



## John Power

**(31<sup>st</sup> March 1931 – 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020)**

John Power had been a member of the Association of Yachting Historians since 2011 and during his lifetime on the water completed seven transatlantic crossings, in his own wooden boats: six crossings in KATAREE and one in PENNYROYAL, described below.

His son, Richard, recalls here some very personal memories of his father:

Boats he owned:

- **STORM** – a 5 ton Hillyard, that he and my mother cruised in the UK and N. Brittany, before children came along. She had a 2hp Seagull outboard that apparently never worked for more than 10 minutes at a time. Consequently, my father quickly learnt to scull over the stern with a long sweep – a skill he passed on to my brother and me.
- **MYFANWY** – SCOD No. 10, built by Lallows in (I think) 1955. When she was launched, the rudder floated off, much to the bemusement of Clare Lallow himself. Raced and cruised her in the UK and cross-Channel, with my sisters on board as (VERY) young crew. She was eventually stolen from her mooring in the Beaulieu River by an escaped Borstal boy aged 16, who singlehandedly sailed her out of the Channel and into the Bay of Biscay, before coming to a sticky end off Arcachon in SW France. MYFANWY was salvaged, and my father met her getaway skipper – I think he was secretly quite impressed. MYFANWY ended up being sold to a Canadian who restored her and still keeps her in Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- **PENNYROYAL** – an Alan Buchanan designed “Saxon” class 35’ sloop, built by Priors in Burnham on Crouch in 1961. She had five berths, and although I think my parents planned to have four children, they always assumed that one of us would not like sailing. When I came along in 1963, I wasn’t given the choice, so six of us would cruise for up to a month every Summer in Brittany, NW Spain, Ireland, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Holland etc., as part of our upbringing. My father built a pipe cot between the two fo’c’sle bunks that I slept on until it broke in Ireland when I was aged 6. He then built another pipe cot, above one of the fo’c’sle bunks, that you slid into like a drawer, with 2” ‘headroom’ above your nose. No room to lie on your side. Being the youngest, I had to use it. In 1980 my father, sister and brother sailed PENNYROYAL out to the Caribbean, and we all had our first taste of the area over the Winter of 1980/81. My sisters went back to work, I went back to school, and my mother came back to England with me, leaving my father, brother and one other to cruise through the Caribbean, visiting just about every island including Haiti, before PENNYROYAL was wrecked on the Eastern end of Mayaguana, an outlying island in the Eastern Bahamas, as a result of being caught by an uncharted Northerly current in the Inagua channel. This was a heart-breaking loss for my father, after 20 years of cruising in her, during which she became part of the family. The story of the wrecking, etc. is told in the RCC Journal of 1981.

- **KATAREE** – a 43’ Arthur Robb yawl built in 1959. Originally commissioned by Harold Rapp, the owner of the Duke’s Hotel in St James’s, she was the first British sailing yacht to be built with a deep freeze, and apparently cost him £15,000, £5,000 of which was spent on the deep freeze machinery. When my father bought her in 1981, this machinery was all still installed, including the original 60hp Mercedes diesel that in turn belt-drove the 2.5hp compressor. On purchasing her, the survey revealed problems with her fastenings, and the summer of 1981 was spent with her on the hard at Moody’s in Swanwick, having many of these replaced. At one point, she had so many holes in her she was unkindly nicknamed **CULLENDER OF HAMBLE**. In the Autumn of 1981, we left the UK on the first of what was to become six transatlantic crossings in her, to the Caribbean. After **PENNYROYAL**’s loss, my father felt he had some unfinished business. In Spring 1982, we took her up to the East Coast of the USA, spending some time with the Cruising Club of America in Maine, before sailing home to Cowes.

[AYH member **Robin Richardson** recalls his own somewhat hair-raising experience sailing with John and his wife in **KATEREE** in Maine: “It was May and apparently nobody launched in Maine before June as there was no point until the days of fog had eased. I remember going through some very narrow passage between two islands in dense fog. We could barely see the stem-head! Us doing about 4 knots. John identified a vessel ahead coming towards us fast. We could hear her. It was one of those Maine petrol lobster boats and emerged out of the fog doing at least 12 knots. Both boats held their course. I think your father had confidence that they had us on radar. As the lobster boat went past close down our port side your father hailed ‘Good morning’ as cool as a cucumber. Your mother was not so amused at the wash!”]

More trips to the Caribbean and New England followed, as well as more local cruising, until she was sold in 2004.

- **KARIAT** – a 38’ steam launch built in 1897 in East Cowes. Most sailing yachtsmen, when they reach a “certain age,” opt for something like a Nelson or a Fairey Huntsman motor launch. Not my old man! Over the course of the subsequent dozen years or so, she became a familiar sight in the Solent, as my father quickly got to grips with her late Victorian machinery. He joked about her being available for weddings, barmitzvas, etc. etc., and was only too keen to spend two hours getting steam up if someone said they’d like to go for a trip in her. The pinnacle of her time under my father’s ownership was during 2012, when she took part in the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee parade on the Thames. Probably the zenith was when she stubbornly refused to get steam up (wrong sort of coal...) when the Duke of Edinburgh came to formally open the RYS Yacht Haven, and was due to be delivered to the site by **KARIAT**. Much to my father’s embarrassment, the Duke arrived in the RYS launch instead. **KARIAT**’s final demise came in the 2016 fire in Cowes, when she was completely destroyed while laid up in David Heritage’s shed. To my father, her “Viking funeral” came as a slight relief, as he was worried about who was going to be her next custodian.

[**Henrietta Smyth**, AYH member, recalls that, thanks to John’s generosity, **KARIAT** was a regular, and very popular, participant at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club’s annual Open Day for People with Disabilities, in Fishbourne, and will be greatly missed on those occasions.]

My father was a member of the following clubs:

- Royal Yacht Squadron
- Royal London Yacht Club
- Royal Cruising Club (past flag officer)
- Island Sailing Club (Life member)
- Cruising Club of America
- Cruising Association

He was also known as “the Voice of Cowes,” after many years as “Castle One” (or occasionally “Castle Two”) running VHF comms for Cowes Weeks and other RYS regattas in the Solent.

In addition to his prowess on the water, my father was a keen and active musician, and played the cello. He started and ran a small orchestra that frequently accompanied the organist in services at Holy Trinity Church, Cowes.