned around from her drive home, and it took a long time to pump Kestrel dry. In hindsight it might have made more sense to carry on past Dover, as the entrance was the most dangerous part of the whole trip, but then I didn't have any easier options either had I carried on around South Foreland.

The next weekend I drove back down to Dover with a boom donated by Mike Hayles. It was too windy that weekend to go anywhere, so two weeks passed before Niamh dropped James and I back to Dover to carry on. This time we left Dover in sparkling sunshine, and found ourselves drinking tea, sailing under the white cliffs, with porpoises hunting around the boat, when a spiffire roared overhead...we thought it couldn't get any better! Frankly it didn't. A few hours later we were sat, completely becalmed in the middle of the Thames estuary in a sloppy swell rolling Kestrel around with rain pouring down. Skip forward a few hours further and we were sailing beautifully again, and witnessed a stunning sunset, including seeing a green flash. We nipped into Harwich for four hours kip alongside Ha'penny pier, as we had time to kill before we could cross the Ore Bar. The next morning, we had a slow sail up the coast but made the bar half an hour before high water, and Kestrel was back on her mooring by lunchtime.

Next time I think I'll get a trailer.



2017 Burnham Fleet Dragon class report

The Dragon class is close to celebrating its 90th year and whilst numbers on the river are not quite what they were during the class's heyday, the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club continues to host and support one of our sports most elegant racing yachts.

Over the 2017 season the class has slowly been accruing new owners to its number in Burnham, as the enduring appeal of the boat continues to draw sailors to the challenges of sailing Dragons.

During the close season whilst the fleet were wintering at home, Rob Campbell was competing in the Prince Philip Cup hosted by the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron achieving a 3rd overall. A spirited sail by the 92 year old Gordon Ingate, can you believe it, saw his Dragon *Imagination*, take line honours.

With sailing off most people's agenda over the winter months, the fleet were thrown into completion at the UK's national curling centre in Kent. Most adapted well to hoisting their curling stones, as opposed to hoisting kites, down the rink ensuring the competition was as intense as racing on the Crouch.

As warmer conditions saw winter memories fade the Burnham season got underway with visitors from Belgium and Scotland joining the fleet for the Easter Regatta won by the super quick Peter Marchant.

Late spring and early summer saw smaller fleets but still close and competitive racing, however sailors were back for Burnham week which remains a draw for many. 12 Dragons provided a superb race spectacle

on the line and on the river for the Bank Holiday Weekend regatta.

Into autumn and the Dragon stand at RCYC is lined with boats hoping the weather will be sufficiently kind to allow tight competition for the remaining weeks of the 2017 season.

Over the 2017 season Burnham Dragons have competed in events across Europe, San Remo, La Baule, Ostend and Lake Thun to name just a few and sailing at these events has not only been restricted to the water. When sea sailing was abandoned in Ostend due to high winds the organisers from the Brugse Zot brewery, yes a brewery, laid on a sand yachting event and of course the prizes were of the liquid variety.

During 2017 the fleet attracted new owners and has been pleased to welcome, David Warner, Dan Wastnage and Mike Hill. Rumour has it there are two further Dragons being prepared for the 2018 season.

As well as new owners the fleet has enjoyed the company of visiting Dragons, particularly Richard Leask from the Scottish fleet. During his visits he often commented on the friendly can do attitude of the club, something he observed is missing from other clubs he has sailed at.

The Dragon fleet looks forward to the 2018 season with what will be a new look fleet with the likelihood of strong competition for line honours from its new members.

Andy Moss

Dragon Fleet Captain





CLASSIC AND VINTAGE DRAGON REVIEW 2017

THE CLASSIC DRAGON SCENE in the UK continued to be very varied in 2017. At the very top level, *Blue Haze* (GBR 375) won the Regates Royales in Cannes and was very competitive in a number of other top level events. Similarly *Josephine* (ex-GBR333) was campaigned at a high level but is now Turkish-owned and is apparently shortly going to be based at Bodrum. *Heuschrecke* (GBR422) made a brief appearance at the Edinburgh Cup with her Russian, UK-based, owner Dimitri Bondarenko, and won two races. At the other end of the spectrum, among the fifty Classic Dragons known to be extant in the UK at least three, *Suzanne* (GBR 34), *Rumba II* (GBR368) and *Kingdom of Fife* (GBR373) are in what is likely to prove to be terminally poor condition. My old boat *Polly* (GBR 11), a 1966 Borresen, has apparently been crushed by a tree and written off. A sad fate for a good boat. In between these extremes there are a number of Classics which are racing and some more which are laid up and for sale.

