

## Commodore's Thoughts

2012 promises to be a special year for those of us in the UK. Firstly the Queen's Jubilee celebrations in early June before the arrival of the Olympic Teams and visitors in July before a whole month of Olympic competition in July and August. For sailors this gives us a number of opportunities and challenges.

Whilst all these events are taking place hopefully the sailing areas and ports (excepting Weymouth) will be quiet and we will be blessed with good sailing weather. The challenges will be to avoid all other sailors who have the same idea and persuade sports mad families that there is more to 2012 than just the Olympics! This said I was successful in getting Olympic tickets so watch out for me at the Rowing and Beach Volleyball!

My personal challenge is to work around the web of external competing events to try to encourage Hillyarders to meet afloat at our on water events.

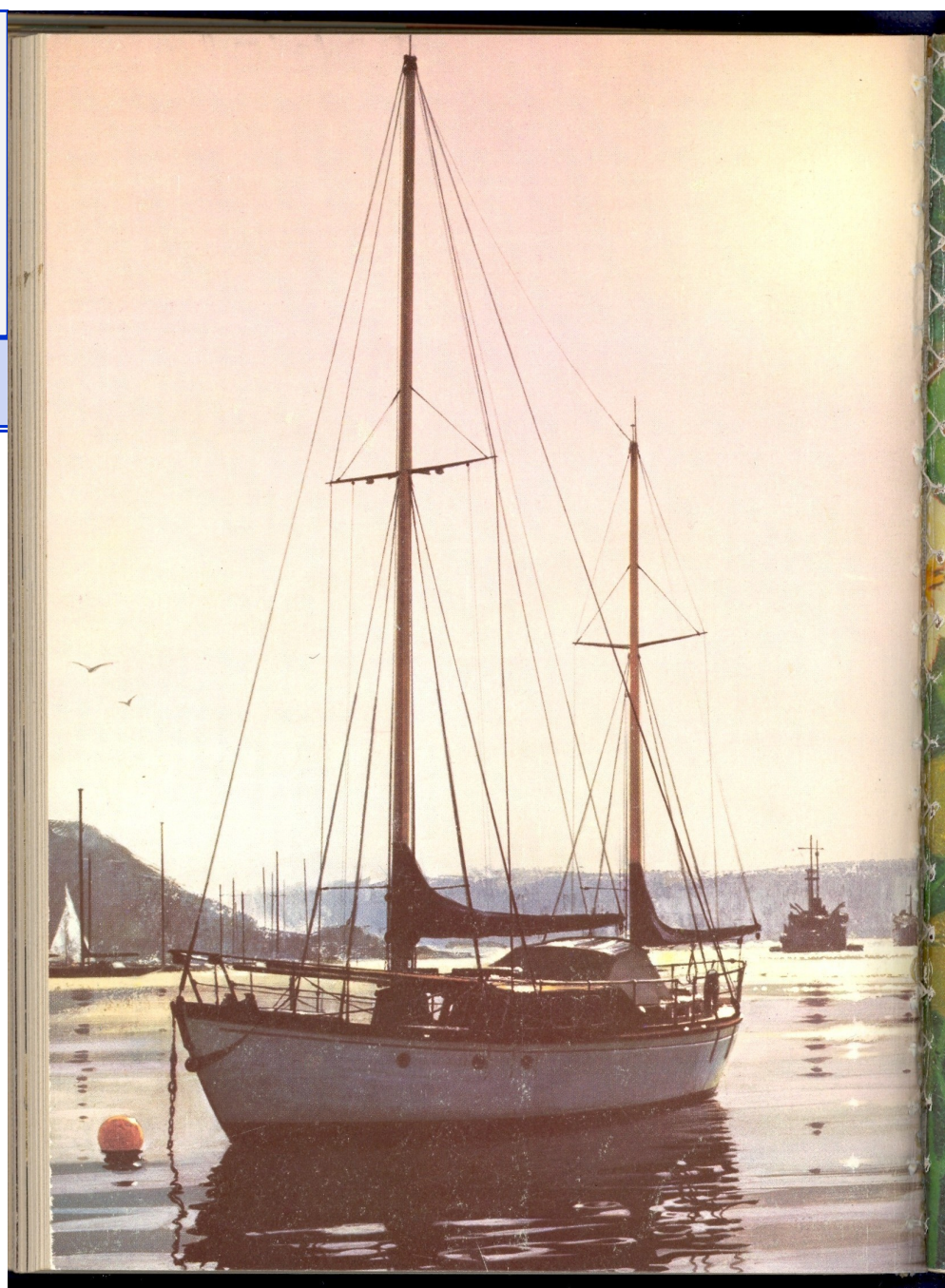
Last year the weather did not help, but putting this to one side we still struggled to attract boats to our Rallies. This year we are trying something different – in part recognising the above – by trying to have some

### Dates for your Diary during 2012

- 19th/20th May - Informal Solent Rally
- 7th/8th July West Country Rally at Falmouth
- 1st/2nd September Solent Rally

### Contents

Commodore's Thoughts continued	2
Eric Sibthorpe Obituary	3
Michael Joyce Memorial	3
Quest - An account of her rescue and stem replacement	4
Tashana Spreader Troubles	6
AGM and Naval Club Dinner	7
Hillyard records	7
Wendy Woo rescued	8
The Meanness of a Midnight Tide	10
HOA Officers and Contact Details	12
Welcome Aboard	12
HOA Events 2012/13	12





## Commodore's Thoughts continued

flexibility in the format of rallies and changing the timing of the rally in the south west. We now have a large number of members in Scotland and it may be appropriate to have a meet north of the boarder!

