



## SPARKMAN & STEPHENS ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER July 1998

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#### ***RORC honours Olin Stephens***

The Royal Ocean Racing Club, Britain's leading offshore racing club, recently awarded Life Honorary Membership of the Club to Olin in recognition of his outstanding contribution to yacht design and the sport of yacht racing. Olin, who has been a RORC member since 1931 when he won the Fastnet race in ***Dorade***, joins a elite list of Life Honorary Members, only six of whom are not crowned heads of state!

#### ***Dorade leads ICYA European Grand Prix***

After winning two out of the four races at 'Les Voiles d'Antibes', ***Dorade*** led the six classic yachts that had so far competed for the ICYA Grand Prix series in early June. This most renowned S&S classic, owned by Giuseppe Gazzoni, was helmed by America's Cup designer Doug Peterson and skippered by Giles McLoughlin in tough early-season sailing with high winds and big seas. The International Classic Yacht Association's European Grand Prix is a points series calculated to find the top classic yacht that is racing in Europe this year and consists of 32 races in eight regattas in Italy, Spain, France and Britain. A minimum of eight races count towards the series. About 30 members of the ICYA are expected to compete during the course of the season, with the remaining events consisting of the 'XIV Trofeo Almirante Conde do Barcelona' in Palma, Spain, on 17-23 August; the 'Vele d'Epocha 1998' at Imperia, Italy, on September 9-13, with passage races to: the 'Regates Royales', Cannes, France, on 21-26 September; and 'La Nioulargue 98' from 28 September to 3 October, when the ICYA Awards Ceremony will be held in St Tropez. **Update:** In mid July ***Dorade*** was still leading the ICYA points series after sailing 7 races, with two further wins in the Prada Sailing Week at Porto Santo Stephano, Italy. However, a number of serious contenders have yet to start their campaigns in other venues in Europe and the championships are still wide open.

## ***Eric Tabarly lost at sea***

Many of you will have read of the loss at sea in early June of the renowned French sailor Eric Tabarly. Eric, the Honorary President of the International Classic Yacht Association, to which the S&S Association is now affiliated, was washed overboard at night from his yacht *Pen Duick* in the Irish Sea. He was on his way, with four inexperienced crew, to the Fife Regatta at Fairlie in Scotland. Eric Tabarly will be remembered as an intrepid round-the-world sailor and an inspiration to many face the challenges of the sea in both modern and traditional craft.

## ***Annual Dinner***

This has now been arranged for 21 November at the Royal Naval and Royal Albert Yacht Club, Portsmouth. An application form is imminent.

## ***Regional News***

**Italy** Preparations are well in hand for the tenth "Raduno Vele d'Epoca" to be held in Imperia from 9 to 13 September. S&S designs are receiving special attention this year and Patrick Matthiesen and other members of the Association have helped to assemble an impressive collection of material for an exhibition which will run throughout the regatta. Drawings, half-models and a film of *Dorada* will be shown, representing the whole range of S&S designs. **Caribbean** Nick Philp wrote recently from the Galapagos Islands: "Finally left Antigua with *Scalpay* at the end of April, making the 1150m to Panama in 10 days. Then through the Canal and in 7 days the 850m to these wondrous islands. Mattieu (a crewman from *Stormy Weather* I met in Douarnenez) and I crossed the Equator at exactly halfway between Greenwich and the antipodes. We've had tuna and wahoo meals every day for 17 days under sail. About to start the 3800m to Pitcairn Island, God willing, in 4 to 6 weeks. Then the atolls and islands to New Zealand for Christmas. Perhaps we'll join some of the other S&S 34s for the Sydney Hobart Race in '99 (a 30th Anniversary run!). Nick can be contact c/o Stephen Philp, 65 Asquith Avenue, Mount Albert, Auckland, New Zealand. Hans Lammers (Swan 43 *Pavlova*) has kindly agreed to take over from Nick as Regional Secretary, Caribbean. **Southern England** The International Festival of the Sea at Portsmouth on August 28-31 is the venue for the region's regatta. Currently *Aceca*, *Clairella*, *Mantra*, *Mornings End*, *Sally May* and *Scheherezade* are known to be registered. Any other members planning to take their boat to the Festival are asked to contact Mark Weaver so that arrival times can be co-ordinated to ensure adjacent berths. **US East Coast** We welcome the recruitment of two new Regional Secretaries to cover the East Coast of the United States. Robert Pemberton will cover the southern part of the eastern sea-board, while David Virtue will cover the northern section. Their contact details are given at the end of this Newsletter, along with those for all other officers. We look forward to more information about them and their boats - and perhaps the odd contribution to the Newsletter?

