

# *Journal of the* Association of Yachting Historians



[www.yachtinghistorians.org](http://www.yachtinghistorians.org)

2021



# Yachting History Research Resources

Further to our announcement in the 2019/20 issue of this Journal, we are in the process of adapting the website to accommodate a new Research tab under which we intend to include a list of Research Resources. We hope to have this up and running soon, but in the meantime we felt it might be useful for our members to be able to refer to the current list of resources in printed form.

As already stated, this list is a work in progress and we invite our members to add to the list by contacting us and suggesting other collections and locations of which they have direct experience.

Please e-mail Martin Black [mblack@mail.com](mailto:mblack@mail.com) in the first instance.

## Alfred Mylne Archive

With over 650 original designs, 7,000 original drawings + technical papers and original correspondence books, the Mylne archive represents one of the most important historical yachting records in the world.

In 2015 they embarked upon an ambitious project to put the entire archive online, with better previews of every drawing than ever before and streamlined online purchasing. Contact David Gray.  
[david@mylne.com](mailto:david@mylne.com)

[www.mylne.com/index.php/archive](http://www.mylne.com/index.php/archive)

## Bartlett Maritime Heritage Research Centre and Library

Despite the recent sad demise of George Hogg, founding trustee of the NMM Cornwall, we feel sure that fellow trustee Tony Pawlyn and his team of 22 volunteers in Falmouth will continue to respond efficiently to queries. Naturally strong on Cornish history, the library contains over 20,000 books, the core of which was formed by the donation of 6,000 books by the eminent civil engineer John Bartlett. Many long runs of yachting magazines and, most helpfully available online, the massive book *British Yachts & Yachting* of 1907. Another very significant resource, accessible online, is the compilation of all yacht designs published in (British) yachting magazines, together with the plans of Alan Buchanan and Jack Holt.

[87.106.22.33/iframe/yachtdesigns.php](http://87.106.22.33/iframe/yachtdesigns.php)

See also AYH member Mike Bender's yachting bibliography, *A*

*New History of Yachting*, published in 2017.

[nmmc.co.uk/explore/bartlett-library-2](http://nmmc.co.uk/explore/bartlett-library-2)

## British National Yachting Archive

Our AYH committee member David Elliott has, over 20 years, assembled a vast database of yachting records, principally of 20th century yacht racing. So far, only he has the means of access to this but the BNYA must be a first stop for anyone seeking hard data on yacht racing in the UK and international classes.

[david.elliott@bnya.org.uk](mailto:david.elliott@bnya.org.uk)

## Classic Boat Museum and Gallery, Cowes

The Gallery (see page 8) contains a very large collection of yachting material, featuring many original archives, including those of motor boat designers and builders Thornycroft, and the work of Uffa Fox.

Many long runs of yachting magazines, and glass slide photographic collections, unfortunately not yet wholly catalogued and indexed.

All the above are accompanied by excellent displays of models and pictorial material. Rosemary Joy (AYH member) and her colleagues are especially helpful in their combined yachting history knowledge.

[www.classicboatmuseum.com](http://www.classicboatmuseum.com)

Telephone: +44 (0)1983 244101  
[rosemaryannjoy@gmail.com](mailto:rosemaryannjoy@gmail.com)

## Cruising Association

A very large collection, most specifically yachting publications and, as expected, books on yacht voyaging and pilots. Excellent long runs of bound magazines.

Particularly strong on British periodicals such as *The Yachtsman* and *Yachting World*, as well as the American yachting magazine *The Rudder*. Includes many older publications from the 19th century. The library is accessible for a daily fee of £15 to non-Cruising Association members.

Contact:

[ianwilson25@btinternet.com](mailto:ianwilson25@btinternet.com)

The Cruising Association  
CA House, 1 Northey Street,  
Limehouse Basin, London E14 8BT  
Tel : +44 (0)20 7537 2828  
[office@theca.org.uk](mailto:office@theca.org.uk)

## Ernest W Toy Jr Adventures Afloat – a Nautical Bibliography 1988

Described as “a comprehensive guide to books in English recounting the adventures of amateur sailors upon the waters of the world in yachts, boats, and other devices and including works on the arts and sciences of cruising, racing, seamanship, navigation, design, building etc. from the earliest writings through 1986”.

It represents the product of 12 years' research in both the USA and in the UK – principally in the extensive Cruising Association Library. The entries in the volumes are split over 100 different

*Continued on inside back cover*



# Journal of the Association of Yachting Historians

*The 10M yacht Marga,  
restored by the Cantiere  
Tecnomar, Fiumicino, Rome  
(photo by Carlo Borlenghi and  
courtesy of Marga's owner)*



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*Cover photo: Morning sun on traditional Danish vessels  
in Svendborg (courtesy of Tom Cunliffe)*

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[www.yachtinghistorians.org](http://www.yachtinghistorians.org)

2021

With this Journal our Association sets sail again after being harbour-bound by the pandemic which has disrupted everyone. Despite several absent friends, we have a full crew with many new members and an excellent new Honorary Treasurer. Our well attended AGM on Zoom in April allowed us to catch up with familiar faces and we now set course towards charity status.

Helping our members to find sources for historical research is a core activity of our Association and at last, in this Journal and eventually on our website, we specify some of such sources, inviting our members to add to our list.

The sad and sudden loss of our much-valued Vice Chairman, Rees Martin, a founder member of our Association, has left us under-manned in our officers and we very much encourage members to join us on our Committee, especially for Hon. Secretary tasks. We are very pleased that Stratos Boumpoukis has taken on the Hon. Treasurer role and we also hope that Thalia Giannopoulou will help us with her digital marketing expertise in boosting the sales of the digitised *Lloyd's Register of Yachts* and *The Yachtsman* (see page 27). We have started another scanning project: *Hunt's Universal Yacht List 1849-1914*. This is smaller than *Lloyd's* but it starts much earlier and it is complementary.

Of course, we are all looking forward to meeting up again in person, and visits to the Upper Thames, Venice and Lyme Regis are on our wish list.

Finally, we trust you will find the enclosed new Membership Directory useful for keeping in touch with your fellow members.

Fair Winds,

Hal Sisk  
**Chairman**

# Sailing for sailing's sake

Top right: Sailing in Sopranino off Cowes post-restoration (courtesy of the Classic Boat Museum, Cowes)

Bottom right: Patrick Ellam (left) and Colin Mudie, alongside Sopranino (courtesy of Max Mudie)

## Sopranino and the Junior Offshore Group (JOG)

David Munge

**As many “oldies” will remember, the use of yachts and pleasure boats was restricted in World War II. At the end of the war, men who were used to a certain amount of physical deprivation were being squeezed into office jobs or other work that was restrictive, and those who had been active sailors before the war needed to re-think how to spend their free weekends.**

One such sailor was Patrick Ellam, who attended Stowe School and passed the exams to go to Oxford but chose instead to go to France and Germany, and became fluent in both languages. He enlisted at the outbreak of war in 1939, joined the Artillery and was sent to France. A couple of years later he was recruited in the Special Operations Executive (SOE). His war activities gave him unique experience, which as the war ended created a search for further adventure.

He had joined his father's office equipment company, but at the weekends started sailing again. Up until 1946, small boats tended to be scaled down versions of bigger yachts, and therefore had awfully bad performance and were rather dull. Uffa Fox had started sailing 10 square metre canoes, which were single seaters, but Ellam, seeking adventure, realised that if you started with a dinghy design such as the 10 square metre canoe, you could build a slightly larger version, retain its speed and agility, and consequently sail far greater distances.

He decided, therefore, on a double-seater, and commissioned Kenneth Gibbs, naval architect and boat builder, to build a modified version,



with buoyancy tanks and storage for navigation equipment. This new boat, *Theta*, was built initially without the plank, and instead of sailing around relatively quiet waters Ellam used her for English Channel crossings, and with various “picked off the beach crews” crossed the Channel nine times. Often he would leave England ahead of the forecast of a decent breeze, arrive in France, enjoy the atmosphere, wait until the storm had blown over, and then dash back to England on the back of the breeze.

Ellam formed a firm friendship with Capt. John Illingworth, then Commodore of the RORC and already a major figure in the development of post-war yacht design. Illingworth was also founder of the annual Sydney-Hobart race, and he persuaded Ellam to stop sailing *Theta* and build a small, lightweight ocean racer.

The firm of Laurent Giles of Lymington had built a reputation for innovative design, so

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*‘...Ellam, seeking adventure, realised that... you could build a larger version, retain its speed and agility, and... sail far greater distances.’*

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Ellam commissioned them to design his next boat, *Sopranino* (named after the smallest known wind instrument). However, Ellam wanted *Sopranino* to retain dinghy-like properties so had her built by Kenneth Gibbs at Sunbury-on-Thames. She was designed and built following Ellam's tried and tested philosophy, and was 20 foot overall, wooden clinker built, with a very narrow beam. The accommodation was just enough for two, with a small chart table. She was rigged as a Bermudan sloop, and proved to be very safe and fast, when sailed by a crew of two.

At only 20 foot, however, *Sopranino* was too small to compete in RORC races, 24 foot being the minimum, so in December 1950, led by John Illingworth, it was decided to form the Junior Offshore Group (JOG). Patrick Ellam was the class captain, and Illingworth the President. Early members were Bruce Banks, Ian Proctor, Laurent Giles, Michael Henderson and Robert Clark, among others, and the Group is still, of course, very active today.