We have an informal meet in the Solent on 19/20 May, a new location for the West Country meet in Falmouth in July (enabling some boats to move from there to the Brest Festival), an east coast event with a format to be determined and finally an end of season event which is proposed for Lymington. However please let us have your views and suggestions so we can accommodate these.

We now have a large number of email addresses to help us communicate up to date details of these events but we are still short of some. If your email (or mobile number as these are useful on our travels) is not included in the latest Handbook enclosed please email the details to me ASAP, so they can be included in the next update.

Please let us know what type of events during the sailing season you might be interested in so we can gauge levels of support and change formats if appropriate.

Invites to the first two events are on the web site and future ones will be posted there as well and will also be advertised by email. If you are unable to access the website or do not have email please let me know and we will be happy to post details out to you. With increased postal costs we need to be careful as the £10 annual subs will not stretch far once we

**Please let us know which events you might be interested in so we can gauge levels of support.**

**Adjacent Michael Walden's 9 ton Hillyard, Trimley Maid in the Lymington River, May 2011**

**Below: Gillian and Michael Walden (new President of the HOA) together with Steve Tiffin (Commodore) & Doug Couslon at the Naval Club January 2012**

take account of printing and distribution costs.

With our continued emphasis on communication and sustainability of the HOA, we are moving to a situation where we can produce both the Handbook and Newsletter internally.

We are indebted to Tracey Daley for editing and producing the Newsletter from the 60th to the 65th edition and thank her for doing a splendid job.

This newsletter is the first Liz has produced utilising our new publishing software which has also been used for the Handbook (thanks Liz).

With the format now established future updates of the Handbook should be more straight forward. Our apologies if there are any errors or omissions as this has been a massive logistical exercise – please let us have any corrections.

We can now send out the updated Handbook more frequently on an electronic basis, with a hard copy produced every eighteen months. Hence our plea for your email address if you have one!

At the AGM I had the pleasure of inviting Michael Walden to be our new President, a position he willingly accepted. He retains his enormous enthusiasm for the organization and his experience as ever, remains an important sounding board for the committee.

I hope that the past winter has been a productive time for everyone. Ianthe went back in the water on 20 April and since then we have had heavy rain and gales – we thought that, like the last 2 years, we would now be enjoying balmy weather and quiet early season sailing! At least she looks nice sat on the pontoon, although I didn't get around to all the winter work planned, but there is always next year!

Have a good season and look forward to meeting you on the water. **Steve Tiffin, Commodore**



## Obituary Eric Sibthorpe

Eric Sibthorpe died aged 87 in June 2011. His love of sailing and boating began during the war when he served as a Signalman on a minesweeper in the Mediterranean. His ship the Fantome was blown up when it hit a mine and Eric was thrown up into the air and a colleague of his who was standing close by was killed.

Following this event and subsequent to the Torch landings Eric was transferred to a Trawler patrolling around the Azores to keep the shipping lanes open to counter the threat from the German U boats.

In the late 50's Eric and his wife Jean bought an 8 'dinghy on a Bramber trailer with a small British Anzani outboard and trailed it up to the Norfolk Broads for an extensive holiday around the Broads. They then progressed to a 15' CB15 motor launch which they kept at Conyer near Whitstable in Kent. In 1964 they bought a 26' Eventide which they sailed extensively to France, Holland and Belgium and became active members of the Cruising Association attending many meets especially those in Calais during the Spring Bank holidays. Eric also became an HLR (Honorary Local Representative for the CA and inspired his 2 sons to take up sailing.

In 1971 Eric spotted Rosalind of Arun in a boatyard on the Medway, there was no indication that she might be for sale but Eric and Jean were interested in her so they left a note on her. Within several weeks they were to become the proud owners of an 8 Ton Hillyard built in 1967 and enjoyed many happy years sailing aboard her with voyages to Holland, Belgium and France venturing as far as Brittany and became active members of the HOA attending meets whenever they were able to. Ill health forced Eric to give up sailing on Rosalind after Jean passed away but she is now being looked after by their elder son Philip and is berthed in Brighton Marina.

Eric was a very lively outgoing personality who made friends easily and always had a great interest in others and was never backward in coming forward. One memory I have of him is seeing him send Semaphore Signals using code flags to a naval friend of his some 50 yards away to arrange a lunch meeting in the Ship Inn at Conyer!

**Philip Sibthorpe**



Eric and Jean aboard Rosalind of Arun

## Michael Joyce Memorial

As discussed at the AGM we would like to remember our former President who served the Association so well for over 30 years. We are very grateful to HOA

members who have given this matter some thought in particular Michael Walden and Nicholas Gray.

Before his death in 2011, Michael, was aware of the problems facing future Hillyard owners in looking after well built but ageing vessels. In the 1990's he tried to put together an ambitious scheme to form a trust to raise funds to acquire the David Hillyard shipyard at Littlehampton which had stopped building boats some years before. His intention was for the shipyard premises to be acquired and run as a non profit organisation, initially to serve to maintain and repair the existing Hillyard fleet. Michael also had in mind a larger and longer term vision, namely that the shipyard and the adjoining buildings and river frontages on the river Arun in Littlehampton could become a 'mini' Mystic Seaport (see [www.mysticseaport.org](http://www.mysticseaport.org)), now a major USA visitor attraction as a working ship museum, centring on America's maritime past, attracting substantial sponsorship funds.

Michael had discussions with Arun District Council, West Sussex County Council and the Maritime Museum in Greenwich, all of whom expressed interest in the idea. The project foundered, however, mainly as a result of the Cullingford family, who owned the boatyard site, not wishing to take the project forward, perhaps swayed by increasing land values at the time.

