

AHOY - The Newsletter of the Watermouth Yacht Club

Berrynarbor, Ilfracombe, North Devon, EX34 9SJ
51° 13' N 04° 05' W



August 2012

40 YEARS AND 4 GENERATIONS BOATING FROM WATERMOUTH

40 Years and 4 Generations of the same family separate these two photographs. The first of Norman Gough, a founder member of The Watermouth Club, and to the left of the picture notice the burgee as the Club started as The Watermouth Boat Club. The second photograph shows his Great-Granddaughters, Lucy Beveridge (left) and Sophie Beveridge (right) still using and enjoying the same boat.

"Thumper" is a Cheverton Champ built by Cheverton Workboats of Cowes, Isle of Wight. With 1970 vintage it is still very original, with the same Saab diesel engine and all main fittings. It is, we think, possibly the oldest boat in Watermouth Harbour, still in the same family and has always spent a full season on its moorings for the last forty two years.

David Gough



A little history in support of the Commodore's column below. Ed.

Commodores Column

Large streams from little fountains flow

Tall oaks from little acorns grow.

David Everett

The above quotation is very apt, as this is a special year for the Club for two reasons; firstly we celebrate our Fortieth anniversary. Forty years ago, a number of enthusiastic yachtsmen who kept their boats at Watermouth Harbour, used to meet on the premises of a Club for campers situated on land adjoining the Harbour which was then in the ownership of one person, whom they persuaded to grant them a long lease on the land on which the Club is now built; he did so in a most generous manner at a peppercorn rent. They then borrowed the money to enable them to carry out the work, and within two years the Clubhouse was built and within three years the loan repaid. We owe them so much, and I hope that those Founders who are still with us will feel that the present members have followed in the example they set.

Secondly it marks the completion of the major works of improvement that we decided on some years ago, the building of a new and enlarged Galley with all "mod cons" and new and modern showers and toilets. It was decided that this work would be carried out without the need to borrow money to do so; that this has been achieved is thanks to all the members who have supported the Committee in all its fundraising activities, and in particular to the enthusiasm and extremely hard work of a dedicated band of members who have organised these activities, without them I doubt we would have attained our goal and certainly not in the time we have. I am not proposing to list their names, I am sure you all know who they are; (if you don't you jolly well should do).

Finally on a purely personal note may I say, most sincerely, how honoured I have been to have served as Commodore of the Club, and to thank you for all the kindness and friendship extended to me.

John

Lundy Race 2012

0800 on 23 June, blowing F6 and gusting F7, yup, must be Ilfracombe Yacht Club's Round Lundy Race, (Trafalgar Cup). Sensibly, this year's course was around a mark on the East side of the island instead of having to go around the island and through the tidal races at each end of Lundy.

Watermouth Yacht Club was represented by Keith Allsford in a Moody 27, "Wayfarer" and Geof Pierce in a Hunter Horizon 273, "Chaser". This was going to be an 'interesting' sail as it was pretty much first time out for Keith and Geof as weather hadn't been conducive to any sailing so far this year. The conditions certainly showed up any weakness in boat or crew. There were several radio calls before the start with boats retiring due to torn sails and other problems; I think 5 boats retired before crossing the start line and Chaser was 10 minutes late at the start because one of the rope clutches failed and we had to do some hasty re-routing of control lines.

It amazes me how quickly boats disappear from each other after the start, for the first hour you can see most boats but then you find yourself on your own until you get to Lundy because some boat's go into Barnstaple bay and others go out to mid channel.

About 6 miles off Lundy, Chaser and Coquette found themselves crossing tacks and it became another race to see who would round the mark first, (as it happened Chaser just got ahead at the mark), which cheered up Chaser's crew as Coquette is a real pocket rocket with what looks like high tech sails and several different headsails to suit the conditions, but at the end of the day, it's the handicaps that determine the results, not first to finish.