1951 was the first JOG season, with the longest race being from Cowes to Ostend. *Sopranino* (JOG sail number 1) was an instant success, winning many of the races in this inaugural season and in later seasons.

The architect Colin Mudie, who worked on *Sopranino* at Laurent Giles, so impressed Ellam

that he persuaded Mudie to join him in an Atlantic crossing. They left Falmouth in September 1951, crossing via the Canaries and Barbados to meet Ernest Hemingway in Cuba, where Mudie had to leave and fly home.

In this impossibly small boat they carried Fargas brand fizzy water in aluminium hot water bottles to shave with and wash in. They also had a stuffed elephant (called Hannibal) who had his own hammock. They had a compass, sextant, tables and a BEME loop radio, which is useful for direction finding – although Colin remembers it more because it was used to hang the hammock for the elephant (who sat with his trunk facing down, suspiciously close to the drinks cabinet!).

There was self-steering – one using a load from the mainsheet with an elastic centrepiece or in trade winds they set twin spinnakers so both could sleep below. Colin wrote: 'People say "weren't you brave" – no, we were out to enjoy ourselves'.

All these adventures, which can only have stemmed from Ellam's SOE experiences, are vividly described in his book *Sopranino*, published by Rupert Hart-Davis in 1954. I can heartily recommend it: it is a good read, and I have cribbed much from the book, plus from obituaries in the JOG archives. It is nice to know that *Sopranino*, after many further adventures, is now safe and well cared for, side by side with the original *Theta*, at the Classic Boat Museum in Cowes, Isle of Wight.

*Sopranino's* voyaging was all about the Corinthian ideal – of amateurism, of sailing for sailing's sake and not for profit – and that is also reflected in the continuing popularity of the Junior Offshore Group today 🚢

*Above: Sopranino rediscovered at Newport Museum of Yachting, Rhode Island, from where she was rescued by a JOG syndicate who paid for her professional restoration*

*Top left: Patrick Ellam, left, sitting alongside Mark Wynter on board Sopranino. Note the limited leg room in the cockpit!*

*Below left: Nigel Synnott proudly presents the restored Sopranino to Princess Anne*

*All photos courtesy of the Classic Boat Museum, Cowes*






# Uffa Fox Celebrations 2022

In November 2019 the Classic Boat Museum received a letter from Mike Dixon, the Commodore of the Atalanta Owners' Association (AOA), asking if the museum were planning to celebrate Uffa Fox's extraordinary contribution to yacht design and yacht building on the 50th anniversary of his death. The AOA and the museum have since worked together and have come up with a

plan for a weekend of celebrations including a Regatta from 18th to 21st August 2022. The on-the-water activities will be organised by the Royal London Yacht Club (RLYC), and will take place, appropriately, just before the Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club's Flying Fifteen European Championships (20th to 26th August).

All Uffa Fox-designed boats and classes will be invited to this event, and the weekend will include talks and receptions at the Museum Gallery and Boat Shed with evening events at the RLYC and CCYC. On Sunday 21st August there will be an opportunity to book a tour of the Commodore's House in Cowes where Uffa Fox lived 

## Sailing with the Prince - Uffa Fox and Prince Philip

Right: Prince Philip sailing in his Dragon Bluebottle with Uffa Fox and a young Prince Charles




With the sad demise of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh in April 2021, it seems appropriate to mention here the longstanding connections between Prince Philip

and Uffa Fox, who sailed together on numerous occasions, both in the Prince's Dragon *Bluebottle* and in the Uffa Fox-designed Flying Fifteen *Coweslip*, presented by Uffa to Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip on the occasion of their marriage in 1949.

There is a delightful chapter in Uffa's book *Joys of Life*, in which he recalls racing on the Solent with the Prince in *Bluebottle*. 'The race was for the Duke of Edinburgh's Cup and,

although entered in the race, with the Duke himself steering, we were not competing for the Cup. Prince Philip rightly decided that we would skylark our way round the course and... see how well we could do against the fleet without interfering with the wind of any boat....[Prince Philip] sailed on an absolutely steady course from mark to mark, because, being a wonderful seaman, he watched the land over the buoy ahead, and the buoy astern, and steered so that it did not grow to port or starboard...the farther we sailed the more boats we overtook [and as] the race progressed the three on board became happier and happier with our progress up through the fleet, for Prince Philip has great joy in his heart.'

Uffa concludes: 'Throughout all the years we have sailed and raced together since, I have always been greatly impressed by the ability of Prince Philip on all points of sailing, under all weather conditions.' 

[From *Joys of Life*, Chapter IV: 'Prince Philip as a boat sailor', by Uffa Fox, reproduced by kind permission of Mike Dixon]

'...I have always been greatly impressed by... Prince Philip on all points of sailing..'







# Classic Boat Museum Cowes

*Above: The Boat Shed  
– the dinghy and small  
yacht display hall*

**Mark McNeill**


**I am pleased to be able to report that although the Museum has been closed to the public since before the first lockdown, there has been a lot of work going on behind the scenes at both the Boat Shed and the Gallery. The Museum's finances are strong, the government grants have covered the running costs, and being entirely volunteer-run we have not had to worry about salaries.**

As regards the Gallery in East Cowes, the plan over the winter of 2020 was to refurbish and upgrade the main exhibition room and to make more use of the Friends' Room for smaller exhibitions focusing on Cowes and sailing. We decided to apply for a grant and completely reorganised the entire layout of the Gallery. It was a huge task but, as described by Rosemary Joy (see page 8), it has the advantage of giving us approximately 35% more exhibition space once the work is complete.

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*‘The Boat Shed is now ready with reorganised displays... we should be open for business again as usual... to welcome our visitors in this 25th anniversary year...’*

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The Boat Shed is now ready with reorganised displays. The Gallery work was to have continued in January, February and March, but with the third lockdown there have, inevitably, been more delays. By the time you read this, however, in early Summer, we should be open for business again as usual and ready to welcome our visitors in this 25th anniversary year of the founding of the Museum 



Right The new library and archive room on the second floor of the Gallery, East Cowes

Below right: The large meeting room with offices in the centre



## Classic Boat Museum Gallery

— a new look for a new era


Rosemary Joy

*‘...the new archives gave us the confidence that a solid basis for research could make us a much more professional organisation’*

When the Museum first came into being 25 years ago we didn't have anything so grand as an archive. We had a few boats and some boaty bits and pieces, and the sudden arrival of quite a lot of unexpected donations rather took us all by surprise. It was as if hordes of local people had been waiting for us to leap into existence so that at last they could empty their sheds, attics, garages of years of precious sailing memories, hoping that they would be treasured and that someone else would dust them. Especially the books and the magazines, which came through the door in car loads.

And, because we were grateful and keen, we welcomed everything. Eventually it began to dawn on us that special skills were needed to organise all this bounty into some sort of order. Slowly space was allocated, shelving installed, discernment learned. Slowly too we began to appreciate the value of what we were amassing – as early volunteers we each had our own areas of interest and experience, but the new archives gave us the confidence that a solid basis for research could make us a much more professional organisation. We were fortunate to be guided by true professionals, trained in the care and management of all we now had – books, yes, but also plans, logs, photos, film, media of all kinds. Our current library has numerous maritime volumes; our sailing magazine collections continue to increase, the few gaps

are filling up. We are particularly proud to hold the private volumes bequeathed to us by some respected sailing names.

I don't suppose our cataloguing of all this will ever be complete. The aim to publish on-line more of the wealth that we now shelter is an ongoing task, but so worthwhile. Not only does our ability to answer queries improve, we even hope to find a way one day of making it pay – and most of all we encourage researchers to come and spend an interesting and useful day with us 

*I would also be grateful if AYH members would be good enough to ask their yacht clubs to forward to the Gallery copies of their club newsletters, including past issues, which contain many valuable yachting history stories. I can be contacted at: [rosemaryannjoy@gmail.com](mailto:rosemaryannjoy@gmail.com)*







# The Bray 'Droleen' One Design

Vincent Delany

**Yachting historians are always interested in the origins of one-design yachts, and the dates when they were designed. In the case of the 'Droleen' [the Irish language word for 'wren'], it was designed in 1897 as a beach boat for Bray, Co. Wicklow, a seaside town developed by railway entrepreneurs, located 20 km south of Dublin City.**

A Dublin milliner and member of Bray Sailing Club (est. June 1896), William Ogilvy, decided that a new sailing club needed a new one-design dinghy. He was aware of the Water Wags of Kingstown (now Dun Laoghaire) which had attended the annual Bray Town Regattas since 1887, and Ogilvy decided that the Water Wag design was more suitable for young men, being lightly built and not sufficiently sea-kindly for the choppy waters and gusty wind conditions off Bray Head. He investigated other design options for a small open dinghy.

Ogilvy was aware of the American cat boats, and he probably saw one at Strangford Lough in Ulster while on linen-buying trips to the north. That boat was the *Una*, a cat boat which had been purchased in 1850 at Robert Fish's boatyard in the United States by Earl Mount-Charles (1797-1876) (later Marquis Conyngham of Slane Castle) who served as first Commodore of the Royal St George

Yacht Club, 1845-62. *Una* had (for unknown reasons) been put on display at the Serpentine in 1851 during the period of The Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, and had impressed many yachtsmen. The following year she raced at Cowes and impressed to such an extent, 'with her one sail she showed such speed and was so handy' that, according to *Yachting Monthly* of August 1910, by 1852 there was a fleet of *Una* one designs racing in Cowes. Dixon Kemp said, 'People almost regard the *Una* as a little too marvellous to be real.'