To his credit Michael persisted with his original idea to try to put together a fund to provide grants for restoration projects until illness prevented him from making any further progress, although the idea remained something he still thought and talked about in his last years.

It has been suggested that we consider whether it would be possible to resurrect the first part of Michael's idea and for the HOA to look at forming a charitable trust fund, the purpose of which would be to raise funds to enable it to make grants toward the cost of worthwhile restoration and/or maintenance projects. If there is anyone who would be willing to take this further please let the Committee know.

Our membership is not increasing at the moment and we are conscious of keeping subscriptions to a modest level so we want to be able to do something in Michael's name which is sustainable. It has been suggested we seek donations to enable us to make an award, on an annual basis. Whilst there is merit in a trophy being awarded we have to think of the practicalities of it being sent and returned to all parts of the country if not the globe! Therefore a small gift in Michael's name which the recipient is able to keep, either on land or water, is proposed.

Please send all donations to the Treasurer (if each member gave a minimum £10 we could even have the basis of Michael's original concept.)

We intend to make the award on an annual basis at either the AGM, London Meet (it has been suggested that the latter is renamed The Michael Joyce Memorial Meeting) or a Rally, but if the recipient is not able to be present then the award will be posted. It is intended to make just one award each year to The Hillyarder showing the most "endeavour"—this could be for a voyage, restoration project or other Hillyard related activity.

Please let the Secretary have your nominations by the end of the year and the Committee and President will then make the decision.



## QUEST, 1930 Hillyard 4 ton cutter.-An account of her rescue and stem replacement



*"Any report would have been so damning that I could never have brought myself to buy Quest.*

*Ignorance is bliss to some extent and I did after all fancy myself as something of an amateur shipwright".*



In early 2009 I sold my Torbay J, Suzette, an open three-quarter decked yawl-rigged 20 footer, built by Louis Gale on Paignton Quay in 1920 for handicap racing on Torbay. To be honest, she was getting a bit powerful for me and I fancied somewhere to brew a cup of tea, have a sleep and other necessary functions and, you never know, maybe go somewhere other than a quick thrash down the Exe and back for a pint. I had learned much from my restoration of Suzette, having steamed and riveted in over twenty new oak timbers, replaced several shifts of rotten planking, and generally brought her up to scratch. I gave the proceeds of sale to my wife and instructed her that, whatever I said, she must not give it back if I ever showed any intention of repeating the madness of buying a decrepit old wooden boat.

A week later I found Quest online (her picture still appears on the HOA web-site) and rang Sue Penda, the vendor, who had saved her from dereliction and done much useful reconstruction work but had inherited another larger boat and couldn't give the necessary attention to two. She told me that there had been a disaster as Quest had been badly fire-damaged when the motor-boat alongside in Fareham harbour had caught fire and she had been written off by the insurers. Frankly, my heart leapt as I know a possible bargain when I see one and the job looked largely cosmetic. In due course I bought Quest for the differ-

ence between the asking price (less a bit) and the insurers' not ungenerous payout. I had the devil's own job getting the cash back from my Wife but she also has an eye for a real boat and, before I could repent of my folly, Quest appeared on a low-loader at my chosen boat-yard in Exmouth where I set about inspecting the damage: main-sail and various lines melted on boom (staysail and jib needed replacement in any event from sheer old age...luckily my best mate is the local sail-maker), boom badly charred on starboard side as was coach-roof side and mast to a height of ten feet with, worse still, it's glue lines opened, port-holes cracked (or melted in one instance where perspex had been used), side-deck GRP sheathing split and lifting, ditto the old casco sheathing on the coach-roof.

Apart from the fire damage, she clearly needed a rudder re-build, new or re-made rudder hangings, the chain-plates, once galvanised half-round bar, needed re-galvanising and re-fastening through hull to something better than the cracked wooden hanging knees to which they were bolted. There was rot in the coach-roof, substantial rot in the cabin back and in the cockpit. She was well-endowed with cleats and winches along the cockpit coamings but they all needed re-fastening with their bolt holes properly plugged, the mast required to be re-glued, and she badly needed a new fore-hatch and major attention to the main sliding hatch as this appeared to be surfaced with an "iron-on" veneer more suitable to a piece of cheap furniture which had bubbled dreadfully in the heat of the fire. There was lots more and lots of missing gear, no cooker, no sea-loo (there was an old mayonnaise drum beneath a Baby-Blake seat under a berth in the fore-peak, definitely not up to my requirements, and the navigation lights needed sorting out. I could go on for ever!

The good news: lovely bow-sprit, fore-deck bitts and bumpkin; new toe-rails and rubbing-strakes, gorgeous massive bronze highfield levers for the running back-stays, pitch-pine hull generally in sound, very tight, condition (but not completely...I'll come to that), not a single cracked or broken timber (amazing for an 80 year old boat), and a modern (well, 1989) diesel which has proved reliable and very sweet. Best of all, a wonderful modern set of berth and cockpit cushions, my predecessor being a very skilled marine upholsterer.

