



**D**  
BRITISH DRAGON ASSOCIATION

# **DRAGON NEWS**



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**Aberdeen**

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## Notes To Members

All members contact details, known as the White Book will be published separately. 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 britishdragonsec@gmail.com

At the AGM in January 2017 there will be a proposal to increase subs to the following levels:

- i: An annual fee of £60 payable for each Dragon owned by a BDA member at the 31st March each year.
- ii: A fee of £60 payable for each Dragon acquired during the year either by a non-owning member of the BDA or a new member.
- iii: A subscription of £25 for each member payable on 31st March each year or on joining during a year.

Please keep an eye on the website for next years rates. [www.britishdragons.org/join-the-bda](http://www.britishdragons.org/join-the-bda).

Both Individual Membership and Boat Fee Subscriptions may be made by internet banking, cheque or direct debit. Internet banking details are - Bank: Lloyds TSB; Name of account: British Dragon Association; Account Number: 03090827; Sort code: 30-00-08. Please give your name in the reference so it is traceable (e.g. J Smith subs).

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.

## The BDA 2015 AGM and Annual Dinner

As previously notified, the 2016 British Dragon Association AGM and Dinner will take place on Friday 13th January 2017 at the Army and Navy Club, Pall Mall, London. Please arrange your dinner tables and book your tickets now. Please do come and support your association. Since we have been using the Army and Navy attendance at the dinner has increased each year and there is now every chance of you being able to catch up with many friends from around the country. The evening will get underway with pre-meeting drinks at 1800. The meeting will start at 1830 prompt in the Drawing Room on the second floor and dinner will be called at 2000 in the Pall Mall Room on the first floor. 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. Tickets

will be £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 Nigel Kaula at Lingwood, Eglinton Road, Rushmoor, Farnham, Surrey GU10 2DH. 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](mailto: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.

## BDA Officers, Fleet Captains, Contact Details

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# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I FAIL TO RECALL OVER THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS AS GOOD A REGATTA SEASON AS THIS HAS BEEN. The BDA has enjoyed outstanding racing in 2016 at some wonderful venues. We are indeed fortunate to be able to appreciate our yachts, the comradeship, the competition and the wonderful help of many volunteers.

The year started with our customary AGM and Annual Dinner at the Army and Navy Club in Pall Mall. We had an excellent turn-out of members and enjoyed a good meal and catch-up. If you haven't been for some time I strongly commend you to consider coming along in 2017 (Friday 13th January!) to see for yourself.

At the meeting Ron James stood down as Chairman and I wish to pay tribute to his time at the helm of our Association. He navigated the waters well, with a light touch of the tiller here and there, lent weight when it was needed and ensured we always reached our destinations in good order. Therefore a very well deserved thank you from all members, as well as a note of gratitude to Julia for her support to Ron whilst he was in the chair.

I was extremely grateful to Julia Bailey agreeing to take over as Vice Chairman and to Selina Dicker relieving me of the more onerous duties of Honorary Secretary. My thanks to them both for their time and wise input over this last year and indeed my thanks also to Nigel Kaula, who has decided to step down as Honorary Treasurer after admirably carrying out his duties with diligence and fortitude for two years. Our Fleet Captains have also had a busy season and I wish to express my thanks to them, on behalf of all members, for their time and dedication in supporting the class.

Having taken up the role there are three themes I am pursuing as Chairman. The first is to retain and grow the membership of the Association. I see this as a task we should all take on, encouraging new owners, new crew and new members to join us. The second is to keep and expand our existing fleets. Club racing is the bedrock of our class and will remain so. It is therefore vitally important that we all support our own fleets and that we participate and help with their running. The final theme concerns promotion of our class, something the Committee has been looking at this year. We have, for example, redesigned our web site and are making more use of our Facebook page. Watch out for more initiatives.

In my speech at the end of the Edinburgh Cup this year I said something that seems to have resonated with many of you, judging by the number of comments I have had

since. It is that we should never forget that we sail for the fun of it. I asked the audience to recall that first moment they were given control of a tiller, whether it was as a child, a teenager, a young adult or in mid-life; we all wore a wide grin and found the experience joyful and exhilarating. We should continue to strive to retain those feelings aboard our beautiful yachts, whether gilling about on a river or in the heat of an international regatta on a stormy sea.

The regatta diary this year did not start in earnest until July, which proved to be a very busy sailing month, with the movement carried on well into August. So rather unusually our first regatta was the Northern Area Championships, immediately followed by the Edinburgh Cup in Abersoch. It was perhaps the best Cup regatta that many of us have had the pleasure to participate in. I rather hope I will embarrass Abersoch Fleet Captain Rob Riddell by stating that he ran an immaculate, fun and very well administered regatta in splendid style, one that we all clearly enjoyed very much. He and his team deserve our great thanks for providing happy memories of a smashing event. During one of our delectable social evenings I was very pleased to present Owen Pay with a framed photograph of Dragon K1 sailing at Burnham and a small plaque, to commemorate his over twenty five years of service to the Dragon class. He has been a giant striding the scene in several capacities, notably many years as Honorary Secretary of this Association, then later as Chairman and also as Solent Fleet Captain. It was his decision to step down from that last role earlier this year that prompted me to recognise his, and Josy's, support and dedication to our class. Thank you, both from us all.

Only one week after the Edinburgh Cup we enjoyed a cracking weekend's sailing on the Solent for the South Coast Championships, organised by Fleet Captain Oliver Morgan with great support from the Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club and the Ross Boss; you decide about whom of the two I write! This was then closely followed by a non BDA regatta, nonetheless well supported by Dragons, for the Cowes

Classic Week. Tim Street generated much enthusiasm amongst the Classic fleet, not these days renowned for racing, to join his immaculately restored boat *Tschüss* in what has become over recent years a friendly and fun regatta. Tim is hoping for even more entries in 2017, when we shall be running the Dragon Classic Championships within the regatta.

Next up for us was Cowes Week, which this year we decided to run in conjunction with the IDA Corinthian Regatta. We enjoyed champagne sailing on the Solent, unusually without a lay day, the wind and sun gods smiling on us throughout the week. One of the consequences of Cowes popularity as a regatta venue is that it is increasingly difficult to get a club, PRO and race committee for the dates we may wish for. It was this that eventually forced us to run the Corinthian Regatta during Cowes Week and at rather short notice. Your association therefore tabled a proposal at the IDA AGM for the Corinthian Regatta to be blessed by the IDA and given equal status in the forthcoming regattas programme. In addition, nations will now have to bid to run the Corinthian Regatta several years in advance, as happens for the Gold Cup, the Europeans and the Worlds. The hosts will retain the ability to run the regatta along the lines they may wish to.

The August Bank Holiday weekend saw the Scottish Nationals run on the Forth, incorporating the Classic Championships. It is most encouraging that we have been able to run a Scottish regatta two years running and it is to be hoped that we may continue to do so, as well as encouraging the growth of a vibrant fleet of Dragons in Scotland once again. The reports I had indicated that the competitors had a marvellous time, both on the water and ashore, in the Dragon tradition.

Our last regatta was the Eastern Championships, held with aplomb by the Medway Yacht Club. Again the weather was most kind to us and we enjoyed some outstandingly good racing, with close finishes. The sun shone, it was warm for late September and the shore side events were equally warm and welcoming.

During the year our international fleet travellers have been as busy as ever. Our members have participated in the Europeans at St Petersburg, the Gold Cup at Hornbaek, the Prince Phillip Cup in Sandy Bay, the Grand Prix in Cannes and many regattas elsewhere. They are to be congratulated on flying the flag for our country, class and association, as well as for their dedication.