## ***Expo '98 Round the World Rally***

An enthusiastic reception awaited the Round the World Rally fleet on 24 May as the 24 yachts that had circled the world sailed up the Tagus River to Lisbon in the

company of some 200 local yachts. Tears reportedly flowed as freely as the drinks at the final prizegiving. Overall winner for the European fleet was **Fazer Blue Magic**, Folke West's Swan 65, skippered by Gordon Kay, with 1st mate Justin Olley. Justin's father David is currently wallowing in 19 video tapes of the Rally, all with Finnish commentary. Special viewings of a selection may be on the menu for a future Association Dinner - or even to liven up the AGM!

### ***Stainless steel rigging failures***

Some interesting correspondence resulted from Dick Newnham's letter in the March Newsletter and we hope soon to have some authoritative technical information to publish in a forthcoming issue.

### ***Life subscriptions***

At a recent committee meeting the idea was put forward of introducing a form of Life Subscription to the Association. This would save you having to remember to pay the current modest subscription each year and save our Hon. Secretary a lot of work chasing people who haven't. A fixed sum would discriminate against older members, so some sort of scaled amount, dependent upon age bands, might be sensible and acceptable: those of more advanced age would pay a lower amount. The Royal Yachting Association in the UK has such a scheme. What are your views? Is the principle of a life membership dependent on age sufficiently supported for the committee to draft a motion for the next AGM? Let us know, please.

### ***New insignia available***

House flags, ties and other items of clothing with the Association's new logo can now be obtained from Mark Weaver, the Hon. Secretary. The House flags are 32cm by 48cm, rectangular, with the S&S logo in gold on a dark blue background and cost £15. The all-purpose greetings cards, costing £1 each, are also available from Mark.

### ***You and your boat***

**Steve Gann and Saraband** We've had **Saraband** for ten years, and during that time we have pretty much taken her apart and put her back together. During one race about eight years ago, during the Master Mariner's Regatta on San Francisco Bay, we damn near sunk her. We soon discovered that a number of the frames under the large bronze mast step were like sponge; later it emerged that a lightning strike several years previously had probably destroyed the wood's integrity. Apart from that, just about everything on the boat has been gone over, replaced or improved to include the sails, electronics, and various fittings that were not bronze. The hull has been worked over each year during the haul-out, be it fastenings, rudder, or anything else that seemed in need of attention. The mast, which is varnished and strangely large in dimension along with the boom, have been stripped and all particulars taken care of, though the rigging has only acquired a new forestay. I have also made some changes to her original look. She came with large dorades on the main deck house, which might be