I knew that there was an issue with the stem as there were some slight vertical and diagonal cracks, a fairing piece or a little filler needing attention, I told myself. It was slightly perturbing however so, not being one to in-

dulge in slow deliberation, I set about exploring the problem with a mallet and chisel the minute Quest arrived in Exmouth and ended up in the chain-locker having gone straight through a completely rotten stem and apron. I admit to a sleepless night..."should I have spent a fair proportion of the value of the boat on a surveyor?" With apologies to that worthy profession, I decided not. Any report would have been so damning that I could never have brought myself to buy Quest. Ignorance is bliss to some extent and I did after all fancy myself as something of an amateur shipwright. Most importantly, you can learn anything from books (I am the son of a long-retired chief librarian) and hate to be beaten. The boat-yard proprietor was full of stories (as was his yard) of old wrecks which represented the unfinished project of many a disillusioned dreamer who had bitten off more than he could chew. I asked him later whether he thought I would go the same way. He, the assistant mechanic on the Exmouth Life-boat, and a great source of advice, friendship, and inspiration, said "No, I knew you would finish her as you were obviously "driven" from the start".

How to replace a stem? It was clear that the rot emanated from a scarf (probably a very old repair) which had been put in incorrectly: the scarf sloped down from the front outside of the stem to its lowest point inside. It had probably not been glued, all the old iron fastenings were corroded with the consequent affect on the integrity of the oak stem, and it had opened up, and dumped copious amounts of fresh water into the heart of the stem.

It was worse than I had feared because it had even penetrated the front end of the keel and the plank-ends were jagged and eroded where fastenings had damaged them during this and previous removal processes.. Luckily there was plenty of meat left in the plank- ends for ultimate re-fastening so I made all the damage good with individually shaped and fitted plugs, graving pieces etc. I had to remove the first two vertical steamed timbers inside the chain-locker (having demolished the fore-cabin and forward bulkhead to give me access), and saw off the front foot or so of the stringers. I clamped the gaping maw of the bow to prevent the un-supported planking from springing too far apart, ruthlessly evacuated all the horrible damp, black, powdery rot from the front of the keel and, when certain that I was back to sound wood (and thank goodness there was some!),



filled the cavity with a jigsaw of new oak and a liberal helping of thickened epoxy. Templates were then made, initially of cardboard, of the great aperture where the stem had been, both of inner and outer edges, and various horizontal and vertical cross-sections until I began to visualise the shapes needed. The

The boat-yard proprietor was full of stories (as was his yard) of old wrecks which represented the unfinished project of many a disillusioned dreamer who had bitten off more than he could chew

original stem would almost certainly have been made in one piece with a great rebate carved out to accept the plank ends. This was not possible with Quest as the plank-ends could not be sprung out far enough to allow the fatter back of the new stem to pass through so it had to be made in two parts, the stem itself to be fitted from the outside and an apron which, fitted from the inside, would then, in theory, mate exactly with the back of the outer stem and take the plank-end fastenings.

I decided to have a trial run by making some soft-wood patterns, so glued and screwed some lengths of pine joist together and set about carving and shaping the two pieces so that they fitted the aperture and mated with each other exactly. This was a long job, very much done by eye, cardboard templates being of limited use. Ultimately, when I felt that I could fine-tune no further, and the Boss said, in his Devonian way, "sweet!" (a high accolade from a man of few words) I took myself off to a boat-builder turned marine timber-merchant, a splendidly knowledgeable and helpful man called John Moody, in the wilds of South Devon and he sold me a wonderful great lump of oak with its grain exactly following the curve I required for £100.00, very reasonable.

It took me a week to pluck up the courage to apply this great baulk to my band-saw but, in the end, the stem and apron were both sawn from this piece thereby ensuring that the two parts would mate precisely as the join is one saw cut. A neat double scarf was cut at the top to join the top part of the existing stem to the new piece. The bottom was shaped to marry to the newly filled and strengthened keel front and a large internal knee was created to reinforce this lower joint. A quantity of long bronze bolts, nuts and washers were than purchased for a king's ransom and holes drilled in strategic places (not easy to come out in the right place), a large quantity of thickened slow-setting epoxy resin was mixed and, when everything was right, the whole lot was buttered liberally, and the jigsaw bolted together. When all was set, the plank-ends were re-fastened with new bronze screws, the rough shape was refined down to something approaching the right curve and cross-section, and two long strips of oak were steamed and laminated onto the front to complete the profile. Everything with a chunky great strip of 3/8ths thick brass strip. The two removed inner timbers were re-riveted in position, the stringer ends



## QUEST—An account of her rescue and stem replacement continued

scarfed back on, the fore-cabin re-built, and the new front-end re-caulked, puttied and painted, a newly fabricated galvanised bow fitting being riveted onto the stem to take the bob-stay in place of the corroded old one. This whole process took about two months (much of it standing contemplating what to do next) and attracted much interest from the plastic bath-tub and motorised egg-whisk owners from whom boat-yards have to earn their living these days. I had recently retired from a highly stressful career as a prosecutor so the process was highly therapeutic.

I derived enormous pleasure from those who gazed in awe at my "craftsmanship" and asked respectfully, "Are you a professional shipwright?", to which I replied modestly, "No, actually I'm a solicitor". (or silly sodder, as my wife always described me...no respect). The ultimate accolade came from he of few words, the Boss, who said "You could use her as an ice-breaker now". Two years on, I am confident that the stem will not fail me. I do worry however that the rest of the boat might still fall off the stem!



**Quest Launch**



**Quest under sail and fully restored**

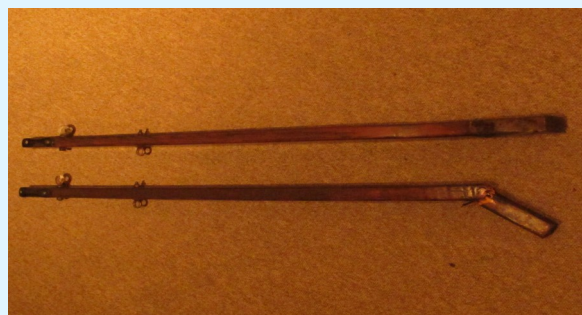
A new stem was just the beginning, the rest of the restoration took another year, but that's another story. I have a boat which delights the eye (everyone on the Exe says so as we meet), which sails like a dream, she's fast and Weatherly, albeit a little tender with such an enormous rig on a twenty-two foot hull, is fully equipped now with all creature comforts, and is surprisingly capacious; most people think she's a twenty-six footer.