Next season we are planning on a full programme of regional and national regattas. Two of them are particularly remarkable and I urge you give them your support. The first is a new venue for Dragons, I believe. West Mersea on the Blackwater will host the Eastern Championships, which are being organised by Selina and Mark Dicker. We should give them and their young team every encouragement, especially as we shall be able to show off our beautiful yachts to a new group of potential future owners. Then the Edinburgh Cup and South Coasts are to be held in Cowes, but with a slight twist. During the week we shall be there the Panerai Classic is also taking place. We shall have the opportunity of sailing amongst some of the most iconic and best looking old ladies of the sea, though of course we will have our own race area and berthing arrangements. The town and the Solent will be fizzing and we anticipate an action packed time ashore and an amazing spectacle on the water. Oliver Morgan and his team are putting together an excellent programme and are standing by to help you with accommodation, craning, berthing, travel and logistic solutions to make your visit fuss free. They do however recommend that you plan well ahead and start by contacting them now. In addition, we are hoping to arrange several deals to make the trip to Cowes less expensive than it may otherwise be.

Thank you for your continued support of our class. Please do all you can to encourage new owners and members. Please attend as many BDA regattas as you can. Do please join us for the AGM and Annual Dinner. Let us know your views and suggestions. Above all, have fun and enjoy your Dragon sailing.

*Tim Wilkes* Chairman

## Forthcoming Fixtures

BDA AGM and Dinner	London	13 January 2017
The Northern Championships	Abersoch	25-7 May 2017
The World Championships	Cascais, Portugal	9-17 June 2017
The East Coast Championships	West Mersea	24-26 June 2017
The South Coast Championships	Cowes	8-10 July 2017
The Edinburgh Cup	Cowes	11-15 July 2017
Cowes Week	Cowes	29 July-5 August 2017
The European Championships	Lake Thun, Switzerland	14-19 August 2017
The Gold Cup	St Tropez, France	13-20 October 2017

# Classic Fleet Report

IN THE SAME VEIN AS MY REPORT LAST YEAR, I'd like to start with some statistics. For the BDA I try to keep track of Classic Dragons in Britain, as well as keeping track of those that were once British but may now be somewhere else altogether. The BDA is currently aware of 47 Classic Dragons in Britain. This is almost certainly an underestimate since boats quite regularly emerge blinking in the sunlight from barns in which they have been living for several years. Statistically, I believe that at least 19 of the 47 have sailed or raced this year. Nine boats are for sale, seven are being actively restored and I fear that four are gently rotting without much care being taken of their

condition. Bear in mind that a boat might be in more than one category and that there are also boats of which I am aware but don't know what is currently happening.

There have been some changes. *Tschuss* (ex-*Zara II*) has been bought by Tim Street, who found her through Google Earth, refurbished and is racing. *Josephine* has ended her long sojourn in Petticrows and is now a Turkish boat

*Left: Argee – Early days on the Clyde.*

owned by Ali Tedziker. She promptly came second in the Swiss Championship crewed by the very Turkish Andy Beadsworth and Simon Fry. *Meteor*, *Heuschrecke* and *Wanderer* have also all returned to racing in 2016, in some cases after a long absence. Sadly, on the downside, I fear that *Suzanne*, *Rumba II* and *Kingdom of Fife* may not be long for this world unless some serious intervention takes place.

Racing in Classics has taken place at different levels. Ivan Bradbury with *Blue Haze* and *Debutant* continues to be the most successful British boat in major events in Continental Europe. There were two events in Britain for Classic Dragons this year. Tim Street organised a Classic class within Cowes Classic Week with four participants, *Mistress*, *Tschuss*, *Wanderer* and *Aurora*. Bill Daniels in *Mistress* was a convincing winner. Meantime the BDA Classic Championship took place at Granton on the Forth outside Edinburgh within the Scottish Championship. *Heuschrecke*, *Wizz Too* and *Meteor* competed and *Heuschrecke*, on her first outing since restoration, was a

convincing winner. It must also be recorded that she looked really lovely. All credit to Dimitri Bondarenko for seeing the restoration through and to Yevgeny Kazakov of the Tallinn Boatyard and Petticrows for a splendid piece of work. Various Classics competed in Dragon events and also in club handicaps. I don't have full details but would be happy to record them if kept informed.

At the international level there continues to be Classic participation in many events. The biggest concentration of Classics is undoubtedly on the Austrian, Swiss, German and Italian lakes. Clean, fresh water, excellent storage facilities and generally light weather sailing are all good for elderly wooden boats. Patrick Delahaye, Alex Claytor and I have also tried to collate more information on Classics and Alex is managing a website for this purpose, which can be reached via [www.classicdragons.org](http://www.classicdragons.org).

Next year it is likely that the BDA Classic Championship will be in Cowes during Cowes Classic Week. I hope that the numbers will continue to creep up since the demonstration effect of such elegant boats is a powerful incentive for more to emerge from their hiding places into hands that want to use them. There is no shortage of Classics available in widely ranging condition though pricing is notably opaque and sometimes over-optimistic for anyone captivated by them. I do hope that we may see more boats in use next year.

*Patrick Cifford*

*Below: Ael II makes a wet exit from Deauville.*



# Aldeburgh Fleet Report 2016

The high point of the Aldeburgh fleet season in 2016 was probably late in 2015 when we had a meeting at which five boats decided to buy jibs(not genoas).

*Basilisk* already had one of these so that made six of us with them. The purpose was to make it easier to sail with relatively less experienced crews in windy conditions. We agreed that they would be used in the evening series when crews are often recruited at very short notice or boats are short-handed and when wind over 20 knots forecast was forecast. The jibs were bought as a bulk order and have indeed been used by *Basilisk*, *Kestrel* and *Harkaway*. They certainly do the job and are especially useful if the wind is

blowing hard either up or down the Home Reach which implies a lot of short tacking.

The sad fact is that *Orion* and *Apache* which both made this investment didn't reach the water this year for excellent reasons in both cases. Unfortunately this made a dent in the numbers and therefore also the marketing attraction of the class. This is a particularly acute problem because of the fifty-strong Aldeburgh Loch Long class which can validly claim

to provide strong class racing throughout the year.

In the early part of the year *Basilisk* was on her own. Patrick and Mike sailed her in the handicap races which was good fun because Aldeburgh really does provide entertaining and challenging racing but it wasn't a competitive experience. The regatta was different. Mike put *Naiad* in the water(much greyer than what she normally floats in in France) and she and *Basilisk* had some excellent match racing which was ultimately won by *Basilisk*, largely because of slightly better starting. This didn't prevent Patrick from throwing away one race through a schoolboy error which should have been thrashed out of him about fifty years ago. Never allow anyone to get inside you at the Pumphouse even if you are temporarily becalmed!

*Basilisk* also won the Personal Handicap Trophy by one point from Jonathan Hunt in *Panther*. Despite imperfections due to crew and helmsman changes, this system has worked well for several years in sustaining interest among the boats that are less likely to win on the water due to age or lack of experience.

Away from home, *Naiad* continued to represent the Aldeburgh fleet internationally especially in France. *Basilisk* also travelled to France(La Baule), Scotland where she became the Scottish Champion and Ireland. Patrick was the only constant presence on the boat. He isn't quite clear

whether he is the reason that he needed eight different crew for four events. They ranged from the highly experienced Philip Catmur and Geoff Butcher at La Baule to the much less so Fiona Gray and Kevin Hayes in Kinsale. All performed splendidly.

**For next year** there is hope that our effective numbers may improve. Matt Lingley and Euan Seel have taken over day to day management of the Aldeburgh Boatyard from Peter Wilson which should mean that *Kestrel* sails more often. *Tamerlane* seems likely to reappear on the water and there is hope that *Harkaway*, *Apache* and *Orion* may also make more frequent appearances. Such a demonstration effect should also help to develop a virtuous circle as potential owners and crew discover the inherent interest that the boats offer. We are ever optimistic!

*Patrick Gifford*



# Abersoch Dragon Fleet 2016

Staying on the right side of being politically correct can be so difficult – instigating and developing a healthy and fun Dragon fleet at a club, in comparison is pretty easy.

