

# ‘The Boat’



## TRURO AND DISTRICT BOATING ASSOCIATION TBOA NEWSLETTER

**AUTUMN 2016**

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Moonlight on the TBOA moorings at Mylor.

Courtesy of Stefan Szoka.  
TBOA Secretary.

## **Editorial**

Welcome to the 2016 edition of the TBOA Newsletter!!

I hope you enjoy reading it this year. It's a mix of reports from the TBOA Committee coupled with some happy tales, tales of hard and challenging times when sailing, practical descriptions and tips and also a bit of local history (and club history) thrown in!!

Reading some of the articles new members or people new to sailing might be forgiven for wondering if it's all worth it; most of us know that our hobby and past time is a mix of great pleasure and difficult times as well, but that's what makes it so worthwhile, 'cos if it was all plain sailing we would soon be bored!!

Many thanks, to all the contributors of this Newsletter! Articles and photos are essential, ***without them there would be no newsletter***, so contributions are always welcome, in any format, any time of year. My contact details are on the website or just hand me bits of paper!

If you have any suggestions for improvements or something different for the Newsletter please let me know, feedback is always helpful. Variety is the spice of life and I am open to new ideas!

A reminder that this Newsletter and previous ones are available to download and view in PDF format from the TBOA website in the Newsletter section.

I hope you enjoy reading it once again!

Phil Coltman.

## **A Message from the Commodore.**

Dear Members,

Another year has flown by and as I write this the Clocks have returned to British Medieval Time with darkness approaching in mid afternoon. However the summer is still a very recent memory and I hope that you had as good a time afloat as we did. My "Year" started with a phone call one Sunday Evening as I was about to sit down to eat from a member who had just arrived at the Yard to discover Mewa had fallen over on to Ann Louise and was in a potentially dangerous position. While Wendy contacted Chris Rowe and John Butler I rushed to the yard and ensured that nobody was hurt and that there was little danger of any further movement of any boats. Once Chris arrived, the position was fully considered. We had no alternative but to wait until the next morning to take action. For me, having had a not dissimilar problem with Sundance two years previously, there was a terrible feeling of Deja Vu but thank goodness again, no one had been hurt.

The Monday morning saw a volunteer team and Macsalvors very promptly on site. Both boats were brought upright (Mewa having to be launched and recovered) and by the afternoon order had been restored. The way in which this was handled speaks volumes for our club. The Members directly involved who were naturally very distressed, handled a difficult situation superbly and the volunteers who arrived as if by magic, did a splendid job. I would like to record a big thank you to everyone who helped and gave time so willingly.

This year was my first attempt at the Falmouth Classics and it was good to see at least 2 members of TBOA supporting this growing local event. Our "Classic" summer then turned to the Festivals at Brest and Douarnenez (the latter another first for Sundance). The Channel crossing was the worst I have ever had in a yacht. My son Mark hit the exact note when he described it as "like sailing in a washing machine"!! Brest has become a haven for larger boats including many replicas and we both felt that the organisers had sadly priced all the smaller exhibitors off the quays. As classic yachts we were placed on a pontoon at the extremity of the harbour where the view was good but our boats were just not a part of the Festival. However the atmosphere ashore was great.



At the end of the festival the fleet and many hundreds of local boats depart the Rade de Brest for Douarnenez. Watched from the cliffs by thousands of Bretons, we pass

Camaret, take the Tolinguet Passage and then despite the organisers directing us outside the Tas de Pois (the set of rocks off the coast in the Iroise) virtually all the fleet divide to take one of the 4 "safe" passages between the rocks en route for Douarnenez. It is rather like pouring model yachts down a small drain. The boat behind us didn't see (and narrowly missed running down) a small - 8ft sailing dinghy - hardly surprising in such a crowd.



Douarnenez is far more intimate and is held in and off the Port du Rhu in what is in effect the SE corner of the Baie de Douarnenez. We had a reserved buoy in an area off the harbour but it was so chaotic I stayed out and anchored further away. The next morning when things had calmed down I summoned up the courage to go into the mele and found a British Yacht alone on a mooring in the right area. He was really nice about company but pointed out that the previous night (in a flat calm) he had dragged his mooring and had to anchor as well! We decided to anchor but not before being told that a most inviting and empty mooring buoy right in the middle of all the other boats was there to indicate a rock!!! Vive la France.

We left after a few days - there is a limit to the amount of Breton Festivals I can take - We had a great sail to Cameret and then up to L'Aber Benoit - a delightful river next door to L'Aberwrach I had never visited before. Many will know it and I recommend it although you do need to be accurate in the various approach channels. Once inside and safely moored we were greeted by a girl in a workboat - clearly the Harbour Master. On enquiring where the nearest Boulangerie was she indicated 20 minutes in either direction. My reluctance for an early morning walk produced an immediate offer of a morning delivery and at 0830 the following morning she duly returned with fresh bread and croissants! In our conversation I gathered that she also lays the moorings and a fully serviced annual mooring for Sundance would cost 500 Euros. Are your thoughts similar to mine I wonder?

We progressed up the Coast to St Peter Port spending a week in the QE2 Marina where the ramps are brilliant for Wendy and a wheelchair. Last year I discovered Guernsey's excellent Bus Service where a trip however long or short costs £1. The island has changed in the 30 years I have been visiting but still retains its charm and we always like calling there. One day I will get to Alderney. Other members have, I know, also had good summers with some record number of trips being clocked up. I felt that most places we visited were quiet with fewer boats



than usual although I was 6 out from the Pontoon in Salcombe on Regatta night - hardly surprising really!!

The Club continues to prosper and we are now feeling the benefits of our CASC (Community Amateur Sports Club) status with not only an 80% reduction on the Yards Business Rates but also a further discretionary relief from the Council reducing our Rates bill to a few hundred pounds. It all helps and I am confident that we should now be able to enjoy at least 10 years where prices are stable or rising in line with inflation as a maximum.

The Winter Programme is looking good and I am sure will be well supported.

On your behalf I would like to record our thanks for all the hard work from the various Committee members and volunteers. Sometimes it can feel like a thankless task but without all of them TBOA could not function, let alone be so successful. Wishing you all fair winds and calm seas in 2017.

Geoff Trebilcock

Commodore.