Would I sell her? Possibly (although you'd have to pay a top price), but only because there's an old double-ended Hillyard six-tonner down-river which is looking for some-one like me to show her some TLC!

**Michael Ashby**

### Spreader Troubles

This is what happened when our rigger unstepped Tashana's mast, as he does every other year – I'm glad it didn't happen mid-Channel.



You might want to look at yours – this one was at least eleven years old, possibly older.

**Carol and Dave Stickland, Tashana**



## AGM and Naval Club Dinner

**Friday 6th January 2012**

We are pleased to report that we enjoyed another successful London meet at this excellent venue in the heart of Mayfair.

We were rewarded again with being made very welcome by John Sonderskov and his staff and were able to hold our AGM beforehand in one of the imposing upstairs meeting rooms.

David Stickland has prepared the minutes of the AGM and they are available for any members who wishes to see them on the website.

To summarise the Minutes of the meeting held at Royal Lymington Yacht Club on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2010 were approved and it was agreed that the Aims, objects and constitution would be included in the next edition of the handbook.

The recommendation of the Committee to appoint Michael Walden as President following the death of Michael Joyce was approved by acclamation. Michael Walden responded warmly. The Commodore's Report drew attention to a number of points: this is an active Association; a small number of people are involved in its running; we are caring for very special vessels; he was only intending to serve a three year term of office.

The Treasurer's Report was circulated; there were no questions and thanks were expressed for the Treasurer's work on the Association's behalf. Under AOB Nicolas Gray, who had known Michael Joyce over many years suggested that a memorial trophy should be purchased in Michael's memory and that it should be awarded annually to a member for something meritorious. Subscriptions should be invited immediately. Members were invited to discuss the topic further over dinner.

John Chambers expressed his thanks to the Commodore on behalf of the members.

Future AGM's—The next meeting would be held in the summer of 2013 in the West Country and the one after that on the East Coast.



We then had a truly excellent meal being provided for 26 HOA members and guests who were :Michael and Gillian Walden, Dave & Carol Stickland, Doug Coulson, Ken Andrews plus his four stalwart crew, Nicholas & Jo Gray, John & Jan Ridgeway, Adrian and Zoe Chorley, John and Kersti Chambers and their two guests, Frank and Rabab Hardiman and their two guests and Kevin Conroy, who had flown in from Ireland for the event!

It was great to catch up with new and old friends, to hear sailing yarns from last year, plans for the next sailing season and how various restoration projects are progressing.

Next year for this meet we will have to take account of the change in dates - the London Boat show is a week later than in recent years and we are therefore planning to hold the dinner on **Friday 11th January 2013**. We hope to see you there.  
**Steve and Liz Tiffin**



**Dave Stickland, Jan Ridgeway, Carol Stickland and Jo Gray at the Naval Club**



**AGM at the Naval Club**

### Hillyard Yacht Records

Michael Joyce did a wonderful job over the years keeping a record and photographs of as many built Hillyards as possible— this was continued by Michael Walden. The exercise was made more difficult in terms of keeping track of all the boats by the frequency of name change! Please help us by emailing Steve Tiffin with any details and pictures of either your own Hillyard or any you have seen on your travels or other owners you have spoken to. This will help us maintain a meaningful archive and be able to help more often when we received requests for information on a particular Hillyard's whereabouts, which we do on a regular basis.



## WENDY WOO RESCUED

By Nicholas Gray (ngray@xilan.fr)

In early 2010 I spied on the internet a Wooden Ships listing for a 1965 42 ft 20 ton Hillyard Ketch lying in Pembrokeshire. 'Ah, that must be Wendy Woo,' I thought and an exchange of emails with Peter Gregson quickly confirmed this. The email also contained several photographs showing her in a terrible state. However, it didn't take me long to convince myself (and persuade my wife) that this was just the project we were looking for !

I had known Wendy Woo and her owner, Sir David Mansell Lewis from some years back when we used to live and work on the Milford Haven waterway in Pembrokeshire. Then she had been very well cared for. Now, in Peter Gregson's description, she was *"into her third season lay-up since last sailed, beginning to look rather Marie Celeste like and in need of a new enthusiastic owner."*

I asked a friend who was local to Pembrokeshire to have a look at her. This was his response:- *"The bad news - This is a classic old man's boat. Everything is there, it probably works but nothing has ever been touched or changed. Add to that 2 years of total neglect since the owner died and you have one of the dirtiest, grubbier, untidy boats I have seen for years. You need overalls and rubber gloves just to go aboard. Junk, old newspapers, rubbish, old damp clothes and dirt everywhere. Every surface is filthy. Sails are still bent on. Damp books and manuals in the cupboards. Nobody is going to buy her as she is."*

What I did know was that the boat had been well cared for except during the last few years when Sir David Mansell Lewis, who bought her in 1992 and who died in 2008 and was well known to many HOA members, had been very ill and unable to care for her. I was pretty sure that the problems were mostly skin deep and not structural.

Whilst I never intended to take on a boat quite as large as Wendy Woo (the last Hillyard I had helped restore was Michael Joyce's final boat, the 2.5 tonner Koala) we were tempted by the challenge and in May 2010 we were back in Pembrokeshire having a look. Sir David's son, Patrick, had arranged to have Wendy Woo hauled out at Neyland for our inspection.