The corner stones of Abersoch's success is quite simply based on four principles;

**Birds** – Ali Edward's GBR 686 is an all girl team, and more than fifty percent of the Abersoch fleet teams includes girls. So what? Well, errrr, it just goes to show how ergonomically well thought out a Dragon actually is.

What I mean is brains not brawn; The Dragon is an out and out race boat, whose speed and competitive edge is extracted using brains, guile, courage, experience and talent – brutal raw muscle and brawn is not a required ingredient to success.

Anyone thinking of joining the Abersoch Dragon fleet – relax in the knowledge; A Dragon all but sails it's self - buy one and you'll find out for yourself.

BIRDS, BOOZE,  
OLD DRAGONS  
AND WET KNICKERS!

## Old Dragons

– It's how we re-launched the Abersoch Dragon fleet, and we recommend it to any club on the brink of starting a Dragon fleet. We acquired a dozen or so excellent, low cost Dragons, and never looked back. The Abersoch fleet is now upgrading their boats – last November four teams acquired fabulous, bang up to date boats, pillaging the south coast of France when sterling shot up in value against the Euro for a month or two last October and November.

**Wet Knickers** – 21st century Gortex fabrics and brilliantly designed sailing kit has entirely ended the old saying 'the Dragon is a wet boat'. A wet boat; Far from it not a bit of it. I walk ashore after each full day racing Dragons dryer than when I stepped on my boat wearing my fabulous new sailing top garment thing and slinky trousers, (a gift to me from my very kind Abersoch fleet competitors as a token of thanks for orchestrating the Edinburgh Cup),



**Booze** – A glass of cleansing beer or wine after racing is good for the body being ram packed with vitamins, is certainly good for the soul....a generous dollop of booze after racing and everyone quickly forgets what a smashing time you had T-boning your competitor rounding a mark earlier that very afternoon.

Importantly, whilst it's difficult to argue booze is good for the size of your behind, it's very good for the club's bottom line, and with the national media confirming the modern day 'gal' out imbibes the fellas, bar takings are set to sky rocket.

Enough nonsense - Did anything actually happen at SCYC this year?

## Yes - lot's;

Abersoch Fleet hosted the 2016 Northern Championship and Edinburgh Cup – see full report elsewhere in this magazine. The upshot was Lawrie Smith's team *Alfie*, and Grant Gordon's team *Louise*, both made a special point of confirming Abersoch's South Caernarfonshire Yacht Club is an excellent hosting venue, Pwllheli Marina and Welsh Sailing



Academy has all the facilities to manage a large fleet, Tremadog bay is a near perfect sailing venue supported by the expertise of Malcolm Blackburn as PRO plus his experienced and polished team.

Both Grant and Lawrie want Grade One Dragon events hosted at Abersoch and Tremadog Bay.

Club sailing wise, what really struck me was, thanks to the hard work, investments in servicing and improving the older boats, new sails, determination and dedication of the teams, the competitive edge of the fleet's performance has stepped up a gear.



And is there a point?

**Yes - two:**

Firstly it means the club sailing is very close, it's hard to win, indeed one mistake and you are lucky to be in the top ten and that means fun – and good fun generates a very high turnout for club racing and encourages more girls and boys to buy a Dragon and join in.

Secondly – Once a team attains a good and consistent standard, their strengthening confidence entices them to travel, to benchmark their performance against the national fleet – very exciting.

Jamie Peters and David Cummings on *Yeah Baby* GBR 662 were quick in the club events, impressive noting Jamie had to get the better side of a spot of ill health.

Mike Budd and Dr Greebo on *Harry* (GBR 793) are fast, and would have been the best score club team for the season, but including a couple of IRC championships into their calendar kept them off top spot.

For me the stand out teams for the 2016 club sailing season were team Tsunami GBR 699 Col Brereton, Chris



Mills and Andy Wilkins, and team *Phantom* GBR 655 Chris and Selina Thomas.

*Phantom* edge it – their performance in the Aberdaron Cup – last series of the season was breath taking with a 1,1,2,1. Well played you guys.

That's it, very much looking forward to meeting up with everyone at Oliver Morgan's Cowes based Edinburgh Cup.

## Toodaloo!

(derived from a` tout a` l`heure)

**Let's have a look at the season to come:**

**Northern's** – we are looking at Thursday 25th to Saturday 27th inclusive, eight races

**IDA Worlds** – Mike Budd's GBR 793 *Harry* and my team on *Merlin* GBR 622 plan to compete.

**East Coast Champs** 24-25-26 June at West Mersea

**Southern's and Ed Cup** at Cowes 8th to 15th July.

We will look at the logistics of how we support the East Coast event, and get the boats down to Cowes.

Club racing wise, **The Captain's Cup** is planned for Wednesday 9th to 11th August – it's the one to win!

# Burnham Fleet Report

**AS IS ALWAYS THE WAY**, I begin the 2016 report with a wrap up of 2015.

Burnham was pleased to welcome 5 Belgians and Mark and Selina Dicker for our final weekend of the season. Unfortunately, the weather didn't fully cooperate as the first race of the Peter Matthews trophy was blown out (in total contrast to the previous year when it was lost due to lack of wind). An excellent prize giving dinner made up for it, and toward the end of the evening we were joined by the 'Mud' Dragon and a Mother Clanger (otherwise known as Mark and Mandy Wade), to award Major Clanger (Martyn Fogg) with the trophy for leaving his dragon 'high and dry' during one race and his extended hike (part of the way) home from the Roach. Sunday dawned with a gentle breeze, so we managed to blow the cobwebs away, and the Peter Matthews trophy was awarded to Avalanche.

While the 2016 season has been quiet on the river at times, the fleet has travelled far and wide. The Wiltons started the season's racing early with an excellent seventh overall and first Corinthian in Cascais while crewing for Stefan Winberg in March.

Back on the river, eight boats, including our only visitor, *Rackham*, participated in (a very early) Easter regatta. The first race on Friday took place in light wind and strong tide upriver. It was a particularly tough day for Humoresque who battled the tide from his mooring to finally reach the start line for the first time just before the start of the second race, which had to be abandoned as no one managed to cross the start line within 10 minutes. On Saturday the conditions had completely altered with a strong south westerly allowing racing in the mouth of the Roach. Two races were completed, with some close encounters, interesting rolls and all round hairy sailing. With two firsts and a second, *Avalanche* was looking tough to beat, and so it proved as *Storm Katie* blew in, putting paid to both Sunday and



Monday's racing. After an earlier than planned Monday morning prize giving, a number of the fleet stayed on in the club to watch the storm progress and, unfortunately, the sinking of *Hat Trick* on her mooring, as the tide was too low to allow a launch to leave the pontoon and carry out any pumping. I'm happy to report that *Hat Trick* was safely recovered later in the week and is now back racing.

After *Easter Flame Again* raced in San Remo, finishing ninth out of 33 boats in the Italian Dragon Cup and stayed there for the Spring Dragon Cup as well where they finished eighth. Meanwhile, eight dragons participated in the first (and thus far only) mini series of the year in the mouth of the Roach in shifty winds. After an early lunch break to shift the course, *Avalanche* with two firsts finished first with *Quicksilver VI* in second and *Danish Blue* in third. *Avalanche* then continued their winning streak by winning the Karl Marx trophy over the May Bank holiday weekend and the Whitsun regatta.

Despite French fuel strikes, thunderstorms and very little of the usual La Baule sunshine, *Scorpio* and *Storm* (and a few 'extra' AWOL crew) joined 35 other boats to enjoy the usual French hospitality (including a wonderful langoustine



lunch) in La Baule. Unfortunately a frayed runner meant Storm only managed twenty-second overall, with *Scorpio* finishing tenth. Storm made up for their disappointing La Baule result by finishing third on countback in Deauville a few weeks later.

