

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*