The Classic racing scene has benefited enormously from the enthusiasm and energy of Tim Street, especially in the Solent. For the second year he ensured that Cowes Classic Week ran a class for Classic Dragons. This year it was also the BDA's Classic Championship. Six boats competed and it was won by *Kestrel* (GBR207) sailed by Matt Lingley from Aldeburgh and crewed by his wife Niamh and Tom Kiddle. Matt in fact sailed *Kestrel* from Aldeburgh to Cowes and back for the championship. He has written elsewhere in this magazine of his experiences. *Kestrel* was built by Tucker Brown and is by no means an example of the heavily renovated, usually Pedersen and Thuesen built, Classic. She does, however, have an enthusiastic and practical owner who is, usefully, also a boatbuilder. Second was Rupert Street in *Tschuss* (GBR457) and third was Adrian Green in *Aurora* (GBR39). A similar class for Classic Dragons also formed part of the Hamble Classic Regatta run by the Royal Southern Yacht Club in September. Four boats took part and *Aurora* won, taking her revenge on *Tschuss*. This was also a first appearance for *Mystical Rose* (GBR184) which was once one of the top British Dragons under the name of Inge.

Elsewhere Classics continued to participate in Dragon class racing. *Harkaway* (GBR151) and *Kestrel* have raced in Aldeburgh with *Harkaway* proving to be very competitive at times. *Royalist* (GBR455) and *Snap* (GBR292) have raced respectively on the Medway and at Falmouth. On the Forth *Wizz Too* (GBR343) and *Meteor* (GBR402) have been active participants. Apart from club racing the number of Classic events is continuing to grow and Dragons are generally accepted as eligible boats. Such events can in fact provide a circuit for Classics

that don't feel able to compete effectively in open Dragon events. It is less clear that there would be demand for a separate Classic start at the Edinburgh Cup. My suspicion is that this would split the Classics and Vintage boats, leaving only a very small fleet in their own start.

Next year's BDA Classic and Vintage Championship will be at Aldeburgh from 15th to 17th June. This will be the first time that Aldeburgh Yacht Club has hosted a BDA event though it has had a Dragon class since at least 1948. The reason for this can be seen from a glance at a map. The Alde estuary is long and thin. We expect to be able to provide a great mix of courses on different parts of the river but conventional windward-leeward courses are impossible because the mud will arrive before the corner layline. However, if Burnham and Medway can have Championships so perhaps should Aldeburgh. The good news is that large waves are unusual and it is a very kind venue for elderly boats. For more details, please contact either Matt Lingley or me.

The Vintage scene is above all characterised by an apparent shortage of boats. A trawl through the BDA White Book revealed a mere 18 GRP Dragons over 25 years old. This was a surprise for two reasons. Firstly there were about 130 sail numbers issued over the relevant period. Secondly old GRP boats don't fall apart in quite the same way as neglected wooden ones. They do, however, lack the intrinsic style of wooden boats and are apt simply to look scruffy. Like all boats TLC is a good idea.

Among those that remain, *Kestra* (GBR489) sailed by Richard Leask is the current BDA Vintage Champion. The event was sailed on the Forth as part of the East Coast Sailing Festival. Second was Cathy Sedgeworth in *Kismet* (GBR 508). Other Vintage Dragons that have competed successfully in 2017 include *Full Speed* (GBR585) sailed by Martin Payne which won the Derby Dragon at La Baule, *Basilisk* (GBR 515) which won Aldeburgh Week and *Scorpio* (GBR 586) and *Rackham* (GBR 610) which participated highly competitively in several events. These boats do prove that good maintenance can give you a competitive boat for many years at a very reasonable price. So where are the others?

Patrick Gifford

Medway Fleet Report



Dragons racing in the Medway Regatta 2017

"Call me Ishmael"... oops wrong story.

The Medway Dragon Class opened the year with 12 boats in our fleet, this is an overall increase in numbers and is a better position to be in, after a decline in the past few years. We now regularly have 8 to 9 Dragons out on a Saturday afternoon, for tightly fought races around the Channel Marks, and for Windward/Leeward races.