Five boats travelled to Abersoch to take part in the Northern Championships and Edinburgh Cup. The event was characterised by 'interesting wave patterns and strong winds' and all was not plain sailing as this quote indicates: 'Dragons are not fast when they are full of water and on the verge of sinking, but it does bring out the best in the boat's crew, I have rarely seen such strong work with buckets and plastic bottles!' Well done to *Quicksilver VI* who finished seventh in the Edinburgh Cup, with *Beauty and the Beast* fourteenth, *Storm* eighteenth, *Full Speed* (sailed by Teresa Wilkes) twenty-seventh and *Humoresque* who finished thirtieth in their first ever event off the Crouch.



Next on the agenda was the Patricia Burnett trophy for the crews race which consisted of two back to back town courses with the helms being reminded how hard their crew work every race. The first race was won by Alex Burnett in *Scorpio*, with the second, and therefore the trophy going to Andrew Norden (Noddy) in *Avalanche*. That evening, to allow the helms to compare notes about how tiring crewing is and crews to discuss whether or not they enjoy helming, the fleet got together for a barbecue, although music was banned by our host!

It was then on to Cowes week for *Ganador* where they won one race, finishing eighth overall. At the same time, was the annual trip to Belgium with *Storm* and *Quicksilver VI* racing in the Brugse Zot and *Flame Again* joined them for the Belgian National Championship. The first day of racing was lost due to too much wind, but each of the Burnham boats made up for the lay day with a bullet by the end of the fourth race. After seven races *Quicksilver VI* finished

second, losing her Belgian title in the last race, with *Storm* in sixth and *Flame Again* in fifteenth.

Meanwhile, the Crouch was graced with a visit from the very elegant Snehvit, a 1936 dragon lovingly restored to her original beauty, complete wooden mast and boom, a two-berth cabin, lockers and optics. Although fitted out for cruising she did take part in two races with Katie Cole, who had been responsible for the rigging and sailing fit out, crewing.

Next was Burnham Week, which was characterised by light wind and sunshine, except for the bit of a blow on the first and last days. Eleven boats, including *Tarakona* (Hugh Howard, visiting from down under's new boat) raced over the bank holiday weekend with *Wish* finishing first. Midweek was won by *Pageboy XI* with two firsts and two seconds. The final Saturday had the fleet rounding Outer Crouch twice in strong wind and big seas (for a river) before *Beauty and the Beast* won the Telegraph Cup.

Over in France, *Storm* took part in the French National Championship and finished their travelling season on a high note with a second overall out of fifty boats.

Closer to home, six boats joined fifteen other competitors for a very late East Coast Championship in Medway. The Burnham boats certainly made their presence known as the final result was *Quicksilver VI* in third (and first Corinthian), *Avalanche* in fourth, *Beauty and the Beast* in fifth, *Scorpio* in sixth, *Ganador* in eighth and *Flame Again* in fifteenth.

As I write this report, the fleet is looking forward to the further four weeks of sailing which include the final mini series of the season, competition for four more trophies, our end of season dinner, and of course the presentation of the infamous Clanger. So concludes another busy year on the water for our fleet, with much success, particularly for those racing away from home. Last but not least, a thank you to everyone who has been racing on our 'muddy little ditch' this year, whether local or visitor, and should you be passing Burnham at any time we would love you to join us, either racing or socialising!





Having just completed a very successful East Coast Championship at Medway, it is now time to reflect on the three days of good company and some great racing. The fleet consisted of visitors from Belgium, Abersoch, Burnham and the Solent as well as affiliated, and a good turnout from Medway. Race Officer Richard Stone had the task of keeping 20 enthusiastic racers entertained and he did a great job. Friday the first day delivered four races and it soon became obvious that Quentin Strauss (aka Q) with *Gorgeous Worgeous* and Tom Vernon with *Badger* were the guys to beat. There were two other professional teams Ian Gray in *Scapio* as well as Peter Marchant and Katie Cole in *Beauty and the Beast*. Corinthian sailors Rob Campbell in *Quicksilver VI*, and Mark and Mandy Wade in *Avalanche* were right up there at the end of day one with four races still to go.

Day two saw the fleet waiting for two hours to get on the water, then most were towed four miles down-river to the start line. By midday a very reasonable F4 to 5 enabled two races to move the event on. Q continued to dominate, Ian Gray port-tacked the fleet to win a race as he demonstrated Elvstrom's training from a few years ago.

The Regatta Dinner saw ninety sit down to a most enjoyable evening of fare, with entertaining speeches from Colin Weston - MYC Commodore, Steven Vermeire - President of The Belgian Dragon Association and Mark Gail - Vice Commodore MYC.

Day three saw some of the best champagne sailing, with two superb races to complete the event prior to returning to MYC to see all the visitors lifted out in 100 minutes by the club's proficient dry sailing team headed up by Bosun, Steve Porter and directed by Philip Clarabut.

Line honours went to MYC's Quentin Strauss, followed by Tom Vernon from the Solent. The Corinthian first prize Half Model to Rob Campbell, followed by Mark and Mandy Wade with the Deuxieme Prix MYC Salver, both boats from RCYC Burnham.

The Medway Yacht Club's EDCD team thoroughly enjoyed the event and I really appreciated their massive input and support. I hope that we will be asked to stage a repeat in the next few years.

What a difference a year makes! It has been great to see MYCs weekly numbers move up from the 2015 lows of 5 or 6 boats to current ranges of 8 to 10 on the MYC line. The highest was nine weeks ago when Race 15 saw 12 of our current 13 boat fleet cross the line.

So what's changed? We still have a great level of enthusiasm

and competitive spirit with a hard-core of five or six boats, this has been enhanced by the return of *Gandalf* and *Royalist*, plus the arrival of *Anarchy* and the re-launching of *Ithaca* (who actually won the race on her first outing this year!).

So can we continue the growth? Well there are a couple of opportunities. Firstly, I can welcome Ben Hancock, an ex-Solent member and Class Captain who has recently brought his boat *Asa* from Northern Ireland. She currently resides in Jaspar Wright's barn to undergo some work and hopefully start racing with us next year. *Asa* is a wooden boat so it looks as if 'The Right Royal Red Boat' *Royalist* GBR 455, will have some competition. I am very pleased to see that Quentin Strauss and family have re-joined MYC, so Q is now racing under the MYC burgee.

Attention has also been focussed on Heiko Schupp who is rumoured to be looking at a serious upgrade, with a more recent boat. This might leave the possibility of GBR 494 being used as a development boat (with a bit of help from The Class and MYC) to encourage others to join in the action and have a go at racing a Dragon.

On the travelling front this season, we have seen *OCD* and *Anarchy* at La Baule, *Fit Chick* at Ostend, and *FLOSS* in Holland. There has been less travelling this year which may have contributed to our higher weekend numbers.

## Results for the year so far

The Proton Cup, The Dragon Flagon and MYC Regatta were won by *Fit Chick*.

The John Field Trophy won by *OCD*.

The MAD Weekend Salver by *Suti* and as I write this, next Saturday will see the final results for the season.

This will probably be my last report before I step down as Class Captain in January 2017. The last four years have been good fun and at times very demanding. I struggle to remember how Pepita and I managed to do so much in my previous captaincy without emails and the internet. David Harris hopefully will be taking over from me and I wish both he and Susan good luck and every success in 2017/18. It is fascinating to see the continuation of Dragon racing by our younger members, charged with enthusiasm and the fun of being a Dragon owner and/or racer, so long may that continue!

*Bruce Boyd*

Medway Dragon Fleet Captain

# DRAGON PEOPLE!





# Solent Fleet Round-up

IN MANY RESPECTS Owen Pay and his irrepressible wife Josy are the Solent Fleet but after years as fleet captain Owen has stepped down. At one time or another Owen has been on nearly every British Dragon Association committee and it was very moving to see this recognised when Tim Wilkes presented Owen with a framed picture of Dragon K1 during the Edinburgh Cup regatta in Abersoch. Luckily Owen and Josy are still very active with the fleet. Filling Owen's shoes – actually and metaphorically very large – we have a committee of myself, Oliver Morgan as fleet captain, Simon Barter as vice-captain, Francesca Morgan as secretary and Mark Hart as treasurer. We have a hard act to follow.

