

2015



DRAGON NEWS 

BRITISH DRAGON ASSOCIATION



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CONTENTS

From the Chair	4-5
BDA Notices:	
Notes to Members	3
BDA Officers	3
Forthcoming Fixtures	5
AGM & Dinner	6
BDA Merchandise	6
Regattas:	
Edinburgh Cup	8-9
Gold Cup	14-15
Regates Royale	16-17
Venice Team Racing	18

Fleet Reports:	
Classic Fleet Report	6
Abersoch	7
Aldeburgh	10
Burnham	12-13
Medway	19
Solent	20-21
Articles:	
Brits Abroad	11
Growing Old Gracefully	23
From the Archives	23



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 timwilkes6@hotmail.com

As at December 2015 the membership structure and fees are as follows:

- i: An annual fee of £55 payable for each Dragon owned by a BDA member at the 31st March each year.
- ii: A fee of £55 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 £20 for each member payable on 31st March each year or on joining during a year.

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.

BDA Officers, Fleet Captains, Contact Details

Chairman	Ron James	07740 177038	r.james@company-doc.co.uk
With effect from 16.1.2016 and to be ratified at AGM	Tim Wilkes	07720 288100	timwilkes6@hotmail.com
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With effect from 16.1.2016 and to be ratified at AGM	Julia Bailey	07831 139090	julia.salt@planelegal.com
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Honorary Secretary	Tim Wilkes	07720 288100	timwilkes6@hotmail.com
With effect from 16.1.2016 and to be ratified at AGM	Selina Dicker	07818 423031	britishdragonsec@gmail.com
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Abersoch Fleet Captain	Rob Riddell	07816 059421	rob.riddell@hotmail.co.uk
Aldeburgh Fleet Captain	Rufus Gilday	07900 681542	rufus@gildays.com
Burnham Fleet Captain	Rene Nel	07956 867465	rmnel@mail.com
Irish Fleet Representative	Tim Pearson	00353-(0)87-2480-361	timothypearson@gmail.com
Medway Fleet Captain	Bruce Boyd	07860 536343	grahamboyd@btconnect.com
Solent Fleet Captain	Owen Pay	07813 963643	owen_pay@yahoo.co.uk

FROM THE CHAIR

Approaching the end of the chapter but not the end of the story

The chair I am sitting on to write this is at a table on the pavement in front of a cafe/bar on a mild autumn morning in Paris (*this was written before the atrocities were committed in Paris. Ed*). It was a Dragon, or rather Dragons that brought me to this elegant city and now I am using the time until Eurostar takes me home beneath the sea that is so often our playground. I came here to attend the IDA AGM but more of that later.

Having almost completed my two years as your Chairman, it is time to briefly look back but also to look forward. I have tried to guide the BDA in much the same way as I try to sail my Dragon, with a light touch on the helm, having some input into strategy and direction and with the crew doing most of the hard work and indeed, my BDA crew, the fellow officers, the class captains and classics representative, have worked tirelessly to deliver area and national championships of the quality you have come to expect, both on the race track and on shore. These events are written up elsewhere in the magazine, so I will not dwell on them, but I do wish to thank all those involved for everything they achieved, with a special mention to Patrick Gifford who has been the man behind the Aberdeen Asset Management sponsorship of the BDA and also arranged the sponsorship from Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust for the Edinburgh Cup. Patrick is becoming steadily less involved with the financial sector and makes the point himself that the BDA cannot continue to rely on his contacts for future sponsorship. We are most grateful to all our sponsors large and small and those who persuade them of our cause. Without sponsorship, membership fees and regatta entry fees would have to be higher and/or quality would fall, which could be the start of a downward spiral too grim to contemplate, so there is a vacancy for a person, or more likely people, to fill Patrick's shoes.

At the outset of my term, I had three personal objectives: to encourage the start of a new fleet of Dragons somewhere on the south coast; to reconnect with the dwindling fleet in Scotland and to help revive it and to leave the UK fleets in a no less a healthy state than when I started. Success has been mixed. Notwithstanding a most enjoyable Edinburgh Cup at Lymington, there is no sign of a new fleet forming there or anywhere else in the south. Although not a universally popular concept, especially with the Cowes fleet, I believe it still has merit. The south of England has by far the biggest reservoir of potential Dragon sailors and while I am delighted that the Solent fleet is again growing in numbers and in activity, there remain large numbers for whom living on the island is impractical and regularly travelling there to sail is unattractive. The reasonably close proximity of fleets like Forth and Clyde or Lowestoft and Aldeburgh, when we had them, was, if anything, beneficial and certainly the demise of the Lowestoft fleet did not lead to more Dragons in Aldeburgh. People are moving up from dinghies and down from campaigning big boats, which is more akin to running a hotel than racing and by not having a convenient Dragon fleet they can join, most will seek another class rather than another club. We are in my view missing a trick to build the Class, but sadly I do not have a magic wand to pass on to my successor.

On the other hand, holding the Edinburgh Cup in Largs did work.

Not only was it a good regatta at a club that went the extra mile to provide all we asked for and that would love to have us back, the three active Dragons from the Forth rejoined the BDA and participated in the event. Now there are four active boats in the Forth fleet and the Scottish Area Championship has also been revived and will be held in Edinburgh, a city every bit as elegant as Paris, in 2016. I know from experience that the Forth is a fine stretch of scenic uncluttered water with moderate and straightforward tides. Do support this event if you can and you are assured of a warm Scottish welcome.

The third objective, on average, has just about been met with, as noted, the Solent and Forth on the up and the Abersoch cost-controlled fleet is still proving popular and attracting talented converts, like Mike Budd, from other local classes. Mike has two Dragons, one for local events and another newer model he put to good effect coming second at Largs. Burnham remains a strong and lively fleet, but elsewhere numbers on the water have declined even where membership is static. Although there have been notable successes by GBR boats this year on the international scene (see "Brits Abroad" article) their number has also declined slightly. This slow reduction in the numbers sailing is not confined to parts of the UK. There are growing fleets in Turkey and classics in Palma and many other countries are stable but regatta entries, new sail sales and boats built and on order are all down, not catastrophically, but it's a trend. Reversing this trend pervaded the business of the IDA AGM. The prospect of having to choose between two candidates for IDA Chairman with their somewhat different views on the future development of the class, brought together the greatest number of attendees seen at an AGM and the recent debate between the two camps, one for a more professional organisation and regattas and the other with a more Corinthian approach, has brought about a much needed healthy discussion. In the end, shortly before the AGM, a compromise was reached between the candidates with one standing down in exchange for an agreed set of principles the other will implement, so no divisive vote was required.

The overwhelming view at the meeting, shared by you according to feedback we obtained from fleet captains and general soundings, was that we wish to compete against the best, whether professional or not, but on a level playing field. This was reflected in the resolutions that were passed or rejected or in some cases withdrawn. Key amongst these were rejecting an increase in the weight limit, approval for greater restriction on coach boats (no towing out and no contact from leaving the harbour until the last boat finishes the last race and remaining behind the start line throughout unless requested to help by the race officer), allowing two shorter races a day to be scheduled for every day at the Worlds and Europeans, but not allowing more than two per day to be sailed even if races are lost, rejection of a proposal to award the Gold Cup only to Corinthian Crews and the withdrawal of the Corinthian-only helms proposal. A proposal to prevent an owner having more than one boat in a race (to prevent team racing) was rejected on the grounds that the wording used would leave loopholes that could easily be used by those who wished

to cheat and that ISAF is currently reviewing this topic and will likely come up with better words. Likewise a proposal to ban, amongst other things, smart phones on board was rejected as impractical, though the use of GPS is still banned. It was suggested that anyone thought to be team racing or using GPS should be protested under Rule 2, which if proven, results in very heavy penalties. Both topics will be kept under review.

Amongst other topics discussed were how to attract new Dragon sailors, especially younger ones and the possibility of reducing substantially the cost of a new Dragon. Overall, the tide was with the Corinthian spirit and the future is brighter, but we all need to be vigilant to stop the takeover of the Class we love by a super-professional elite.