Having been forewarned what to expect, we were not put off and soon decided that underneath all the dirt was a perfectly good boat with few structural problems. The same could not be said in the mechanical, electrical and rigging departments, which were a total disaster. There was rot in the main cabin top and a few soft patches on the fore-deck but otherwise the hull was sound. We were surprised, and pleased, to find that, unusually for a post-war Hillyard, the once varnished upperworks were all made in teak (this was specified by the original owner along with extra length spars).

We made an offer which was quickly accepted. A survey revealed nothing we had not foreseen and we arranged to move the boat by land to Ramsgate in Kent, where we would work on her, helped by our excellent shipwright, Steve Parish. She arrived there and was offloaded onto hard standing on the 6th June 2010 (coincidentally also my birthday!)

A bit of research revealed Wendy Woo had been built in 1965, for a Mr Hugh Thomas of Falmouth, one of three sister ships built in the mid 60s, the others being Santa Lucia II (now based in Shoreham) and Tarion, sadly wrecked a few years ago on Tristan da Cunha. Her name came from the family nickname for Wendy, the owners daughter. Wendy Woo was the fourth Hillyard which Mr Thomas had had built (first Bambino 2.5t, then in the 1950's the 9t Spinaway, followed in 1961 by 12t Doojee). Mr Thomas died early at 52 in 1973 and Wendy Woo was moved to Littlehampton to be sold on condition that she was not taken back to Falmouth. She has had three owners since then.

On arrival in Ramsgate we began the process of emptying the boat of all gear and many years accumulated spares and rubbish. Sir David was obviously someone who never threw anything away, and every cabin and locker was crammed full of mostly unusable spare parts and bits of old equipment. This all went out along with sodden bunk cushions and racks of sodden navigation books and charts. The contents of the galley went (including much 6 year old food, milk cartons and even pats of butter). Various heavily corroded gas radiators and water heaters went, along with an old gas refrigerator went. A seized up outboard motor was found under a bunk. This went. Next we nearly filled a container with the sails, rigging and all the rest of the usable boats gear. No wonder Wendy Woo was floating well below her marks.

Then we cleaned the boat - the worst job of all, as every locker was black with mould and dirt. Steve Parish managed to get the engine out (a 60 HP BMC Commodore from the 1990's) without disturbing the wooden doghouse (quite a feat in itself) and we stripped out all the electrical wiring and plumbing including two very nasty looking sea toilets and an original Godwin pressurised water system from the 1960s.

Then we came across the first (and only) unforeseen problem. On taking down the ancient soundproofing in the engine room the aft tongue and grooved bulkhead completely disintegrated. It had been sandwiched between the soundproofing on one side and by foam-backed polystyrene tiles in



WAITING TO BE RESCUED—WENDY WOO AS FOUND IN NEYLAND



the aft heads compartment on the other and had obviously been trapping water and moisture for nearly 50 years. Luckily the rot had not spread into the structure of the boat.

The next job was to remove the rotten cabin top and 4 of the 6 six deckhead beams. With no top on, we used the opportunity to take out the old tanks, which were beneath the main cabin sole (there was no other way out for them). A large 150 gallon galvanised water tank, badly corroded, was craned out along with two 100 gallon steel diesel tanks (these were both weeping diesel from corroded seams).

Next the anchor chain in the forepeak had to be hammered out as it was a solid ball of rust. It went off for re-galvanising (along with the chain plates) and all came back as new.

Now, with the boat empty and clean we could see just what we had and we realised what a large boat she was – the hull chine gave her a huge internal volume and a longish ladder was needed to climb down from the cockpit onto the top of the keel (some 10 feet). The state of the bilges was indescribable, especially in the engine room, but lots of detergent and a pressure washer soon improved things.

We had decided at an early stage to replace the engine and in January 2011 a new 75HP Betamarine diesel was ordered (before an imminent increase in VAT!). The rudder was removed for repairs and the prop shaft withdrawn. This was severely pitted and corroded and a new one was ordered, along with a new prop. Steve Parish managed to save the old Aquadrive unit, even though the bearing on the thrust plate was totally seized. He sourced (in Sweden) a new bearing, fitted this and lengthened the drive shaft to accommodate the differing length of the new engine. This all saved a considerable sum of money, as these units are not cheap.

The original 1965 Torkmaster electric anchor windlass, a chunk of rusty metal linked to a seized electric motor in the forepeak, went away to be overhauled and came back looking as good as new along with a new 12 volt motor (we had decided to change the old 24 volt system to 12 volts).

My next job was to strip the masts and booms and assess what was needed there. In the event, very little. These were the original Hillyard box section units and only a few soft stops found after the tracks had been removed – these were cut out and new pieces glued in. The masts were then sanded down to bare wood. Some lengths of seams were cleaned out and re-glued. Then I applied 10 coats of Le Tonkinois varnish.

The underwater seacocks (all of which were seized solid in the open position) were removed and replaced with new ones (proper bronze skin fittings with s/s ball valves). Steve fitted new deckhead beams and built the new cabin top and replaced an area of the fore-deck. With some trepidation we removed the teak rubbing strakes to have a look at what was underneath as a lot of the deck sheathing had broken down on the outboard edges. Being aware of perhaps the main

weakness in David Hillyard's method of constructing his decks, I was concerned as to how much damage may have occurred. (As many know to their cost, Hillyards laid the pine deck planks diagonally or transversely in the way of the cabin top and cockpit, a big saving in cost and material no doubt, but it exposed long lengths of end grain with inevitable consequences if not kept watertight). In the event there was little damage to the decks and only a few soft patches in the sheerline strake. These were soon dealt with by cutting out the degraded timber, soaking in cuprinol, before being filled with epoxy



filler. After that we burnt off the topsides to bare wood which were then filled, stopped, primed and painted. Below the waterline, years of antifouling paint was scraped off and two coats of Primocon applied.

