

**Lymington River Scow Class Association**

**Tell Tales**

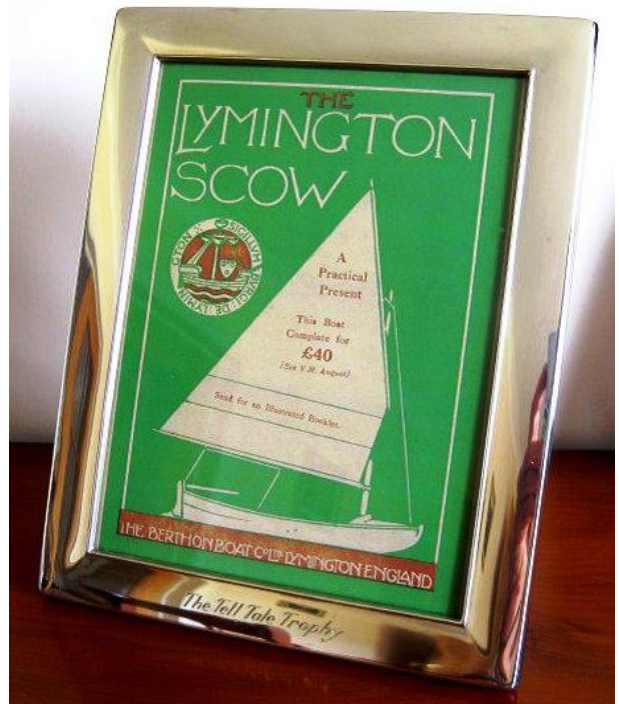
# Lymington River Scow Class Association

## Tell Tales

Lymington River Scow Class Association 'Tell Tales' are creative writing or artwork contributions, by members, to the association's newsletter.

They are compiled in this booklet (41 Tell Tales by 33 members).

The association awards its Tell Tale Trophy annually at its AGM for the best Tell Tale in the year. The trophy is a silver-framed original advertisement by the Berthon Boat Co Ltd for a Lymington Scow, from a 1921 edition of The Yachting Monthly, with the description: 'A Practical Present, This Boat Complete for £40'.



Compiled by Gordon Stredwick  
Honorary President  
Lymington River Scow Class Association

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of the association's foundation 30 August 1997



**The Lymington River Scow Class Association**

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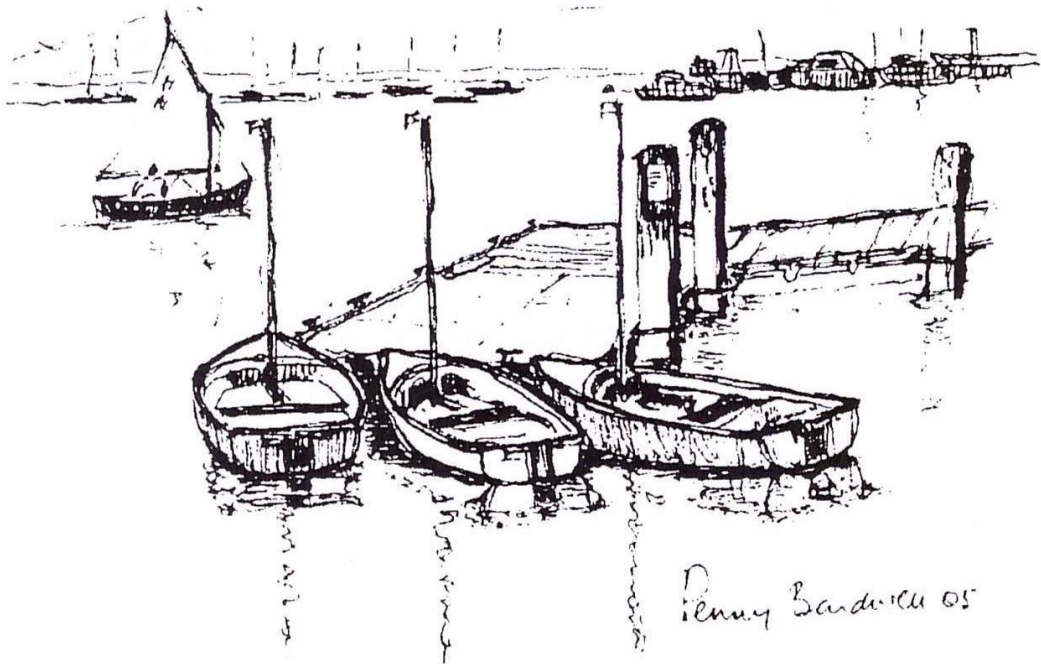
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2005, Penny Bardwell, *Piccinin*, 367