Travelling to events

A small number of Medway boats have travelled this season:

OCD went to LaBaule and competed in the French Nationals

Fit Chick, *FLOS* and *Suti* went to West Mersea and competed in the 'Easterns'

OCD, *Fit Chick*, *FLOS* and *Suti* went to Ostend and competed in the Belgian Nationals.

The good news is that boats have been refurbished and others have changed owners, and have continued to race with the Medway Fleet. We have new-comers to Dragon Racing and this has invigorated the spirit and energy of the Class. We have new younger sailors joining as Dragon crew, and this is great to see. We are hopeful that this commitment will translate into additional boat ownership syndicates.

Revitalizing dragon sailing for the digital age

We are looking closely at all aspects of our activities to see what can be improved or enhanced.

The River Medway offers Dragon Sailors a multiplicity of racing opportunities and situations. We have over 80 courses ranging from 5 miles to 16 miles in distance, with alternatives to suit most wind directions and tidal conditions. As a first step in our renewal activities, Bruce Boyd as departing Class Captain, carefully restructured the Course Card. The aim was to remove courses that were seldom used, were too short or did not have enough challenge in them to hold the interest of racers.

We have to share the joy and rewards of Dragon Sailing to a wider audience. There is real personal achievement in mastering the complexities of the craft. Great camaraderie from learning how

to work together as an efficient and effective crew. Plus, the reward from placing the boat in the right place on the water, allowing for the inexactitudes of wind, tide and depth of water. Getting all these variables working together is a huge attraction to many potential sailors. Then there is the competition element.

In times of change, communicate, like never before

We have put more emphasis on communications and engagement with the wider fraternity in the Medway Yacht Club. We now issue a weekly Dragon Race Report to around 100 recipients. This provides a commentary on each Saturday's racing, shows order of finishing, matters of interest and is hopefully, amusing. The topics in the report have evolved, to cover social and on the water matters.

We recognize that the age mix of the Class was changing with younger members coming to the fore. In response to this change we planned new Social activities. For the first time ever in the Yacht Club, we held a 'Bingo Night'. This was a great evening of fun, food and laughter. We followed this event, with again for the first time a 'Beach Party', which we held on the beach at Lower Upnor. We also held a Video 'Horse Race Night', again with great success.

For many years Dragoners have been frustrated by the vagaries of the final stretch of the river up to the Club's finishing Line, otherwise known as 'Heart Break Reach'. Fickle winds often frustrated boats who were clearly in the lead. To many this was an injustice. To address this issue, we have introduced new race protocols based on choosing, before the start of each race, to adopt self-notified down-river finishing. We recognized that this may not work every time, but decided to explore the possibilities, and review the benefits at year end.

We still have much to do to bring the excitement of Dragon Sailing to the attention of the wider public. We plan to focus more attention on bringing into the Class new people by using the technology of GoPro type cameras and video recording. We plan to install on many of our boats new technology that will capture the excitement that we experience each Saturday.

David Harris

Medway Dragon Class Captain

A Dragon is reborn at Medway Yacht Club

Dragoners may travel diverse paths before they finally arrive in MYC's Dragon Fleet. This is the story of one such journey and the rebirth of Dragon GBR 591, that became *Flos*.

A group of ex-rugby playing friends arrived at the Medway Yacht Club and got hooked on Dragons. Dragons do have this effect on people. On arrival at the Club, one of them, stepped aboard GBR 645 *Dax*, and was amazed at the amount of rope required to sail a Dragon! He also learned that age is no barrier, when it comes to sailing. He got to know Mike Lutener and John Walker and realised that there wasn't much, if anything, that these two put together didn't know about Dragon sailing on the Medway.

The infection spreads

In 2014, Steve Rushbrook, Toby Atack, Ivor Allcock and Kevin Beck, thought it was a good idea to buy a Dragon. It didn't take long for this idea to become a reality, and an offer was made for GBR 591 *Tia*. This Dragon has a pedigree, and has been a past winner of the Edinburgh Cup. It is also one of the legendary Dragons that were built using 'Sweretex', which provides a more rigid hull construction.

Flos is re-born!

Having made the purchase, Steve, Toby, Ivor and Kevin planned to restore *Tia* over the winter period. The Yard Team lifted the vessel out for inspection, and on relaunching - disaster struck!

When *Tia* was returned to the water, the drain plug was inadvertently left out and much to everyone's dismay she sank overnight on her mooring. Do not panic - having worked for the Port of London Authority, Steve Rushbrook knew about boat salvaging and had the right contacts. *Tia* has re-floated the next day, but she looked a sad sight.