In went two new diesel tanks, two fresh water tanks and a toilet holding tank. Then the new engine went in, which fitted the old engine beds with only a little alteration needed.

By now it was July 2011 and Wendy Woo having been ashore for over 12 months we made a decision that it was time to return her to the water as she was beginning to dry out and open up quite badly. In quick time the new prop shaft went in, the rudder was rehung, some seams were recaulked, the bottom antiouled and she was launched on 11 July 2011.

After that it was lots of rewiring and re-plumbing and putting the whole thing back together again. This, combined with stripping and revarnishing the teak brightwork, took up the rest of last year. Then all tracks and fittings were put back on the masts, new s/s rigging was made up and at the start of December the masts were craned back in – now she was looking like a proper boat again. We managed to rescue the old furling genoa but have had a new mainsail and mizzen made. A new Harken self furling gear has been fitted in place of a very old Rotostay, plus two self tailing Harken sheet winches.

There is still lots to do but we feel we are nearing the final stages. The cabins below are still unfinished, a new autopilot needs to be fitted as does a bowthruster (I may be criticised for this, but her sistership Tarion had one fitted and a heavy long keeled boat of this size is just not built for crowded modern day harbours and could do lots

## WENDY WOO RESCUED continued

of damage!). This will be fitted when she is lifted out in the spring.

Has it all been worth it? Yes, I certainly think so. It all took much longer than expected but we have enjoyed every minute. We could not have done it without the able help of Steve Parish and his team. I would recommend him to anyone – he has a real feeling for wooden boats, has all the skills required and is not averse to using modern materials and techniques when required (something I am sure David Hillyard would have done had these been available when he was building our boats).



Ready for launching Jul 2011

Has it all been worth it? Yes, I certainly think so. It all took much longer than expected but we have enjoyed every minute.

Nicholas Gray

## The Meanness of a Midnight Tide

I can remember that when I was studying for my Yacht Master's Ticket in nineteen hundred and frozen to death, I always found figuring out tidal heights hard to grasp....such posers as working out the depth of water at some unheard of secondary port in Brittany and how much anchor cable should be run out if my vessel drew 1.5 metres and arrived at two hours before high water. Gazing at tidal curves for Brest and checking tide times and predicted heights above chart datum was always somewhat bemusing for me. All these convoluted calculations and then the big proviso; heights and times may vary depending on other variants like atmospheric pressure, river rain water drainage, and wind strength and direction.

Since then I have always said to hell with all that and relied on the comfortably approximate and simple rule of twelfths.

Sailing on the River Exe, which is miserably shallow and meandering, has always made it necessary to be very conscious of the prevailing tidal conditions. Recently I ran aground here and had to spend a very uncomfortable night at 40 degrees before we could refloat. But the point of this story is to highlight the vagaries of tidal predictions. We had enjoyed a cracking morning sail down the river in a 1930 4 ton long keel transom-sterned Hillyard cutter, Quest. The wind was a fluky and gusty nor'westerly around force 3-4.

Whilst short tacking up a narrow stretch of river we left our tack a bit late and as she came upright going through the tack, but not through the wind, she went hard on. So now we were on a lee shore on soft mud one hour after high water. Frantic efforts with the engine were to no avail, and we resigned ourselves to a 10 hour wait. During the tedium of the following hours we got to thinking about what time we could expect to refloat. We sat there feeling rather stupid watching all the other yachts returning to their moorings, and imagining their skippers righteously saying 'Oh, look at them, they are going to be there for a



Wendy Woo at Ramsgate with her masts stepped

November 2011



## **The Meanness of a Midnight Tide cont.**

while', and 'How did they manage to get up there?' We've all done it, I know, and if you have run aground, you look the other way in your embarrassment, hoping they will not recognize you, even though they are locals, and know your boat perfectly well!

Twenty minutes after we touched a helpful chap in a little Shetland came by - there was just enough water to come up to our stern and he took our anchor and cable and managed to drop it out in deep water. So there we were, aground on a 2.8m neap tide, one hour after high water. The tide tables said the next high water would be at one in the morning, predicted at 2.6m, and the tide after that, early the next afternoon, would be 2.8m again. We figured that, even though the night tide would be 0.2m less, we should get her off at high water, given we had first touched an hour after high tide. We sat there watching it get dark and listening to the mournful cries of the many estuary wading birds, and the woosh of the passing Great Western 125's rushing down the main line which runs along the shore.

We stretched the meagre rations we took with us for a day sail, making numerous cups of tea. We got the chart out and laid off courses up the river to our mooring, as much of the river is unlit. Anything to pass the time, but buoyed in the expectancy we would get off at high tide, and be on our mooring an hour after that. You would not believe how slowly a neap tide approaches. We watched the margin of mud between us and the water's edge reduce in what seemed like imperceptible degrees, and began to think we would be lucky at this rate to get off that night.

High water came and went, and we were still over at 40 degrees, with absolutely no chance of floating. The high water was at least 0.8m lower than it should have been. After token efforts with the engine we resigned ourselves to another long tedious wait, and began to wonder if the afternoon tide might let us down too.