The splendid summer weather provided a vintage Cowes Week, which is the highlight of our year, but from May to October Solent based Dragon Sailors enjoyed a wonderful year of competitive sailing with regular racing organised each weekend by the various clubs in Cowes. Huge thanks to them and all involved.

Racing began April 30th with fears that the fleet would have been badly reduced by the tragic fire in January that resulted in the loss of so many boats. Whilst five Dragons were destroyed, including an irreplaceable classic owned by Martin Payne new boats were obtained, rigged and ready for the season.

By the end of May it was Simon Barter and his team in Bertie who were dominating the results. The weather in June lead to cancellations but by then boats were being prepared for the Northern Championship and Edinburgh Cup in Abersoch. *Bertie*, *Furious*, *Christianna* and *Jerboa* made the trip north but sadly Graham and Julia Bailey were unable to join us to defend their consecutive Edinburgh Cup wins of 2014 and 2015. The welcome in Abersoch was superb and we enjoyed a very testing regatta with *Jerboa* best placed in

6th followed by *Bertie*, *Christianna* and *Furious*.

Back in Cowes the South Coast Championship was held 16th -17th July and beautifully organised, both on and off the water, by the Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club – vice commodore our very own Dave Ross. A fleet of 10 enjoyed a very competitive regatta in perfect conditions. Graham and Julia Bailey dominated in the new *Aimee* with five 1st and a 2nd whilst Gavia Wilkinson Cox and battled it out for 2nd with Tom Vernon with *Gavia* taking second by a single point. Many thanks to the CCYC team.

The Household Division Yacht Club regatta run from the Royal Yacht Squadron on 30th July took place in very light winds where patience and kedging won the day. The substantial silverware was won by the Baileys and team *Aimee*.

Cowes Week in August was vintage with almost perfect weather and excellent courses. The home fleet was joined by Stavros and team *Bear*, Gillian Hamilton and Chris Brittain, the well-travelled Mike and Monique Hayles with *Naiad* and Martin Makey with Tim and Teresa Wilkes in *Ganador*. That maestro of the Solent Eric Williams with his top girl team of Jo Richardson and Katie Cole joined us as well as John Mellows in *La Traviata* and Bill Daniels sailing the 56 year old classic *Mistress Buddha* made a rare appearance on the first weekend helming the new boat *Sanka* that he co-owns with Dave Ross and with two second places proved he has not lost his touch. Ultimately the overall winners of the week were the Baileys, followed closely by Stavros in *Bear* ahead of *Jerboa* and *Ecstatic* with *Bertie* in 5th place.

No Cowes Week would be complete without the Sunday Night Party at the RORC – formerly the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club Cowes. This year's Olympian theme was interpreted as



loosely as ever. Celebrating the efforts and achievements of our National Sailing Squad saw several horses(!), dodgy Russian doctors and Gods down from Mount Olympus. A great evening and many thanks to the RORC.

The third IDA Corinthian Cup was run during the first five days of Cowes Week thanks to the Royal London Yacht Club who very generously also extended temporary membership to the Dragon fleet. Ten of the teams taking part in the week were Corinthian. Unsurprisingly the Baileys took first place followed by Simon Barter in Bertie and Martin Makey in *Ganador*.

After the intensity of Cowes week we take a break with racing starting again September, which often provides the best conditions of the year. The season ends with the October Cup won this year by Charles Street and Bill Daniels in *Chime*.

**Masts down, covers on** the Dragons are either wintering in their barns or heading south to Cannes or Cascais for the winter season but all of us will be back early in 2017 to prepare for some great events. Put them in your diary, plan a south coast tour and join us in the Solent next year:

**South Coast Championship and Edinburgh Cup**

8 – 15th July 2017

The regatta will be run by the RORC. We have berthing in the north basin of the Cowes Yacht Haven. Running concurrently with Cowes Classic week this should be spectacle not to be missed.

**Household Division Yacht Club Annual Regatta**

22nd July 2017 (TBC)

**Cowes Week** 28th July – 4th August 2017

*Oliver Morgan* Class Captain

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# 2016 Edinburgh Cup – Abersoch

Hosted by South Caernarfonshire Yacht Club

Supported by Gwynedd Council 'Wales 2016 Year of Adventure – Snowdonia Mountains and Coast'

Being invited and trusted by the BDA to host their Northern Championship and cherished Edinburgh Cup is a big deal. Hosting the championship is the most important element to a Dragon Fleet Captain in building and sustaining a healthy Dragon fleet. And there's a bonus; Believe it or not, as the competitors drift away, the dedicated and fabulous host team, who worked so hard, get to sit back and think 'wow, that was such a good laugh – let's do it again!'

The Championship attracts a great gang of boys and girls who require no counselling, guidance or encouragement to be good company, a bunch of people polished in the art of having fun ashore, they give it everything they've got on the water, and the best gets to win – it's a rock solid formula.

So, every championship is different, what did this one come up with?

The event was made possible thanks to invaluable Gwynedd council support – we were included as part of 'The Wales 2016 Year of Adventure' ... and what an adventure

The week started with 31 boats on the start line for the Northern Championships held on Sunday and Monday. The first day of Champagne sailing in light airs allowed the lightweight team *Rackham* to take the overnight lead with a 1st and two 2nds, although *Louise* and *Alfie* were hot on their heels having also both won a race on Sunday. Monday brought the wind, which gave *Louise* and *Alfie* the opportunity to prove they are all round fast sailors, unfortunately the *Rackham* team need to eat a few more pies and couldn't quite keep up. After two firsts for *Alfie* and one first for *Louise* on Monday; *Alfie* and *Louise* were equal on points, with *Alfie* taking the top of the podium on count back. Final Northern results – 1st *Alfie*, 2nd *Louise* and 3rd *Rackham*.

Edinburgh Cup racing started on Tuesday with a return of the sunshine and four additional boats arriving from Japan and Ireland. *Alfie* and *Louise* however continued to show the fleet how to race in Abersoch bay taking a race each, which left *Alfie* with the overnight lead on Tuesday.



Wednesday saw a rather overeager fleet taking three starts to finally get away and a few boats black flagged, however *Lawrie* and team continued their master class of how to sail a Dragon and took the first race, with local boat *Harry* leading from start to finish of a very tricky shifty second race.

On Wednesday night *Tim Wilkes* took full advantage of his position as BDA Chairman to recognise, thank and award *Owen* and *Josy Pay* for their hundreds of years support for the Dragon class at the 60th Anniversary bash - lots and lots of bubbly hosted on *Pat Kearns*' lawn, overlooking Abersoch Bay, during Edinburgh Cup Week. *Owen's* reaction – tears of joy! *Owen* is a seriously good lad – it was *Owen*, then BDA Chairman, and *Josy's* guidance, encouragement and enthusiasm that underpinned the successful re-birth of the Abersoch Dragon fleet. It was *Owen* and *Josy* who worked with a few of us Abersoch yachters who decided to give it a go and buy half a dozen boats – *Owen* and *Josy*, please take a bow!



*Louise, Rackham and Phantom.*

After lots of Champagne on Wednesday night, there was no Champagne sailing left for Thursday, just a very wet and windy day. Despite the lousy weather *Neil Hegarty* in *Phantom* managed to find the buoys through the mist and took line honours ahead of *Lawrie Smith* and *Mike Budd*. Sadly the crews then lost interest in doing the typical Edinburgh Cup 'Crews Race' in 20+ knot winds, I suspect to the relief of the committee boat, so the fleet all went home early to hide from the stormy weather.

Going into the final day *Lawrie Smith* and his team in *Alfie* held the lead, with *Grant Gordon (Louise)* in second and local *Mike Budd (Harry)* in third. Whilst the *Alfie* team played their tactics well and stuck with team *Louise* throughout the day to maintain their first overall, team *Harry* managed to sneak through and take line honours in the final race. This meant that *Louise* and *Harry* were equal on points with *Louise* taking second place on count back.