Lots of silt got into every nook and cranny. Then the real work began

Following the salvage operation, *Tia* was moved to Trevor Cox's Yard in Sittingbourne. (Fibreglass is Trevor's thing and he's good at it). Over the next few months they set about a complete refurbishment of *Tia*.

The first challenge was the removal of some 13 layers of anti-foul that had accumulated over the years. The hull was

stripped back to the gel coat and re-surfaced. New Cuddy-steps, Barney Post, new hull fittings and new sheets were installed, along with a new paint job both inside and out. A bare Mast was purchased and the good parts from three older masts were transferred on to the nice shiny new one. A complete replacement of all the rigging was also undertaken.

What shall we call her

Throughout the refurbishment, there was an ongoing discussion about what to call the 'new' boat. Eventually the group settled on *Flos*. This stands for 'Fat Lads Out Sailing'. Some of the crew are yet to achieve their advanced pie eating qualification, but I'm sure given time and age full membership of the group is not far away!

On the 30th June 2015, after lots of hard work by all involved, *Flos* was re-launched. The pictures reveal the transformation she has undergone. No mean feat for a team brought together through sport and friendship alone. It was now time to go sailing....

In two years a lot has been learned....

There is more to learn going forward. The group said; "In such a short time, it's nice to have the top end of the fleet looking over their shoulders knowing that *Flos* has the potential to win". And success came swiftly ...

David Harris

Captain Medway Dragon Fleet, October 2017

Steve Rushbrook is starting a life with his family in New Zealand. He has been appointed Harbour Master in Dunedin and surrounding areas. The Medway Dragoners wish Steve continuing success in his new adventure in New Zealand.

Bottom right, left to right) Steve Rushbrook, Ivor Allcock and Kevin Beck receiving their Awards at the Dragon Prize giving January 2017



Cowes Week 2017



Jaguar South Coast Champions 2017



Aimee Edinburgh Cup Champions 2017

Some Runners and Riders



Josephine



Seafire Northern Chaptions 2017



Provezza World Champions 2017



Gorgeous Worgeous East Coast Champions 2017



Mistress



The Edinburgh Cup 2017



Kestra Scottish Champions 2017



South Coast Championships 1217



East Coast Action 2017



SOLENT FLEET REPORT

What a season it's been in Cowes with the Edinburgh Cup and Southern Area Championship as well as Cowes Week and the weekend racing from May to September!

Sailing out of Cowes we really are spoilt for choice. Every weekend racing is organised by the Cowes Combined Clubs Association with the five clubs in turn providing race management. There are two major series within which run a number of smaller series. The Cowes Keelboat championship is windward/leeward course in mid-Solent and the Solent Series is shore line starts and round the cans. Judging by the entry lists it appears that the windward/ leeward races are the more popular

format but overall this is a fabulous schedule which we must try to support. We are very grateful to all the club members who provide the race management.

This season the fleet numbers were increased by the arrival of Dreki (Glynn Williams) and Murka (Igor Goikhberg) and the recommissioning of Supremacy (Andrew Miliband /Richard Cullinan). We now have a fleet of 12 more or less modern Dragons as well as the classics Mistress and Tarka II. There is also evidence of increased interest in the fleet from experienced owners from other classes which we must make every effort to translate into ownership and onto the water.

As usual the early season saw the fleet numbers down as boats returned from continental Europe. In the weekend series consistency paid with the Keelboat Championship going to Owen Pay in Furious as clear winner followed by team Bailey in Aimee and Mike Isias in Fanfare . In the Solent Series the winner was Chime with Jenny Stutley and Charles Street sharing the helming. Second was Owen Pay in Furious and third Dave Ross in Sanka who returned to the Solent after competing in the Worlds in Cascais.

The season highlight was undoubtedly the Edinburgh Cup for which the Southern Area Championship was the opening act. The whole regatta was organised and delivered by Gavia Wilkinson Cox and her team efficiently and with huge style. The Island Sailing Club provided the race management and RORC hosted the really superb closing prize giving and dinner.

There were 29 entries for the Southern, which were sailed in conditions varying from very light to a solid 25 knots breeze. The fleet increased to 38 for the Edinburgh Cup which was sailed in testing conditions with the wind producing a difficult Solent chop.