*Above left: Launching a Droleen in Bray Harbour c. 1898 (authorship unknown)*

*Above right: Jim Horgan of Spiddal steering a Droleen (courtesy of Jim Horgan)*

**A cigarette card from Wills's Cigarettes 'Rigs of Ships' Series, first published in 1929, describes the original cat boat thus:**

*The Cat rig is essentially American, and is very common for yachts and small craft all the way down the Atlantic coast. In Europe it has a first cousin in the Una rig. It is purely a rig for pleasure craft, and consists of a single sail something like the mainsail of a cutter, with a mast which is stepped right forward and well stayed. The boom is usually very long, extending well over the stern and as a rule the hull is beamy and shallow with a deep centre board. The Cat boat is very handy in tacking and turning to windward, and is quick and certain in stays, but is apt to be tricky for a beginner.*



*Reproduced by kind permission of the Imperial Tobacco Company Limited*





Above left: Michael Weed's boat built in 2019 at the Boat Building Academy, Lyme Regis and completed in 2020 (courtesy of Michael Weed)

Above right: Launch Day in Co. Galway (courtesy of Jim Horgan)



*'The real advantage of the cat boat is its stability...'*

In Bray, the cat boat adopted was of smaller size than the *Una*, being only twelve foot long, with six foot beam and a 100 sq. ft. gunter rigged sail. She carried a Spinnaker of 60 sq. ft. which balanced the rig when sailing off the wind. Greg Foley of Ringsend had designed and built the single-handed 'Nipper one-design' class for Sutton, Co. Dublin, earlier in 1897, so William Ogilvy must have described the boat he required to Foley, who finalised the design. It was built with spruce clinker planking and American elm timbers at a cost of only £9 each. The sails were made by Modder of Wyvenhoe which brought the 'ready to sail' price to £10 8s. Nine boats were built: *Bolivar*, *Curlew*, *Dutchman*, *Katie*, *Ohne Hast*, *Scud II*, *Spalpeen*, *Tómtit* and *Philon*. Despite their small size, they followed the example of the Water Wags and attended coastal regattas as far south as Wicklow Town and Howth to the north. At that time there were no boat trailers, and although transport by rail was possible they generally sailed to regattas. The real advantage of the cat boat is its stability, so it was suitable for coastal journeys of up to 20 km with a favourable tide. With so much natural stability, the sail was never reefed.


Races at the home port of Bray lasted up to two hours, and were generally held off the Esplanade, where they were visible to spectators and residents taking the sea air. Club members presented prizes for the racing which commenced in July and continued weekly until late September.

Was the class a success? Yes, it gave good one-design racing particularly at the coastal regattas in the Dublin Bay area. On the other hand, success is often measured by the size to which the fleet grew, or the numbers of boats in existence today. The fleet started in 1897 with seven boats, and two more were built in the following year. Although the numbers remained static, racing discontinued soon after 1900. The reason for this is yet to be established, but it is suggested that several boats were lost from the beach in an Autumn storm.

We are fortunate that the son of one of the original boat owners, George O'Brien Kennedy, trained as a naval architect, and took a measured survey of *Tómtit*. These plans made it possible to build two new boats in 2013 as a Bray community heritage development project led by Frank de Groot.

The next 'Droleen' was built in 2015 by the apprentices of the Galway School of Boat Building, Spiddal, Co. Galway, under the guiding eyes of Jim Horgan, who uses the boat for single-handed and family cruising in the Atlantic at Great Man's Bay, Co. Galway.

In 2019, Michael Weed from Co. Donegal built a further 'Droleen' at the Boat Building Academy in Lyme Regis and that boat was completed by the school apprentices in 2020. She is now waiting for an opportunity to be sailed in Bray with the others.

Someday we will bring all extant boats together to Bray for a special regatta 





# A Classic Boat Museum restoration story

## New life for an old Cat




### Rosemary Joy

Some time ago, the Classic Boat Museum Cowes was offered a cat boat called *Vigia*: the family who had always owned her wanted her preserved and preferably in her home town as she was built in Cowes by Corke in 1872, mainly because an American cat boat *Una* had arrived in Cowes and was sailing rings round all local boats. We went up to West Mersea to see her and brought her back to the Museum. She was owned for many years by the Sainty family, who were ancient East coast boat builders and owners (possibly even smugglers!). She was well documented on the East coast and they gave us lots of photographs. We also have a log of the *Hebe* of 178-? with Captain Sainty 'fishing for soles' in the Solent.

The Museum tried over a long time to

restore *Vigia* but she was almost beyond help. The transom had been shortened and concrete had been put into the keel at some point and there was rot everywhere. Eventually the project was put to one side until we were more settled.

Then, surprisingly, one volunteer decided he would have a go at a replica and all was started up again. As much of the original boat as possible was saved. The new hull began to take shape alongside the old, and we kept the family aware of what we were doing. They retained the original tiller and the prospect was to give it to us on successful completion of the build. Looks like we shall eventually have her afloat and sailing, we hope in time for the Museum's 25th anniversary celebrations in September 2021 

*Top: Vigia – the old and the new*

*Above left: The replica of Vigia takes shape*

*Above centre: With 'greenhouse' cabin top, 1940s*

*Above right: Drying mooring, with owner, 1924*

*All photos courtesy of the Classic Boat Museum, Cowes*





# UK Heritage Harbours

*Above: Sunset at Maldon*

*Right: Battle of Medway 350th anniversary*

**Brian Corbett**, *Heritage Harbour Initiative Project Manager*

A few years ago a joint initiative by the Maritime Heritage Trust (MHT) and National Historic Ships (NHS) Shipshape Network, with strong support from the European Maritime Heritage (EMH), proposed that historic ports and harbours in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland become officially recognised as 'Heritage Harbours'. It was realised that there was great value in sensitively developing their (often superb) historic buildings, waste land, mooring, and maintenance facilities for both local and visiting historic vessels.

The nomination of **Medway** as the first British heritage harbour (**HH1**) has important historical significance, dating back to 1667, when Admiral de Ruyter led the Dutch Navy fleet to the River Medway and set fire to a substantial part of the British Royal Navy, capturing the British flagship, the *Royal Charles*. This embarrassment enabled Samuel Pepys to convince the King to invest heavily in the navy, leading to the greatest world navy of the time for Britain. 350 years later, in June 2017, a Dutch fleet of 200 yachts, tall ships, ex-naval and fishing heritage vessels visited the Medway, in two fleets, to celebrate the anniversary (*described in the AYH Journal Winter 2017*). As the UK coordinator for this great event, I spent much time in The Netherlands, before and since, discovering that one reason why the Dutch

have a greater appreciation of their status as a maritime nation arises from the establishment of Heritage Harbour status in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and many other Dutch ports and fishing harbours.

The Medway nomination was duly presented to a meeting at Sun Pier House, Chatham, on 10 December 2018, which was well attended by some forty enthusiastic representatives from the local historic vessels, the Medway Council, MHT Trustees, the Thames Sailing Barge community and representatives from Faversham. Subsequently, recognising the value of listed historic buildings and maintenance facilities at the Sheerness Royal Dockyard, HH1 became **Medway & Sheerness Heritage Harbour**.







## HH2 Faversham & Oare Creeks

**Heritage Harbour Group** has met regularly since early 2019 at Faversham Guildhall. Considerable work in optimising balanced development and improvement of the creeks has already been carried out by group members, and Kent County Council has continued the design work for the replacement of the Faversham upper creek bridge. A member of the group, the Faversham Creek Navigation Company (CIC), as well as carrying out important dredging work, is re-building Brent Town Council's Mooring Jetty.

**HH3 Maldon and Heybridge Heritage Harbour Association** moved at even greater pace. A full public meeting was held at the Maldon Little Ship Club (MLSC) in mid-September 2019, during the Maldon Heritage Weekend. The Association literally sprang into action and regular monthly meetings have taken place at the MLSC and then via ZOOM. The group is working with the Town Council and District Council to optimise the local plans to best secure Maldon and Heybridge Maritime Heritage for future generations.

**HH4** The nomination of **Exeter Ship Canal & City Basin Heritage Harbour** followed at the end of 2020. The ship canal, the oldest in the country, was built so vessels could navigate the Exe estuary to the heart of Exeter from which developed boat-building and maritime traditions throughout the port with its estuary and city quays that are still active today.

**HH5 Sandwich Heritage Harbour:** The Sandwich Port and Haven Commissioners, other Sandwich maritime and heritage organisations at the beautiful medieval town and port, and Dover District Council held the inaugural meeting and have established



Heritage Harbour status for this ancient Cinque port.

## HH6 Brightlingsea & Colne Heritage Harbour:

An enthusiastic and successful inaugural meeting was held recently at which it was proposed that the important riverside villages and Colchester port should be associated to form this new Heritage Harbour. Not generally known is the fact that Brightlingsea is a 'link port' to the Cinque Port of Sandwich.

Other potential and developing Heritage Harbours include Queenborough & Milton Creek, Cowes, Buckler's Hard, Falmouth, Charlestown, Cardiff Bay; Norwich; Cley-Next-The-Sea, Blakeney and Wells-Next-The-Sea as a Heritage Harbour group, Woodbridge & the Deben, Glasgow & the Clyde, Leith (Edinburgh Docks), Belfast, Donaghadee, etc.