After rounding the mark, Coquette launched a cruising chute and shot ahead. I wasn't sure it was viable in those conditions, (you can't sail very low with a chute), so we kept ours in the bag for the time being. Coquette was soon having difficulty keeping it flying and then took it down, much to my relief. Talking to Coquette's skipper later, he said he took it down because he thought he would lose the mast in those conditions!

Even with three on board Chaser we found it a challenging sail so it's a huge tribute to Keith that he sailed single handed in those conditions, finishing 10th overall and 2nd in Class, in spite of breaking his tiller and putting in more tacks than necessary to change arms, also, Keith said he was "too wet" and had to take off his waterproof trousers as he was taking in water faster than it was escaping!

Chaser finished 7th overall and 6th in class, but after a mistake in her handicap was corrected came 5th overall and 5th in class.

And, just to round off the day, we managed to let go of the dinghy when picking up an outer mooring. With a rising tide it was going to be a very long wait or go for a swim! Fortunately, just as I was getting my wetsuit out of the locker, we saw Colin Nurse on the beach getting ready to go out and he brought it back to us and kindly made no reference about our incompetence.

It was a hard day's sail and I'm sure we wouldn't have gone out in those conditions by choice but we were all very satisfied to have completed the course.

Geof Pierce - Chaser

Editorial Note - 48 entered, 12 finished, 5 retired and 31 did not start however WYCs two intrepid sailors both started and finished. A huge well done to both, and to Chaser's crew. Keith being Keith did not have a crew!

RUBY DOO !

Watermouth Yacht Club 1972 -2012
Saturday 18th August to eat at 7.00 p.m.

Celebratory Buffet Dinner
Guest Speaker - on his Ocean Master experiences

Tickets only £10 - 00 per person
Please contact Moira - 01271 865001 or allsford388@btinternet.com.

only a few seats left

Dates and Details of Other Club Activities -

BBQs at the Club - Saturdays 1st September and 22nd September.
Ready to eat 7.30 pm at £6-50 per person including dessert.

Club Cruise - Saturday, Sunday and Monday 25th, 26th and 27th August.
Destination t.b.c. Sunday 2nd September. Clovelly Crab and Lobster Festival..
All details will be confirmed nearer the dates.

Pool and Games Night with Supper - Saturday 6th October at 7.00 pm.

2012 ANNUAL DINNER AND DANCE

At Ilfracombe Golf Club

Saturday 20th October at 7.00 pm.

Live Music

Tickets £22-50



Please telephone Moira for details – 01271 865001 or allsford388@btinternet.com.

Payment with booking with cheques payable to Watermouth Yacht Club.

Copperas Challenge

Unfortunately this has been a non-event this year; there were six dates with suitable tides on a Saturday afternoon but due to a combination of boats launching late this year and unfavourable weather, we haven't sailed any of the four races to date. There are two more races scheduled for 25th August and 22nd September, so let's hope we can sail at least one race this year.

Geof Pierce

Buccaneer to Porlock Weir - 1968

Early in the spring of 1968 I towed *Buccaneer* from Faringdon, Oxfordshire to Porlock Weir in West Somerset. I chose Porlock mainly because my parents had a boat there as they lived in Bossington Lane, Porlock and I really liked the Weir and the people around that area.

The Weir consists of two harbours, the inner and the outer. These are separated by the harbour wall and they are connected by large lock gates, over which is a walk way and in the wall is a large sluice gate. Outside the lock gates is a non drying pool which is about forty feet in width and about four feet deep in the middle. Around this pool is a fairly level area where boats are moored using ground chains and outside this area is a steep bank of stones and boulders which is about fifteen feet high and is kept back by logs which are laid between stakes to a height of six feet. On large spring tides the boats outside the gates are brought inside and at high water the gates are shut thus holding back a vast quantity of water that stretches from the inner harbour to the westward end of the adjoining field. When the gates are closed no craft are allowed to enter the harbour. At low water the sluice in the harbour wall is opened fully. The water surges around the pool and down the cut to the sea, taking with it all the loose boulders, mud and stones that has accumulated since the previous cleansing. This is a very cheap and effective way of clearing the rubbish out of the outer harbour and the inner harbour is also cleaned of mud by the same process.