This last paragraph is rather like the ritual safety warning on aircraft flights, in that you expect it to be there and do not give it much consideration, but like those warnings, it is important and sincerely meant. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my fellow officers: to Nigel for taking on the treasurer position, one that is generally under-appreciated because it is relatively invisible, but when not undertaken

properly the ensuing crisis becomes highly visible, to Tim who as Secretary has shouldered the administrative burden of keeping the show on the road and who's advice has been invaluable and to Claire, until recently my Vice Chair, (I have praised her efforts on the website, but e-praise is ephemeral and Claire's contribution was anything but ephemeral and deserves more permanent recognition), to the class captains whose help and advice from the coal front is indispensable and to others who have stepped in and helped me when asked (you know who you are), thank you all. With Tim, who knows more about the UK Dragon history and culture than I shall ever know as Chairman elect, Julia, who knows more about sailing a Dragon fast than I shall ever learn, as Vice Chair elect, Selina, who knows more about the ways of youth than I shall ever comprehend, as Secretary elect, and with Nigel firmly holding the purse strings, the new committee will benefit from more female insight and a refreshing younger view, added to existing professionalism and wisdom. This chapter is almost done but the story goes on. I will contribute to the future of the Class in whatever way I can and will continue to sail the Dragon for as long as I am able, safe in the knowledge that the future of the BDA is in good hands.

Ron James

Forthcoming Fixtures

2016

Burnham Easter Regatta	Burnham on Crouch	25-28 March
The Northern Championships	Abersoch	2-4 July
The Edinburgh Cup	Abersoch	5-9 July
Panerai Classic Week	Cowes	11-15 July
Dragon Corinthian-Only (Classic Week 2016)	Cowes	16-23 July
The European Championships	St Petersburg, Russia	15-22 July
The South Coast Championships	Cowes	30-31 July tbc
Cowes Week	Cowes	6-13 August
The Gold Cup	Denmark	25 August-2 September
The Scottish & Classic Championships	Edinburgh, Scotland	27-29 August
The East Coast Championships	Medway	23-25 September

2017

BDA AGM & Dinner	London	13 January
The East Coast Championships	Levington tbc	May tbc
The Northern Championships	Windermere tbc	June tbc
The World Championships	Cascais, Portugal	June tbc
The South Coast Championships	Cowes	24-26 June
The Edinburgh Cup	Cowes	27 June-1 July
Cowes Week	Cowes	29 July-5 August
The European Championships	Lake Thun, Switzerland	14-19 Aug
The Gold Cup	La Grande Motte, France	tbc

Classic Fleet Report

THE BDA KNOWS OF THE WHEREABOUTS IN BRITAIN of about 45 classic Dragons, defined as carvel-planked boats, generally built before 1975. This is about 10% of those originally registered with a British sail number. We do also know of the whereabouts or fate of several among the 90% including some of those that were exported. Tim Wilkes and I are extremely willing to share our knowledge of these boats



Moonshine and Anarchy at Falmouth Week.

and to gather new information as it becomes available. In practice there are almost certainly several boats in Britain of whose ownership and location we are unaware. So, if anyone hears of a mysterious, roughly 30ft long, keel boat lurking in a shed or the back field (of dreams!) in a boatyard do let us know. It doesn't mean we can necessarily save them. *Blyanka*, K267, was recently cut up when the otherwise unused space she was in in Stockwell in London got planning permission for development.

It is possible to classify the 45 known boats into different categories. I believe 12 boats are currently being raced. 5 are being rebuilt, 7 are laid up, some in poor condition and 8 are for sale. We don't know whether the others are being used or are laid up. Taken overall they range from very well

looked after, often extensively refurbished boats such as *Debutant*, *Blue Haze* and *Humming Bird* to examples which probably have no financial value but might be a starting point for an enthusiast's renovation. The market for classic Dragons is opaque and with low turnover. All one can safely say is that their ownership and renovation is better undertaken for interest, recreation and love of old boats rather than for profit. It would be very nice to get more of the boats that are for sale or laid up into hands that will sail them. There are several which I believe could still give a good account of themselves, especially on the less rough estuaries or lakes.

From the racing perspective, easily the most successful British owner this year has been Ivan Bradbury with his two Pedersen & Thuesen boats, *Blue Haze* (Mediterranean) and *Debutant* (Northern Europe). *Blue Haze*, in particular, placed second in the Regates Royales in Cannes this year. I hope that Ivan may yet bring one of them over to Britain to compete. More mundanely classics have been seen racing in Aldeburgh (*Kestrel* and *Harkaway*), on the Forth (*Wizz Too* and *Sieglinde*) and in Falmouth (*Snap* and *Buccaneer*). *Wizz Too* also came to the Scottish Championship and the Edinburgh Cup. The BDA Classic Championship was in Falmouth, within Falmouth Week. Sadly, despite Alan Dale's strenuous efforts and the considerable appeal of the venue and overall event, *Snap* was the only participant and therefore is now the British Classic Champion.

On the international scene, Lars Henriksen has been the undisputed champion of the classic Dragon and has

sailed *Eva*, his Pedersen & Thuesen, to many high positions in major events. *Qi Ti Too* (Frederic Gourlaouen), and *Troika* (Peter Heerema) have also had some very good results. The IDA Classic Championship on the Attersee in Austria had 24 starters from four countries, with most boats coming from Germany and Austria. I know from personal observation that there are many immaculate Classics on the German and Austrian lakes and they are likely always to be the main



Snap at Falmouth Week, winning the Dragon Classic Championships.

source of such competitors. However, it wouldn't be a great hardship either for the crew or the boat to go from Britain to the Union Yacht Club at Attersee and make the occasional foray onto the normally quite placid waters of the lake. The BDA can help classic owners who might wish to have the use of a modern trailer for towing; please contact the Hon Sec for details.

Patrick Gifford

The BDA 2015 AGM and Annual Dinner

As previously notified, the 2015 British Dragon Association AGM and Dinner will take place on Friday 15th January 2016 at the Army & Navy Club, Pall Mall, London. The agenda for the AGM is below. Please arrange your dinner tables and book your tickets now. Please do come and support your association. Since we have been using the Army & 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 Ladies 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.

For the fifth year running we are pleased to say the cost remains at £49.50 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 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.

Abersoch Fleet Report

LOOKING TO 2016 – IT'S GETTING TOUGH OUT THERE, BUT WOW, IT'S EXCITING!

The Abersoch fleet was re-born in 2009, the coming 2016 season will deliver at least 16 Dragons on the club start line. 2015 was all about developing the fleet's credibility and competitive edge; we are certainly getting there.

'Two Boat Budd' victorious as the Largs hosted Edinburgh Cup Corinthian champion with GBR 793 *Harry* and pretty much dominating the very well supported Abersoch Dragon fleet racing held through the summer season. Nick Whipp's *Djinn* GBR 564 team is now very much 'in it to win it', with good results to back their determination. Next year's Abersoch hosted Northern Championship and Edinburgh Cup will be their cards on the table moment. Nick's 2nd at the J24 World's in Japan a decade or so back indicates his team has the credentials to mix it at the sharp end of the fleet

However, the team showing the greatest grit and improvement during the 2015 season must go to GBR 653 *Njord's* Julian Adams, David Coxon and Pete Hawkins. Despite their occasional weakness – an irresistible lure to sample good food & wine – on the occasions they did manage to focus their eye(s) on the ball, they hit the speed button and won races against tough competition. Well done them, two season's into Dragon racing and they can deliver good speed.

The Abersoch fleet took five or six teams to Largs, made the best of extremely testing light conditions, thoroughly enjoyed the scenic Clyde scenery and hospitality, waited in vain for an invitation for cocktails on Abramovich's *Eclipse* and avoided a run in with a nuclear armaments carrier. We also took a couple of teams over to Ireland's late May East Coast Championship hosted by Royal St George YC. Catching the 8:00am Holyhead-Dublin ferry, breakfast on board, then rigged, launched and crossed the start line for the first race at 3:15pm the same day! Taking part in Dublin Bay based Irish events is easy, very well organised, brilliant hospitality and ludicrous fun! Abersoch's team *Merlin* GBR 622 arrived short-handed – a couple of Royal St George's best dinghy sailor's namely Ed Butler and Dan O'Beirne stepped in to fill the gaps, very capable young lads. What did these young lad's think of Dragon sailing with us ancient relics? They loved it.

Abersoch hosted the early June Northern Championship, attracting fifteen competitors, including visitors and victors IRL 176 *Phantom* David Williams, the quiet and reserved Pete Bowring, plus Diarmuid O'Conner. IRL 213 *Whisper* Claire Hogan claimed fifth spot, GBR 793 *Harry* Mike Budd & team 2nd, GBR 622 *Yeah Baby* Jamie Peters & team 3rd. Ed Butler and Ryan Scott, Royal St George members, accepted an invitation as our guests to join Abersoch's

early August Dragon Week. Their injection of skill, competitive drive and youthful mischief was massively well received and a lesson for us all; invite talented young sailors along and they'll add spark, speed and great humour to any fleet. GBR 564 *Djinn* Nick Whip walked home 1st, GBR 655 *Phormerly Phantom* Chris Thomas 2nd pushing the class captain GBR 622 *Merlin* to 3rd.