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## **Chairman's Report.**

During the past few years the officers of TBOA have dealt with a number of issues, the yard lease, mooring fundus and also CASC membership and even now moves are afoot to gain membership of the P.o.F.S.A - Port of Falmouth Sailing Association. For those of you who race it adds interest and the ability to race under handicap, but the bigger picture has to be a united voice for the beautiful waters of the South West, with most if not all local clubs already members. We will keep you posted with any updates.

We are also now quite heavily involved with the Harbour Forum with three of our own Committee; Geoff Trebilcock, Stefan Szoka, and Phil Allen putting themselves up for the extra duties and nights away from the "missus" and the TV etc.

It has been a busy year for the Club Officers no more so than for the Social Committee, who every year endeavour to put together a programme of events to appeal to all. It started with the St. Michaels Hotel "staycation"/dinner! Hosted by our very glamorous couple Lynn & John Butler. This led on to some great guest speakers and some excellent summertime rendezvous. It was hard to pick a favourite, but for me it was the curry night at the Ganges Restaurant. All these events were relayed and prompted by Vanessa Boucher - Thank You. Unhappily Vanessa is standing down from her post, having completed five years of 'hard labour', its time, she says, to move over and give someone else the chance to shine for our club.

As you can see there is much to applaud in TBOA, not least that sense of belonging - I know I do. The willingness to help each other with whatever is needed, a genuine no questions asked willingness is as much a part of the Club ethos as the boats and the river itself.

Long may it continue.

Paul Thomas.

Chairman.



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*Brenda Grieve*

REG071

At the last social meeting of 2016 we auctioned two cases of wine that were very generously donated by Keith Harris. The winning bidders were two of our members and the full proceeds of £60 in total were donated to the RNLI.

# B·S·G



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Paul Thomas

*We like to keep you moving*

## **REPORT FROM SOCIAL SECRETARY T.B.O.A.**

Well what a brilliant programme we have had this year, starting with January we were delighted to welcome Des Prouse and his talk on The History of Goonhilly Earth Station 'A tale of two half centuries' what an informative and enthusiastic couple of hours on a subject that we all knew something about, but were so surprised to learn about the new space programme, terrific evening, and we look forward to having Des again for an update in the not too distant future.

The Christmas Party at The St .Michael's Hotel Falmouth, 50 members came and spent a wonderful weekend with plenty to eat and drink, good raffle once again with plenty of prizes thanks goes to those members who contributed towards it, always appreciated. We also joined TBOA up to Facebook thanks to Amanda Walsh for getting it started.

In February we visited Mylor Yacht Club for the talk with Phil and Sheila Standley and 'The Adventures of Narnia' which was the story of a trip in their Moody 346 in which they circumnavigated the Iberian Peninsula and returned via the Med and the Canal du Midi.

March brought the Quiz night at Flushing Sailing Club, unfortunately not to many of our Club members turned up but that didn't deter the TBOA team from winning.

April is always a busy month for the club so we thought this year we would have a presentation from Mike Treglown 'What to do when things go wrong at sea'. Well, what can I say, so informative it's a wonder that any of us risk going back into the water, explanations and questions could have gone on forever, a terrific evening enjoyed by all. Next season it will be Winter Engine Servicing, and has already been confirmed for October 2017.

April also brought in launch days, a busy weekend had by all, thanks to everyone for their team effort, and to Vanessa and the girls for continuing to make tea, coffee and cakes.

In April we posted adverts into the West Briton, this year to try and increase the number of pitches for the boat jumble in Newham Yard, quite a good turnout but unfortunately the parking situation doesn't help us, however we covered the cost of the advertising so that's ok.

May brought the shakedown cruise at the Ferryboat, 24 members attended, a good social evening and we all had a meal, but only Paul T, Paul, Dawn and Andrew managed to sail across and the rest of us decided to drive, as the weather was horrid to say the least, but it did clear up in the evening. On Dawn's face book page the following morning her report stated the weather had left the water lumpy all night!!

June brought the Club get together on the Pontoon in Truro river, unfortunately John and I couldn't make this event, but I understand from our Facebook page that it was a hilarious BBQ most dressed as Zoo animals, yachts attended were Skywave, Miss Patsy, Deseo, Kirri, Mulan, and Puffin. Paul dressed as a parrot and he certainly did manage to get his feathers wet by falling in!! A good selection of BBQ's and plenty of grub all washed down with a little drop of the good stuff. European relations were improved by the presence of a French yachtsman who enjoyed our hospitality but must have wondered at the costumes.

July came and went we had some glorious weather and we had some horrid weather but those wanting to sail did so and enjoyed what they could when they could.

August brought the curry night at Castaways East, 39 club members attended, it was a smashing evening and a fantastic turn out, food was good and the company even



better, staff at the Castaways were most obliging, we will definitely make a return visit.

September we had our late cruise to Fowey and a meal at the Royal Fowey Yacht Club, 8 boats turned up onto the pontoon and 18 members arrived at the Club for the meal, I understand that Paul entertained everyone afterwards on Miss Patsy with his nibbles and tipples!!

Late September brought the annual lift out of boats at Newham Quay, the weather kept everyone entertained to say the least, we had the winds on Saturday, drizzle and some showers on Sunday but it all started well on the Monday and then the rain arrived. I don't think anyone managed to stay dry all day, but credit due to all those that worked over the three days, it just goes to show what a really good club we have. I thank those individuals and you all know who you are.

October brought us back inside the Truro Rugby Club for the start of our Winter programme starting off with a talk from one of our own members - Mike Martin. He told the tale and showed slides of his experiences on his epic voyage to the Antarctic, certainly a trip of a lifetime, one never to be forgotten. We also welcomed our newest members to the club and enjoyed a pasty supper.

November we welcomed back Chris Rubery to talk about 'Man Overboard' - Prevention and Recovery, so informative always a good topic especially for our club, let's hope we never need to put it into practice.

December is the AGM at Truro Rugby Club when we vote in our Chairman and Committee Members once again for 2017 and discuss various issues that have come up in the year. Followed by a buffet provided by 'The Cornish Oven'.

Lynn.