Left: Downwind action in brisk conditions.

The championship was blessed with plenty of wind and sea. Malcolm Blackburn as PRO made it look so easy as his team delivered a championship of hard fought and competitive sailing.

Lawrie Smith and team *Alfie* electing to include the Abersoch hosted Edinburgh Cup in their ram packed race schedule was a real plus. Lawrie, Joost Houweling and Adam Bowers didn't just turn up – they were first class company ashore, and fought tooth and nail to overcome the single minded challenge from Grant Gordon and *Louise* with Kasper Harsberg and Ruairidh Scott.



*Team Alfie.*

Mike Budd is no slouch in any sailing boat or championship. Third on count back in the over all results, in *Harry* with Jeremy Entwistle and Doctor Grebo (Mark Greeves) grabbed the Corinthian Edinburgh Cup Trophy with both hands and a big smile. Not only did Budd's team have their eye on the over-all championship, they had to contend with the Dicker's in *Rackham* with their cousin James Campbell snapping at their heels in every race.

Team *Rackham* won the Vintage division – so the Dicker's are clear proof, with their 20+ year old Peticrow's flying machine, you do not need a brand new boat to compete for the podium and the championship.....a well and correctly prepared boat, determination and a lorry (pun intended) load of talent puts the ultimate goal within reach – victory!

A very big thank you from me and the Abersoch fleet to all our guests who made the not inconsiderable effort to join us.



*The Japanese Team's distinctive crew-wear.*

That's that. Let's look to 2017 it's all about Oliver Morgan's Solent fleet team hosting the 2017 Edinburgh Cup – I, and ten Abersoch teams will be there. Looking forward to it? I know I am!

*Rob Riddell*



# Cowes Week 2016

This year's Cowes Week also included the 3rd Corinthian Cup which saw some of the best UK teams battle it out in a variety of conditions over eight wonderful sailing days on the Solent... Of the 14 experienced teams, just three were non Corinthians.

After successful Corinthian Cup events in France 2014 and Germany 2015 it was the UK's chance to host this relatively new event counting five races within the eight during the long week, this proved very popular amongst the competitors.

From the opening three races it was obvious who were the 'team' to beat... Once again it was the experienced and extremely well drilled crew from *Aimee* helmed by Graham Bailey who threw down the gauntlet to the rest of the fleet as they started with all guns blazing! Graham guided his four person crew (which had a variety of changes during the week) to three victories over the opening three days, an amazing start. This left the rest of us mere 'mortals' scratching our heads wondering how we could stop this genius from working his local magic :-)

However, on Tuesday, day four of the regatta, it was the Burnham-on-Crouch team led by Martin Makey helming *Ganador* crewed by our BDA Chairman Tim Wilkes and his lovely Wife Teresa who stopped *Aimee's* run by winning convincingly after leading the three hour race from start to finish. This victory was extremely well deserved as the *Ganador* team used their boat speed and navigational expertise to full advantage over the demanding course that incorporated eight turning marks within the Solent.



Team *Ganador*: Tim Wilkes, Teresa Wilkes and Martin Makey.

On day five it was business as usual with *Aimee* once again back in control at the front of the fleet. However, their 10th position the previous day meant nothing could be guaranteed as the Corinthian Cup had no discards and the overall Cowes Week only discarded after seven races! So although Graham, sailing with his wife Julia and a variety of crew, was well placed everything was most certainly still in the balance.

Day six was a great day for my team on the *Bear*. Sailing with Chris Brittain and Gillian Hamilton we managed to get a few lucky breaks around the course and kept the rest of the chasing pack behind. It was pleasing to win this particular race (Thursday) as it was one of the Royal Yacht Squadron's days, thus the Trophy is presented during the week, which is always a nice bonus :-)



Myself, Gillian and Chris taken at the RYS Prize Giving (Friday) during Cowes Week.

With race seven (Friday) being the final race day of the Corinthian Cup it was imperative that team *Aimee* scored well as they were under pressure from both Simon Barter helming *Bertie* and Martin Makey in *Ganador*. Needless to say

when the pressure is on, the cream always rises to the top and once again Graham Bailey sailed extremely well to win the race and secure the Corinthian Cup for himself, wife Julia and their excellent team...



The Corinthian Winners – Dylan Potter, Libby Deegan, Julia Bailey, David Cagney, Graham Bailey and Francesca Morgan.

The 8th and final race was a real *Teaser* as even though *Aimee* held a comfortable lead, for the overall Cowes title, they could still be overtaken by the chasing *Bear*... :-) Although very unlikely, mathematically it was still possible and as we all know in yacht racing... It's never over till it's over. Just to prove the point, team *Aimee* managed to put their spinnaker completely over the bow at the leeward turning mark and sail from the front of the fleet to the back! This allowed team *Bear* to take full advantage and sail into a comfortable lead. Needing to win the race and hope that *Aimee* could do no better than 7th, the *Bear* pressed on covering

Simon Barter and his team from *Bertie* winners of Race 8.





Bear GBR 789 leads the pack off the start line in Cowes.

the fleet up the North shore passed and beyond the Beaulieu River... It certainly gained Graham Bailey's attention, if only for a short period... as team *Aimee* retrieved their kite and battled back up through the fleet... Simon Barter helming *Bertie* had a tremendous final beat and managed to win the final race, with the *Bear* close behind. However, team *Aimee* (helm Graham Bailey) finished a comfortable 3rd place and so took the Overall Title from *Bear* (helm Stavros) in 2nd and *Jerboa* (helm Gavia Wilkinson-Cox) in 3rd place.

In closing this was most certainly one of the best Cowes Weeks I have ever sailed. My warmest congratulations go to the winning team *Aimee* who showed excellent skill and tactical awareness throughout the week. Graham Bailey is a fantastic sailor and a true gentleman both on and off the water. Team *Aimee* thoroughly deserved this well orchestrated victory... :-)

Higher, Faster, Longer... *Stavros*



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# The Brown's 'European Tour' 2016 .....

OUR YOUNGEST SON JONO has been racing with us, his parents David and Lyn, for over ten years now and the three of us, having enjoyed some success in the RS Elite Class and with David hankering after a Dragon for many years, five years ago, purchased GBR 770 *Storm* to race in Burnham-on-Crouch.

It was a huge shock to all of us to find that we couldn't just step into a Dragon and be competitive and after the first two years, we almost gave up. Then an opportunity arose which we found irresistible. Jono had decided to take himself back to university with a view to changing career direction. He sold us the idea of taking a few months sabbatical prior to starting university enabling us as a family team to spend the summer on what would become our European Road Trip with *Storm* in tow.

What a summer it turned out to be. At the end of 2015 we had finally concluded that we were never going to be competitive with three people crewing as we were about 60 kg underweight. So, we made the decision that if all three of us lost a little weight we could bring a fourth person on board for 2016. It was a steep learning curve but it has proved with practice and work the right thing for us.

**Early May.** The year started in Douarnenez, France where we enjoyed the experience of our first Grade 1 event, with 46 boats and racing against some amazing teams, we also benefitted from what we learnt about the Dragon. Jono took the opportunity to speak to as

many of the top sailors as were willing to speak to him, and he took full advantage picking their brains absorbing as much information as he could. A lot of changes were made during and after Douarnenez and our education in racing the boat had begun. We lost two full days racing due to lack of wind, however the two days we did race meant we were able to start putting into practice some of the knowledge we had gleaned. We finished 29th overall but we were around some established teams in the rankings so were encouraged and eager to get to the next event.

**End of May.** Off we went to La Baule, France where we left *Storm* for three weeks ready for the next event. Despite headlines of fuel shortages and blockades of fuel terminals we set off to France duly stocked up with spare diesel and with a promise from Yacht Club La Baule that they would see we had sufficient fuel to get us home. 37 boats made it to the Derby Dragon and yet again, as is the nature of sailing, day one was lost to no wind, thunder and mist, but the compensation was an excellent langoustine lunch.