I had chosen a fairly flat area in the inner harbour, next to my father's yacht, and laid the necessary mooring chains. *Buccaneer* was floated off the trailer and manoeuvred to a place where she could lay against the harbour wall at low water. Her mast was then lowered through the hole in her deck and stepped in the keel. She was then rigged so that in all aspects she was ready for the sea. Later that day when the tide had come in, her legs were fitted and she was put on her inner mooring. My allocated outer mooring was on the 'stones' and just seaward side of the pool. At that time there were only about five other boats in the outer harbour. Two fishing boats that had been built by Hink's of Appledore, namely 'Lilian' owned by Arther Ley the harbour master, and 'Mistletoe' owned by his brother, Preston. There was an RAF tender and an unusual International 18 that had a Gunter rigged mainsail. My father's yacht 'Etoile d'azur' and the two fishing boats were kept in the pool. Often there were other craft there but in the main they were visitors who had got stuck for one reason or another.

Sometimes when it was quiet on a high tide, Arthur would close the lock gates and leave them closed for several days. By doing so the tide was held back and all the boats inside remained afloat. Unfortunately he had the habit of letting it out without telling anyone! One day I had removed the legs and was painting the hull beneath where they were fitted. My wife, Jill was sitting in the cockpit with our eight month old daughter on her lap when suddenly I realised that Arthur had opened the sluice to let the water out. I quickly put the leg back on the side that hadn't been painted and asked Jill to sit on that side. *Buccaneer* had a habit of lying over on the other leg when she dried out, which was due to the fact that the ground sloped away on that side. I quickly rowed round to that side to put the other leg partially on when I realised that the keel had grounded and the boat was heeling that way, despite the fact that Jill was on the other side. I got out of the dinghy and ended up to my waist in the water, grabbed the leg, and jammed it under the gunwale. Preston who was working nearby, saw our predicament, waded in and applied his weight on the other side to keep the boat upright whilst I fitted the leg. Arthur meanwhile had left for lunch!

I was in the inner harbour fitting an echo sounder one day when Arthur wandered over and asked what I was doing. I explained that this was the latest Seafarer echo sounder with two depth controls when he said, "You'll find my lad that electrics and sea water don't mix and you can't better the old ways. 'What's that,' I asked. 'Well now,' he said, 'If your draught was four feet we'd tie a knot in our lead line at four foot six. Hang it over the side by your hatchway so that the knot is at water level. The other end is tied to a piece of wood that is stretched across the under sides of the hatch.

The lead weight tensions the line and keeps the wood in place and on the wood you put some tin plates, mugs etc. When the water depth is four foot six the weight touches the bottom, the tension goes out of the line, and all hell is let loose when the tin plates fall off the piece of wood. You'll wake for sure without any fancy and no doubt expensive, electrical apparatus."

Over the coming months and years, Arthur taught me all manner of different things that he and his father used to do when sailing their trading ketch around the channel. He taught me all I know about navigation. He used to say, "Get yourself an Admiralty Chart Brian. All you ever need to know is on that chart." He taught me more in a few hours about navigating and seamanship than I would ever learn from books. It has stood me well over the years. He taught me to watch the sea in its various moods, make a note of which way it was flowing at different states of the tide. He introduced me to the 'twelfth's rule'; what an easy and reliable system that is for finding the depth over a bar or to anchor and remain afloat wherever you are. Most of all he taught me to use my eyes and never to take the sea for granted. He showed me the course past Foreland Point on the chart. His recommended route was right up close to the headland, about thirty feet off, whether you were going up or down channel. Further out than that and you would be subjected to tide rips and eddies and at some times dangerous overfalls for a small boat.

Being young I had no fear in those days and I can remember once when I was sailing up the coast through the foreland race, and went forward to change down from a genoa to a smaller jib as the wind had veered around the headland and was coming from the southeast. I had no pulpit or guard rails at that time. Now it brings me out in a cold sweat just to think about it!