Chester (HP7) has been nominated as the first of the Rivers and Canals System Heritage Ports. It is hoped that Stourport and Brentford will follow.

On an international footing, European Maritime Heritage conferred the status of International Heritage Harbour on Auckland 'City of Sails', in the lead-up to the America's Cup. Dun Laoghaire is to be recognised as the first Republic of Ireland Heritage Harbour nomination 



*Top left: Faversham Creek*

*Top right: Cardiff Bay*

*Above left: Bucklers Hard*

*Above right: Cley-Next-The-Sea*



# Voyage of the *Harald*

Rees Martin\*

Right: *Harald* in St. Helier, Jersey (1964?) (courtesy of Rees Martin)

**Preamble: Young colonials, who come to the UK for their Trip, in later life sensibly refrain from mentioning certain periods during their journeys. However, with the recounting, mellowing (and distortion) of these stories, they can become possibly acceptable.**



\*Back in late 2019 Rees submitted to me this delightful tale of his youthful adventures, with the suggestion that we might like a “lighter” piece for inclusion in the Journal, and I am delighted to be able to publish it here as a tribute to his memory. Ed.

**‘Harald looked just sublime: a 100ft three-masted Danish schooner...’**

Towards the end of a five-month working holiday in Europe in the early 1960s, my then partner, Jill, and I ended up in Copenhagen, broke and looking for work.

After a night of carousing and a good breakfast in the local youth hostel, most guests had left and we were sitting alone in the lounge when a couple came in and put a sign up on the notice board: ‘Experienced Crew wanted for Topsail Schooner; report to Dock xxxx Hobro.’

After a quick look at the details, I ran after the couple and immediately assured them that Jill and I were the needed crew. At this stage our experience was in sailing dinghies; what we learnt later was that the couple had a similar level of expertise, however over coffee we extolled our capabilities to Steve and Sheila and agreed to meet the next morning at the dock in Hobro.

Having hitch-hiked to the port, we were just in time to meet the old captain and crew. The skipper was explaining to Steve various intricacies about boat handling – difficult as none of the new crew had any Danish....

*Harald* looked just sublime: a 100ft three-masted Danish schooner just having returned from delivering cement to Reykjavik. Originally a topsail schooner, her sail plan had been simplified to two jibs, mains, topsails and mizzen. She was built in 1918, the engine added in 1927.

She was one of many lovely Scandinavian sailing ships that were at the time being bought up by enthusiasts for conversion ostensibly to passenger charter. They were bought incredibly cheaply, by many who thought they could live their dreams by taking passengers on lovely tours of Scandinavia, Europe and even further. Many just didn’t survive; others with costly restoration are now operating in more comfortable latitudes. I am full of admiration for the efforts of those who have done this; our six months on board was a mix of great joy, pure terror and grinding hard labour.

Two crew members were holystoning the deck. When the legal matters were completed we were given a tour of *Harald*. Eventually we all shook hands and the extremely nice Danish crew left. The skipper hesitated on the gang-plank and quietly wept. We never knew whether it was because of the loss of his lovely ship or the heinous act of handing his love over to a clearly amateur crew. Probably both; his father had been the previous skipper.

Sensibly, Steve had hired a professional skipper who was arriving the next day. In the meantime, we looked at who was to do what. *Harald* had a basic fo’c’sle (crew – Jill, self and hired skipper), a mess and the captain’s cabin (Steve and Sheila). All accommodation was immaculate in varnished pine panelling and polished brass fittings.







*Top left: This three-masted topsail schooner is still seen at the docks in Elsinor (courtesy of Tom Cunliffe)*

Decisively we divided the tasks into Engine Matters, Sailing Matters, Mess Duties and Administration. Steve and I tossed a coin for the engine and sailing; I became Chief Engineer. The engine was a massive single cylinder Penta diesel that was started with compressed air, encouraged by igniting two fixed blow torches that heated the massive head. One had sufficient air to attempt several starts after which one had to manually pump the compressed air tank – which took 30 minutes... I discovered it could (and often did) start backwards; very simple really; that's how you went in reverse. Once one caught the knack it was simple – well almost.

To return to our journey. The skipper arrived the next day and immediately filled us with confidence: here was our expert who would help us learn the intricacies of schooner sailing and the vagaries of the Kattegat. We were intending to find our feet, then sail to Hull where *Harald* was to be fitted out for the owners to live on board, blissfully sailing from port to port where Steve would paint and sell his watercolours...

We departed on the tide from Hobro, motoring gracefully down the Managerfiord. A beautiful day, light winds and late autumn skies. Jill and I promised we would get another *Harald*; if this was sailing, we just had to have one of these beautiful boats.

This blissful day ended in a small haven just short of the open sea. We managed to moor



*Left: A typical anchor on a Danish vessel, such as would have been found on Harald (courtesy of Tom Cunliffe)*

up without disgracing ourselves and celebrated at a local bar.

Our new skipper woke us early and we prepared to leave. Unfortunately, my engineering skills had left me and despite everybody giving advice the Penta remained silent. Embarrassingly we had to call up the Hobro agent who kindly sent an engineer down who had *Harald* chuffing away in minutes. We motored out to open sea and, with only a little confusion, hoisted sufficient sail for Copenhagen.

That evening the wind came up and, drawing on our vast experience, we set more sail for the night crossing...even now I shudder. By midnight we realised our error and spent two hours taking down a topsail, a jib and two mains. I still recall standing (?) on the bridge roof in total darkness with the wind screaming, trying to reef a very, very angry mizzen. By 2 a.m. the seas had whipped up as only the Kattegat can. Nobody really slept



*Right: Nyhavn is still a very popular destination for tourists (courtesy of Henrietta Smyth)*

*Far right: Exploring the colourful backwaters of Copenhagen (courtesy of Henrietta Smyth)*



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*‘...the only sober person on Harald was the pilot...’*

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but we all were reassured by the presence of our skipper.

Day eventually broke and we were in thick fog. For some reason the wind seemed to be all over the place, followed by odd sea states. The skipper was peering intently at the compass, then into the fog. I asked if I could give him a spell, thinking he was tired. Rather irritably he agreed, giving me the course. A quick glance of the compass and I saw we were steering something completely different. In deference to his expertise I slowly brought *Harald* back to the correct course and, lo, the wind became steady and the seas regular. Our hired skipper could not read the compass and was guessing the ordinates. Nothing was said until Steve came up and, when I told him, he exploded. We were totally lost somewhere off Helsingborg. Extremely shaken, Steve called on the radio and we were eventually given our position by a passing fisherman. Still in fog we altered course and headed south.

Suddenly our disgraced skipper became very animated and pointed, exclaiming: “There’s København!!” Irritated I said nobody could see anything but we crept on and, with more good luck than anything else, I started the engine and we gracefully, if shaken, berthed.

Steve marched our unfortunate skipper off the boat and went off to hire a more competent skipper. Our new man had been a chief mate on one of the many ferries and

had taken a week off to enjoy sailing a classic yacht. A lovely if taciturn Dane who had the correct skills, he was very kind to us, but drove us demented by wearing clogs, and on the still lovely holystoned deck you could hear him coming for miles....

We spent several days in Copenhagen enjoying the Nyhavn “attractions” and became regular tourists frequently taking the bus to the Carlsberg Brewery. Eventually we sailed from Copenhagen to the North Sea via the Thyboron Canal, where our skipper/mentor left us. The North Sea was at its best: around Force 3-4 southerly, sunny with cloudless skies. By this time we were more used to *Harald* and sailed her using sails alone. It was extraordinary to be able to sit up in the bow occasionally adjusting a jib sheet. After fifty years I still remember those blissful days.

We arrived eventually on the East Yorkshire coast and spent an afternoon trying to locate the Humber estuary. While we were (only!) eleven miles out on our dead-reckoning, none of us could recognise any landfall. We eventually picked up a Humber pilot who was still chortling as he came on board (they had been watching us go up and down the coast and our erratic plotted course had kept them amused for hours).

Len our pilot and new friend immediately fell in love with *Harald* and in passing asked us what ballast we had. We had picked up thirty tons of sand in Denmark and, having







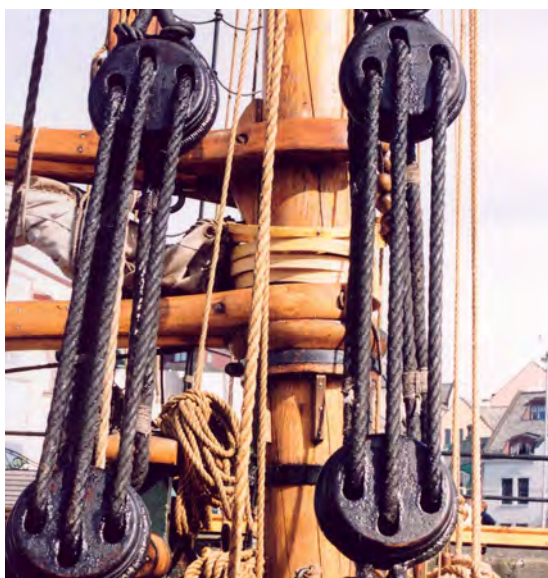
*Top left: Morning sun on traditional Danish vessels in Svendborg (courtesy of Tom Cunliffe)*

discovered the advantages of a bond, added several cases of spirits and the odd carton of cigarettes.

It was a long motor up the Humber and we finally entered the Princes Dock around midnight. Actually we had to wait for the tide, which was our undoing. Unbeknown to the male crew and pilot, our women partners had decided to have the odd gin and tonic and by the time we had entered the lock they were, as the saying goes, feeling no pain...