Let's now look at the 2016 Abersoch hosted Edinburgh Cup. The 2015 Rugby World Cup was good fun, but predictable. The 2016 Edinburgh Cup will be a very different kettle of fish. Which Dragon team thinks it is they who have what it takes to be best of the best in Abersoch? Who would even dare predict? What we can predict though is a week of heart stopping, edge of the seat, dare to be victorious excitement, backed up with stunning views and a very warm welcome to our bay from all the members of South Caernarfonshire Yacht Club's Abersoch Dragon fleet.

The race program summary: Northern Championship - Register & launch Saturday July 2nd Race Sunday July 3rd + Monday July 4th. Edinburgh Cup - Register Monday 4th July Race Tuesday 5th to Friday 8th inclusive. Dinner Friday night and head home Saturday morning. Racing will be managed by Malcolm Blackburn whose robust race officer experience will be enriched by his intimate knowledge of the bay. Competitor moorings will be in front of the Abersoch club with an outstanding launch service. Marina berths will be available for those who need them in Pwhelli.

We expect fifty teams of the absolute highest quality for the Edinburgh Cup; this really will be the championship to win. For GBR 622 *Merlin* to walk off with a massive grin at the end of the week I suspect, subject to entry confirmation, we'll need to get the better of the following teams from Ireland; Martin Byrne in *Jaguar*, 2011 Champion winner at Abersoch, Neil Hegarty in *Phantom*, Andrew Craig in *Chimaera*, Cameron Goode in *Little Fella* to name just a few of the Irish competitors. In addition we would expect to see a rampant Julia Bailey putting up a staunch defence of her current cup stewardship.

In 2011 the Irish teams performed with eloquence and polish enjoying refreshments at the bar each evening, whilst majestically walking away with ALL the lollipops at the end of the week; Jaguar winning the Edinburgh Cup, Kin winning the Corinthian. In 2016 I have a feeling the England south coast teams will savour the opportunity to set the record straight – what fun! I'll be there – I hope you will too. In the meantime, very best wishes.

Rob Riddell



The Edinburgh Cup 2015

TWENTY OF THE TOP CREWS gathered in Largs for the Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust Dragon Scottish Championship and Edinburgh Cup. This was a welcome return to Scottish waters for the class, 2003 on the Clyde being the last time we visited. We hope that Dragon owners in Scotland will be encouraged to return to our fold and join those boats already racing there.

It was a case of mixed weather and mixed fortunes for the Dragon Scottish Championship. The race committee did an excellent job to get in all of the five race series. The fortunes of the sailors were as mixed as the weather. The Championship concluded on Monday evening with the trophy being awarded to Julia Bailey, Keith Tippell, Will Heritage and Pedro Andrade sailing GBR720 *Aimee*. From the opening race Cowes based Julia put her stamp on the regatta showing impressive boat speed and tactical superiority. She won three out of the five races and finished third in another with the only blot on her copybook being an OCS disqualification in race two, when she failed to realise she was on the wrong side of the start line. Julia's nearest rival was a chap named Martin Payne from Cornwall,

sailing GBR789 *Bear* with crew Gillian Hamilton and Donal Small, whose constantly improving scoreline of 4, 2, 2, 1 left them three points behind Julia. Third place overall and the Corinthian Scottish Championship Trophy, for all amateur crews, was awarded to Patrick Gifford of Angus sailing GBR515 *Basilisk* with his son Michael and guest crew Martin Spall. Patrick was understandably happy with their achievement as their boat is 29 years young and this was the first time they had raced with Martin in the boat.

For Julia her victory was particularly sweet as she noted, "My Grandfather Machlachlan would have been very proud to know that his granddaughter had won the Dragon Scottish Championship." At the prize giving she also paid tribute to the excellent race management provided by the Scottish Sailing Institute's Race Committee headed by Race Officer Chris Hadden, the outstanding quality of the Clyde's sailing waters and the warm Scottish hospitality that has been extended to the competitors since they arrived at Largs Sailing Club.

The Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust Edinburgh Cup proved to be a long drawn out and extremely frustrating affair as the wind gods played cat and mouse with the fleet. First strong winds but then sunny skies, unusually warm temperatures and the race committee announcing a number of postponements. In race two what appeared to be a reasonably solid 7-9 knots from the same direction at both



ends of the course had Chris Hadden and his team getting the fleet underway smartly. All looked very good until about a third of the way up the first beat when the wind turned itself inside out and the race had to be abandoned, much to the frustration of Gavia Wilkinson-Cox in GBR761 *Jerboa* who was leading at the time. The AP was re-hoisted and the boats slowly drifted back towards the committee boat. By this time the sky was decidedly overcast and hopes for a true sea breeze were fading, so when the wind showed signs of stabilising from the north again the race committee immediately leapt to take advantage of it. Once again a course was set up and once again the fleet got underway. And once again they got a third of the way up the beat only to have the wind gods turn the fan off again. This time it was Martin Payne sailing GBR789 *Bear* who was leading when they had the rugged pulled out from under them. As some compensation for missed races competitors enjoyed a wonderful Scottish Supper featuring delicious local fayre and music. The festivities opened with the Piping of the Haggis and entertainment provided by a local folk band.

By the final day three races needed to be completed to allow a champion to emerge. The day kicked off with a light but fairly steady south-south-westerly and after just a short postponement to tweak the course the fleet was ready to go for the long awaited race three. At the first attempt their eagerness resulted in a general recall, but the boats were quickly turned around and got away cleanly at the second time of asking, with the aid of the black flag. So far, so good. That was until the security flotilla surrounding a nuclear submarine outbound from Faslane hove into view and instructed the race committee to abandon the race and the boats to clear the area. To add insult to injury the wind began to die and it then took until late afternoon before enough wind returned to allow a re-start.

However, the series was raced and an historic champion emerged. The Edinburgh Cup is rightly regarded as one of the most prestigious trophies in British yachting and a glance at the winner's plaques reveals the names of many illustrious sailors. For 66 years the names engraved on the Dragon Edinburgh Cup have had two things in common. They have been the names of some of the finest sailors in the world and they have all been men. Julia Bailey was already recognised as a great sailor, but she made history by becoming the first woman to claim the Edinburgh Cup. For Julia and her crew of Pedro Andrade, Keith Tippell and Will Heritage aboard GBR720 *Aimee* the victory must have been even sweeter for knowing that they didn't just win the regatta, they positively stormed it with a race to spare.

Whilst *Aimee's* overall victory was secured early, the battle for the remaining podium places was only decided in the closing stages of the final race. Ultimately second place was secured by Mike Budd, sailing GBR793 *Harry* with Mark Greaves and Sam Gardner, who added a first and second to their scorecard to trail *Aimee* by two points. Third place went down to a tie breaker with Martin Payne, Gillian Hamilton and Donal Small sailing GBR789 *Bear*, and Tom

Vernon, Adam Bowers and Oliver Spensley-Corfield, both finished the regatta on thirteen points with *Bear* taking third place on count-back. Mike Budd and the *Harry* crew also claimed the Corinthian Cup for the leading all amateur crew. Second placed Corinthian was GBR764 *Naiad* sailing by Mike and Monique Hayles and Julian Brooke-Houghton and GBR515 *Basilisk*, sailed by Patrick Gifford, Michael Spall and Alan James were third.

Asked how she felt about her momentous win Julia replied, "Brilliant. It took a little time to sink in. They're a great team and I love to sail with them. I've sailed with Pedro for the last ten years in all sorts of things and he knows my strengths and weaknesses and plays to them. We're over the moon." At the prize giving Julia again paid tribute to her crew and to her fellow competitors and also asked fourteen year old Will, who she told the audience she had had to loose ten kilos this year to keep on board, to step forward and help with the thank you speech. Will acquitted himself admirably thanking everyone involved in laying on the regatta and in particular Julia, Pedro and Keith for the incredible opportunity and learning experience.

The regatta, hosted by the Largs Sailing Club in association with the Scottish Sailing Institute, was agreed by all to have been one of the most demanding Edinburgh Cups in many years. It opened with a near gale, lost a day through lack of wind, had a race abandoned because of the sudden appearance of a nuclear submarine and featured five of the most challenging keelboat races you could hope to experience. After racing the crews came together for a gala prize giving dinner to honour their winners and celebrate the return of the Dragon Edinburgh Cup to Scotland and the Clyde after an absence of 12 years.