fine on the east coast in the summer, but out here on the west coast we don't need them. Removing them has given her a more graceful look, but I did put a bronze funnel far forward for better ventilation. In addition the large aluminium funnel on the aft dorade was replaced with a very small bronze one. All fittings are now bronze along with a custom made bronze bow roller that was copied from Chris Craft Motor Yachts. It folds back on itself when not in use and thereby does not stick out over the bow. *Saraband* also had a thick rub rail along each side of the hull, which I found disturbed her beautiful lines; these are quite similar to a Rozinante Ketch, but of course larger. The rail was removed after looking at it for about seven years. Some people question the small aft cabin, an original feature. We have found it to be a delight, since it is hard to find space and privacy on a small 35' wooden boat. The separate aft cabin means that you don't have to eat and sleep in your bunk, and can take a nap without disturbing anyone else. Also it makes the very comfortable cockpit even better, providing protection back aft as well as providing backrests. A new teak dining table has been made for her that folds up against the mast, as well as a new forward hatch and a new boom gallows, the original having been ripped off during a gale. *Saraband* is certainly not a boat for everyone. For 35' overall length she is small down below, but then she is a small boat which I like, since it makes for easy single-handed sailing, something I do a lot of. Unlike many of the modern floating caravans, she doesn't have a large galley, nor double bunks. But she handles supremely in a seaway without banging and crashing about and she stands up to forty-knot winds without bother! And finally it should be said that *Saraband* always attracts attention wherever she goes, because she stands out so much from the rank-and-file of plastic production boats. I should mention too that *Saraband* was built in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, but was sailed down the east coast, and spent a period of time in Panama before being sailed to California, without an engine. The trip to California makes for interesting reading, as written to me by the owner at the time. In it he explains the troublesome lightning strike. I have other letters too, including one from the original owner to Rod Stephens, thanking him for creating such a wonderful vessel. Editor's note: *Saraband* is described, with line drawings, on pages 104-5 of "The Best of the Best".

## *The Lone Danger*

*by Neil Millward*

The sea is a picture of tranquillity - white-laced waves roll effortlessly towards a hazy horizon, while the sun dazzles in reflective brilliance. It is a perfect day for my first single-handed race in *Clairella*. And I couldn't have made a better start - first over the line and 30 yards upwind of the Man To Beat. A close fetch in F2 takes us eastwards from Cowes towards the Nab Tower. As the wind frees and drops a fraction, the MTB slides past in my lee, my reacher not matching the drive of his tri-radial spinnaker. Passing the Forts, we realise that half the fleet have given up on the failing breeze, the weather's idiosyncrasies leaving an elite group of five striving to prove that Man cannot be controlled by Nature. Six or seven hours later we are still wallowing short of the Nab Tower when frustration gets the better of the other four skippers. Shortly

after, I throw in the towel too, the last to retire and a moral victory achieved. I put the tillerpilot on for the 15-mile motor back to Warsash while I tidy up the boat. It is now dusk. Nav lights on. The steaming light, however, seems to have been infected by the half-baked inactivity of the day and refuses to provide any illumination. Flat calm, flat sea and not another vessel in sight. Yet having mast steps means that changing the steaming-light bulb is a simple, safe one-man job. So 25 ft above the deck, facing aft, I wrap one arm around the mast and disassemble the light. Tiring from the awkward position, I take a rest. Suddenly, in my peripheral vision I glimpse a wave, a rather big wave. It is dead ahead of *Clairella*, approaching at about 10 knots and concealing the black bows of an unlit 200-ton barge. O Lord! There isn't time to climb down the mast and get to the helm before collision time. But is he really coming straight for me? I spot a minor asymmetry in his profile and hope for the best. Within seconds he is abeam of me, I cling frantically to the lower mast as his wash hits *Clairella* and the great black monster slides past - all of 10 yards to port. His unlit wheelhouse is silent and empty. Perhaps he's looking for a spare light bulb! (An edited version of this article was printed in the "Confessional", *Yachting Monthly* in 1997.)