Cowes Week followed just three weeks later. Whilst the weather had moderated it was nothing like the conditions in 2016 when we sailed under clear blue skies in bright sunshine. Notwithstanding the weather

we sailed 7 of the 8 scheduled races. The local fleet was joined by loyal supporters Martin Payne in Full Speed, Mike and Monique Hayles in Naiad and the Solent ace Eric Williams in Ecstatic. Once again the regatta went down the wire. By the final race Oliver and Francesca Morgan in Christianna crewed by Pedro Andrade were hoping to consolidate their third place with a good performance with both Full Speed and Aimee in contention for first place overall. A truly massive front under a dark sky was making its way down the Solent as the fleet started to the west. Weathering this Christianna was first to the turning mark at Beaulieu. Increasing their lead on the fetch to Newtown they managed to hold off the competition on a nail biting run to the RYS line to win the week by a single point from Aimee followed by Full speed.

After the hectic summer the autumn was quieter though four dragons entered the CCYC Forts race – our offshore race for the year – which was convincingly won by Andrew Miliband in Supremacy.

It will be some time before we have another season like this and on behalf of us all I'd like to thank everyone involved in organising our sailing but particularly Gavia who pulled off a really superb Edinburgh Cup.

Oliver Morgan



Scottish Fleet in Granton Edinburgh

WE ARE DELIGHTED to have official status again in Scotland and report that there is Dragon racing alive and well on the Forth. Our fleet is small with 6 dragons on moorings in the harbour but we also have those racing in other waters! The ones in the harbour are a mix of GRP vintage boats and classics. The oldest one is *Solan* (GBR 65) which will be 80 years old in 2018 and still takes the tide twice daily in the sailing season. She does not race with us but cruises gently on the river. We are hoping there are some more Dragons around that want to come and join in and you would be made very welcome. We have racing most Saturdays and also on 2 evenings a week when the tides allow. There is a mix of drying moorings and also deeper water ones as well as our pontoon which gives us all tide access to the water.



We gained one new Dragon sailor this year as Simon Peakman



as part of the East Coast Sailing Festival, run by Forth Yacht Clubs Association, hosted by Royal Forth Yacht Club, Edinburgh.

Saturday 2nd September gave us a beautiful sunny day and the first race was run in a light NW breeze. Crossing the start line was a challenge and how the boats started was also how they finished with *Kestra* leading the way. After a short delay for some sunbathing the wind strengthened and settled. Race 2 saw *Kismet* take the lead and the battle for second and third places was settled as *Kestra* just pipped *Wizz Too* on the line. Race 3 was a clear win for *Kestra*.

Sunday 3rd September saw 3 races in stronger SE breezes using a trapezoidal courses. The first race had *Kismet* in the lead at the end of both beats but they had issues turning the corners giving *Kestra* the win by a boat length. Race 5 had a challenging breeze with puffs and lulls and *Wizz Too* took advantage and gained a significant lead with *Kestra* only managing second. The final race of the day started in very blustery conditions with all four of the home fleet competing for the committee boat end. Again the wind had lulls and shifts which *Kestra* managed well

and led from the first mark. Three Dragons came together again at the end of the second beat which resulted in *Kismet* touching the mark to drop back to third with *Kestra* beating *Wizz Too*.

Monday 4th September saw all racing cancelled with not enough wind. We watched the Red Arrows fly over to mark the opening of the new Queensferry crossing and of course for the new Scottish Dragon Champion!

Scottish Dragon and Vintage Dragon Champion – *Kestra* (GBR 489) Richard Leask, Willie Adams and Donald Milne, 6 points

2nd Wizz Too (GBR 343) Helen Horsfall, Henry Boyd, 11 points

3rd Kismet (GBR 508) Cathy Sedgeworth, Moira Kinnear, Joe O'Leary, Arnold Gunis, 11points

We are still planning our programme for 2018 and we will run a Scottish Dragon Championship and the favoured dates are 18th – 20th August so please get these in your diary and come and join us on some stunning water. These dates are in the Edinburgh Festival time so there is plenty to do for any support crew but please get in touch about accommodation as it needs booked early.