## **Notices for Members.**

**22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017** - Launch Days from Newham Quay.

Ladies we need your help we need cakes/buns/quiches to feed the workers over the 2 days and helpers for Vanessa and Lynn serving coffee/teas all day or part days would be very welcome.

**30<sup>th</sup> Sept/1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Oct 2017** - Lift Out Boats at Newham Quay.

Ladies we need your help we need cakes/buns/Quiches to feed the workers over the 3 days and helpers for Vanessa and Lynn serving coffee/tea all day or part days would be very welcome.

NOTE TO ALL MEMBERS:- To enable the TBOA Committee to inform members of events or any issues it is necessary for us to keep updating your changes of mobile numbers, email addresses or home addresses, please contact Mark Arrow membership officer at [markearrow@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:markearrow@yahoo.co.uk)

Many thanks.

Lynn.

TBOA Social Secretary.



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## **Cook's Corner (or The Galley Slave!)**

When planning to be away on the boat for several nights it is helpful to have a few recipe's you can rely on - other than the usual Spaghetti Bolognese!!

These are a couple of meals I regularly cook - one to prepare in advance and warm up on board for the first evening and one that can be cooked on board.

If you have your own favourite recipes for on board catering - please share them with us - let Phil have them for the next newsletter!

### **Braised sausage casserole with cannellini beans**

(Prepare in advance - serves 2 to 3)

6 good quality pork sausages  
1 x 410g tin cannellini beans, drained and rinsed  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 medium onion, peeled and sliced  
3 medium carrots, peeled and finely diced  
2 sticks celery, finely diced  
1 large clove garlic peeled and crushed  
500ml (1 pint) chicken stock  
2 tablespoons tomato puree  
Approx 300g - 400g Charlotte potatoes cut in half  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
¼ teaspoon hot chilli flakes (if you like some extra heat!)

Heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a flameproof casserole or heavy based saucepan and brown the sausages well all over. Remove the sausages to a plate and add the remaining tablespoon of oil to the casserole. Add the onions, carrots, celery and garlic and cook over a medium heat for about 10 minutes. Heat the stock or mix with hot water if using a cube. Add the tomato puree and stir well to combine. Pour the stock over the vegetable mixture, add the beans and potatoes, seasoning and chilli flakes. Stir well and place the sausages in the casserole - on top of the vegetables. Put on lid and bring to the boil. Reduce heat and simmer gently for about 40 minutes. Allow to cool and transfer to Tupperware (or old ice cream tub!) for carrying to the boat. Simply re-heat on the hob for about 15 minutes and serve - if you wish to thicken the sauce first dish up the sausages and potatoes onto warm plates then thicken with cornflour (about 2 dessertspoon's mixed with a little water). Enjoy with a nice bottle of red wine and you only have one pan and two plates and wine glasses to wash up!

### **Lentil, chickpea and spinach curry**

(made in about 20 minutes and only one large pan needed)

2 tablespoons Olive oil  
1 red onion chopped  
2 cloves garlic peeled and crushed  
2 tablespoons curry power (I use HOT but vary to your taste)  
390g chopped tomatoes with pepper and chilli (normally stocked by tins of tomatoes in supermarkets)  
400g can Green Lentils, drained and rinsed  
215g can Chickpeas, drained and rinsed  
100ml of hot water  
2 tablespoons of tomato puree  
180g bag Baby Spinach  
2 Plain Naan

Heat the oil in a large pan and cook the onion for 4 mins until soft. Add the crushed garlic and cook for another minute. Stir in the curry powder and cook for a further minute. Add the tomatoes, lentils, chickpeas, water, and tomato puree and stir well to mix together. Simmer gently for 8 minutes. Add the baby spinach (hence the large pan) for the last 2 minutes so it is just wilted. If you're having Naans, heat them according to the pack instructions just before serving the curry.

Vanessa Boucher.

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## **Two engines for two Moody's.**

As a lot of you will be aware there are actually two Moody 33's in the club. The first is 'Malkin', owned by Chris Rowe for at least the last decade. The other is 'Seaxe', owned by me, Phil Coltman, since 2009. It is pure coincidence that, independently, we both decided to replace our engines last winter! The following are the tales of how we each approached this job in different ways in different boatyards. Both jobs were carried out throughout the winter lay-up using only our own labour.

### **A New Engine for Seaxe**

Seaxe is an old Moody 33. She is a much loved "Fat Old Lady", who, until last winter, had an engine that was fitted when she was first built in 1979!

This engine was therefore about 35 years old, and had done well in excess of 4000 hours when I finally decided that the time had come to "bite the bullet" and replace it. It was a Thornycroft T90 - a marinised BMC 1500cc, 35 HP four cylinder diesel engine that was designed in the fifties and based on the Austin Morris B-series engine as fitted to vehicles like the Morris Oxford, Morris Marina, some small tractors .... the list is endless. It was marinised by a lot of different firms, not just Thornycroft, and fitted to yachts, fishing boats and also hundreds of canal boats in the Midlands during the sixties and seventies. Many are still running, they're a great engine if a little noisy and "agricultural" by today's standards.

Seaxe's engine was still starting and running but showing signs of age with obvious things like oil burning and oil leaks becoming troublesome, and every season there was some issue or another! As I sail mostly singlehanded I need something that I can rely on not to breakdown in some remote foreign port or in the middle of a long passage! I had the choice of removing the old engine and rebuilding it or just fitting a brand new one. I chose the latter.

Fitting a new engine wasn't straight forward as the modern engines are physically smaller and lighter than the old BMC and this meant that the existing engine beds didn't suit the dimensions of the modern engines. The engine beds had to be modified. There are a number of new marine engine manufacturers (or marinisers) to choose from, such as Beta, Nanni, Yanmar, Sole, Vetus to name but a few. I ended up choosing a 33 HP Vetus as its physical size, dimensions, and not forgetting price, all fitted my requirements the most closely. Also a Vetus engine could be readily supplied by Marine Team at Mylor for a very competitive price! They're a main Vetus agent.





**Vetust M4.35  
33HP diesel engine.**

So a new engine was ordered and I commenced the project as soon as the boat was layed up last autumn - November 2015. This project filled most of my spare time throughout the winter. The old engine was fairly straight forward to remove as access was good once the cockpit floor and wheel steering pedestal had been removed. The old engine mountings had rusted up and had to be cut off with an angle grinder, after all the electrical, plumbing and cable connections had been disconnected. A lorry with a HIAB was used to lift the old engine out and into my trailer to take home. I later managed to sell the old engine on Gumtree to a fisherman who drove all the way down from Poole in Dorset to collect it!