After some time, they discreetly slipped the odd "tincture" to the men. From memory the only sober person on *Harald* was the pilot, and when we were asked to move into Princes Dock, our 20' bowsprit slowly but surely peeled the pedestrian railing off the dock bridge and we gently settled across most of the road. This did not appear to be seen by anybody so we went astern and waited for the morning when the manoeuvre was completed without incident. Friends, family and enthusiasts arrived in the morning and, by midday, arrival celebrations were well underway. The harbour authorities were very magnanimous about the bridge railings; after all we were celebrities.

The intention was to carry out the modifications to *Harald* in Hull and base our brilliantly successful charter company from the Princes Dock. Unfortunately, Harold Wilson brought in the Import Deposit Scheme and we had arrived just too late to



*Left: Traditional Nordic rigging has a character of its own (courtesy of Tom Cunliffe)*

avoid incurring the payment of 50% of the price of our lovely boat, so it was felt we should move to the Freeport of Jersey without delay.

The passage was relatively incident free and on arrival in St. Helier we were escorted in the inner harbour and berthed next to another working schooner, the *Result*. Press and TV people arrived and we basked in the publicity. We were made temporary members of the St. Helier Yacht Club, only to have this privilege subsequently politely withdrawn. If I may take this opportunity to apologize to this wonderful club: the mud-spattered crew who entered your committee room in session thinking it was the shower room were soundly reprimanded. But that's another story... ⚓





*You never know where research will take you....*

# Mortimer Singer and the catamaran *Jessie*

**Martin Black supplements the research of Paul Hawthorne, *Singer historian***

Here at Mission Control, we receive occasional enquiries from the public seeking information on Great Uncle Joe who was known to have crewed on a yacht that raced in Cowes Week in the 1930s. Usually there is never quite enough background information to enable a helpful reply to be given.



*Above top: Mortimer Singer in 1890*  
(© Singer Collection)

*Above: Engraving of a Duplex Catamaran, built in 1878 in Rhode Island, U.S.A. for Mr. Henry N. Custance*  
(Source: Illustrated London News Ltd./Mary Evans Picture Library Ltd.)

This time it was different. Paul Hawthorne made contact, explaining: ‘I wish to track down steam yachts and yachts owned by the Singer (sewing machine) family from 1880 to 1935.’ What was not immediately clear was why Paul had attached to his enquiry an image of Paignton Harbour taken in 1889 (*opposite*).

My natural curiosity was aroused when, on closer

examination, the image showed a sprightly catamaran moored in the harbour.

Catamarans at that time were highly unusual craft to be seen in British waters. Paul also sent a cutting from *The Torquay Times & South Devon Advertiser* of Saturday August 29, 1885, which contained a report on the Torbay Royal Regatta:

‘An object of considerable curiosity to spectators was the catamaran belonging to Mr A. M. Singer of Paignton, constructed of two canoes, joined ingeniously together, so as to work each of them independently of the other, with a platform spanning them, in the middle of which the mast was steeped. A high rate of speed is attained by this queer craft, which is, we believe, an American notion. The *Jessie* as she is called, was one of the sights of the Regatta.’

Could we provide more information on *Jessie*? Paul wanted to know. He was able to explain that when the company’s founder,

Isaac Singer, died in 1875 a significant portion of his fortune passed to his son, Mortimer. Young Mortimer was not able immediately to get his hands on his inheritance, but while he was a 19-year-old student at Downing College, Cambridge, he did get his guardians to fund the purchase of horses, a yacht – the 10 tonner *Moray* – and a “shooting place” in the Highlands. He came of age in 1884 and now was free to follow his love of innovation.

So why Paignton and why *Jessie*? Although the Singer family owned a large house and land in Yonkers, New York, in 1873 Isaac Singer had Oldway Mansion, a 100-room residence, built (to his own design) for himself and his family, in Paignton, overlooking the harbour. Paignton is, of course, in the heart of the English Riviera. In 1879 while the rest of the family moved to Paris, Mortimer, then aged 16, stayed on.

Looking at the image of what was clearly a highly developed concept for a yacht, it seemed most unlikely that *Jessie* would have been built locally; it was far more likely that *Jessie* hailed from the USA.

In 1875 Herreshoff designed and built his first catamaran, the 25ft *Amaryllis*. She was a complete novelty. She took part in the Open Centennial Regatta on Long Island Sound in June 1876, winning easily against extreme sandbaggers and cabin yachts with far larger sail areas. In 1877 he went on to build four more catamarans – *John Gilpin*, *Teaser*, *Tarantella* and *Arion*. In 1878 he built *Duplex* for an English owner, Henry N. Custance.







Above: *Catamaran Jessie in Paignton Harbour, 1889*  
(© The Francis Frith Collection)

*Duplex* was kept on the Thames at Erith. She was 33 feet long, with a draught of 3 feet, and had been recorded making 23 mph (with the tide) in the Lower Hope.

The concept caused a stir among the more innovative builders and yachtsmen of the day – none more so than Commodore Fred D. Hughes of the Empire Yacht Club, New York who turned to Tom Fearon, a boat builder of Yonkers, to build him a succession of catamarans. Hughes was very much the doyen of the class. Fearon built *Tarantula* and *Primo*, as well as *Jessie*, amongst others.

*Jessie* was 37.5ft overall and weighed less than 3,000 lbs. She was regarded as the fastest of her time, but what brought her to prominence in the eyes of the public was not her prowess racing against similar craft, but rather a race in July 1883 between her and a racehorse named Boston. Boston was attached to a lightweight sulky (or spider), carrying a jockey. The race was over a 90-mile distance from New York to Stony Creek, which lies to the east of New Haven, Connecticut, for a wager of US\$ 1,000. The horse took 15 hours 45 minutes arriving at 8 pm, *Jessie* having arrived at 3.35 pm. The horse was said to be in good condition and was rewarded with a feed of hay and bran mash.

Boston's owner paid up, but claimed that *Jessie* had been favoured by unusual winds, so a re-run was arranged for that September, again for US\$ 1,000. However, by now *Jessie* had been sold so it was agreed that Hughes substituted a new catamaran, *Cyclone*. Again

his boat won (the horse had to be helped by some dray horses to get it to the line, and Boston's owner was tried for animal cruelty).

Hughes owned a total of 6 catamarans, designed both by Fearon and Herreshoff, but declared that *Jessie* was 'the summit of catamaran excellence'.

In a June 1885 race in New York Harbour, *Jessie* was described as exceeding the speed reached by ice yachts, travelling at times at a mile every two minutes. That was part of a series of five races against the new Fearon-built catamaran *Iris*. *Jessie* won the US\$ 600 prize.

In July that year *Jessie* was sold to A. M. Singer and she was carried across the Atlantic as deck cargo on a steamer. She was not the only catamaran to be sold to Britain: the Fearon-built *Tarantella* went to the Clyde so that her new owner could conduct speed trials with her. Once there, the local measurer took off her overall length but then insisted on taking her beam as being the distance across from the port side of the port hull to the starboard side of the starboard hull. The result was that she was measured at 27 tons, making her totally uncompetitive.

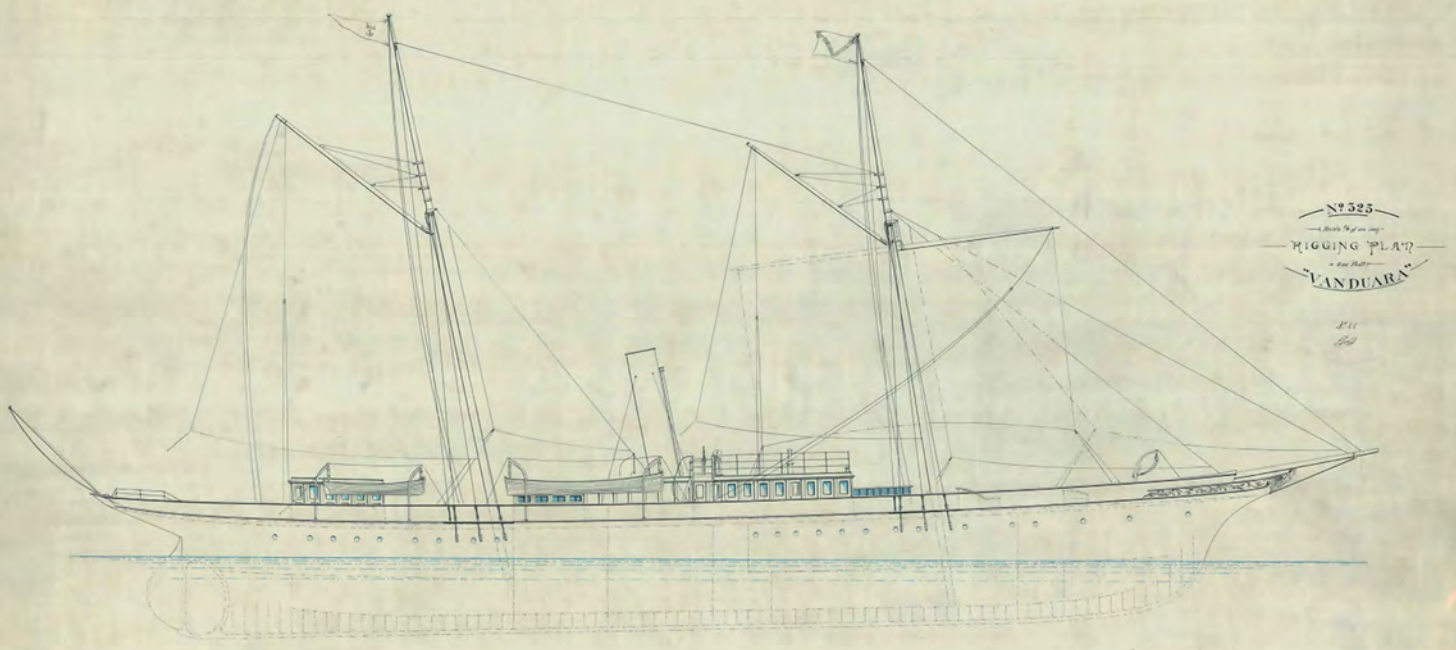
Given the great disparity in speeds between catamarans and mono-hulled yachts, catamarans were only allowed to race against similar vessels, so both owners and the American public soon lost interest in them. By 1887 the short-lived love affair with catamarans was all over 🚢