As well as the major trophies a number of special awards were also made including the Jordan Bell for the boat with the highest overall position that does not include a top 6 finish which went to Martin Makey's GBR704 *Ganador*, the Classic Boat prize which went to Helen Horsfall's GBR343 *Whizz Too*, the First All Girl Crew prize which was won by GBR509 *Kismet's* Cathy Sedgeworth and crew, and the Puffin Plate for the leading boat over 25 years old which went to Patrick Gifford's *Basilisk*. There was also a very special presentation to the best Scottish Country Dancer from Wednesday's Scottish Night which was won hands down by Donald Milne of GBR790 *Flotation!*

The Largs Sailing Club team had to hold the championship dinner for over two hours due to delays in hauling out. No mean feat when it featured three delicious courses, each with at least three options, and everything was freshly prepared from local produce that day. Huge respect was therefore gained by all the club staff and the brilliant volunteer waiting team who all stayed on for many hours longer than they had expected so that the Dragons could enjoy a fantastic dinner and celebrate and honour their new champions. They all made the Dragon's return to the Clyde such a memorable one with their outstanding Scottish hospitality.

Fiona Brown



Aldeburgh Dragon Fleet 2015

THE FLEET REMAINS STEADY IN NUMBERS with nine registered, ten if the venerable *Vana* is included. She has been rescued by the Gibbons and is undergoing a slow restoration in their barn.

During the season *Kestrel* was afloat. Matt Lingley represented the Dragons on Wednesday night racing and had an out of the river excursion down the coast with his new boxer as crew. The dog learned the hard way that Dragon decks can be slippery, but survived and went on to enjoy the cruise from the cockpit. Hunty drove up from London and cruised *Panther* on the river on sunny Saturday afternoons. He tells us that he enjoys peaceful sailing untroubled by the stress of racing.

As usual Patrick Gifford and Mike Hayles flew the colours at various regattas. Patrick took *Basilisk* to the Irish Championship and to Scotland for the Edinburgh Cup. Mike and Monique Hayles have been at a regatta virtually every month this year with *Naiad* and have racked up more racing days than the rest of the fleet combined.

This year's Aldeburgh Regatta had only six entries, but the racing was close and all enjoyed themselves. Patrick won the week on *Basilisk*, showing that a well maintained and well sailed older boat is still very competitive. Tim Hannon with the evergreen *Harkaway* won the week on Handicap to the chagrin of the fleet lawyer who felt the numbers were not 'fair' (Handicaps not perfect? Quell surprise!).

Encouraged by how much fun we all had during the Regatta, but alarmed at the lack of support during the rest of the season, heads were scratched, brains were engaged and questions were asked. We concluded that short tacking on the river is hard on genoas and even harder on crews and a simple but brilliant idea emerged. Why not sail with the small jibs? It was an eureka moment and the entire fleet signed up for it. Patrick did the research and sourced a job lot for the fleet. Next summer all seasonal racing will be with the small jibs, which will enable boats to be sailed two up and depending on the weather on a white sail basis. This will ease the crewing problem and encourage more boats to turn out. For special weekends and the Regatta normal sails will be used. We hope that this will revitalize the fleet.

That's it from the Alde where all the Dragons are safely tucked up for the winter except of course *Naiad* which is still on tour somewhere on the Continent with Mike and Monique.

Rufus Gilday



Brit's Abroad

AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, Julia and I do most of our Dragon racing outside the UK. The reason for this is that we are not near one of the UK fleets and by choosing events overseas we generally have better weather, often lighter winds and larger fleets with more competition. The food and wine is good too! Each year, we try to go to at least one venue we have never been to before. This year it was Bastad in Sweden for the Europeans and next year it will be St Petersburg. We are not the only Brit's sailing Dragons abroad; some do more events than us, most do less and some live in continental Europe, so we never see them in the UK. While we enjoyed our year immensely, we did not make the podium in any regatta, but other Brit's did. Below is a review of their successes showing that we still have some of the best sailors in the world getting GBR boats on the score board.

In the first two of the big three, Brit's had a hard time with Grant Gordon best at 11th in the World's at La Rochelle and Laurie Smith best at 16th in the Europeans in Bastad, but it all came right in the Gold Cup with Laurie 1st and Gavia Wilkinson-Cox 6th in Kühlungsborn in Germany. Laurie was probably the most successful overall also claiming a 2nd in the Swedish Championship, 3rd in the Grade 1 King Carlos Trophy and a 2nd in another of the Cascais winter series. Close behind came Rob Campbell who started the year by claiming 2nd place behind 88 year old Gordon Ingate who won the Australian Prince Philip national champions trophy. What an inspiration Gordon is to all older helms! Rob also notched up

a 1st in the Belgian Champs and a 2nd at Deauville. Gavia and Martin Payne also enjoyed multiple successes, Gavia adding a 3rd at Regates Royale, one place behind Ivan Bradbury, and 6th at the Venice Team Racing event. Martin was 2nd in the Irish Nationals and 3rd in a Cascais winter regatta. He also crewed Mike Budd to a 4th place in St Tropez which could have been higher had he, along with two thirds of the fleet, stayed out rather than lifting out before a much delayed light wind final race and Martin helped Graham and Julia Bailey to win in Venice.

The best of the rest was Quentin Strauss who won the Dutch Champs in Medemblik, Klaus Diedrichs had a 2nd in one of the Cascais winter series plus a 4th in Douarnenez and Ian Gray who was 5th in the Belgium Champs and 4th in the Bruges Zot event. Ed Wright of Finn fame, helming a Dragon for the first time, was 3rd in the Portuguese nationals and Mike Hayles was 4th in Deauville.

I apologise for not listing the crews. You all deserve a mention because Dragon sailing is a team sport, but space is limited. Apologies too to anyone I missed; my memory is also limited! There were many great parties at these regattas, perhaps the greatest being in the Palm Beach Casino during the Regates Royales; I tried to find pictures of this but could not access any. May be that's just as well! (Ed: But Selina did, see her report)

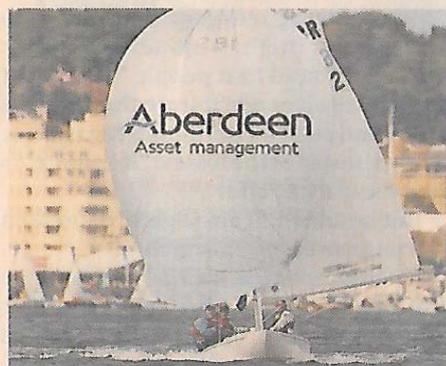
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Aberdeen's fall from grace forces move to seek buyer

Aberdeen Asset Management has suffered a comedown since it became Europe's largest listed fund house 18 months ago. Now Martin Gilbert, chief executive, has sounded out potential buyers as its assets and share price have tumbled amid concerns over its exposure to emerging markets. It is a big departure for the man more used to buying than selling assets.

Analysis PAGE 23

Lombard PAGE 22

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Dragons don't often make it onto the front page of the Financial Times. For whatever reason!



Burnham Fleet Report

AS IS USUAL, THE REPORT FOR 2015 MUST START WITH A WRAP UP OF 2014.

The final weekend of sailing started with no sailing. A complete lack of breeze gave the fleet extra time to tivate themselves in preparation for the prize giving dinner. The evening highlight, as always, was an entertaining presentation by the Page Boys of the *Clanger*, although Clive sounded almost sad to give up his 'dinner bell'. After reliving a number of fleet misdemeanours, the trophy was finally passed on to another family team, the Wades, for a certain incident involving forgotten passports. Better breeze on Sunday gave five boats a final race for the season and culminated in the award of the Peter Matthews Memorial Trophy to Ian Gray in GBR586 *Scorpio*, with our special guest for the weekend, Steven Vermeire, President of the BDA (Belgian Dragon Association in this instance) crewing.

With the boats safely on dry land, sailing boots were exchanged for walking boots for a brisk walk to North Fambridge for lunch where we were met by a few others who had opted to drive. Despite much mud, a brief rain shower and a delay thanks to a bull blocking the path, it was an enjoyable outing.

And on to 2015. The Burnham season started with the Easter Series (a change from the normal format to accommodate the East Coast Championship over the Easter weekend). Although light breeze is the preferred option for checking the boat in the first race of the season, the weather was not co-operative, so some boats opted to finish rigging and do last checks on their mooring, rather than joining the racing. Three boats completed Saturday and Sunday's races with general agreement from those crew who tested the water that it was a little early in the season for swimming.