Cathy Sedgeworth

has bought *Stargazer* GBR 509 and is learning the ropes and there are plenty of them. The core group of Dragon racers are Richard Leask in *Kestra* (GBR 489), Helen Horsfall and Henry Boyd (*Wizz Too* GBR 343), Pete Cooke (*Meteor* GBR 402) and Cathy Sedgeworth and Sheena Kerr in the new *Kismet* (GBR 508). We have an extensive and varied sailing programme from early May and at the time of writing we are still to have our last Autumn points Saturday racing at the end of October. With Richard campaigning in his new boat around the circuit this has meant that it was quite rare for us all to race against each other. This has also meant more silverware to go around and I am delighted to report that all of the core group will be collecting at least one trophy at this years' prize-giving.

The highlight of our season was our chance to race against each other in the Scottish Dragon Championship supported by Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust. The Dragon event was incorporated



South West Fleet Report

Falmouth had a decent Dragon Fleet up until the early noughties, when they gradually disappeared, to be replaced by a large fleet of Sunbeams. There is difficulty in current times when everyone is so busy to gather three people together twice a week to race a Dragon. Sunbeams can be sailed single handed without a spinnaker.

However, there is huge affection and enthusiasm for the Dragon expressed by all who pass by on the pontoon... and 'guests' are taken out on *Snap* every year and are invariably hugely impressed by the experience, but, as yet, this has not converted in to any purchases.

Next May, *Snap* will be part of the 'RYA Try a Boat Week' organised by Mylor Yacht Club... and with the official BDA endorsement... with the BDA banner hung across the boat... the casual try-outs can be formalised. *Snap* will be on a 'main access' pontoon for that week so we can attract passing trade.

Snap has raced in Falmouth week since 2013, and Falmouth hosted the Dragon Classics and Vintage in 2014. However, only 2 GRP boats came to join us, with the general consensus being that it was too far to travel. We therefore see the future lies in building a local fleet, rather than to persuade visiting Dragons to join us. There is at least one GRP boat nearby in storage which is ready to go, and I am advised that *Buccaneer*, a *Snap* contemporary, might now join us next year.

It is a shame more distant Dragons do not travel to join us, as Carrick Roads is the perfect location.

Snap underwent a major refurbishment over the winter of 2015, and the improved stiffness and performance has contributed to achieving a first place this year in the K class handicap fleet. Some of the rig is still not working as well as it should, so we feel that there is some more yet in reserve. Our plan is to consolidate our performance at Falmouth, and venture forth to the Dragon regionals when we feel that the boat is fully sorted.

We hope that the report for next year will include *Snap*, *Buccaneer*, the GRP boat hiding in a shed, and one or two new purchases.

I understand that the 'exhibition standard' refurbishment of *Bluebottle* at the Falmouth Maritime Museum has not progressed but I am in touch with the Museum and will provide a further update.

Alan Dale



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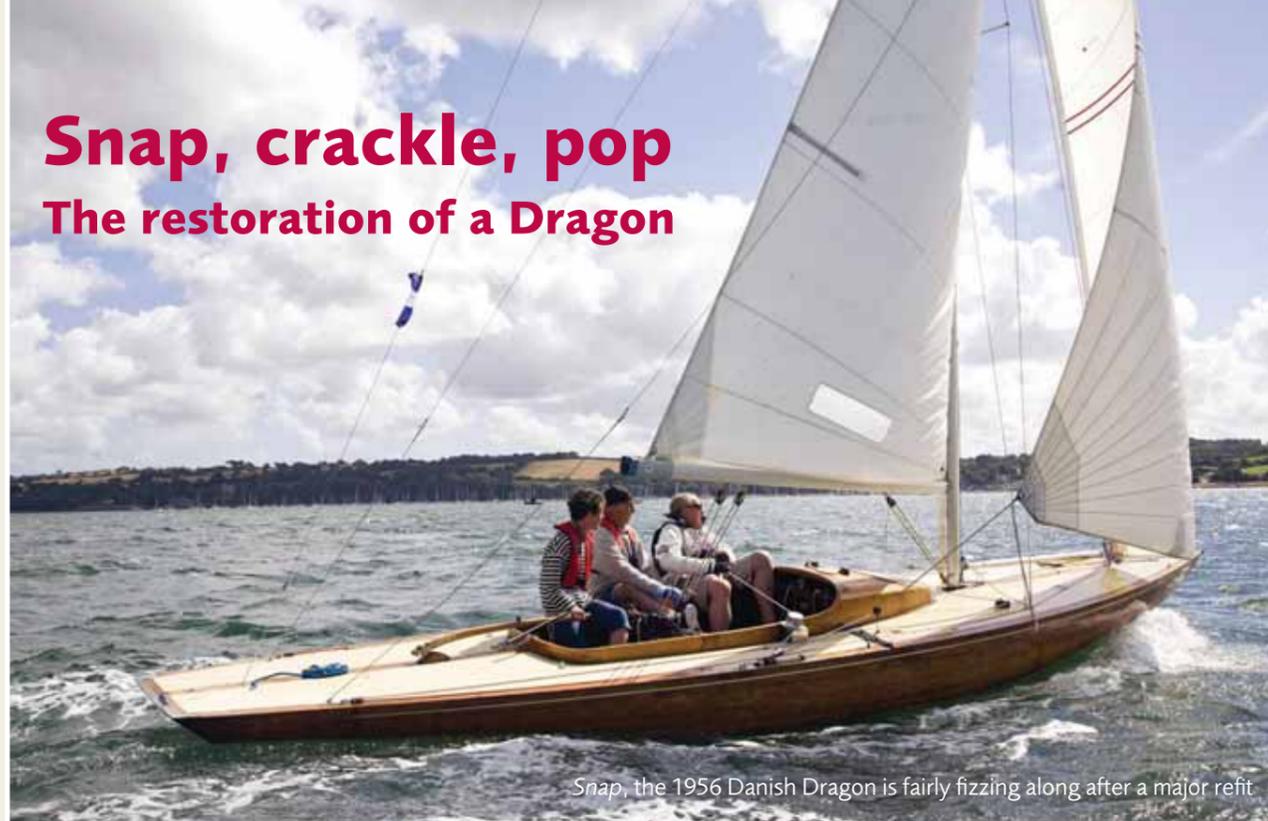
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Snap, crackle, pop