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*'The horse took 15 hours 45 minutes arriving at 8 pm, Jessie having arrived at 3.35 pm'*

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Above: Vandura –  
Rigging Plan

# Scottish Yachting Archives

## *The evolution of yacht design, construction and use in Scotland*

**William Collier**

Yachting had become a well-established pursuit in Scotland by the mid-19th century. Its early evolution was primarily centred on the Clyde which provided ideal waters for both racing and cruising, but soon Scottish designed and built yachts ventured far afield. Specialist businesses emerged to support the demand for yachts. The Fifes of Fairlie were the first of Scotland's enduring yacht building businesses, whilst G. L. Watson was the first in the world to establish a dedicated yacht design business. Both the Fifes and Watson followed a trajectory that went from local renown, to national celebrity, and eventually international acclaim. The vessels they designed and built became the elegant ambassadors of Scottish ingenuity and skill. Today the names of Fife and Watson are still relevant and are celebrated as the pre-eminent Scottish yacht designers.

In 2020 Scottish Yachting Archives Ltd. was formed to hold the archives of G. L. Watson & Co. Ltd. and William Fife & Son (as well as their successors). There is significant synergy between the two collections: Watson and the Fifes were friends and design rivals. There are also areas where the businesses had significant differences. G.L. Watson & Co. were only ever designers and managers, the Fifes were

designers and builders. Occasionally the Fifes built yachts to the designs of outsiders and these include both G. L. Watson and Alfred Mylne, the third in the trio of most famous Scottish yacht designers. Invariably G. L. Watson-designed yachts were built by others, some abroad but overwhelmingly in Clyde yards, and these range from small, now largely forgotten 19th century yards such as those of Thomas Orr of Greenock, J. McAdam of Govan or J. McQuistan of Largs, to the internationally famous yards such as D. & W. Henderson of Partick, Denny's of Dumbarton or John Brown & Co. of Clydebank where the largest racing yachts and great steam yachts were built.

Yacht designing, construction and maintenance were significant sources of employment in Scotland. Yacht designing pushed the boundaries of technical knowledge with repercussions for mainstream shipbuilding. The achievements of Scottish designed yachts are myriad. Nearly all the crowned heads of Europe owned one at one time or another. In their wake came the holders of great wealth such as the Vanderbilts and Rothschilds. They played a key role in competitive events, and *Britannia*, the British royal family's racing yacht, designed by G. L.







Watson and built at Partick, remains the most successful racing yacht of all time. Between them Watson and the last William Fife designed six America's Cup Challengers and their yachts distinguished themselves at Olympic regattas, Cowes Week, in the British America's Cup, the Seawanhaka Cup and the Fastnet Race. In the pre-World War II era, Scottish yacht design was internationally acclaimed.

The archives held are largely technical, often giving us all the information that the original builders of these yachts would have had. But they also contain correspondence: ranging from a routine letter from a supplier to a handwritten card from the Emperor of Germany considering the construction of a new steam yacht.

Alongside the technical documents, photographs form the most important part of the collection. Again, these reflect the full range of fashionable and prominent marine photographers practising at ports visited by the yachts. But the collection is particularly strong on Scottish photographers including Maclure, McDonald & Co., T. & R. Annan, William Ralston, G. Innes, J. E. Polmont and G. L. A. Blair; all businesses that benefitted from the yachting trade.

Aside from the two key collections of Watson and Fife material, the archive also holds material from other Scottish yacht designers and firms involved in yacht design and construction. Outside of its focus on Scottish yacht design and construction it holds


significant material on Camper & Nicholson.

The primary objective of Scottish Yachting Archives is to provide a high quality repository for all the material held. This is achieved by detailed cataloguing, appropriate storage, condition assessment and conservation as required.

G. L. Watson & Co. continues to trade today and the archive facilitates that firm's commercial work as field leaders in the restoration and maintenance of classic yachts.

The organisation recognises the rarity of its collections and their wider historical value. Noting the importance of the cultural heritage represented by the archives, community and academic interest is welcomed and facilitated subject to commercial imperatives.

The archive has an active collecting policy whereby it looks to acquire material which will help it better reflect the evolution of yacht design, construction and use in Scotland. This includes material connected with persons who may have been designers, builders, crew or active in other associated roles.

Contacts: Email: [enquiries@yachtarchive.scot](mailto:enquiries@yachtarchive.scot)  
Tel: +44 (0)141 5010490 



*Top left: Fife ledgers*

*Top right: Mikado designed by William Fife and launched at Fairlie in 1904*

*Above: Thalassa at John Brown & Co., Clydebank*

*Bottom: The plans chests which now house the Fife archive*

*All images courtesy of Scottish Yachting Archives Ltd.*



# *The Missing Years*

A précis of Hal Sisk's longer work exploring the first 200 years of yachts and yachting

**Histories of yachting usually give a token nod to the Dutch as the pioneers of our sport around 1600 but we have to wait until a new beginning in the early 19th century to find a sustained continuity with the current phenomenon of yachting. Now we can see that this second foundation happened after a watershed which radically departed from the practice of the first two centuries.**

**I am privileged to be familiar with Dutch history and culture and thus inclined to present a revisionist alternative narrative of the dominance of the Dutch in maritime matters and their unique example in the early years of yachts and yachting. I believe the first 200 years (i.e. the 17th and 18th centuries) were dramatically different, to the extent that the concepts of that period may seem quaint, even bizarre, to modern eyes.**

There are only two historical published sources for those early years and both are relatively inaccessible. Arthur H. Clark's rare 'History of Yachting' was privately published by the New York Yacht Club in 1902 and it unusually limits its scope to the first two centuries. Eerde Beulakker's 'Onderscheid moet er zijn' ['One must make a distinction'] of 2012 is subtitled: 'a cultural history of yachting'. His 500-page magnum opus comprehensively covers the story of Dutch yachting from its origins.

Both sources acknowledge the different character of yachts in the early period, but neither book fully recognises their primary functional use, so much a feature of the period that yachts then were as far removed from the leisure craft of today as are the flying machines of the America's Cup. Perhaps the most telling feature of the two centuries of Dutch yachting is that throughout that long period, there was no organised yacht racing, no racing rules, and no trophies. Instead, the everyday practical utility of yachts predominated. This is explicit in the contemporary definition of a yacht in Falconer's Marine Directory in 1771: 'A vessel of state, usually employed to convey princes, ambassadors or other great

personages.' He continues with describing yachts as 'fitted with a variety of convenient apartments, with suitable furniture and richly decorated.'

The Dutch term "dienstjacht" meaning a yacht used "in service" seems to convey the prevailing image of yachts at that time. 150 years earlier in Holland public transport was very limited. In the hundreds of waterways of the deltas of the rivers Maas and Rhine, travelling by road entailed multiple ferries, since bridges were only found on narrow urban canals. So, if one could afford it, one owned or chartered a yacht for personal transport.

In our AYH members' visit to Holland in 2016, we sailed aboard the replica statenjacht *Utrecht* of 1746. Such yachts were much more than a privately owned nautical coach and four, they were vehicles for many official duties, including conveying VIPs, entertaining and sending dispatches and, of course, displaying the prestige of the owners. One can picture these yachts as floating boardrooms and they were fitted out appropriately.

The common descriptor "jacht" was applied to any smaller, general purpose,







Left: The Utrecht,  
replica of a statenjacht  
built in 1746

people-carrying vessel deployed anywhere where a relatively light and fast non-cargo vessel might be required, for example in hydrography.

The smaller Dutch ‘speeljacht’, literally ‘play’ or ‘pleasure’ yacht, was, initially, schooner-rigged without headsails and typically about 40 feet long. Later the ‘bezaan’ rig became common, a surprisingly modern-looking sloop with a very short gaff, almost a Bermudan sail. By the late 1600s the prominent and richly decorated upper transoms of the earlier yachts gave way to round sterns and, remarkably, this model has survived 300 years to the present day.

Apart from day sails with friends and family, however, the big occasions were the annual events in July of ‘admiraalzeilen’ – mock naval fleet manoeuvres under the command of an ‘admiral’. Sailing in a line, sometimes in separate squadrons, tacking in unison, signalling with flags and guns, all good clean fun. Significantly, a trumpeter and cook were included in a speeljacht’s typical paid crew of six. And it was for organising this activity, rather than racing, that detailed instructions were drawn up and published, some of which can be found in Clark’s book.