The engine beds had to be raised about 2 inches and brought inwards about an inch on either side. This involved epoxying and bolting on two Iroko runners to increase the height and then epoxying and bolting 10mm flat bar on top of that to accommodate the narrower spacing of the new engine mounts. Before the new engine was fitted I also took advantage of having plenty of working space and removed all the old and smelly sound proofing, painted out the bilges with fresh grey bilge paint and then fitted new foil backed sound proofing all around the entire compartment.

The lorry driver with the HIAB then returned to lift in the new engine and with great skill he used his HIAB to lower it down precisely to sit on the new beds.



These pictures show the new engine in place, bolted down with engine alignment complete.



Most of the plumbing and cabling has also been done, but the cockpit floor and wheel pedestal are still removed.

The electric fuel lift pump can be seen clearly in the middle of the picture next to the engine fuel filter.

The engine and prop shaft were aligned using feeler gauges on the R&D coupling and all the cables and plumbing re-established. Fuel bleeding is a piece of cake on these new Vetus engines as they are fitted with electric fuel lift pumps, so it's simply a matter of turning the key and letting the pump run for a few seconds to prime and bleed the fuel before initial starting. The engine was filled with oil and water and the gearbox filled with oil, the sea

water inlet was supplied externally with water and the engine was test run prior to refitting the cockpit floor and wheel steering system. The engine started instantly, I hardly even heard the starter motor engage!! Very re-assuring!!

The old Thorneycroft engine was fitted with a hydraulic gearbox with a 1:1 drive ratio and a fine pitched left handed propeller. I chose a TMC60 mechanical gearbox for the new engine with a 2:1 ratio needing a right handed propeller. So a new propeller was also ordered from C&O Propellers in Devon. The other problem with the Moody 33 engine installation is that the engine bed inclination angle is very small at about 5 degrees meaning that it can only throw a very small diameter propeller, about 12 or 13 inches maximum. This is way too small for a boat of this size and engine power. So I chose to fit a 4 bladed course pitch propeller that would help to get around this problem as best as possible. The boat used to suffer with prop slip and lack of grip under power and this has now been greatly improved with the new 4 blade propeller. Extra drag under sail is barely noticeable since the propeller is still fairly small in relation to the size of boat and propeller that would ideally be fitted.



The shiny new 4 blade propeller before launching.

12 x 16 RH propeller.

As I write it's the end of the 2016 season following a whole summer of running with the new engine which has now done about 150 hours!

I have been very pleased with its quieter and smoother running. There also seems to be more power available, it uses less fuel and the propeller gives much more "punch". I found it to be a very satisfying project, I did all the work myself which kept the costs as low as possible and I certainly know exactly how it's fitted should there be any problems in the future.

Phil.

.....

### **Malkin - New or Re-Conditioned; the choice is yours.**

I blame Ross Trebilcock as, like me, he is a bit of an E-bay watcher. Had I seen this engine, he said?

It was a Yanmar 3gm30F going for £500. Drawback of course was that it was a non-runner. I went for it on the basis that I could at least sell on the ancillaries if it was not fixable.

As is the case with Phil my Moody 33 (Malkin), the age of the boat meant that the existing motor may have run its course, but mine had already been re-engined in 1993. On the estimate of 50 or 60 hours a year my existing 3gm had probably not run any more than 1200 to 1500 hours in its life, so should not be too bad. But we all know the hard life boat engines have, particularly if they have lived in a cold, dank environment under the cabin sole and "out in the open". Another reason for the major operation was to fix the floor to stop leaks and to sound insulate the engine compartment. The old Yanmar was always a bad starter, and I had tried everything you could imagine as regards ancillaries to fix it. Replacement fuel filter assemblies, new lift pump, injectors, all to no avail. So the problem was probably inside. There is always a debate whether to replace with new as Phil has done, or to fit a reconditioned unit, but purely on cost grounds I opted for the refurb. Good move or not?

As it happened, when I got the new engine home, someone had already stripped it down and I could see straight away that my “bargain” may not have been so good. The engine had broken the middle con rod, damaging the cylinder and writing off the crankshaft. Potentially catastrophic, and now obvious why someone had got rid of it, but “as it ‘appens”, as they say, I had a whole load of spare parts at home, gathered from another foray into the “bay”. Don’t ask, but I had another crankshaft, pistons as well as a load of other bits.

Cornwall Engine Company reconditioned the engine including a regrind of my “spare” crankshaft and fitting of a new piston liner, overhaul of the head and valves. They did a great job, and Richards’ brothers also reconditioned my “spare” fuel injection pump and injectors. Now all we have to do is put it all back together again! This I did, taking my time and referring to manuals and other advice from experts including our Chairman.

Big day arrives. Will it go or will it self- destruct? Phil Johnson and son kindly checked the timing for me, so I had a green light.

I suppose the greatest satisfaction is derived from having done it yourself, and when it fired up first time and ran as sweet as a nut without any adjustments whatsoever the pleasure was unmeasurable.



The old engine had been removed with the help of the yard residents and the forklift from the fish factory, and the new one fitted back the same way. Because the engine was more-or-less a like-for-like replacement minimal adjustments were made to the engine beds. Like Phil however I repainted the engine bay and fitted loads of sound insulation and seals. Result is a bone dry engine bay and a clock running underneath rather than a noisy beast.

I have kept the same 12x15 propeller, but as I have in theory 6 more horses, I may get that re-pitched to tweak up the grip.

In summary I am really pleased with the result; it starts first time, is quiet, and so far reliable after 65 hours or so.

There is no comparison with Phil’s job which is an excellent and thoroughly competent installation.



We both have a fantastic result, the difference being in the total cost. I suspect the refurb method may be cheaper by quite a bit, but the engine is still not new. Time will only tell and Phil and I use our boats differently, with Phil doing twice as many hours each year as I will do, so a new engine for him would be the best option I suspect. My old engine is at home now and will be repaired in due course, so I'll end up with loads more spares, a spare engine or some spare cash.