Over the Easter weekend we were pleased to welcome Mark Dicker, James Campbell and Drummond Sydenham in GBR610, *Rackham* and Nigel Kaula, Matt Walker and Owen Pay in GBR797, *Vibe* for the weekend. The East Coasts Championship was made up of six windward leeward races run from the committee boat. The

fleet enjoyed close racing but although Rackham managed three race wins, the *Avalanche* team (GBR722) of Mark and Mandy Wade and Andrew Norden beat them to the top position by one point. The *Scorpio* team of Ian Gray, Alex Burnett and René Nel finished third. *Avalanche* collected the Easter trophy as well after the series of races were completed the following weekend.

The season progressed with the usual Saturday and Sunday series, interspersed by the Karl Marx Trophy over the May Bank Holiday (retained by the Browns in GBR770, *Storm* with three firsts in four races), a Try-a-Dragon day and two attempts at sailing the crew races, both postponed due to too much wind.

As an aside, Martyn Fogg deserves a special mention for leaving *Hat Trick*, GBR597 parked up the Roach overnight after a particularly high tide deceived as to where the river ended and the land began (a hazard encountered by most sailors in Burnham at some point). Luckily, Martyn and crew managed to get ashore without getting their feet wet and after an unintended hike through the RSPB sanctuary they were picked up by the club launch. *Hat Trick* was recovered at 'oh my goodness it's early' the next morning and was thus back in time for Sunday racing.

We were pleased to again welcome Rackham to the river for the Burnham Week bank holiday weekend. Sunshine and a reasonable breeze saw eleven boats racing in the rivers Crouch and Roach over the three days, with *Avalanche* winning the weekend with two firsts, *Scorpio* in second and *Storm* in third. Seven boats entered the midweek series, with a maximum of five racing each day. Rob Campbell in *Beauty and the Beast* (GBR746) and Mike Holmes in *Hands Off* (GBR760) battled it out with *Hands Off* winning the midweek series. The fleet enjoyed a Thursday night social, which included sharing the champagne won as second fleet in the 2014 Belgian Five Nations Cup and a photo opportunity with the Gold Cup (more on that to follow). Nine boats turned out for the final Saturday, about half of whom were a little over-eager at the start, which gave



Storm the opportunity to get away and win the Telegraph Cup.

In between times, we have also managed to complete three four-race mini-series, an exhausting but popular part of our programme. Unusually, the weather largely co-operated and the close racing produced three different winners of *Avalanche*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Scorpio*, respectively.

Our fleet has certainly clocked up a good mileage over the year. A number of the fleet swapped England's rain for Australian sun during winter, including Rob Campbell and Andy Moss who competed in the Prince Philip Cup. Rob won the warm up event, the Albert Memorial Trophy and was runner up to 88 year old Gordon Ingate in the main event after close competition throughout.

Geoff Butcher has turned up at many events on many different boats, but a first while sailing with the Hayles in Douarnenez must be one of his season highlights.

Burnham managed a good turnout at the Derby Dragon in La Baule, with David Crabb, *Seafire* (GBR636), Clive Page *Pageboy XI* (GBR792), Rob Campbell *Quicksilver VI* (GBR788) and Ian Gray *Scorpio* racing, the *Magic* boys popping in for a visit and Trudi Churchward and Geoff Butcher AWOL, crewing on *Vibe*. The usual combination of sunshine and socialising made for an excellent week, though sailing conditions were challenging. The top Burnham team was Ian Gray, Nigel Cole and René Nel in *Scorpio* who finished 14th overall.

Quicksilver VI stayed in France and with Thomas and Nicky Wilton crewing for Rob, finished 3rd in Deauville just behind Poul-Ricard Hoj-Jensen. In the Worlds in La Rochelle *Quicksilver* came 33rd and Penny Anderson was AWOL this time, crewing for Sandy Anderson on AUS210.

Ganador (GBR704) and *Hands Off* supported the Scottish Championships and Edinburgh Cup in Largs. Wind conditions were light and sometimes fluky and a submarine going through the middle of the race course is always a challenge, but the sailors were warmly welcomed and well looked after. *Hands Off* (Mike Holmes, Tim and Teresa Wilkes) finished 4th in the Scottish Championship and 8th in

the Edinburgh Cup and *Ganador* (Martin Makey, Geoff Butcher and René Nel) finished 7th and 10th respectively, with the Jordan Bell awarded to the *Ganador* team.

Next on the programme was the annual visit to Ostend for Belgian hospitality, mussels, beer and chocolate. *Scorpio* came 4th in the Brugse Zot warm up event before being joined by *Flame Again* (GBR 617 with David Hall, Geoff Butcher and Julie Thomas-Page) and *Quicksilver VI* for the Belgian Open Championships. Unusually for Ostend, the regattas were characterised by light wind and sunshine, but Rob Campbell, Karl Odent and Luke Malisse excelled in the challenging conditions and won the event, with *Scorpio* in 5th and *Flame Again* in 6th.

In September *Storm* (Jono, David and Lynn Brown and James Howard) finished their season with an 18th in the Regattes Royales in Cannes

Last but certainly not least, two more Burnham crew also made their mark in August. Katie Cole had an excellent week in Cowes crewing for Eric Williams who was the Cowes Week Dragon class winner. Special congratulations, however, must go to Tim Tavinor who was part of the Gold Cup winning team in Germany. *Alfie*, helmed by Lawrie Smith with Joost Houweling, won by a convincing 16 points in this prestigious event, where consistency is crucial as there is no discard.

As I write this, we are looking forward to our end of season dinner, although we still have the Patricia Burnett Trophy for the Crews Race, the Newts, Candlesticks, Petticrow Open and Peter Matthews Memorial Trophy to complete. In summary, this has been another exceptionally busy and successful year for the fleet locally, nationally and internationally. As always, a big thank you goes out to everyone who has helped ensure the success of the season on and off the water: the race team; the local sailors and their long suffering partners and last but not least, our visitors. Should you be passing Burnham at any time we would love to welcome you to our 'muddy little ditch'

René Nel



Gold Cup Report 2015

THE GOLD CUP IN KUHLLUNGSBORN WAS WON BY OUR VERY OWN, LAWRIE SMITH IN GBR 801 *PRINCE ALFIE*, CREWED BY PETTICROWS OWNER TIM TAVINOR AND NORTH SAILS PROFESSIONAL SAILOR JOOST HOUWELING.

Since joining the Dragon's just over 6 years ago, Lawrie has continued to enjoy the fantastic one design racing our wonderful class offers. Indeed his World Championship win in Melbourne 2011 was as a result of many hours of practice both at home (in Weymouth) and during the winter in Cascais, Portugal.

Lawrie was always destined for greatness in the sport. During his early days of dinghy racing mainly in Fireballs and 470's he had success at so many major championships. This was finally epitomised when he won an Olympic Medal at Barcelona in 1992 (Soling Class). It was the only medal won by team GBR! So it was only a matter of time before he won a major title in the Dragon class. The World title in 2011 perhaps came a little too easy as quite a few major championships have slipped away over the recent years since then, which emphasises how difficult it is to consistently win on the International Circuit. I know that losing the Gold Cup in Kinsale 3 years ago was a hard loss to bear, but such is the nature of the no discard series, that it's never over till it's over.

So at this year's Gold Cup, Lawrie and his excellent team were fully prepared for all eventualities. Kuhlunsgborn is the most perfect setting for a major championship, the marina is well arranged with all the necessary facilities and infrastructure required. The sailing waters have no commercial shipping or extreme tides & currents and the depth offshore is manageable to lay immaculate courses. All the ingredients for a great championship and indeed it was.

Part of my role as the IDA Sailing Co-ordinator is to make sure the major events run smoothly and efficiently. So as the Assistant Race Manager on the Principle Committee Boat, the *Ebb Tide* it was my job to broadcast via the VHF the necessary information to the 66 competing teams. This not only meant that time keeping could be 100% accurate but also allowed me to impart information about the race track itself, such as wind bearings, current, line setting and wind strength. My 23 years' experience of Dragon racing has given me an excellent insight into what sailors think, talk

about and require prior to a start. All of this knowledge I am then able to convey over the radio so that every single boat is up to speed with the goings on and the Race Officers race preparation. From this position and superb vantage point I was able to follow the 6 races for every minute of each day, living the 3 upwind and 2 downwind legs as though I was actually sailing the 2.5 mile beats myself!