Scows at Keyhaven



**2006, David Howden, *Bocca Lupo*, 335**

### **Up the Dart with Sammy**

I decided to launch the scow at Dittisham and drift upstream with the tide to see how far it would take me. Equipped with my trusty bottle of water and chocolate bar I ventured forth into the tidal stream.

Admiring the delightful wooded shoreline and pretty cottages I began to have the feeling that I was not alone! You know the instinct that tells you that you are being watched. Glancing round I caught a glimpse of a dark head emerging from the glistening water. Sammy was following me. Perhaps Sammy the seal had caught a whiff of my chocolate bar. We enjoyed each other's company all afternoon until off Stoke Gabriel I beached my little boat ashore under some overhanging oak trees in order to partake of a naughty cream tea at the local café.

Sammy was obviously not amused and did not wait for me. I sailed home feeling strangely alone.



## **2006, Marigold Salmon, *Speedwell*, 428**

### **A Scow in Suffolk**

Sad to leave the south in 1994 when we moved to Bury St. Edmunds, but determined to sail Peppermint on the east coast, we borrowed a trailer to tow her up to Suffolk. Unfortunately the trailer was not up to the job and it collapsed about 20 miles from home leaving us with a hefty bill to pay to the garage which rescued us.

The first club I joined was at Waldringfield on the River Deben, just above the lovely Maybush Inn where one can relax in the garden and watch the boats on the river. The dinghy park was overgrown, to say the least, and I had to come armed with shears and secateurs each time I came to sail. The Club was mainly for racing Wayfarers and a few Cadets, so when I raced on a particularly windy day, I started with the Cadets. However, the strong tide held me back and eventually led to a polite request for me to retire so that the next race could start! On one occasion I actually saw a Keyhaven scow on the river beyond Woodbridge - so I raced up to it to see who it was. The helmsman had been on holiday here, had seen the scow and, liking it so much, had bought one to sail on the Deben.

After a few years of sailing up to Woodbridge or down to the Ramsholt Arms (another pleasant pub) and once to Felixstowe Ferry where the tide runs out in a torrent, I was asked to move my boat to the car park at the top of a hill as they needed my space for a Wayfarer. As it was impossible to pull Peppermint up the hill each time I came in, I had to resign and join the Orwell Yacht Club on the River Orwell.

I asked two non-sailing friends to come with me to move the boat from Waldringfield to Ipswich and bought a new trailer to do so. However, as we crossed the Orwell Bridge and fortunately before we had picked up the boat, I noticed one of the trailer wheels bowling along in front of the car. I stopped immediately and ran after it, as I knew that if it went over the top of the bridge it would go on bowling for miles. As I raced towards the disappearing wheel a passing lorry driver saw my dilemma and gently knocked it over so that it stopped. I was so grateful to him that I put out a message on Radio Suffolk that evening to thank him! I later discovered that the trailer suppliers had only tightened the nuts on the wheels 'hand tight'. A police car also stopped and diverted the busy A14 traffic so that we were able to restore the wheel to its right place.

Sailing on the Orwell was pleasant but uneventful. I sailed down the river to Levington in about 2 hours and back again in about 30 minutes, but it was not very exciting. Meanwhile, in 1994 I had put my name down for a place in KYC dinghy park and it came up in 2003, so thankfully returned Peppermint to Keyhaven where, although it meant only sailing for one or two weeks a year, she stayed until we were able to rejoin her in February 2006. I now have a LR scow, *Speedwell*, and Peppermint has joined HCSC in her retirement.