The restoration of a Dragon



Snap, the 1956 Danish Dragon is fairly fizzing along after a major refit

Who could fail to be moved by the grace and simple elegance of a Dragon? Eighty-eight years after its inception, the Johan Anker design is still one of the most loved and widely sailed classes internationally and in the UK, where around 48 wooden Dragons exist, many of them keenly raced throughout the season.

"I first saw a new Dragon at the 1999 boat show – it was the most beautiful shape I had ever seen," says Alan Dale. In 2002 he bought Snap, a 1956-built wooden Dragon as a semi-wreck, and vowed to restore her to her former glory: she had won the Dragon Classics at Falmouth Week in 1998 and 2000. In 2015 she matched the new glassfibre Dragons and Alan decided there was more life in the boat yet, so Cockwells boatyard in Mylor, Cornwall, has given her a new deck, 15 new ribs, and a new transom in order to give her a new lease of life.

Snap was built by the Danish firm, Pedersen & Thuesen in 1956, who built an average of five Dragons a year. By 1962 the Pedersen & Thuesen Dragons had won Cowes Week, the European Championships, an Olympic gold medal, and the Gold Cup, as well as several national championships. They continued to dominate international sailing for many years, and are still popular today.

"Snap was named Salar for the first six years of her life," says Alan. "She was one of the 1950s Dragons with a slightly longer waterline. Tim Colman of Lowestoft bought her new in 1956 and raced her in the Edinburgh Cup in the late 1950s. Those were the same years that Bluebottle (the Dragon owned by the Queen and Prince Philip) was sailing in the Edinburgh Cup, so they probably sailed together."

Snap was sold to Edward Sudell of Waldringfield in Suffolk, then in 1988 Dr Alan Doyle bought her and took her to Falmouth in 1989, where she had her Classics success a decade later.

"Dr Doyle died in about 2000, and she was then sold to Daniel Wastnage at Burnham-on-Crouch who raced her in 2001 with good results, then I bought her in 2002," Alan says. "Despite 11 cracked ribs and two broken keel bolts, she still sailed competitively, but she had a lot of work done at Woolverstone, Suffolk, and we got her afloat again in 2004. She came to Falmouth in 2008 because it's such a fabulous place to sail, and also because I was born and brought up in Cornwall."

Varnished hull

So why did Alan buy Snap? "I was looking for a performance sailing boat that I could also take several people cruising on," he says. "I wanted a boat with a displacement hull, which would be more comfortable, and I bought Snap because she still had a varnished hull."

Snap had had work done over the years. "I did all the original work from 2002 including new keel bolts in stainless steel, 12 new ribs and,

helped by a wonderful joiner, cut down the coamings to the cockpit," says Alan.