Lawrie and his team started with such consistency recording 2nd, 2nd and 2nd, to hold a very healthy half-way lead over this very competitive fleet. Also showing great form and having a most excellent championship was fellow British boat GBR 761 *Jerboa* helmed by Gavia Wilkinson-Cox, crewed by Mark Hart from the Isle of Wight and Kasper Harsberg (our IDA Treasurer), from Denmark. Gavia put together a quality series of races using all the experience on board with her two top crew. Consistency is always the name of the game and never more so than at a Gold Cup. Without a discard, every race counts and a simple OCS or misjudged manoeuvre can cost the Championship!

To prepare for a Gold Cup it is imperative your boat is in first class condition, with some quality sails. It also helps to arrive at the venue two or three days early so that the journey and the stress of measurement, registration, boat rigging, launching and berthing can be done in an organised and leisurely fashion. A good result starts with excellent preparation and no 2 boats are better prepared than Gavia and Lawrie. It was a great pity GBR did not have a 3rd representative as the Nations Cup was up for grabs after such a strong showing from our top two British teams.

At the event it is important to have a good base. Sensible accommodation is essential. In order to work hard and sail hard, you must also make sure you get time to rest. Gold Cup races are long races. It may only be one race per day, but the whole day can be very tiring, so a good night's sleep is the basis for achieving good results. In Kuhlunsgborn there are many hotels, self-catering apartments and B & B's, so everything is available and possible if booked in advance.



So back to the actual competition and as the week progressed it was obvious that the two GBR boats had an excellent chance for a great result and for Lawrie; could he go one step further than his runners up spot in Kinsale. With Tim Tavinor and Joost Houweling keeping the boat moving fast with good trimming, clear lane starts and sailing with the majority of the fleet, the *Prince Alfie* team kept their noses ahead. In the end Lawrie took the cup by 16 points, which is some margin. Runners up were RUS 76 *Strange Little Girl* helmed by Dmitry Samokhin and 3rd GER 1133 *Sinewave* Tommy Muller. These three boats were all on the podium in Kinsale three years ago! But this time it was Lawrie's turn.

Meanwhile Gavia finished her championship in style and took a well-deserved 6th overall, which is a fantastic result in this high standard fleet. Although Gavia has finished 2nd before when the Gold Cup was in Cascais in 2008, this 6th place was as good a finish as any, as the fleet gets stronger every year. So very well done to the *Jerboa* team and of course to Lawrie, Tim and Joost, the Champions!

Looking ahead to the major events in 2016 we have the Europeans in St Petersburg, Russia during July and the Gold Cup in Denmark during August. These will be excellent regattas and well attended, with plenty of information regarding transportation, accommodation and registration soon becoming available on the IDA web site. I will be continuing my Sailing Co-ordinators Role at both events making sure everything runs smoothly and maintaining the highest possible standard of racing that is now associated with our ever popular one design keel boat class.

Higher, Faster, Longer

Stavros



Regates Royales 2015

*“Champagne sailing with some fabulous parties!”
or “Corinthians on tour!”*

A new team *Rackham* headed down to Cannes to the Regates Royales this year. Leaving Mark behind, after conning him into giving me a Dragon towing lesson for 900 miles, I recruited three friends, two of whom had never set foot on a Dragon before and the third had not been in front of the main sheet track in the last 15 years and wondered what happened to the winches! After leaving a miserable rainy England on a Friday evening after work we drove nonstop through the night arriving in Cannes on Saturday at 11am to beautiful sunshine and quite frankly weather that made us smile!

The local Dragon fleet were all around to welcome us and after a very civilised lunch at the yacht club we got the boat in the water and sailed across to the old town where all the Dragons were to be moored next to the likes of *Shamrock* and *Kookabura III*. One of the reasons I love this regatta is the fact that we are the only modern one design racing boats that get to hang out with these amazing, beautiful classics. Having become rather used to going round the Worlds, Gold Cup and European circuit over the last 15 years it was nice to see the party atmosphere that I remember from the days before I started Dragon sailing when my parents were dragging us around the circuit. The other great thing about the Regates Royales is the race timetable, Monday to Friday with two races a day. This meant we only had to take five days off work and weren't in a rush to get there or home. Saying this, given two of our crew had never been on a Dragon before, we spent Sunday morning waiting for the wind to arrive labelling all the bits of string not present on Merlin Rockets

and SB20's, then went out for a training run. One of our neighbours on the dock mentioned it was not cool to label, but it's also not cool to be unable to drop the kite or break the mast by having it tweaked the wrong way. This was champagne sailing at its best, lots of tacks and gybes later and one complaint that the water was blue not brown like the North Sea, we decided we should make it around the race course without upsetting anyone at the windward or leeward marks and retired to the Irish bar. There was a bit of a theme that began here, despite the fact that our apartment was in the opposite direction to the Irish bar it was impossible to leave the boat without refuelling the crew with at least one pint of Guinness. This gave the crew a chance to meet some of the other Dragon teams and realise that they weren't old and boring. It was good to see a strong contingent from GBR including: Gavia, Mike and Monique, Stavros, the Browns, Ivan, Ron and Julia and Malcolm Green.

Racing started on Monday, lots of general recalls including a few black flags, where we had fantastic starts, finally the one they let go was of course diabolical for us. At least starting at the back gave us a chance to spend the race overtaking people and we were still surrounded by some pretty good sailors so we were happy. Luck was also on our side on Monday, the only instance during the week that we got on the right side of a big shift and took 13 places on the last beat finishing 16th out of 38 which seemed fairly respectable. The race was won by Ivan, Lars and Claus who took 16 places on that last beat, the only boat to hit right harder than us! Sadly race two was canned due to lack of wind/getting late so it was time to head to the first drinks party of the week in the regatta village.

Tuesday we managed to get two races in and it was encouraging to find ourselves in the top ten going round the first windward mark



on both occasions. As Corinthian newbies trading places with some of the best Dragon sailors in the professional world, not that my crew actually knew who any of them were, adds to the fun. Both races that day were won by Michael Schmidt, impressive consistency in shifty conditions. Monday and Tuesday were both champagne sailing with sunshine and force 2-3 winds, perfect conditions for selling the class to newcomers.

Wednesday the weather was not so perfect, the Mistral had arrived (localised 40 knot plus winds that sweep through Cannes every so often). It started blowing hard from the West so we sat around on the dock in the sunshine, still warm enough to wear shorts and T-shirt, until 2pm when the final decision was due. At 2pm quite suddenly the wind died and the race committee being very much on the ball decided to send us out. My crew also being very much on the ball were dying to get off the dock first, however I didn't want to hang around on the water waiting for everyone else so we waited for everyone else to at least arrive on the dock before departing. Good call as five minutes after the Westerly dropped another 40 plus wind developed from the East. Amazing how rapidly it changed. Luckily the 'very young at heart' team from GBR 764 were there to drink rosé with us for the rest of the afternoon before team *Rackham* made it to the Irish Bar and led a few other crews astray.

Thursday morning was another AP due to no wind. By now we had done at least three laps of the dock drooling over the beautiful classics, being very grateful we didn't have to spend eight hours a day polishing our boat. Finally we got underway and managed to get in a couple of good races with the first being won by RUS 27 and the second by Stavros, Donal and Gilly. Thursday night was Dragon Fleet party night. The Cannes Dragon Fleet, supported by some wonderful sponsors, put on a party to remember at the Casino which included scantily clad girls on stilts, magicians from Paris, snake charmers, a live band, lots of champagne and just enough food to make sure that

the champagne had the desired effect of getting the whole fleet on their feet to dance. During the night we also discovered that Stavros had cleverly targeted the right race and won a holiday to Mauritius: good effort guys. There was a great turnout which included most of the pro teams, led by EST 17 on the dance floor. There was some impressive shape throwing, plus Prince Henrik and some of his friends, who were not actually Dragon sailing that week, must have heard that this was the party of the regatta and decided to gate crash. We were sad to see the party end at midnight but all agreed that this was the best Dragon party we had attended since the 75th anniversary in St Tropez (OK I am biased!).

Friday our crew were getting too experienced so we decided to replace one of our five-day-qualified's with my former university crew who had never been on a Dragon before; the fourth person we managed to convert to Dragon sailing in a week. The final race was won easily by Ivan, not the best day for us but a big lesson for the crew on the role of jumpers on a Dragon.