**2006, Mervyn Cook, *Nutshell*, 424**

### **A Lymington River Scow in Chichester Harbour**

My Scow 'Nutshell' and I live on Hayling Island. Our home waters are, of course, Chichester Harbour, an 11 square mile natural harbour, with 17 miles of marked channels, and, coincidentally, 17 sailing clubs. Sailing can be gloriously peaceful, pottering in and out of sheltered creeks, or exciting, in the confluence of the two main channels during a spring flood. As in the Solent, tides can be friend or powerful foe, and it is always wise to be aware of the state of the tide. But wherever you sail in the harbour, the foot of the South Downs forms a beautiful backdrop.

Public slipways are, unfortunately, scarce. The closest for the visitor from the west is by the Ship Inn, by the north end of Langstone Bridge. There is a public car park, but the slip is only useable for an hour or so either side of high tide, and the channel into the northern waters of the Harbour is tortuous, even at high tide. Other slips at Bosham and Dell Quay provide easier access to the sheltered waters of Bosham Channel and Itchenor Reach. Scows are sailed at several clubs, including Mengham Rythe Sailing Club, Emsworth Sailing Club, West Wittering Sailing Club, and Bosham Sailing Club.

Nutshell and I sail at Mengham Rythe Sailing Club, where there is an embryo fleet of Scows. MRSC is a friendly, self-help club, with a nice new clubhouse, located at the top of Mengham Rythe Creek, in the western side of the Harbour. As yet, the Scows tend to potter rather than race, but a Scow is, of course, ideally suited to either! There is a Wednesday Potter Group which cruises 'in company', patrolled by rescue boat. Destinations include East Head for a beach picnic, or a longer sail to the Ship Inn, for a pub lunch. A voyage north to Emsworth Sailing Club, another Scow club, is also possible, if wind and tide serve.

Temporary membership of MRSC is available, and any of you planning to visit Chichester Harbour may be best advised to make contact with the club in advance. As with all waters, local knowledge can be invaluable, and sailing in company is often more fun.

**2007, Karen Brett & Peter Mills, *Storm Kitten*, 377**

### **A Scow in the Golfe du Morbihan**

Just after Christmas 2005 we received, in the post, an invitation to take part in 'Semaine du Golfe 2005'. It promised to be good sailing in convivial company and a celebration of Breton culture, food, drink, music and dance; all in the beautiful Golfe du Morbihan. On a grey January day we didn't need much persuading so we immediately entered 'Storm Kitten' in class 2, sail and oar.

Over the next few months we were kept well informed of the planning of the event including that there would be 7 classes of boat ranging from large traditional vessels down to small sail and oar craft like us. In total there were over 700 entrants and about 300 in our class. Each class had a different town for its home port and for 3 days we all criss-crossed the Golfe stopping at a different port each day for lunch and for the night. Those of us with no accommodation on-board took over the municipal camp site at Vannes from where we were bused to and from and where we were provided with a good French breakfast every morning. All this for less than £40 for both of us. Excellent safety cover was provided by the French CRS (Riot Police), who looked terrifying but were kind and very attentive.

The sailing was great fun with tidal challenges. It was organised as cruises but with little informal races added in for interest. There were prizes but we never managed to work out how they were awarded, suffice it to say that we won one for being small and English!

The stop-overs were historic, with each town trying to out-do its neighbours to provide the best food, drink and entertainment, I got to the stage where I couldn't look at another oyster. As sailors we were well looked after and there was an amount of complimentary food and drink provided.

Most memorable was the final day and the 'Grand Parade'. Each fleet came from the port where it had spent the previous night to the entrance where the Golfe meets the Atlantic. The bigger boats went outside and around a buoy. (This was too dangerous for us so we went to Port Navalo, just inside the entrance, for lunch.) All of the boats came back into the Golfe together and as they passed by we joined in. 700 boats all sailing together to Vannes, what a spectacle, even if it was a bit scary at times. Hundreds of people came out to watch either on the shore or in spectator craft. Would we go again, of course we will.