You pays your money.....

Chris.

**Editors note:** *Thank you for your kind comments about my installation Chris. Readers should know that your job is also very well done and the engine runs smoothly and quietly. You have shown more skill than I did in working to a tighter budget and keeping the costs as low as possible to achieve the required result for maybe half the cost of mine. Well done.*

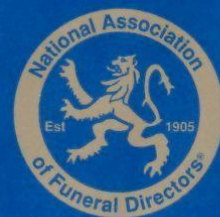
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## **Regattas of the Upper Fal in Victorian times**

### **Recreation on the Fal**

Sometimes we may feel that there are just too many boats on the Fal, particularly on busy summer holidays, but this is nothing compared with its heyday in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century when watermen at its ports and quays handled the life-blood of industry and empire. One can only imagine the sight of Falmouth Harbour in Nov 1860 when 200 vessels sheltered from a South Westerly storm or even February 1861 when 300 deep sea vessels were in harbour awaiting orders. The regattas of the period captured the attention and imagination of rich and poor alike and, when the spectacle was close at hand as with the regattas of the Upper Fal, thousands of people thronged the shoreline to watch, giving these regattas an intimate and personal flavour. The improving transport systems; roads, railways and river steamers allowed more people to attend what was often accepted as a general public holiday on regatta day.

My appreciation of the recreational significance of the river, early in the last century, was sparked by father's recollection of his own grandfather. Captain Allen had a fleet of rowing punts for hire at Malpas and would be seen, telescope to eye, checking their progress from his terraced cottage above the slip, as Edwardian families sported themselves on the river. When William Allen; shipwright, boat proprietor and oyster merchant died in 1936 the eighteen craft were sold, punctuating the end of an era. Regattas were a large part of William's life, as they were for anyone involved with boating on the river. Much of the competition was between professional boatmen, indeed the few amateur races were described as such. There was substantial prize money at stake as well as professional pride and winning craft were important both to the shipwrights who built them as well as the crews that manned them. The winning crew of a four man gig could typically expect a prize of 15s or £1, equivalent to a policeman's weekly wage, and special prizes of £15 to £30 could pay for the building of a boat. The wider Allen family, whose trades included a river pilot, fishermen, watermen and labourers, lived in Kea Parish at Coombe, Trevean, Churchtown and Woodberry. William's father, Henry, moved across the water to become ferryman at Malpas sometime near the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and his brother John took this enterprise over, becoming the last ferryman in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In typical fashion for the age, marriage with local families made cousins of all, in a matter of only forty years, four unions are recorded with the Gunns of Coombe and two with members of the Scoble family, Jane Allen marrying Nicholas Scoble, shipwright, in 1852. All able cousins manned the boats claiming their share of the regatta prizes to supplement sometimes meagre wages.

The reputation of Kea watermen is summed up in an account of the 1861 Truro regatta; "the committee having offered prizes for boats rowed by amateurs, there was a goodly muster of those fond of aquatic sports, and a good race as a consequence. The first prize was won by three Kea boys, who might well be called amphibious, as many of the inhabitants of that parish pass much more of their time on the water than on shore. They were not, strictly speaking, amateurs but no objection was raised, and they, as well as the other successful competitors, well deserved to be rewarded for their good rowing." The first prize went to Zebra under James Allen of Woodberry.

## The Regattas of the Upper Fal

Each of our local regattas had its own traditions; Truro Royal Regatta, so named following the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1846, was the senior venue and its proximity to the city always brought out large crowds. The silvan setting of the Tregothnan and Malpas Regatta, however, could hardly be improved and its connection with the important Tregothnan estate ensured it was always popular. Devoran Regatta by its situation off the main Truro to Falmouth road, was an easy venue and the “new town” and port appeared to instil an atmosphere of youthful optimism. The Feock Regatta became a venue for all seasons, hosting its neighbours in turn by taking advantage of deep and open waters and under the promotion of its celebrated vicar, the indefatigable and ever welcoming Rev. T. Phillpotts of Porthgidden.

Our local regattas catered for a wide range of classes, however races for working punts and gigs always remained a mainstay, reflecting the background of the area. The two ports of Truro and Devoran also ran races for “bona fide” ships boats including those from the square rigged naval training ship HMS Ganges of Mylor and other ships when in port. Sailing punts also featured strongly and although Truro Regatta suffered the most from being tidal, making yacht groundings an additional hazard of the course, nevertheless it nurtured, more than any other, a period of design improvements which transformed future sail racing on the Fal.

In the years 1857/61 Truro Regatta sought to use the incentive of prize money to improve racing craft design. In a few years the nominal fifteen foot keel boats were transformed into out and out racers of thirty foot overall length and the "Secret", built specially by shipwright Nicholas Scoble of Malpas, emerged as invincible.

A dramatic picture of racers of this ilk can be seen in the painting of the yacht Flamingo within “The leeward mark” by Charles Napier Hemy 1904 which is shown below.



## The Truro Regattas

The earliest were those of Truro Regatta which was a thriving affair in 1848 when the newly wed Queen Victoria visited on their tour of Cornwall, attended by her husband Albert. It was normally held at Sunny Corner and under various names; Truro Regatta, Truro Royal Regatta and Truro Quay Regatta. For a number of years in the 1870's, following certain financial issues and the difficulties involved with organising sailing contests in the tidal waters of the upper river, it was held at Loe Beach and amalgamated with the Feock Regatta. The people of Truro, however, never accepted the usurping of their name and after civic pride received a boost at the opening of the cathedral and confirmation of city status, the Royal Regatta returned to Sunny Corner in 1884 after its ten year absence and again thousands of spectators lined the shores, cementing a successful future into the next century.

The traditional position of the committee boat and start line was at Sunny Corner and the course was invariably to Victoria Point, round Calenick Reach, up to Trennick Row and back to Sunny Corner. The course being so close to the town, crowds of spectators were attracted and also numerous visitors in yachts and pleasure boats from Falmouth and other ports "within the Rock". In 1859 it was described thus; "The banks were lined with spectators throughout the entire distance from Truro to Sunny Corner, at intervals along the bank there were numerous stalls and stands for the sale of refreshments. The Louisa steamer brought a large quantity of visitors from Falmouth and during the afternoon steamed up and down the river, affording those on board an excellent opportunity of witnessing the sports", again in 1863; "The concourse of people at Sunny Corner, off which was the starting point and where the band of the Truro Volunteers was located, was very large, not fewer than 4,000 persons visiting the place and lined the banks of the river on both sides during the afternoon. "This represented a fine crowd at a time when the population of Truro itself barely exceeded 10,000.