Having not read the NOR properly I had not clocked that craning-out was all to be done on Saturday and not after racing on Friday. However after a bit of sweet talking Gerard very kindly allowed us to head straight to the Yacht Club after racing in order that we could be first in the queue to crane out at 6am on Saturday morning in order to make our 10pm Eurotunnel train back across the channel on Saturday night. Note to self, book a Sunday train next year. Prize giving was a lovely affair on the roof of the Yacht Club, the regatta was won by Michael Schmidt, Mario and Stefan, second was Ivan Bradbury, Lars and Claus and third Gavia, Mark and Philip. I am not entirely sure who was first Corinthian, there was a rumour that there were only three Corinthian boats, but apparently they thought we were professionals. Professional Guinness and rosé drinkers maybe, but certainly not sailors. Anyway we may not have won the regatta but we had our moments and converted four young people into Dragon sailors that want to come back. I do love Dragon sailing, having been the youngest people in the fleet for 20 years, we are still considered young. On that note we would love to see some more young crews in the fleet and hope that others will convince young newcomers to join us. Hope to see some of you in Cannes next year, our boat is already oversubscribed!



Selina Dicker

Metropole - Glenfiddich 2K Dragon Venice Invitational Team Racing Regatta

THE INAUGURAL 2K DRAGON VENICE INVITATIONAL TEAM RACING EVENT WAS HELD IN EARLY OCTOBER.

The inspirational driving forces behind the new event were fellow GBR sailors Klaus Diederichs and Martin Payne. Both put in a huge amount of effort to make the weekend a stunning success. 2K team racing is a new format for the Dragon class so there was a big learning curve for the competitors. To make our task easier Principal Racing Officer Bruce Hebbert ably directed the event on the water. On top of this an excellent race committee from the Vento di Venezia and Compagnia della Vela Yacht Clubs, under Alberto Sonino, assisted by many helpers and volunteers, helped the event run like clockwork. Six owners also generously loaned their boats for the racing. Last but not least Certoso Island Marina provided the fleet with a perfect base for the weekend's racing.

On the water racing was held in random pairs switching over the teams after each race. Winning simply involved avoiding finishing in last place. This ensured a battle during each race in order not to be the last boat to cross the finishing line. Race tactics are wide and varied and include slowing down to come to the assistance of your team mates if they are under pressure, or going head to wind at the top mark to lock out another boat allowing your fellow team members to sneak ahead. The wind conditions were light but strong enough to enable the competitors to sail. The races were all staged within the iconic Venice Lagoon.

Lined up for the weekend the 12 teams represented six nations in total, including hosts Italy, Great Britain, Russia, Monrovia, Spain and Australia. GBR sent the largest contingent, winning three podium places. Team *Louise* represented by Ruairidh Scott on

tactics, Kasper Harsberg trimming and Grant Gordon helming won overall, having finished with seven wins from nine races. As Stavros obligingly reported "An excellent display of tactical awareness, boat speed and a great understanding of working as a team with a variety of partners". Javier Scherk from Spain finished second and team Stavros with Graham Bailey on helm, Julia Bailey and Martin Payne finished third, with five wins from eight races, despite being the most penalised team due to some over aggressive sailing on day one! Besides from the team racing itself we also enjoyed two short fleet races in the Grand Canal, offering a magnificent display of spinnakers that knocked 007, as seen in Casino Royale, into the shadows.

The social programme was most enjoyable, managed by the excellent team of volunteers and included a partner programme for family and guests. The gala dinner was hosted in the magnificent setting of the Metropole Hotel, event co-sponsor, where the teams enjoyed a splendid evening. Glenfiddich was the other event sponsor, providing a talented barman who served a variety of guaranteed to be consumed cocktail drinks.

At the end of the weekend there was unanimous agreement that the regatta, complementing the Stavros Cascais Match Racing event, was a big success. Hopefully 2K Dragon Venice Invitational Team Racing will become a permanent fixture in the class diary. Team *Louise* will be back next year to defend our title!

Grant Gordon



Medway Fleet Report 2015

HERE AT MEDWAY OUR 2015 RACING IS NOW COMPLETE with the socials still going strong. So what's been happening down here this year? Probably the best words to describe the events are 'changing times' and sure enough we have had a few of them!

First up is that the fleet has been beleaguered with a combination of recession, old age, sabbaticals, emigration, the Cruiser Class, the Wayfarer Class (sometimes locally known as Waybarges) and the MYC Management Committee! As they say on Strictly 'in no particular order' – Old Age has seen the farmers (the Wright brothers) after 40 years, hang up their Dragon boots and take to the Cruiser Class, joining Robin and Chris Ridsdill Smith plus Philip and Alex Clarabut in their new found toys. Sabbaticals have seen Edwin and Sue Hannant almost completing circumnavigation of the World (without a boat) but I'm pleased to report they will be returning to us in 2016. Emigration with Team Esoteric appearing to ship out to France to run a gite. Claire and Julian Sowry are now 'Out of Port Members' so sadly we are without their competitiveness and participation. The Waybarges with Stewart and Catriona Coltart and Len Jones defecting to our strongest dinghy class, albeit its rumoured (no pun intended) that we may see them returning for guest performances at next year's ECDC to be held here at Medway in late September. MYC Mancom; well, the ongoing battle to reduce our dry sailing costs by helping our numerous 'oligarchs' to recover from the recession appears to have failed once again, so we will have to continue as scrubbers in 2016!

The net result of the above is that we have seen the lowest turn-outs for many years, but the level of enthusiasm in our smaller fleet is considerable and I am confident that we will see an improvement in our numbers next year.

Results on the water for the major series have seen *OCD* (David Harris, Chris Brealy & Brian McKenzie) taking the Proton Cup and Bar Cup. *Suti* (Trevor Cox) wins the John Field Trophy and Gold Cup. *Whistle* (Wendy Howland) succeeding with the Deuxieme Prix and *Fit Chick* (Jono Ratnage and BB) retains the Dragon Flagon, 211 Cup and Irish Silver Bowl. Congratulations to everyone, we have seen some close and exciting racing that has been enjoyed by all.

This year we had 5 days of windward/leeward mini-series racing that has proved to be very popular and hopefully sharpened us up to compete when racing in foreign parts. On the travelling front *OCD* (Obsessive Compulsive Dragonistas) went to La Baule and La Rochelle. *FLOS* (Fat Lads Out Sailing), *Suti*, *OCD* and *Fit Chick* to Ostend. All reported mixed results on the race course but great success off the water.

On the social side we have seen a fascinating visit to the Normandy Beaches in April, several casual suppers and the annual end of season bike ride and pub lunch in and around Appledore on the Romney Marshes. Up and coming is Bonfire Night where our class officers will be the duty chefs ably assisted by some hardy Dragoners and retirees. A Christmas Supper in December, then 2016 looks to take in a visit to Canterbury Cathedral and The Houses of Parliament (introduced by Kelly Tolhurst MP one of our members).

In closing, a quick plug for the East Coast Dragon Championships that we are holding at Medway between 29th September to 2nd October. We look forward to welcoming many of you to this late season event.

I take this opportunity to wish all fellow Dragon sailors a great Christmas and happy New Year

Bruce Boyd



Week, after a reasonable absence, with *Flotation*. The summer had been warm and dry until August when the heavens opened and the temperature dropped and the Isle of Wight had its wettest August for over 100 years. Cowes Week itself was sadly wet, but there was enough sunshine to compensate and very varied conditions. Eric Williams showed his mastery of all things Solent by winning Cowes Week yet again, ably crewed by Katie Cole and Jo Richardson, in *Ecstatic*. The Baileys were in second place in *Aimee*, followed by Gavia's *Jerboa* in third. If you look at the Cowes Week results from 2011 onwards you will see the same three boats in the top three every year; this is an amazing degree of consistency and I still hope to break into the top three one day!

The South Coasts were due to be held in July but were moved to the August bank holiday weekend due to 'Race Crew Exhaustion'; it has been a big year in the Solent with the RYS celebrations and there are only a finite number of race teams, who do a marvellous



job. The South Coasts were sailed in very light, tricky conditions and Gill Smith as PRO did well to run five good races. The battle up front was between Julia Bailey in *Aimee* and Oliver and Francesca Morgan in *Christianna* and the Morgan family won on count back.

The Solent fleet had some success on the travelling circuit as well. Not only do we include the current national champion, Julia Bailey, amongst our numbers but Gavia Wilkinson-Cox has had a successful year including 6th place at the Gold Cup crewed by Mark Hart and Kasper Hasberg. The girls are showing us the way!

Things wind down a bit after Cowes Week and we settle down to the final series of the year and the light wind theme continued; so I had to brush up on my close tacking skills. October produces some of the best sailing of the year and 2015 did not disappoint with warm sunny days. *Furious* took third, with *Fanfare* in second, and *Chime* the winner.

Through the year we are also racing for the overall



Above: Katie Cole, Eric Williams and Jo Richardson, *Dragon* Cowes Week victors



Above: Graham Bailey, Eric Williams and Gavia Wilkinson-Cox, the top three *Dragon* racers for each of the last five years

championship which this year was won by *Furious*, followed closely by *Chime* in second, with *The Old Bailey* and *Fanfare* in joint third. I feel that we in *Furious* are really being rewarded for turning up.