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*‘...the big occasions were the annual events in July of “admiraalzeilen” – mock naval fleet manoeuvres under the command of an “admiral”. Sailing in a line, sometimes in separate squadrons, tacking in unison, signalling with flags and guns, all good clean fun...’*

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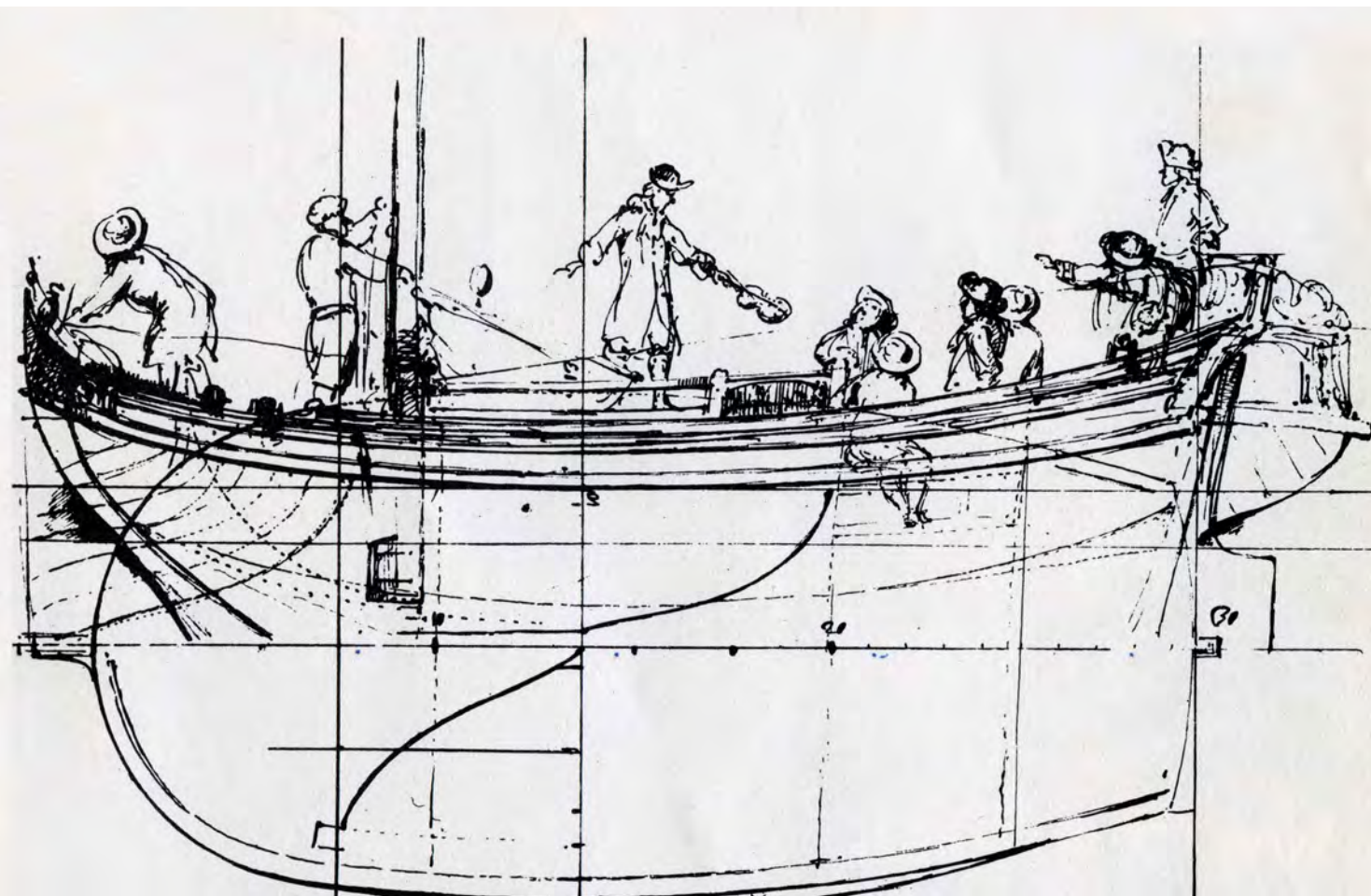
also applied elsewhere, most especially in England. The story of the gift by the city of Amsterdam to King Charles of the large statenyacht *Mary* and subsequently the speeljacht *Bezaan* is well known, but this episode left no enduring legacy in the development of our sport. The English did not copy the Dutch example of widespread private ownership and the practice of



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*‘...if one could afford it, one owned or chartered a yacht for personal transport.’*

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*Above: Willem van de Velde's charming doodle of his dream yacht circa 1670.*


*A unique insight into the mind of a 17th century yachtsman and master maritime artist. Guests aboard include a violinist!*

*(Source: Het Scheepvaartmuseum)*

admiraalzeilen. By contrast the English royal yachts were all built by navy shipyards with monies raised by taxes which were voted by the parliament. And indeed why not, since they were also yachts ‘in service’, effectively small warships? This aspect was vividly illustrated during the third Anglo-Dutch Maritime War when, in 1673, the yacht *Anne* was sunk and the *Catherine* was captured in battle off the Dutch coast.

More longer-lasting was the transplantation for a limited period of the speeljacht and its adoption in Cork Harbour from 1720 to about 1765. Here, through the Water Club, we again find a specific local geography which encourages wealthy merchants and landowners to use the many arms of Cork

Harbour for waterborne personal transport. With their short gaffs, pronounced tumblehome and unstayed bowsprits, not only did the yachts of Cork Harbour, as painted by Peter Monamy in 1738, clearly reflect the Dutch speeljacht of 1700, but the sailing directions of the Club also paralleled those of the admiraalzeilen.

I conclude by noting the combined turning points of Trafalgar (1805) and Waterloo (1815) which ushered in the British maritime lead worldwide, with the consequent discontinuity in the tradition of yachts and yachting. Only from the 1850s did the rest of the world follow the Dutch lead which had started 250 years earlier 





# Publications

## The Motor Yacht Club of Ireland

Vincent Delany



In 1903 the first Harmsworth Cup event took place between Cork Harbour and the City of Cork, with support from The Royal Irish Automobile Club. Following the example of the British Motor Boat Club, and the Motor Yacht Club in Britain, The Motor Yacht Club of Ireland was

founded in 1907, initially to provide technical advice to owners wishing to put internal combustion engines into old yachts. These vessels competed in handicap races on the east and south coasts and estuaries. The Club allied itself to existing yacht clubs.

In the 1920s the hydroplanes arrived, and there was a hunt for suitable sheltered venues with flat water. The most favourable places were the River Bann and the Shannon at Tarmonbarry. The Club declined from the early 1930s.

*This 44 page paperback book is available from the author at [delanyvincent@gmail.com](mailto:delanyvincent@gmail.com) at the cost of £20 plus post and packaging of £4.*

## The North Shannon Yacht Club

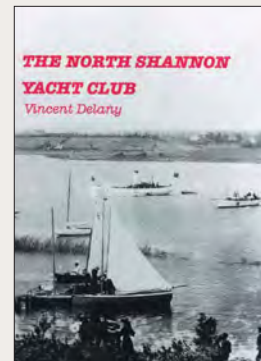
Vincent Delany

Few people today are aware of the history of organised yachting on the north Shannon on Lough Allen, Lough Key, Lough Drumharlow, Lough Boderg, Lough Bofin and Lough Forbes. Between 1896 and 1929 there was a prosperous yacht club on the north Shannon in which the landlords and professional classes who were residents of Counties Roscommon, Leitrim and Longford enjoyed time on the lakes. The Club had a major influence on the creation, in 1920, of the Shannon one design.

This book is the definitive history of the Club, warts and all.

*The English may boast of their Henley,  
The Yanks the America's Cup,  
But give me for sport, health and beauty,  
Boderg when the flags are all up.  
The boats they all flock in their thousands,  
At least, sanguine Bob tells us so;  
The Clubhouse is chock full of prizes  
All glittering there in a row.*

*This 81 page paperback book is available from the author at [delanyvincent@gmail.com](mailto:delanyvincent@gmail.com) for £20 plus £4 post and packaging.*



## Mister Lucky -

Walt Walters, boat designer, fabricator, racer

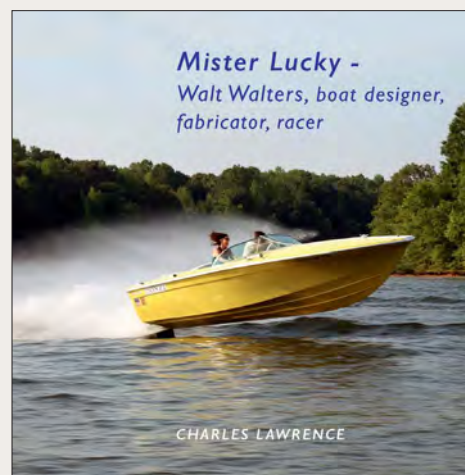
Charles Lawrence

This book describes the life and work of Walt Walters (1926-2015), the American boat designer and builder as glass fibre production was replacing wooden construction. Walt was production engineer for the legendary Bertram 31, helped develop the Bertram 25, and in his short partnership with Jim Wynne designed the Wyn-Mills and the many Formula, Donzi and early Magnum production boats for Don Aronow, together with their aluminium Maritime challengers so successfully raced throughout the 1960s, by Wynne, Aronow and Walt himself, culminating in the British-built Ghost Rider in which Wynne became World Champion.