After a couple of years of confidence building and sailing around the area from Foreland Point to Minehead, I felt like going further afield. Practically all my sailing was done on my own, without radio or any electrical goodies apart from a compass and echo sounder. I did wear a lifejacket and when going forward to change the headsail, I tied a rope around my waist. I always streamed a long line which I hoped to be able to get hold of if I fell in, but I was younger in those days, slimmer and more foot sure.

When work permitted me to take three or four days off I would sail over to Mumbles on the ebb, and usually got there before the tide dried right out. Mumbles was one of those places that you didn't go ashore unless you had a dinghy as the bottom consisted of sandy mud and it was very gooey. It did however offer good shelter behind the headland in any wind from Northwest through West to South. (Swansea marina didn't exist in those days and that area was all commercial docks.) From there I would sail either round to Caldy Island or across to Ilfracombe. Having a boat with a waterline of around 17ft meant that my speed was restricted to around 4-5knots and so everywhere I went was with the tide. From Ilfracombe I would sail back up the coast to Porlock. There were only a couple of yachts in Watermouth at that time but I never saw Watermouth from the sea, and it was not until I drove around the coast by car that I first saw the harbour, and wandered in as one does.

As time went by and I became more experienced I began to think about getting a larger boat. *Buccaneer* was fine for me to start with but she was a little wet as all the spray came across the deck (no spray dodgers then either) and you get a little fed up with being drenched every minute or so. All I wanted was a sea kindly boat with a bit more beam and length so that I could ride over these steep little waves and not get so wet and cold. I also wanted a bigger engine, preferably diesel as a 1 ½ hp Stuart Turner petrol engine was underpowered when trying to push through a sea. Today, that size seems ridiculously small but in those days most yachts had no more than a 5hp engine. The sea conditions are the same but then the engine was an auxiliary, and people sailed everywhere. Over the years the engines have got larger which means that family yachts are mostly motor- sailed everywhere, and people have forgotten the skills of sailing and the basic functions like heaving to, for a cup of tea, check the chart or answer the call of nature.

In the winter of discontent I sold *Buccaneer* to a retired solicitor from Withypool, and from then until the present day she has been kept in the Fowey area. Hopefully she enjoys flatter seas and a better climate in her old age.

Brian Jones (Rouselle)

The Boat Race

The first I knew about the boat race was when I came down from bed that morning. When I sat down for breakfast and that's when my dad said: 'There's a boat race today, maybe you should enter.' At that point I was too tired to fully acknowledge what had just been said, but I soon managed to gather what was going on.

Later on in the day when, I was more awake – My brother and I went off to my Grandad's workshop to make the boats. The first boat we made had to be discarded as it was bigger than the 75cm. I then went with my grandad to make 'the boat mark two' while my brother made his boat with my dad. After we had finished we made our way to Watermouth Harbour, where the boat race was to be held.

We arrived at the harbour a few hours before the race was to start so we had plenty of time for trial runs. We gathered our newly – made wooden boats and bamboo canes (for getting the boats untangled from seaweed or out from behind rocks) and headed down to the stream. My brother and I ran ahead and placed our boats into the stream, eager to see who would reign victorious in this mock race between brother and sister. This friendly rivalry was short lived, however, as it soon became clear that if we joined forces it would be more beneficial and we then formed a partnership between us. We decided that if one of us won then we would share the prize. Further down the river, our boats bobbed up and down – mine slightly in the front, when out of nowhere my grandparents dog (Zoe) charged into the stream and snatched up my brother's boat before faithfully returning it to my Grandad's hands. She did this several times with both mine and my brother's boats until we decided to stop our first trial run. Our second trial run went without k9 interference as Zoe was kept securely on her lead.

Shortly after, we went into the Watermouth Harbour club house where there were refreshments (a delicious sausage casserole and hot cross buns) and "The Best Decorated Boat" was announced and they received an Easter egg. We then all headed to the bridge over the stream where the race was to start.