With several hours uncomfortably dozing in my bunk I got to thinking about my long ago studies of tidal predictions. Why had that night tide been so poor? Although during the day we had had a good nor'westerly breeze, which the locals say pushes the water out of the river, it had dropped away to a light breeze during the evening and by midnight it was almost calm. The barometer was steady throughout the period at about 1017 millibars, and there had been little rain in the previous couple of days.

By next morning we were pretty fed up. We called up a chum who lives aboard a boat not far away, and he kindly offered a lift ashore. Our boat was clearly safe enough for the time being, so after a squelch through the mud we got ashore to enjoy a good shower and a decent breakfast.

Before noon, that day, we set off in the dinghy, which we had retrieved from our mooring, back to the boat and arrived an hour and a half before high water. Al-

**So now we were on a lee shore on  
soft mud one hour after high water**

ready the tide looked more generous, and the water was well round her and with her only heeling 20 degrees. Almost exactly one hour before high water, she was upright, and with a little help from the engine she slipped off as sweet as you like. We hauled in the anchor and set off up river to our mooring. Buckets of water and a deck scrubber went into action and we washed off the black glutinous mud left from the anchor and chain.

So all ended happily, and the next day after a sound night's sleep found me much refreshed and ready for the shore side flack. Word had got round the town of our misfortune. "Oh it never happened to me" comments came from all and sundry. "I hear you ran aground yesterday" came the smiling comments hiding the unsaid thoughts of the well wishers, that we should never have been there, and should have known better. Pride is a funny thing; having it is not supposed to be a virtue, but losing it often seems much worse. And still that mean midnight tide and the poorness of it's height still puzzles me. Perhaps somebody who is a tidal expert, or knows the river better than me, can explain it.

**Mike Ashby, QUEST**

## **Contributions to the Newsletter**

**We are very grateful for our contributors this month - without whom there would be no newsletter!**

**Please continue to send us news of your restoration projects, sailing stories and anything else you think may be of interest to other Hillyard Members.**

**You now have an added incentive - as highlighted in the Michael Joyce Memorial article it is intended to make an award each year to The Hillyarder showing the most "endeavour".**

**This could be for a voyage, restoration project or other Hillyard related activity and we want to hear about it please!**

## HOA Officers and Contact Details

President Michael Walden

**Commodore Steve Tiffin**

Telephone 0208 949 1699, mob 07979 530293

E-mail [stevtiffin@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:stevtiffin@blueyonder.co.uk)

**Treasurer Keith Tullett**

Telephone 01872 865414, mob 07812 138651

E-mail [kjatlullett@gmail.com](mailto:kjatlullett@gmail.com)

**Secretary Dave Stickland**

Telephone 02392 345342, mob 07836 282561

E-mail [david\\_stickland@talk21.com](mailto:david_stickland@talk21.com)

**Website Guy Smith**

E-mail [hillyardyachts@ntlworld.com](mailto:hillyardyachts@ntlworld.com)

## Welcome Aboard

**Kevin Conroy (rejoined)**

**Modig**

**5t**

**1969**

**Lough Derg, Ireland**

**Milton Chimonas**

**Fiona Rowan and Chris Hudson**

**Letona**

**9t**

**1960**

**Oban**

**Michael Wilcox and Caroline Pye**

**Shimmer 12t**

**Chichester**



MODIG



LETONA

We sailed Letona back to Oban from Tayvallich on March 21st - our first sail. Wow Hillyards sail beautifully - very exciting for us! And yesterday round Kerrera - motored down the sound anchored in Castle Bay then a sail up Firth of Lorn with very happy parents who haven't sailed for over 20 years Here is a picture of her in Oban Bay. Fiona & Chris Rowan

## HOA events for 2012/13

### HOA WESTCOUNTRY MEET

**SATURDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2012**

**The Royal Cornwall Yacht Club, Greenbank, Falmouth, Cornwall, TR11 2SP**

**19.30 for 20.00: Bar opens 18.00**

By courtesy of the Commodore and Officers, the 2012 West Country Meet has been arranged at the **Royal Cornwall Yacht Club** and is convenient for those travelling to Brest Festival (which starts on 13 July) or otherwise to Brittany to cruise. (Le Four lighthouse is 100NM from Falmouth.)

Please let me know by email ([kjatlullett@gmail.com](mailto:kjatlullett@gmail.com)) if you are able to attend and your menu choices using the numbers to indicate choice.

Payment may be made direct to the HOA bank at 05-02-00; 29869783 or by cheque payable to Hillyard Owners Association sent to:

**Keith Tullett, Walden Lodge, Tarrandean Lane, Perranwell Station, Cornwall. TR3 7NP - by Monday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012 at latest to secure a place. Regretfully no refund after that date.**

### HOA SOLENT - MEET

**LYMINGTON (TBC)**

**SATURDAY 1ST/2ND SEPTEMBER 2012**

Tides that weekend are:

1st Sept HW 12.47 BST 4.8m  
2nd Sept HW 13.24 BST 4.8m

Please let me know by email [stevtiffin@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:stevtiffin@blueyonder.co.uk) if you are interested in attending

### HOA LONDON MEET

**FRIDAY 11TH JANUARY 2013**

The dinner will be held at The Naval Club, 38 Hill Street, London, W1J 5NS.

The menu choices and cost have yet to be finalised but are expected to be available from November onwards and details will be available in the next newsletter and on the website.

**Date of next issue November 2012**

If you have any articles, photos or news which would interest other HOA members please email this to Steve Tiffin at [stevtiffin@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:stevtiffin@blueyonder.co.uk)



Vivona leaving Paimpol Festival 2011— all those flags give at least an extra knot!

Disclaimer: the contents of any written material supplied or published by The Hillyarder may not necessarily represent the views of the HOA committee or the majority of the HOA members