Looking to the future we are already looking forward to holding the Edinburgh Cup in 2017. More immediate is the Corinthian Championship scheduled for 17th to 20th July 2016 with more details to follow.

Owen Pay

Growing Old Gracefully



AMONG DRAGONS, THE LEAST LOVED GROUP OF BOATS IS MADE UP OF THE OLDER GRP BOATS.

By this I mean boats built from 1973 when GRP construction was first allowed up to about 2000, thus excluding boats built in the last fifteen years. In GBR numbers this means boats numbered from about 463 to about 650. They don't have the interest and attraction of the Classics and they are thought to be uncompetitive with the modern boats. However, the Dragon is a one-design class and the scantlings, derived from the Classics, produce boats with considerable extra strength and stiffness compared to more modern designs specifically intended for GRP construction. This should mean that deterioration in competitiveness is relatively slow and significantly slower than the reduction in cost in the secondhand market.

Mike Hayles and I have now owned the 1986 Borresen Dragon *Basilisk*, GBR515, twice in her life. We bought her in late 1987 the first time and sold her in early 1997. We then bought her back to be an Aldeburgh-based boat in early 2007 by which time she was already over twenty years old. She



1952 *Coupe Etienne de Ganay*, Cowes; K143 *Ganymede*, a 1947 C&N; K125 *Sabre*, a 1949 C&N and K238 *Rin-Jin*, a 1952 *Lallow*. These team races occurred in UK and France from 1951-66

has been a success for us both when nearly new and more recently. In the first period, the best result we achieved was a third in the Gold Cup and since 2007 she has won Aldeburgh Week several times and also performed respectably, most recently when third in the Scottish Championship this year, when allowed to leave her comfortable estuary.

It is interesting to think about what is required to keep such a boat competitive. First, she must have been well built and down to weight when new. Borresen certainly achieved this and *Basilisk's* hull shows no sign of age or rust. There are clearly plenty of middle-aged Petticrow boats which are equally sound. At the other end of requirements, it is just as necessary for an older boat to keep its sail wardrobe up to date for important regattas. It may, however, not be so important at Aldeburgh, or other local venues where low cunning can substitute quite well for outright speed. This does in fact represent the major cost.

The interesting area is in the updating. Having sailed *Basilisk* for so long we do know exactly what has changed over the years. The biggest problem is middle-aged spread. We have added bulkheads (and pumps in them), a ram, windward genoa sheeting and an electric pump, all of which add weight. She has also been painted which makes her look pretty and the bottom has been grit blasted to remove excess antifouling. Otherwise there haven't been many changes. The genoa roller system is now a cross between the old Borresen system at and below the deck and the more modern system running in the



1952 Olympic Trials, K240 *Troll*, a 1951 *Bjorn Aas* and K73 *Tama*, a 1938 *McGruer* among the fleet.

mast at the top. We also bought a Borresen GRP bridge deck and removed the old wooden one. This enabled us to modernize the runner system.

What would we still like to do? The one thing we can't do which would make a big difference would be to raise the cockpit floor to the height in modern boats. It really does make it so much easier for less athletic middlemen. However, it is a very major job to change the interior moulding and we haven't any appetite for it. We are toying with moving the shrouds forward to where they were when we first owned her. This would put in more pre-bend which might help us since we tend to sail with weight well below the limit.

The end result is that we have a boat that works well, has always felt as though she wanted to go and is still pretty competitive. The good news for others is that a very quick trawl through the For Sale lists of various Dragon Associations reveals plenty of similar boats capable of doing the same at prices between £7,000 and £12,000. They should mostly be able to do what we have done provided there hasn't been serious neglect at any point.

Patrick Gifford

From the Archives – 30 Years Ago

IN 1985 THE EAST COAST CHAMPIONSHIPS WERE HELD IN LEVINGTON. THERE WERE 35 ENTRANTS;

Yep, 35 for a regional championships. Why? Well, then the relatively newly introduced regional championships were pretty much the only ones that Dragon sailors attended. There was nothing like the same amount of international travel that there has been over the last decade, so one's choice of venue was a little more restricted than it is today.

Chris Dicker was the hard working Secretary to the BDA and he had introduced an upmarket version of the magazine. Peter Lloyd was Chairman and he wrote about the interest in the class, reporting that the class was going from strength to strength and several younger yachtsmen were coming into it. We hope that shall be repeated in the coming years!

The Edinburgh Cup was held in Edinburgh in the second half of July, to where we repair next year, of course, for the Scottish Championships. The following week the Gold Cup was also held there, demonstrating the ease with which the typical Dragon owner could then justify taking two weeks off to race; as much to his wife as to his employer! Mind you, I was fresh out of the Army then and working in the Square Mile, where three hour lunches were not that unusual and Big Bang was just getting started!

One thing that chimes with us this season is that the weather in 1985 was 'foul' in Peter's words, something I believe we can all empathise with after this year's so called summer. He reported that the season finished off with the Worlds held in Douarnenez, where the weather was warmer and the competition even more so. It was noted that in particular the German and the Danish sailors excelled at the then Olympic style courses, mostly because that was the only sailing they did, very little club racing being normal for them then.

Meanwhile Peter Wilson in Aldeburgh was selling DK 11 *Polly* for £4,000, curiously listed as being a 1966 Borresen, whilst Mike Williamson and Nicky Streeter had their 1971 Borresen DK 459 *Sandpiper* on the market and laid up in Burnham for £9,500 with a trailer. In addition, there was a plea for anyone wishing to be considered to be a part of the single BDA entry for the English Speaking Union Yacht Racing Trophy to contact the Secretary as quickly as possible; the match racing event was to be held in Vancouver in June 1986. It would



be interesting to know what has happened to that cup and the regatta in the meanwhile.

Merchandise, then as now, formed a part of the service provided by the Association. Chris Dicker had in stock for your delectation BDA sweaters, 9 carat gold tie pins, car stickers and ties. They were £9.50! Alongside was a report from Bobby Melville of the 1985 Egyptian Dragon Championships. Apparently the German team walked all over everyone by winning every race. The Norwegians were runners up in each too. Mm. The five race series only saw three to count; the other two having no or too much wind. Apparently there were 'wind shifts of an Oriental nature' which clearly didn't help the British sailors. The hotel accommodation was 'an exciting five miles drive' from the racing location and even more 'exciting ten miles' away from the yacht club! To polish the whole affair off, Bobby noted that the prize-giving 'closed with an energetic performance by a belly-dancer with a beautiful head of hair. It was a pity Nelson was temporarily blinded during his visit – he would have enjoyed that!'

The 1986 Edinburgh Cup was due to take place on Strangford Loch, hosted by the Killyleigh Yacht Club. Because of the restricted race area a four buoy course was to be used. Round the cans Edinburgh Cup; now there's a splendid idea! There was also an interesting article by Nicky Streeter on

how to improve British performance at major regattas. Included in his advice was to be on the water early, how to read land, tide and wind to decide on which side of the course to take, to always attempt to find a transit for the start line, how and when to assess line bias, if there is committee boat bias start a little way down the line or come in a few seconds late, start accelerating before the start but sail free and don't let the crew lose your concentration, if the start is disastrous pray – for a recall or clear air and finally, good starts are a result of team effort. It's all in the start then!

Fleet news from Burnham indicated a good number of travellers to international events, including Terry Wade, Phillip Tolhurst, Mike Patten and Bobby Melville, as well as news of a Dragon sinking. From Medway reports that they have a fleet of 21 boats, don't like traveling long distances and the social side is important! Meanwhile the Aldeburgh fleet boasted 14 boats and pride in Peter Wilson producing the first GBR glassfibre Dragon. Strangford Loch sent a short report which included the conclusion that 25 knots wind at deck level was the maximum wind strength in which Dragons should begin a race and that by the time it reached 30 knots during a race the PRO should consider cancelling.

Peter Wilson wrote an article on cold moulded Dragon building, mentioning that even in the late 1960s wooden Dragons were becoming prohibitively expensive. He indicates that since 1970 only five different builders have been represented in the British fleet of new boats. He also intimates that his reason for first attempting cold moulded construction was to explore ways of making the Dragon more cost effectively.

Times change but not all things with them. It is often instructive to review what has happened in the past as we contemplate the future. To do that we are gradually uploading all past BDA magazines onto the web site, where you will be able to contemplate the past at your leisure!

Tim Wilkes

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