## The Gig Challenge

In 1860, following the success of the new racing yachts, the Gazette reporter highlighted the situation regarding racing gigs: "We regret to say that one of the most interesting races this year was wanting, the four oared gigs. If good prizes were offered it would be an inducement for some of the river men to build gigs of a style that would be able to contest with the class of racing gigs pulled on the Thames at Oxford, Cambridge and Newcastle etc. We have as good, if not better men than any of these places and there is no reason why men from our neighbourhood should not get some of the good prizes offered for that class of boats at some of the neighbouring regattas. At Dartmouth Regatta for instance a few days ago a prize of £50 was raced for. The people of Truro and its neighbourhood pride themselves on their rowing and few would be found to beat a crew of river men pulling in equal boats. Hitherto our four oared gigs have been limited to 28 feet, whilst those of other ports run from 32 feet to even 40 feet. We have heard it hinted that the committee intend offering prizes for the above class at next years regatta, if such is the case it would be well to let it be known before hand so as to allow ample time for several boats to be built."

As reported, the traditional river gigs were 28 feet and this was the main class featured in the upper Fal regattas, popularly competing up to the mid 70s. Thereafter the ever popular working punts and their lighter skiff counterparts became the main classes. These were pulled by three men using two oars and two paddles in the manner of the Randan races today. Following the demise of the main gig classes in the 70s, a popular and light hearted event continued in the form of the gig and punt chase. Here the faster but more ungainly gig was set to chase the more manoeuvrable punt, whose crew, if caught were subject to a dunking.

The longer gigs referred to were six oared, those of our modern gig events. The most celebrated gig builder was William Peters of St. Mawes and it is testimony to his, and others, skill that many early examples of the craft are still on the water and racing today. Famous early boats include the Newquay, built by Peters in 1812, the Dove built in 1820, Bonnet 1830 and Treffry 1838. It was common at the time to describe the six oar races as “ free for all England” or indeed “ open to all the world” and, from the first, competition was open to far afield and embraced both male and female crews.

### The Tregothnan and Malpas Regattas

The Tregothnan and Malpas Regattas mirrored those of Truro, having the advantage of deep water but being just a little further from the main centre. Its attraction is summed up in the following report from 1860; “Amongst the sailing and rowing matches that annually take place in our county there are few more interesting or more likely to gratify a lover of these sports than that of Tregothnan and Malpas Regatta. The scenery of the neighbourhood is most delightful, embracing part of the domain of Tregothnan, the woods of Woodberry, the Tresillian River and Malpas and vicinity. The course is admirably calculated to test the sailing qualities of the yachts and boats on almost every tack, let the wind be as in what direction it may. It commences from the moorings immediately in front of Malpas, round a mark boat at Woodberry Point, thence up again and into Tresillian River, round a boat off the Limekiln, back again and round a boat off Victoria Point.”

The Regatta was popular throughout the period even in years when its neighbour at Truro also thrived.

### The first Feock Regatta and links with the Horticultural Show

Possibly the first Feock Regatta on the Roads was held on Tues 7<sup>th</sup> Sept in 1858. “It had previously been held at Devoran but as the Hon. Mrs. Gilbert of Trelissick had kindly thrown open her grounds for the Exhibition of the Royal Horticultural Society it was decided by the committee to hold the regatta on the same day in connection with the fete. The horticultural society had for some time held its exhibitions in Truro and Falmouth, but for several years it had seemed to be wanting to some extent in attractiveness. They were popular with subscribers but the public generally did not appear to take much interest in them and attendances lessened year by year. The committee felt that the society which was the parent of all horticultural and cottage gardening societies in the county, should not fail. To the attractions of the show were

added the excitement of the regatta which took place in sight of Trelissick lawn. Some thousands of people attended not only from Truro, Falmouth, Penzance, Camborne, Redruth and intermediate parishes but from distant parts of the county.”

As to the regatta, this was greatly anticipated as demonstrated by; “the fact that on the morning not a single boat, and scarcely any mode of conveyance could be procured in the neighbourhood for love nor money, all having been engaged a fortnight previously. A barge for the accommodation of the committee was moored in Trelissick Creek commanding a good view of the course though frequent showers of misty rain at times entirely hid the competing boats from view.”

The venue allowed larger sailing yachts, akin to those of the Royal Falmouth Regatta, to compete and the Rev. Phillpotts himself came in second within the class for yachts exceeding 8 tons with his own yacht Ariel.

### The Feock Regattas

In 1876 another regatta was held, again at Loe, and proposed this time to be “the old Truro Royal Regatta revived”. Mr. W. Tweedy of Truro was treasurer and the Rev. Phillpotts was again chairman, this time opening his grounds at Porthgwidden to the public for the occasion. The principle match on this occasion was for yachts not exceeding 20 tons and was won by the Rev. Phillpotts, this time with his 16 tonne yawl Georgiana.

The following year the status of the regatta was further consolidated following the amalgamation of Feock with that of the Truro Regatta under the title of the Port of Truro Regatta. The Gazette reported; “The position is one of the most lovely that can be imagined. Loe Beach is fringed by wooded heights and sloping green swards and from these, which on Friday were covered with spectators, a splendid view of the whole proceedings could be had. It was the opinion of the oldest inhabitants that so many people were never seen in the district before.”

The class of sailing dredging boats was, of course, that of our modern day Falmouth Working Boats and the picture below shows them in full sail at the 2015 Point Regatta:





The Fal oyster has been harvested throughout history and, in common with those of other estuarine fisheries in the UK, provided a staple food throughout the ages. During the 1840's oysters from the estuaries in the east of England became very scarce for a number of reasons and prices rocketed giving the Falmouth oyster industry a dramatic boost. At this time of bonanza, from 150 to 200 boats might have been seen on a fine day engaged in the fishery with minor fortunes being made as a consequence. In the following years, intensive commercial interests prevailed and large scale industrial boats were attracted from across the country prompting fears that the fishery would become exhausted, however it was not until 1868 that the current bylaws were introduced, by the Truro Corporation, which regulated the fishery to the non-mechanised techniques only. This action uniquely provided enforced stability and sustainability to the fishery and also provided a focus for the design and building of boats we now call the Falmouth Working Boats.