Walt also designed fascinating one-off and production boats for many others, including Paris Six Hour racers, Thunderbird, the Danish Botved Coronets, Cassarino, Fino, Soverel, Chris Craft, Starcraft, Luhers and Aquasport.

*Lavishly illustrated with contemporary photos, Walt's own drawings and new drawings by the author. ISBN 978-0-9956451-9-6, 2020. Softback, 176 pages, 210mm x 210mm. Price £20 plus p&p. Available from the author: [www.charleslawrencechiswick.uk](http://www.charleslawrencechiswick.uk)*

Charles Lawrence is also putting together an anthology of the late Ray Bulman's writings from *Motorboat & Yachting* over the past 50 years, entitled **Ray Bulman – from Bull's Eye to Back Chat**.



# Rees Martin OBITUARY



*Above: The proud father – Rees at his son Harry's wedding (courtesy of Penelope Martin)*

*Below: Cowes Classics Week 2008 – the 6M yachts joined by Darings during the passage race from Cowes (courtesy of Simon Wells)*

*Below right: Rees sailing in Miss Winifred – the replica half-rater (courtesy of Max Mudie)*

**Earlier this year we received the very sad news that our Vice Chairman Rees Martin had died suddenly at home in London, on 20th February. He was a founder member of the AYH and worked tirelessly and enthusiastically to promote the aims of the Association and expand its influence around the world. He will be greatly missed by us all.**

Rees Martin was born in Gisborne, New Zealand, in November 1940 and led a full and very active life. He was Secretary of the British International Six Metre Association (BISMA) for well over 12 years and presided over a period of expansion, in many ways due to his commitment. He had a replica built of the classic half-rater, *Wee Winn*, and also owned the 6mR *Bear* GBR102. More recently he bought a *Tumlare Alert* and the first Yngling that entered the country.

He and his great friend David Elliott established the British National Yachting Archive (BNYA),

of which he was a trustee, and Rees also greatly contributed to the development of the Boat Building Academy in Lyme Regis.

His company was involved in the transportation of fine art around the world and he was a prominent member of the Chelsea Arts Club where he enjoyed entertaining his many friends.

He was also a great rugby fan and much enjoyed going to matches with his son Harry, of whom he was very proud.

Harry described his father as the eternal optimist, always looking at the best in everyone, and his positive outlook on life was succinctly summed up in his customary way of signing off letters or e-mails with the word "Onward!"

*We are pleased to record below some personal memories from just a few of Rees's many friends and colleagues. A full obituary can be found on the AYH website.*



**Rees helped set up the Metre & Classic Keelboat Regatta in 2007**, which evolved into Cowes Classics Week (now in its 13th year). In the first year, 2008, the 6mR and 8mR sailed the original courses from the 1908 Sailing Olympics at Ryde as part of the centenary celebrations of the host club, the Royal Victoria Yacht Club.

'Rees was always more interested in involving people than winning and we all had many very enjoyable experiences at the various national and international regattas that he took his 6mR *Bear* to. He introduced so many younger members to 6 Metre sailing offering them an opportunity (often their first) to sail and race in top company.'

**Robin Richardson**, fellow classic sailor and long-standing friend

**'A kind and generous man, Rees first became involved with the Boat Building Academy (BBA) in Lyme Regis over 20 years ago through a chance meeting with myself, founder of the BBA. Rees was towing his half-rater *Miss Winifred* [a replica of Herreshoff's 1892 *Wee Winn*] in the late evening and had stopped almost outside my house to check the trailer. I recognised this interesting looking boat and a firm friendship ensued.**

'Over the years Rees had taken a real interest in the BBA's activities, initially donating a Fowey River Boat *Sirocco* for student recreation and subsequently being involved with the transition of the BBA into a charity. Rees brought commercial acumen together with his wide knowledge of and interest in all aspects of classic yacht activities.

'We will all miss his gentle manner and sage advice and above all his huge enthusiasm and knowledge of all matters relating to the development of classic boats of all types.'

**Tim Gedge**, director, the Boat Building Academy, Lyme Regis



**'I met Rees a few times, initially at the first Metre & Classic Keelboat Regatta in 2007, when he materialised out of the crowd and made a beeline for me, having seen that I was a stranger there needing someone to talk to.** What a generous-spirited, smiling, kind man he was that day. *Classic Boat* is a magazine Rees knew well – we featured his yacht *Miss Winifred* in our April 2000 edition, and kept up correspondence over the years, meeting again occasionally, including at student launch days at the Boat Building Academy in Lyme Regis. It's only thanks to the time and efforts of the Rees Martins of this world that we have a classic boat scene in Britain.'

**Steffan Meyric Hughes**, editor, *Classic Boat*





## Obituaries

*We are sorry to have to record the death of the following members since 1st January 2019:*

### John Edward Basley

Died on 16th December 2019, member since November 2005.

### Ray Bulman

Died on 1st January 2020, member since December 2010.

### George Hogg

Died in June 2021, member since January 2017.

### Rees Martin, Vice Chairman of AYH (see opposite)

Died on 20th February 2021, member since November 2005.

### John Power

Died on 4th February 2020, member since January 2011

Please see:

[www.yachtinghistorians.org/in-harbour](http://www.yachtinghistorians.org/in-harbour) for full obituaries.

## New members

*We would like to welcome the following new members who have joined the Association since 2019:*

### James Blott

### Christopher J. Brown

### Lars Dahl

### Keith Dovkants

### David Dyer

### Richard Franklin

### Tim Gedge

### G.J. Holbourn

### F.M. Laity

### Patrick Lamache

### John Leonida

### Iain McAllister

### Richard Morris

### Bruce Moss

### Brian Nibbs

### James Pratt

### Bob Russell

### Gisela Scharbaum

### Helmut Scharbaum

### Thassilo

### Peter Thomas

### Richard Titchener

### Yann Wachten

### Philip Wadley

### Maunsel White

### Carl Whitewood

### N.A.J. Witt

# Yachting History Research Resources

*Continued from inside front cover*

## Ernest W Toy Jr Adventures Afloat (continued)

categories. Toy has very much become the Bible for maritime book collectors.

The only regret must be that for reasons of space he was forced to drop listings of yachting periodicals.

## Acknowledgement

*The Association of Yachting Historians would like to express their grateful thanks to Mr Toy for agreeing to allow the Association to scan his two-volume work and to make it available for reference by our members.*

## The Hart Nautical Collection MIT

This is much more than a yachting collection, but its special feature is as the custodian of the designs of N.G. Herreshoff, George Owens, Clinton Crane, Aage Nielsen and others. The American designers have a most helpful tradition of donating their archives and, through the Hart Collection, allowing great freedom of access.

Curator Kurt Hasselbach is an enthusiastic supporter of yachting history and a most helpful guide to its collections. Access by application.

[mitmuseum.mit.edu/hart-nautical-collections-list](http://mitmuseum.mit.edu/hart-nautical-collections-list)  
[kurt@mit.edu](mailto:kurt@mit.edu)

265 Massachusetts Avenue  
Building N51  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
Phone: 617-253-5927  
Fax: 617-253-8994

## Herreshoff Marine Museum, Bristol, Rhode Island, USA

In association with the Hart Nautical Library, the Museum has produced the Herreshoff Catalogue Raisonné which documents all vessels and models designed or built by N.G. Herreshoff or the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company. AYH member Sandy Lee is a Board Member and volunteer.

[www.herreshoff.info/Menu/index.htm](http://www.herreshoff.info/Menu/index.htm)

## Mystic Seaport Museum G.W. Blunt White Library

A stupendous collection of two million objects including, for yachting historians, the archive of W.P. Stephens. The transatlantic dimension of his archive is most significant because it includes many plans of British yachts and correspondence with leading British designers.

[research.mysticseaport.org](http://research.mysticseaport.org)  
[research.mysticseaport.org/coll/collog1](http://research.mysticseaport.org/coll/collog1)  
Telephone: 860.572.5367 or email  
[collections@mysticseaport.org](mailto:collections@mysticseaport.org)

## Royal Thames Yacht Club

Similar to the Royal Yacht Squadron, this body has an excellent library and AYH members will also enjoy the extensive half-model collection. Access by application.

[www.royalthames.com](http://www.royalthames.com)

## Royal Yacht Squadron

As one would expect, this venerable body has a large library with many original records and logs. Naturally particularly strong on the 19th century. Accessible by application.

[www.rys.org.uk](http://www.rys.org.uk)

The Castle, Cowes

Isle of Wight, PO31 7QT

Telephone: +44 (0) 1983 292191

Fax: +44 (0) 1983 200253

## Yachting Heritage Centre, Flensburg

This library now houses the large collection of our AYH member Volker Christmann assembled over 25 years. It is by no means restricted to books in English and German - French, Dutch and Scandinavian publications are also represented. The collection is searchable online.

[www.yachtingheritagecentre.com](http://www.yachtingheritagecentre.com)

Address: Harniskai 13, 24937

Flensburg, Germany

Telephone: +49 461 31803063

## Carry out your own research from home!



USB data sticks of **Lloyd's Register of Yachts 1878-1980** and **The Yachtsman magazine 1891-1939** are both available to purchase from the Association by members and non-members. In addition, the extensive yachting reports in **The Field magazine 1853-2005** can be accessed by members by registering with the AYH to use ProQuest, an academic search programme.

Please visit our website for details: [www.yachtinghistorians.org](http://www.yachtinghistorians.org) (see under Projects).