Day two had four attempted starts, but only two races as the first start saw an over enthusiastic fleet recalled and a restart under a black flag and then the final race was abandoned due to a huge wind shift. *Storm* had two reasonable races under its belt with a fifth place in the first race and we finished the day as first Corinthian. The third day was breezy with 20 knots plus we had a solid 12th place in the first race of the day but just as we started the

second race one runner started to fray rapidly and we made the call to retire. Sadly a third race was put into the mix meaning we were carrying a DNF and a DNC. The fourth and final day was typical of La Baule with light and shifty winds. Boats moved up and down the fleet on each leg depending where the wind filled in. *Storm* put in a 3rd and a 16th, both reasonable results and the boat appeared to be going fast so we were happy even through our overall standing at 22nd was not perhaps indicative of how we were racing.



**Mid June.** On then to Deauville for a smaller regatta but one, which had been recommended to us to find our feet in and with 21 boats and some excellent sailors in the mix, we were hopeful of a good event. Conditions were testing and at the end of the event only two points separated the top three boats with Poul Ricard Hoj Jensen winning with 10 points and *Storm* and *Hybris* helmed by Reiner Wissenraet on 12 points. *Storm* took third place overall on count back. This regatta more than any perhaps started to make us think that improvements were starting to come to the fore and the dynamics on the boat were starting to even out with our new routines slipping into place and becoming more natural. There was certainly less shouting involved than before, though with any boat that has family members racing together it is always an interesting mix. Our fourth crew members quickly learnt that what is said and what happens on the boat stays on the boat – even if sometimes you have to get back aboard to make a final point!!

**Early July.** We then made the trip back to the UK to Abersoch in north Wales for the Edinburgh Cup. Several people had warned us of big seas and howling wind and let's just say they weren't wrong with



## ..... by Lyn Brown

between 10 and 23 knots across the 12 races with gusts reaching well beyond that at times. The confused sea and thick fog added to the general feeling of 'why are we here' and the crew of *Storm* were definitely not completely at ease with this event. Once again *Storm* had a couple of good results but managed to carry a DNF and DNC due to the equipment failure so a disappointing regatta for us finishing in 18th place but still we came away feeling we had gained something.

**End July/Beginning August.** It was therefore with some relief that we headed back to the continent and the Belgium Nationals and the Ostend Cup in Ostend. Again we were warned about big seas and tooth rattling wind but to be honest, after Abersoch, it would have taken something really scary to put us off!! We raced for the Ostend Cup at the Royal North Sea Yacht Club in near perfect 'champagne sailing' conditions. Ben Van Cauwenbergh won the event and we took third place overall in this 'warm up' event for the Belgian Nationals.



The opening day of the Belgian Nationals saw 28 knots across the racecourse and mountainous seas, which kept everyone ashore so the crews enjoyed the customary Belgian hospitality of Brugse Zot beer instead. At the end of day two with three races completed *Storm* had started slowly with a 15 and a 5, but an OCS for the third race yet again left us lagging behind. We were starting to feel a familiar situation building with no room for error once again. Day three kicked off with a steady breeze and the opening race saw us lead from the off to take line honours which gave us all a huge boost and a sense of 'we can do this'. Race six was abandoned after the wind died on the final beat, so after the discard kicked in *Storm* had moved up to sixth place.

We were starting to feel hopeful of a top ten finishing result. On the final day the championship was being raced for by other boats, so we concentrated on keeping the boat moving and upright and aimed for consistency whilst others battled it out. Our tactics worked and we put in a third place which brought us well into contention for our hoped for top ten position.

The championships finally came down to the last race of the day, and with the strongest winds of the event, only 15 out of the 27 boats remained on the water. We were much more confident in these conditions after Wales and after two hair-raising spinnaker runs, the Bakker family in *Elephant* secured the event but amazingly we had finished the event in 6th place overall. We were ecstatic and felt we had put in the best performance of the year so far. All of our hard work and time afloat was starting to pay off.

Early September. So, off we went to the Dutch National Championships at Muiden. After the challenges of the high winds and big seas we were confronted by no tide and light and variable winds. Another challenge completely, but for 'pond sailors' such as ourselves, learning our 'craft' on the backwaters of the Norfolk Broads, we were up for the change of pace.

38 boats competed over six races and *Storm* managed to put in six consistent results which meant that we finished this event in fifth place overall and once again we were greatly encouraged by our performance.

End September. The 38th Régates Royale and the French National Championships in Cannes. What better place to put everything we had learnt during the year into practice. Fifty Dragons racing over five days with ten races to complete and just one discard.

This was our hardest test of the year in that we had high expectations of ourselves and decided that our goal was a top ten result. No heroics, no disasters and no protests. No black flags, no OCS, no run-ins with the jury boats. Most importantly Jono told his mother she mustn't fall



overboard at any time as I have been known to do occasionally.

What happened over the next five days was nothing short of amazing for all four of us.

We went into the final day in second place with only seven points separating us from the leader RUS 27 and being pursued by several top teams with only a handful of points between us all. The final day saw two nerve wracking races with places changing on every leg and at one point, following another huge wind shift, Jono found himself in fifteenth place but, holding his nerve even if his crew were emotional wrecks by this point, pulled off a brilliant beat taking eight boats in the process.

The event was won by RUS 27 *Annapurna* helmed by Anatoly Loginov, the current European Champion, with Vadim and Alexander but we then pushed all the way. So in the end we secured second place overall holding off the pursuing Dragons leaving *Gunter* helmed by Javier Scherk, with Gustavo & Paulo in third place. Our most impressive and amazing result this year and one which we are still trying to believe we pulled off.

We had the most amazing year sailing and are back at work now wondering if we can escape a few times next year to race within this truly great fleet. The camaraderie from both the Corinthians and the Professionals towards us and especially to Jono has been wonderful. A great fleet, a wonderful class and we can't wait for 2017 to try again.

**Jono, David and Lyn Brown with team members Fred Brown, Dave Hudson and James Howard**

# WINTERISING YOUR

Owning and maintaining a Dragon can be expensive. Obviously nothing prepares your boat for the season ahead like a service from a professional but if you follow some simple rules you could save yourself a lot of money and aggravation, not to mention those untimely breakages during the season.

Before you finish sailing for the season try to make a list of anything that is not quite right, that way you will remember they need doing or to tell your professional.

## THE FRESHWATER WASH

Salt is a killer for your equipment, a good soaking with freshwater will make a huge difference to the working and longevity of your kit. A pressure washer is a great thing; it will remove a lot of imbedded grime but do be careful on your teak as you can do a lot of damage if you get too close.

Don't be afraid to use soap – a hot soapy wash is a bonus if you don't mind getting stuck in. Using a soft bristle brush around all those fittings on the mast step and traveller beam will work a treat. Once you have done an initial wash and given all your blocks and ropes a good soaking you can now get busy with a good old fashioned hose pipe. There really is no substitute for holding a hose on all your cleats, cars (especially the mainsheet car) and blocks whilst you run ropes round blocks, move cars back and forth and move cleat jaws open and closed to really flush them through well, you will straight away start to feel them moving easier. The salt and silt builds up in the voids of cleats (see picture 1) and really needs to be flushed out.



If you have a spinnaker chute you should make sure you give the hatch tracks a good wash too, not forgetting the little sheaves that sit under the hatch that the rope runs round. Also check for any holes in the material chute and get them repaired if possible, they will only get bigger and jam up the spinnaker when dropping! While you have your head in there check all around the grp

part of the chute as any damage here will damage your spinnaker, tape is not a sufficient repair here, it should be repaired properly. (see picture 2)



Open the hatches! Yes, there is something beyond that hatch that has been getting salty and sweating all season. Do it all a favour and give it a wash, even if you can't bring yourself to climb inside with a bucket and soapy sponge, at least make an effort to squirt a hose or pressure washer up there. Some hatch clips can be troublesome, giving them lots of water will help. Again, open and close them whilst holding the hose on and you will have much more effect. Leave the hatches off and it can all dry out over the winter.