### ***She is a Beauty??***

Last year, after many years' experience and a few thousand miles of sailing under my belt, I decided it was time to purchase my own yacht. Fortunately I had some savings and managed to arrange a loan and so began looking for boats up to a maximum of £10,000. This set some clear limits with regards to size and age. I scanned the yachting press for weeks and contacted my local broker. One boat on their list was a She 30, offered at my price limit. Not knowing what a She 30 was I contacted a trusted friend and guru who agreed to help me check out any potential yachts. He recommended going to have a look at the She 30, so with a quick phone call to the brokers a rather large ball started to roll. On arriving at the marina I was quite excited. However, words of wisdom from my guru were "don't fall for the first boat you see" - a steadying remark as we wandered past the myriad of gleaming white hulls of all shapes and sizes. It was difficult not to get caught up in a rush of anticipation of sailing off into the sunset in my own boat. Then the bubble burst with a rather large pop! We had arrived at a very sad looking boat. It was the She. Above the waterline she had been painted gloss black, which with the signs of fading and wear gave the appearance of being done with a mop. The furling headsail had no sacrificial strip, the pulpit looked like a drunk leaning on a doorpost, the sheets were green with mould, the deck paint was chipped and peeling and you could hardly move in the cockpit for various warps, rusty chain and faded empty sweet wrappers. On top of this her fenders were made from old car tyres, adding to the scuff marks along the hull. This was just at first glance. The marina manager then informed us that she had been laid up for two years and in all that time had seen the owner only once. Thoughts of osmosis loomed like the horsemen of the apocalypse. On closer inspection things got worse: the self steering had been snapped off, there were several items of wood on the deck, not least the tiller for which the varnish was noticeable by its absence, the aluminium tender was upside down on the foredeck with a huge dent in the bottom and several botched repairs. On the good side were the plethora of winches around the cockpit and two externally mounted compasses. Biting the bullet we asked to look below. As the hatch opened the stench of damp/mould/mildew and diesel zoomed out and overpowered us as if we had entered the pit of despair (with a diesel engine in the corner). Slowly we made our way below, it **was** the pit of despair. We had entered the twilight zone of the

yachting world. The inside had been painted in a mock Tudor style, black beams and all. There was an old paraffin cooker that had corroded solid, a paraffin cabin heater in a not much better state; the galley area was black with years of cooking and spilt food. The seat covers were soggy and covered in mildew, thanks to a broken ventilator cover that had let the past two years of rain in. ( Considerable quantities of it fall on the west coast of Wales where the marina was situated.) This created large pools of water in the bilges as well as the storage compartments under the seats. Hidden in these compartments was a vast collective of odds and sods that had amalgamated together in an orgy of corrosion to form figures that would not have seemed out of place in a modern sculpture exhibition. The vessel was set up for six berths, two forward, two in the saloon, (no table by the way) and two aft. The latter were accessible only by persons with an honours degree in flexibility and doubled as storage compartments for anything too large to fit in a normal sized locker. As there were no cockpit lockers this included any spare warps, sheets, home-made oars for the tender, a boat hook and numerous other items of junk. The engine was a single cylinder Yanmar of 8HP and matched its surroundings perfectly. There were no batteries and wires were everywhere. The chart table was huge, surrounded by a gaggle of instruments that were so corroded that none of the switches could be moved. I feel the need to stop my deluge at this point, as I am sure you have got the message. So with my hopes and anticipations securely folded up, put into a little box and stuffed right back where they came from, we said thanks to the manager of the marina and took ourselves off on a stroll around the pontoons to appreciate what a well kept boat should look like. As we mounted the steps to leave, my guru friend turned and cast his eye over the marina. Then in a quiet, but authoritative, manner he spoke these fateful words, "Still, it's the best sailing boat in the marina." I still remember with clarity the feeling of being Daniel about to enter the lion's den. Soon we were back, with a battery, a surveyor and the owner's permission to have her lifted out and prodded. We brought the battery along to see what, if anything, worked. The lights were a failure at all points. Then came the engine. We hoped that it might just turn over and was not as seized as the other supposed moving parts of the boat, but our hopes were not high as she had stood unused for two years. So imagine the delight and surprise when not only did the engine turn over but fired up and ran on the first attempt. My respect for Yanmar diesels went through the roof. We motored over to the lifting berth where the marina manager was waiting for us. Now it was the surveyor's turn. He wandered about, pushed here, prodded there, scrapped bits away, nodded his head at what seemed imaginary conversations and appeared delighted whenever he burst a blister that smelt of acetone. Anyone with a GRP boat will know these ominous smells of osmosis. After a thorough inspection of her nether regions we put her back in and motored back to the pontoon. The surveyor then spent approximately two hours going over her with a tooth comb so fine that a fairy could use it. I feel I have to give you the boat's name at this point, *Camberwell Beauty*. The reason I am telling you this is because the surveyor's official report states, "She is no longer the beauty that she claims to be." However, on the day his parting remark was, "She's not that bad." A week later with a full four-page surveyor's report in my hands it was decision time. This monster with built-in chamber of horrors; was it possible it could just be an ugly duckling waiting to be turned into a swan? I decided it was worth a shot. I know it was the first boat I looked at, but I thought for the right price I would have enough left over to pay for the refit. After a few weeks negotiation I managed to get to what I felt was an acceptable level and confirmed my offer of approximately two thirds of the asking price. A little while later, with the paperwork