3, 2, 1 Go! The race began! I had started at the back of the racers, so I had a disadvantage in one way, however I soon realised that that my boat had a very streamlined shape which proved very effective. My boat also started in a very fast area of water so I soon regained the distance between the other boats bobbing down the stream. I found that some parts of the stream were faster than others and was also glad to find that my boat didn't really hit too many obstacles and soon found myself in the lead about half way through the race. I soon gained a wider lead, but even so, I kept glancing back nervously and a few times found that there were boats very close to overtaking me but somehow I always managed to stay in the lead. As the race went on it seemed to me that the finish line was getting further away – but, of course, this was all in my very paranoid imagination.



Moira manning the finish with St George ensign.



The race in progress

At last I reached the finish line and I then ran back to cheer on my brother who came fourth. By the time that most people had crossed the line it had begun to rain. I then had a dilemma – I had forgotten my wellies and therefore couldn't cross the stream. This problem was easily solved as a kind woman piggy-backed me across.

Everyone then made their way back to the club house where it was mercifully dry and warm. When everyone was settled the winner and runner up were announced so I walked up to the table to collect the prize (an Easter egg). I then sat down and the boy who had come 2nd went up to collect his Easter egg. After this, excitement seemed to die down and although some people showed no signs of leaving, other groups made their way to the door (me included). All in all, I couldn't think of a way I preferred to have spent the morning.

Iona Mokandpuri (aged 13) Alistair Bell's Granddaughter

Maintenance Report -

I opened my last report saying that I was looking forward to a good boating season. At the time of writing, I am still waiting for this to happen together with all other members.

I am pleased to say that the new facilities were ready on time for the season and apart from some teething problems, which I hope that I have now overcome by replacing the basin taps and fitting a threshold strip to the floor in the mens shower.

I also had a request to fit a blind to the ladies shower window and to install a mirror in the corridor for hair drying purposes.

Unfortunately the club has had some additional expense repairing the damaged outside power points. These could not be replaced like for like owing to new regulations on electric supply, so additional circuit protection and 16amp exterior sockets have been fitted. I have been advised by the electrician to warn members plugging into the new sockets to ensure that **their equipment is in good safe condition.**

Simon Kemp

Notices –

DSC VHF Radio Digital Selective Calling

It is hoped to compile a Club Directory of members MMSI Numbers.

If willing, please will you forward details listing your name, boat name and MMSI number to the Club Secretary. A list will also be displayed on the Club notice board for you to complete.

STORAGE

The Club needs a shed (approximately 10 feet by 8 feet) for storage purposes.

If anyone has a shed they can give or sell to the Club, please let any Committee Member know. Alternatively, local storage space or even a cash donation towards the cost of a shed would be greatly appreciated.

PHOTO COMPETITION

Members - those of you who have seen the new lavatories and showers at the clubhouse will agree with the Committee that whilst they are wonderful, they would benefit from some added colour.

The area is, at the moment very clinical.

To that end we have decided to run a photograph competition open to all members and their families.

The subject can be anything you wish. There is no prize except for the pride and joy of having your photographic and artistic skills on display!

Photographs provided should be in colour and standard 'snap' size. i.e. 6x 4 or 7x5.

The ideal will be if you can submit a hard copy but have the original on your computer.

And now some –

Words on the Water

Let your boat of life be light, packed with only what you need - a homely home and simple pleasures, one or two friends, worth the name, someone to love and someone to love you, a cat, a dog, and a pipe or two, enough to eat and enough to wear, and a little more than enough to drink; for thirst is a dangerous thing.

Jerome K Jerome, Three Men in a Boat

And finally a request from the Editor -

You will note that 40 years on I have been unable to have a Yacht in full sail on the front page because no one has sent me photos. However I am very grateful to David Gough for the most appropriate look back in time which I am sure you will agree gives a happy glance into both the past and the present.. In conclusion MORE photos please! I shall select one from the photo competition for the next Ahoy's front page.

Neil.

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