Having done all of this it is a good time to clean the electric pump. Remove the pump from the housing and clean all debris from around the impeller shaft. While you are down there do your best to remove any rubbish from the bilges – you will be surprised what you will find – sunglasses, that penknife that 'disappeared', money, bottle tops, cable ties..... Now you can put some nice clean water down there and use both the electric pump and manual pump which will flush them through. This will also alert you if there is a problem with any of the pumps and you can sort it out before you put the boat to bed for the winter.

Your spars get the hardest time with the salt. The aluminium, salt and stainless together will do their best to ruin them. Wash them all down with plenty of fresh water from a hose, a pressure washer just won't get into the fittings where you need it. Also flush the boom through on the inside and leave it on its end to drain.

I must emphasize you cannot spend too long washing your boat, it will give you payback in the long run. This doesn't have to be just a winter job, any time you get throughout the season you should give it a thorough wash. If mine lived in a marina and not on a mooring she would get washed after every race,

as it is it gets done once a month when she comes ashore.

## THINGS TO CHECK

### Trailer

The trailer is an important piece of equipment and is often overlooked, but we do want the boat to make it to storage safely. At the very least have a quick look at the tyres and make sure they are not perished and that there are no cuts in the side walls. Check the pressures as they will have lost about 10psi over a season! It is well worth thinking about getting a trailer service, particularly if the brakes have not been looked at for a while and especially if you travel.

### The Hull

To keep her looking good get any damage repaired, all those little chips and scuffs are easier and cheaper to keep on top of if you deal with them regularly. Any smooth gelcoat surfaces should be given a polish and finished with a coat of wax to help protect against UV. It goes without saying that any damage you get to the underwater surfaces should be dealt with sooner rather than later, especially if it goes beyond the gelcoat as water will travel through glass (or between the glass and the keel) and make a much bigger job of the repair when it eventually is done.

### Inside the Boat

Check and lubricate all blocks, cleats and sheaves, not forgetting the hatch track and sheaves mentioned earlier. Yes there are blocks beyond the hatches and it will be worth you going into the darkness to do the same to them. At this point I should mention that you should avoid using oil based products as the oil will catch the salt and make a grinding paste and eventually clog up the ball bearings. I would recommend McLube or Holt Prolube for this. Carry a cloth with you whilst doing this to wipe off any excess, otherwise you can end up with a white residue which will be hard to remove later.

Let off all systems with shockcord takeaways to 'relax' the shockcord.

Replace any ropes, blocks or shockcords that are worn out. Especially check the runners/ backstay and their blocks up in the back tank and again where they come through the bulkhead – most important with wire runners as they give the blocks a hard time.

Something that is easy to miss is the tiller extension joint, lift the extension all the way forwards and check the rubber joint for splits, replace if necessary.

If you have a continuous furling line it will most likely need replacing. They shrink over the season and generally do 1.5 seasons before the crew start complaining about skinning their knuckles and the skipper complaining about how slow the furl is!

Any cleats on aluminium plates such as under the cuddy have a habit of collecting salt between the cleat and the aluminium (see picture 3) This 'grows' over time and will eventually stop the cleat from working. The same goes for the ratchet block on the winchless system. If the block does not run freely there will probably be a large amount of corrosion under the rubber and you need to get it cleaned up.



Check all rings, pins and shackles. Also check the mast ram area on the front of the cuddy, it is not uncommon for the stainless steel fitting to split.

If your mast sits on a single pin on the mast step you should remove the bolt and check it for signs of weakness. (See picture 4). Replace if necessary.



Check all of the connections on the electric pump and battery, any green on plugs is a warning sign and you should replace them. If it is possible you should take your battery home, charge it and keep it in the warm and dry through the cold months. If your battery case lends itself you should open the lid when charging to prevent condensation.

## SPARS

After washing and leaving to dry, all moving parts should be lubricated with McLube or Holt Prolube as mentioned

above. You can buy a special product to wipe onto the mast called 'Mast Care', that puts a protective coating on the outside of the mast, which is a good thing to do, especially before it gets stored for the winter months.

## Mast

Check for any loose fittings and refasten if necessary. Check all halyards and rigging for signs of damage or stress. A common place for rigging to fail is around the end fittings, check this closely. Some insurance companies request that your standing rigging should be changed every 5 years – check your documents. Also have a good look at the wire around the main halyard locking ball, if there are broken wires you should get the halyard shortened with a new ball or replace it. If you have a lead block for the spinnaker halyard up the top check this for wear and tightness. On the other end of the spinnaker halyard where it exits the mast at the bottom it is not uncommon for the mast to corrode especially around the lower rivet hole. This will result in the sheave pulling out of the mast just when you don't want it to. (see picture 5)



If you have an internal forestay system and you use your boat regularly it is recommended to replace the forestay every 2 years. It tends to be at the top where the forestay exits the tube that is the common problem here. If left until it breaks, you not only risk losing a race or worse, but it can be impossible to get the old wire out of the top bearing resulting in the need to replace the fitting in the mast which is a costly and timely job. Have a good look around the mast ram fitting, mainly checking for any cracking, this is a common place for a dragon mast to break. (see picture 6). You should take the foot off the mast from time to time as well, much debris will collect in here



over the season, left to sit there with the damp salty environment it will slowly but surely corrode your mast from the inside until you have no bottom left to your mast. (see picture 7)



When you come to pack your mast away, try to keep all of the rigging off the mast where you can, leaving stainless wires laying against the mast all winter will create a lot of corrosion. If you are lucky enough to have a mast cover you may have an inner sock, that should be put on the mast before anything else, then the rigging can tie to the outside of this, as it is to protect the mast, not to keep it warm! Failing that you can put some clean cloths or towels around the mast to prevent that contact if you want to.

## Spinnaker pole

Not much to check here but again have a good look over for any loose fittings, corrosion and replace anything that needs it.

## Boom

A good visual check of all fittings, ropes and elastics. Check the outhaul car bracket for looseness on the car. Now turn the boom over, the underside is where most of your problems will come from. The biggest problem you are likely to find here is splitting along the centreline of the boom where the mainsheet and kicker are fitted on.

The above information is a basic guide of some of the things that I look for when servicing a Dragon, but obviously different manufacturers/models will throw up different problems and weaknesses.

Hopefully this article will assist in keeping your Dragon in prime condition and I would like to take this opportunity in wishing you all the best for the festive season and look forward to seeing you on the water in 2017.

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# New production facilities and a brand new hull design for 2017

After outgrowing our old premises, we moved at the beginning of the year, and Peticrows new production facilities are back in full production.

## New hull design for 2017

Our new Dragon hull for 2017 promises to be our slipperiest yet. Not only have we utilised advanced hydro-dynamic CAD technology in its new design, but in contrast, we have also gone back in time and analysed the underwater shapes of some of the fastest historic race winners. Many of the secrets of these classic racers have also been incorporated into the new shape! 2017 Dragons will be available with traveller or Barney post, with or without spinnaker chute.

There are already a number of pre-orders under way for completion in early 2017.

## New to our range

The expansion of our new production facilities, now also allows us to build race winning Finn dinghies alongside our Dragon production lines. All overseen by MD Tim Tavinor, himself a successful Finn racer and long acknowledged as one of the world's finest ever Finn builders!



In addition to our new Finn range, we now apply our expertise in glass fibre production to build hulls for Rannoch Adventure Ocean Rowing specialists.

Serious Dragon sailors push their kit to the limit, so just in case you break anything, our legendary service team has also expanded its facilities and are on site as usual with ample spares at most major regattas.

If you are serious about winning, there's really only one choice – The new 2017 Peticrows Dragon.

Find out more online [www.peticrows.com](http://www.peticrows.com)



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