The next 'Semaine du Golfe' takes place from 14 to 20 May this year, we are already signed up we hope that some of you will join us.

**2007, Chris Willard, *Flying Turtle*, 321**

### **Scrambled Eggs and Crêpes à la Plage**

I find that my LR Scow, Flying Turtle, is a most versatile little character for the Solent. Together we manage to enjoy early morning bird watching trips, racing, cruising, cargo and passenger ferrying, beach hut expeditions and dog exercising.

This was only my second season but with relations living on the Isle of Wight, a wife with a beach hut at Hordle Cliff and a Springer Spaniel, I am finding that Turtle can turn her gaffe and tiller to them all.

As I live at Keyhaven, I can leave my house on foot and be in Yarmouth within 45 minutes by scow, while transporting a niece and a friend. A favourable shipping forecast and tide check is advisable. but with the usual South West wind it is a delightful reach across the Solent to keep in touch with family on the Isle. The need to maintain an objective passage plan was overlooked on one occasion in early October, when the sun came out after several days of rain and wind and my son on the Island had a free cargo of fresh eggs surplus to the needs of his holiday business. The challenge of collecting them from Yarmouth by scow on this sunny and breezy morning proved irresistible despite a rising wind forecast for later! I arranged to meet him at midday.

By 11 30am the wind was up to force 5 and rising and I was in mid Solent with the chop already swabbing my cockpit. I decided that digression was the better part of valour and abandoned the crossing. At midday my mobile was ringing but I had not got a free hand to answer it as I played the sail against a gusty wind to keep Turtle on an even keel.

Meanwhile my son had spotted my retreat, in the telescope of the Royal Solent Yacht Club while drinking his coffee. I continued my dead beat into the North Westerly and the ebbing tide up the Keyhaven River. This was ideal for practicing my tacking skills, I thought. But I thought too soon, as moments later, weaving between two moored yachts, a hefty gust followed by my compensating wind spillage, resulted in a near miss of the cruiser and the lassoing of a foredeck cleat by my port shroud. This produced a 40deg angle in the mast diminishing the elegance of my craft and the height of the sail to a foot above the water! I managed to sail for a further 10 minutes before further descent made rowing home the only sensible option. Having tucked the boom and sail away and lifted rudder and centre plate I was amazed at how well she rowed into a strong tide and wind.

So the free eggs became the scrambled eggs, or a euphemism for costly mast repairs!

When my wife suggested a swim followed by crêpes made on the crêpe maker from Brittany at her Hordle Cliff beach hut, I thought that it lacks only the sailing component.

A glance at the tide tables and the weather confirmed the perfect situation for sailing round from Keyhaven to meet her at the hut. It proved to be a perfect 4 mile sail and

took 1¾ hours. The tack along Hurst Spit at the edge of Christchurch Bay was exhilarating and the scow was easily beached in front of the hut with aid of a French 4ft inflatable boat roller (designed to carry 400Kg as against the scow 110Kg). By lifting/pushing the boat over the roller and repeating this, one was able, single handedly but faster with the aid of any offering spectator, to move the scow to the top of the beach.

The August warm water provided a perfect swim which created the appetite for the hot cheese galette and citron presse crepe. Feeling fit and replete, one was ready for the easy gravitational relaunch 2 hours later, to catch the flood tide and the SW force 3 which landed us back at the quay in an hour. Having repeated this several times in Spring and Neap tides, the experience of rounding Hurst Castle in a scow in a Spring ebb tide was reminiscent of sailing round Portland Bill in my previous boat, a Westerly Konsort.

Exercising Chloe, the Springer, has been another string to Turtle's bow. Following a run to the quay she comes aboard and makes a perfect crew, looking happy, relaxed, never arguing with the skipper and putting her weight where she is put. We sail to the castle, complete the run, check the birds and return. If the wind is dying, and there are good smells ashore, she may offer to lighten my load and increase my speed, by jumping over board and swimming ashore.