The most famous designers and builders of Working Boats came from Feock: William "Foreman" Ferris and Peter Ferris started at Pill and later joined the Yard Shipyard of J. Stephens which he started in the 1850's at Carnon Yard. This yard also accommodated Frank and Tom Hitchens and between these shipwrights a large proportion of the local boats were built. Perhaps the most famous other ship to come from this yard was the Rhoda Mary built in 1868 and reputed as being one of the finest and fastest of all schooners built in Cornwall and is commemorated within the Feock Parish Council's coat of arms.



### The Devoran Regattas

The port of Devoran was built from scratch in the 1840/50's by the agents of the Hon. Agar Robartes of Lanhydrock. Regattas were started in the 50's but there was a hiatus during the period 1860 to 1874, the regatta this year was the first for fourteen years. The local shipbuilding families were instrumental in this revival with Mr. John Hitchens as chairman and Mr. Stephens secretary, the local landowners Col. Tremayne of Carclew, Lord Agar Robartes of Lanhydrock, Lord Famouth of Tregothnan, Mr. C. D. Gilbert of Treliassick, Mr. C. D. Taylor mine owner at Point and Mr. A. P. Vivian MP were patrons.

It was reported in 1874; "The prizes were paid in the evening in the engine room at Devoran which the committee considered a far more preferable place than the public house and when all the prizes had been paid and expenses allowed for it was found that a balance of £3 remained and it was unanimously resolved should form the nucleus of a fund for carrying out another regatta next year the expression of hope that the sport would be annual being received with enthusiasm."

By the 1870's the port of Devoran was already feeling the loss of trade due to the ongoing closures of the Gwennap mines which had, at one time, been the richest in the world. By 1870 there were often no vessels at all in port when previously there could be up to thirty tied up or waiting to berth. Nevertheless in 1875 the Gazette

reported; “The beautiful little port never looked so gay or had so many visitors by railway, steamers and carriages at one time before, as were present on this occasion to witness what has generally acknowledged to be one of the best and most successful regattas of the season.”

The tidal nature of the venue meant it mostly attracted the smaller sailing craft and the ubiquitous rowing matches, the prize money attracting crews from across the Fal.

### Point & Penpoll Regattas

The employment provided by the quays and smelting works at Point contributed to the area having a thriving community in Victorian times, however the first record of a regatta was in 1893.

The centenary regatta, in 1993, held its regular children's sports and sailing programme on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June. The next day saw the Sunday Service on the quay and sailboarding events in the late afternoon. On Monday evening the Watersports included Gig, Ran Dan and children's swimming races. The W.I. held a special exhibition of crafts on the Saturday and events also included a display of old photos of Point & Penpoll and a welcome to guests from L' Hopital-Camfrout who had travelled from Brittany for the twinning ceremony with Feock Parish.

Phil Allen



### **“Prudence”**

A replica 28 foot Falmouth Working Boat built in steel and designed by Percy Dalton.

Owned by Sam Coltman a younger TBOA member.

## **Steve & Demelza Todd onboard Agnes of Mylor**

### **En route from The Netherlands to Mylor Summer 2016**

It all started somewhere off the Belgian/ French coast. We heard a slight noise and the engine missed a beat - we were motor sailing and after a check below all appeared well!

Arrival at Dunkerque was fine, we had the tide with us all the way and we motored up to a pontoon with plenty of space - just in time for a lovely fish supper. The next day we were out exploring familiar haunts in Dunkerque - viewing the mock up of the sea front for the filming of a war time drama.

The next day we motored slowly out of the harbour - an old grey WWII naval vessel was hanging around and the quay side was adorned with extras dressed in wartime uniform, the cameras and lights were set up so we slowly passed by so as not to spoil the continuity. Once outside sails were set and we made excellent time down the French coast and then crossed over just off Calais - apart from one deviation to avoid a fast approaching ship in the shipping lanes - we had a excellent sail to just north of the eastern entrance to Dover Harbour. After lowering the sails, Steve radioed Harbour control to seek permission to enter - which we were granted via the Western entrance. We then realised that the tidal stream was quite strong and the usually excellent engine was not coping as our progress was less than 2 knots. Then we got hailed on the VHF from port control - we were blocking the eastern harbour entrance and impeding the cross channel ferries!

Steve responded by telling Port Control that we had very little forward propulsion, so they offered to send out a patrol boat to guide/tow us in! The Harbour Boat arrived in minutes and suggested that we head much nearer to the southern outer harbour wall where there was very little current! They offered us a tow but said they would prefer us to get in by our own steam as it involved a lot of paper work for them! This we managed to do making a little more speed and having the re-assurance of their close proximity, we were led into our pre-allocated spacious berth with no help required and no form filling!

Steve, within minutes of mooring up was off to find the local marine engineer who was on board within about half an hour. After careful examination said engineer thought that it was probably the propeller as everything in the engine compartment seemed fine. He persuaded the lift out chaps (Just 30 minutes before their home time) to lift us out immediately! And there wrapped around the prop was this huge hunk of fishing net - amazing that we had been able to make any progress under power! Relief all round as it was removed and the prop checked for damage, We were back in the water and returned to our berth, all to the great relief of Steve!





As we intended to be off at 0600 the next morning, Steve decided he would fill up with water as the harbour office had kindly lent him a hose! So after showers we went out to a great fish restaurant overlooking the beach and harbour. Feeling pleased that the boat and engine were all fine we duly rose at 0500 to

prepare for departure. Steve went to start the engine before we cast off the last of the lines and instantly a warning buzzer and light started - he turned off the engine immediately and wondered what could possibly be wrong! He went below and started to check the engine only to discover something that did not look like diesel in the filters! On closer inspection he concluded that it must be water! He then started to think about his actions the previous night, he worked out that he had topped up the diesel tank with water! I might add that said filler cap is clearly marked in green with the word DIESEL! So on that note I went back to my bunk and Steve roamed restlessly until it was time to go back to the marine engineer from the previous day! This chap was more than surprised to find us still in Dover! Fortunately he agreed to come back to Agnes later in the morning and the process of siphoning out the water from the fuel tank began. So after most of it was removed and the filter replaced the engine was started - so that was deemed a good sign! Said engine was run for an hour and then the filters were checked and a little more water removed.