Mylor bedded the keel again in 2015, but Snap needed a more extensive refurbishment, so Alan decided to use Cockwells boatyard in Mylor Bridge. "I was very impressed by its expertise and standard of work," Alan says. "I'd heard good reports that it was a wooden boat specialist and competitively priced. And its quote demonstrated its understanding of what the boat needed." So Snap went to Cockwells in March 2016.

"It's nice that owners are prepared to put the love, attention and cash into these treasures," says Dave Cockwell, managing director. "It's sad when boats are allowed to deteriorate, because you can't get them back. But Snap is now as good as new and will stand the owner in good stead for many years to come. What was important with Snap was staying true to the original and ensuring it was done on time and on budget, keeping the customer informed as we went along."

Dave continues: "We use traditional methods – for instance the ribs were all steamed in, but sometimes we use modern techniques with the use of glue and plywood, like for the deck, which makes it more watertight and adds rigidity which helps the rest of the structure of the boat. It's about understanding when to use which method. It's also giving a young person the opportunity to work on a lovely boat and the opportunity for us to demonstrate that we have the skills needed to restore these old boats – that knowledge is becoming lost in this industry."

That young person was 20-year-old Reuben Thompson. Reuben, who trained at the Boatbuilding Academy in Lyme Regis, and came to Cockwells two years ago as an apprentice, relished the challenge.

Reuben's brief was to replace the deck and ribs, and tidy the interior by scraping off the old dead varnish and oiling it all. "In the end I had to replace 20 ribs and steam new oak ribs in – 15 ribs were broken and I had to take the deck off to get to them," says Reuben. "I replaced several deck beams, and the deck was replaced with new sapele covering boards and king planks, and margin boards around the cuddy and cockpit. There was rot in the corner of the transom so it was easier to replace the whole thing than just part of it, so that was replaced as well. The hull was revarnished, and needed a coat of antifoul, then the deck had to be finished and the interior of the hull oiled."

Reuben had some help. "When I was glueing the deck down I needed someone else to help because they are big panels and you need to get them down quickly," he says.

Alan was very impressed by the way the ribs were steamed. "The oak (for the ribs) was straight-grained wood," he says. "The original

ribs were rock elm but that's not readily available now because of Dutch elm disease."

"Some splining was done a good few years ago by a builder not specialising in wooden boats, who hammered in the splines," Alan continues. "Several years later, more splining was done properly by another builder who advised that the splines should not have been inserted so tight, but should have just been pushed in by hand to allow for 'take-up'." Sadly the earlier job caused the ribs to crack again in 2015.

Mitre joint

The most challenging part of the job was replacing the transom, Reuben says, "because it's all varnished rather than being painted. Also the joint between the hull planks and the transom was mitred, rather than the planks running over the transom as they do on most boats, so that meant a lot of fettling and fiddling to get it to fit. So there was a mitre joint all the way round the changed angle which meant a lot of fettling and fiddling to get it to fit."

He also had problems with the ribs. "We had quite a few Snappages on the ribs because we struggled to get a good source of wood; we ended up with wood coming from three different places. There's a really tight turn down in the bilge," he grins.

Reuben enjoyed the work on the frames best. "I like the more difficult tasks because an easy day is slightly dull! I really enjoy the steaming process of the frames – it's almost wood magic when you bend it round really tight curves," he smiles. "I love the whole process – I really enjoy wood and it's been a pleasure to work on the boat."

The wood used for Snap was carefully sourced. The sapele for the transom, covering boards, king planks and margins was bought from a hardwood supplier who sourced it from central Africa. The iroko used to replace the rotten deck beams also came from Africa, most likely the west coast. The multiple steam bent ribs were constructed from English green oak, supplied by Jo Sawmill which is based in Penryn.

Reuben definitely prefers working with wooden boats: "GRP is so uniform whereas wood has more variation – it's more appealing to work with a plane than a grinder making a big pile of dust (far more beautiful, as well). With GRP it's always the same..."

But the last word must go to Alan who was desperate to compete in Falmouth Regatta Week 2016. "I used to have problems getting a crew," he says. "But the big push forward was establishing links in Falmouth with a star local crew, and a helmsman friend from Derby. We have had some great results including second place in a handicap race in 2016, which was the best a competitive GRP Dragon achieved last year."

He smiles and it's clear just how much this boat means to him. "Snap is a very special boat – she talks to you and tells you just what she wants you to do."

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Words by Sue Jackson

Photos Sally-Anne Moore and Alan Dale



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