We have heard of personal water craft, alias jet skis, but for me there is no substitute for a personal sailing craft, alias LR Scow.

### The Milford Mariner

Is it a dinghy, a boat, a yacht or a ship?  
No it's different, it's unique and rather hip  
Now making an entrance and taking a bow  
***Let's hear it now for the incredible Scow***

A pig of a ship with a mind of its own  
The set up is wrong and the rigging's on loan  
A boom that's too low and sheets all a tangle  
And a sail that's surely been through the mangle

***Let's hear it now for the incredible Scow***  
Who owns this 'cloth boat' I hear you say  
'Tis the Milford mariner of Keyhaven bay  
New to the Yacht Club and last in the races  
He regularly puts the Scow through her paces  
***Let's hear it now for the incredible Scow***

Down through the harbour and up the creek  
Stuck in the mud, could be there for a week  
But up goes the shout 'The Scow is in trouble'  
And the rescue boat's there (again) at the double  
***Let's hear it now for the incredible Scow***

When the tide is high it's time to make sail  
But out too long and you'll have to hail  
The rescue boat again! With the current strong  
And nature calling, please **help**, can't wait long  
***Let's hear it now for the incredible Scow***

When you take on a crew be sure they are wise  
To the ways of the sea and to tacking and gybes  
The centre board's up, the centreboard's down  
A simple procedure, but not for a clown  
***Let's hear it now for the incredible Scow***

So, is it the Scow or is it the Master  
Who is continually courting all this disaster?  
Standing proud, Milford Mariner himself  
Dreams of Ben Ainslie and a cup on the shelf  
***Let's hear it now for the incredible Scow***

But what is the target and what is the bait  
Is it Chinese gold in two thousand and eight?  
Just a dream, a flight of fancy and ship ahoy?  
Not if you get an outboard motor old boy!  
***Let's hear it now for the incredible Scow***

### Two into One Won't Go

I am very lucky. I own two much-loved Scows, 'Blue Angel' and 'Black Magic', and what to do about owning two Scows is as plain as...well... a figurehead.

Come laying-up season, any sailor can see that two Scows is one too many; certainly one should go. Good thinking...give that sailor a drink and a pat on the back. One Scow should go....but which? Like a bowsprit, the point is obvious: the Scow that should go is the Scow without a berth. Drinks all round, and pat everyone hard on the back. Scow sailors sharpened by lightning race starts, split-second timing at the marks, and nano moment slam-dunks are decisive. No call for two-minded shilly-shallying then. Problem solved.

So it's *definitely* not 'Blue Angel' that's one too many - my Scow with the magic and indivisible number 373, with its summery, sky-blue hull, and its sunny sails, and its promise of zephyr winds, - because it has a comfortable space in the Lymington Dinghy Park. True there is a conspicuous lack of zephyr winds, and a lot of all or nothing, but a breezy promise can be made good by and by. No, it should be that piratical Scow 'Black Magic', with the sinister number 393, the black threatening hull, the ghostly white sails, and the flaunting red trims, that drifts between Keyhaven's boatyard and dinghy park according to season, and is homeless in October and April, that should get posted 'For Sale'. Oh yes 'Black Magic' has it coming. Keyhaven is too shipshape for such a roving character.

But just a moment...what about those mazy meanders in the Keyhaven marshes, where David Pawley or Eileen Holloway devise intricate Creek Crawls, lengthy voyages within Hurst Spit, explorations even, where at any time an unexplored creek may prove navigable, or another lake be discovered? Who would want to miss these heroic adventures? Stivers Spreader - there's a name to conjure with! And what about the mysteries of orienteering by land and sea, on foot and thwart armed with a punch? Are castaway BBQs, and picnics near Crusoe's Cottage, to be abjured, or the beaching of boats in far-off harbours, such as Camber Lake, foregone? Is the gauntlet no longer to be run through Hawker's, the 'Martello' style tower to become a distant silhouette, the lighthouse a distant white finger? And should the trigger-happy wildfowling Colonel Hawker, the noble garrison of Hurst, or the green-fingered lighthouse men fade into the mist? What of the seal by the bridge, the birds, the KYC veranda chats. Where else can you chase the tales of smugglers invaders, cabbages and kings? No, no. 'Black Magic, is needed, and that's final...'Black Magic' stays OK?