The local marine engineer was excellent and his charges were very reasonable - we can recommend him if you are ever in Dover! So the next morning about an hour later than the previous day we finally set off bound for Brighton - all was well, poor Steve will never be allowed to forget his **"topping up of the tanks" !!**

Demelza Todd



## **Twice Across The Channel In The Eighties with TBOA.**

### **It was sometime in 1985.**

We were in St. Peter Port, Guernsey in 'Pione', Terry Tregunna's Pioneer 9. Terry, Jim, Don, Lawrence and I.

Griff in 'Ekene', Janet and Bill in 'Sagittaire', Jack Harris in his Cutlass 27 and Alan Ashworth Jones and Chris Rowe in 'Emily Rose', the Bell Seamew. The harbour was full, we rafted up very tight on the fore and aft moorings. The fenders squeaked constantly. It blew hard for four or five days. We were getting short of cash (no cards then). Chris had to go home to Truro, leaving Alan alone so I said I would crew for him.

We had a forecast of south west force 4 to force 5 so we left for Falmouth. The Bell Seamew is a 22ft plywood hard chine drop keel, sloop from the 1960s, and Alan had built a brilliant wind vane self steering gear for her. Going up the Little Russell channel we both had to sit on the transom to keep the little outboard in the water, it was getting choppy. Very early in the morning, it was still dark when we slammed off a large wave. We heard a big bang like a gun! I thought the mast had snapped but nothing was amiss?? About an hour later sailing with storm jib and two reefs in the main, heeling well, I noticed water over the boards! The pump wouldn't work so we took it in turn to use the bucket but every time the hatch was opened more came in than we put out! She was getting sluggish digging her bow in to the troughs, then I noticed water inside in the bow. We lifted the under berth ply and found it filled with water about a foot deep by six feet wide!

We bailed that out and saw the cause of the big bang, a tingle about 4ins x 4ins screwed into the starboard side (inside) had sprung open. Alan had recently bought a new spinny pole and was very upset when we cut it to make a support for the patch with a very rusty junior hacksaw!

I think it was about mid day when Griff in 'Ekene' appeared, with full sail doing about 6 knots, and Lawrence holding on for dear life! As they sailed around us I could see the BOTTOM of his keel and his folding prop with one blade dangling! We were sailing well. The radio died and the chart was soaked but we were flying along but slowing in the deep troughs .... Griff circled us.

I had the impression the sea was warmer now, I was lying feet up on the leeward side, Alan said he needed something, my brain said move but nothing happened ? I realized I was cold! Oddly I had a large bar of chocolate in my wet gear pocket and managed to unwrap and eat all of it, I got better very quickly .... lucky one .... Griff circled us! We had bailed for many hours, we were very tired, we sighted land, Griff shouted Salcombe! I shouted to Alan "large fishing buoy right on the bow", "yes I see it" he said .... we hit it spot on, the self steering was torn clean off!!

Griff's main sail ripped clean in half as I watched, Griff's eyes were red and salt encrusted, he sailed on to Falmouth, we had to motor into Salcombe!! We were still leaking badly, Alan patched her up and sailed alone to Falmouth the next day. ***I said I would never sail again!!***

Simon Le Bon in Drum capsized that day.

*And again sometime during 1989.*

‘**Marone Two**’ was owned by my good friend Ken Jones. She was a Nauticat33 monohull motorsailer with a large Perkins 4108 diesel engine. I was her skipper for five years.



In 1989 Ken fancied going to Morlaix and Treguier. There were five of us; Ken, Gordon, Bill Stodley, Dave Winter and myself. The crossing was OK except for a fuel filter change and we stayed in Morlaix a few days. The weather was poor, with rain and force five winds. Ken fancied Treguier so off we went.



We stayed a few days in Treguier .... nice place .... it blew, a force five possibly force six was forecast so we decided to head for Falmouth!!

It was lumpy and Ken descended into the aft cabin at about 11am. At noon a forecast of southerly gale force 8 possibly force 9 was broadcast and we had dropped speed from 6 knots to 3 knots as

Marone rolled so badly. At about 6pm the nylon dogs on the autopilot drive stripped and so I had to steer with the small wheel from them on. We hoisted the mizzen and sheeted it in hard to help the rolling.



We motored through the night in sheet rain and the southerly 35 knot wind. During the night I checked on Ken but had no response. Gordon was very frightened, Bill was elderly and his first time in a boat and David and I were tired. Keeping this tub straight was nigh on impossible, we shut right down as the waves were huge. We were getting badly bruised, being thrown about, with things on board getting smashed. At one point

the small hatch above the cooker was washed off and we took on water from a wave above!

We were 42 miles off Mevagissey when I saw a large trawler .... I called him. (I was a bit lost). His reply, 'ello this is Chrystal out of Maviguizy .What do 'e want?

**Me** .... A doctor and some rest!!

**Chrystal** .... I'll call the life boat!!

**Brixham Coast Guard** .... What is your position?

**Me** .... Not sure !!

**Chrystal** .... (gives position)

**Brixham Coast Guard** .... We are sending Falmouth Lifeboat.



About mid afternoon we saw the lifeboat but he did not see us. I had just got in contact with him when a white plane flew over us (fishery protection). I told the lifeboat that the plane was over us. The pilot immediately gave the lat and long. The life boat launched his RIB with a doctor and one crew member, John, who came aboard. Doc stayed with Ken who was not sick but unconscious!

John took over totally. I had some tinned grapefruit and was sick (the first and only time). The lifeboat came to the bow and squashed the seas as John followed very close; I fell asleep in the bows.

We got into Falmouth at 3am. The coast guard would not let us off until they had searched us throughout. I was put into a taxi for home, I slept all the next day. Ken was well enough to thank the Lifeboat the next morning! Dave Winter was fantastic.

Ron Dustow.





**Memories from the  
eighties**