completed, I turned up to take ownership of my yacht and sailed her with my friend and guru back to my base at Aberdyfi. Now the work started. My friend offered me his cradle until the end of the season. So it was not long before she was sitting on the side, adding to the tourist attractions of the village. I then found a hull stripper based in London who agreed to come and strip the hull back to the GRP. All this time the Harbour Master was putting me under pressure to get moving on the boat. Eventually after several non-appearances by my stripper, I got hold of a local grit-blasting firm (with no experience of stripping boats at all). They do an excellent job in difficult circumstances, being hassled by the Harbour Master every five minutes. A catch-22 situation: he wants me to get on with the boat, but doesn't want the noise and mess that goes with it, so it takes two days with great diplomacy to get the job done. In the meantime I have been phoning around to find the best set-up for re-epoxying the hull. The consideration here is that I am doing it myself and it has to be easy to do outside, so temperature plays a bit part. I eventually end up chatting to the Technical Director at Blakes Paints. He is the embodiment of Mr. Helpful and spends ages on the phone explaining every aspect of the process in great detail, as well as posting me wedges of information. However, Blakes do not supply from the factory and my nearest supplier is Pwllheli marina - a 3-hour drive away. I was pleased to find the same response from this man, a genuine interest in my project, as I had from Blakes themselves and within days my completed order had arrived. In the meantime my brother had constructed a cradle for me and I had the boat transferred to its new cradle and down the road to the boat yard, due to more pressure from the Harbour Master, who had single-handedly succeeded in ruining most of my summer. In its new home I got to work on the boat straight away, a layer of resin followed by plastering with epoxy resin ready for fairing. Then winter temperatures were upon us, too cold for the application of resins, so I turned my attention to the inside. I stripped everything out of her and spend many days and evenings rubbing down paintwork, re-covering cabin roof panels, locating gas cookers, building bulkheads and cupboards, as well as emptying about four industrial-strength bin-bags of rust-infested junk out of her various nooks and crannies. As we pulled slowly out of what was a relatively mild winter and dribbled towards spring, the temperatures crept up enough for me to steal a week off and set to work on the outside again. A friend and supporter lent me an orbital sander, an incredible piece of kit that did an excellent job of fairing the hull. I was then able to get on three more coats of resin, followed by the antifoul primer. After spending a year out of the water, her hull has now been treated, she has had a new coat of paint on the inside, re-covered saloon head linings, cockpit locker created, new bulkheads, new seats, coats of varnish, rewiring and now needs just a few finishing touches before going into the water in mid-May (fingers crossed!). Her sails, on closer inspection, were not as bad as they had appeared, the pulpit was easily fixable and all in all she **has** turned out to be the ugly duckling in need of some tender loving care. Indeed, in my opinion she is fast becoming a swan, though I am somewhat biased. Thanks to those who have helped and supported me through this project - and not least to the guru whose words echo through me every time I set foot on my yacht. Dave Newall

### *Communicating with the Newsletter*

Your Hon. Newsletter Editor has just moved jobs and therefore has changed fax number and email address. New fax number: 0171 654 1900 New email address:

n.millward@niesr.ac.uk Contributions to the Newsletter are always welcomed, may be edited, and are especially encouraged in any electronic format.

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