Aha, so that's easy then: 'Blue Angel' must go. Hold on. Who said that? You can't mean it! What!... no Thursday Potters with Dick Thorn bringing glucose to the becalmed or half-drowned, no muddy challenges in the Figure of 8 Race, no skittering over shallows in Oxey and Pylewell, no untangling of Vince's peas an' sausages, no hooting from ferries that appear from nowhere, like clockwork toys come suddenly to life. Where will be the voyages to Yarmouth or Newtown? What! - no more hope of getting to the head of Beaulieu river once again, and finding a wonderful welcome there at the waterside? No chance of bouncing across the

Beaulieu bar to reach Gin's Farm, with dinner to follow at the Royal Southampton yacht club there? Are there to be no close-quarter starts to Monday night races on the Lymington River, no slip-slidey muddy launchings at low tide, no reviving drinks in the R. Lym. Yacht Club bar, no Thursday sandwiches on the balcony, no 'going to sea' on the Solent, no sightings of ghostly smugglers at the Brandy Hole in Pitts Deep. What if there's no water at Keyhaven, or worse, the tide dictates a dawn launching? Lymington has wonderful surprises: a snake that swims gracefully past the stern when you try the stern to unship the rudder at the slipway, and a dolphin that plays catch-up inside the racing platform, joining the racing scows so merrily and with such powerful leaps and pirouettes and acrobatics that it nearly comes aboard and turns crew. Yes that settles it... Keyhaven hasn't got a dolphin... well it would settle it, if Lymington had got a lighthouse. I used to think I was decisive, but now I'm not sure.

Hey, wait a minute, I've got it! Who says you can't have two Scows? Of *course* two Scows into one won't go; it has to be two Scows for two harbours. Who could give up any of the wonderful sails to be had in and around Lymington and Keyhaven? The more Scows the better, I say. A Sorcery of Scows would be a fine thing, or a School, a Scurry, a Rainbow, a Tempest, of Scows...whatever, so long as they come a' plenty. At last a single-minded decision to solve dilemma! And that's my last word.



### What do Scows do in the Winter?

Well, there's a nosy pokey sort of question. Why, whatever do you think they get up to? The answer is easy though; they do much the same as you and me. Which is keep warm and wait for Spring of course. What else?

Admittedly it's easier for some than others; those that can 'sit in a barn and keep themselves warm', are the pampered ones, trailed by their energetic owners to inland hideaways. They command the services of a road trailer, much as their owners might order a taxi to set off on holiday, and like them they expect good accommodation on arrival. With their masts down, and their (el)bows propped up comfortably, they no doubt exchange farm lore and animal magic in the dry. But these are the lucky ones. Even luckier are the ones that are taken home for the holidays by their owners, who get a tidy garage all to themselves, where they can escape the gossip and hibernate properly. The rest tough it out in various outdoor locations in Lymington and Keyhaven.

Perhaps the more fortunate of these are the RLymYC Balance Pond berth holders; those with their bows facing east to the Lymington river, benefit from the protection of the bank that rises sharply to the riverside walkway, and from the rise of the slipway to the north. They are less liable to the insidious creep of rainwater down the mast or stays than their parallel, west-facing friends, on the other side of the boat park. But all these have a handsome tarmac-surfaced space to themselves, handy to the slipway, which is better than the cosy, but crowded, quarters of those that brave the briars, nettles and weeds in the main dinghy park, way down beyond the Mayflower Inn. These are mostly beyond the reach of the chill-defying, weed-eroding, briar-slashing volunteer team, who yearly smarten up the Balance Pond. Bravest and hardiest of all the Scows are those that remain drawn up below the Yacht Club on the pontoon, ready for any intrepid out of season sailing that may be devised for them.

And perhaps the most fortunate of the Scows at Keyhaven are those parked right alongside the Hurst Castle Yacht Club, tidily placed on well-cut lawn which sets off their figures to perfection, where they can be tended lovingly all through the winter by their owners, and the less happily placed are those in the Keyhaven Yacht Club dinghy park, which is liable to flooding, and has a supply of field mice that will creep under the best-fitting covers, and eat holes in the sails. Scows in the West Solent Boatyard, with gravel under their feet, and the aristocratic company of handsome large yachts, are fortunate enough, but must have the gypsy in their soul; the aristocrats need all the space they can get in October, when they are dun roamin', and wilt not happily let Scows back into the boatyard until after the season has begun in April, unless their owners can bankroll them into the aristocracy. True, they can huddle together near the old coastguard cottages and observe the comings and goings at The Gun, but they do need the gregarious tendency.

But, you will object, the question was not WHERE the Scows might be in the winter, but what they DO when they are wherever. Well, as I say, they do like you and me; they shiver and survive, grumble and gossip, and above all tell stories. Go down to

any of the dinghy parks on a windy night in the dark, and you can bet your life you will hear the shrouds twanging out tales of derring-do, to match the most outrageous tales of old salts tucked up on land with a glass of brandy by a flaring fire. There are tales of misfortune: hulls staved in, travellers parted, gear lost overboard, combings cracked, wayward centreboards that will not stay down, or, if they do, will not come up, ropes jammed and the like; there are triumphant boasts of rivals bested, races won against all odds, mud larked around and over, storms outlived, and complicated courses followed to a 'Vince'-victory; and there are weird and wonderful stories of the old days, - and these last are far and away the best.

It only takes one Scow to begin the 'it was a dark and stormy night' routine, and they are away with the tales of salterns and windmills, and boiling houses and smugglers. One is sure to recite, 'The Smugglers Song', with an accusing nod towards the Milford Pleasure Gardens, and another to add some bawdy songs, beloved of the Keyhaven long-departed garrison. Every wreck and drowning will be reviewed. And then the grumbles about the ferries, and the buoyancy tests, and the ignorance of helmsmen, and the vagaries of tackle, will be followed by gossip.

Until you have eavesdropped on Scow chit-chat, or heard Scows crack their sides laughing, you have much to learn about gossips. How do they hear about the Scow walks of their owners and their dogs, and come to tell tales of how they get beset by gales or mud, have their boots pulled off their legs in bogs, their hair-dos wrecked, their gloves lost, and find their favourite dish scored out when they reach the pub? Do they credit them with keeping fit for the upcoming sailing season, on the wintry land? No way! 'Stick to the sea' they chortle to each other, forgetting last year's ignominious moments in the mud on the Oxey-Pylewell races, and other groundings, and foggy becalming on voyages to Beaulieu and the like, and unmentionable towing in the sunsets.

Presently, they and their well-walked and super-fit owners will get back together to face the buoyancy test, and all will be well; winter has been a breeze, and summer will be halcyon.

### Scow! Here's Mud in Your Eye!

From the Keyhaven Yacht Club lawn you can watch the ripples and colours on the water, on a sunny day, without anyone lifting their glass and wishing you 'Mud in your eye'. No, if the family is visiting, mud is the last thing on your mind, and a pleasant sail on that shining water with, say, a daughter or grandchild, the very first. 'Now for the Scow', brings a round of applause, - which you don't deserve.

Although the water is still well up, the tide turned a while back, when you first intended to push the boat out. 'Mud in your eye, and goodbye', is what you should have said to the members of the party who arrived late. Because, now, out of the corner of your eye, you can see a dark, tell-tale margin around the edge of the water that suggests that time and tide are *not* going to wait for you. But, what with the renewed chat and the cheers, you ignore the mud under that sunny water.

Yes! Under that water there's glorious mud. There's mud mixed with gravel, and bordering banks of sticky, solid mud, well bound together with tussocks of grass; these will give purchase to an oar or paddle, when you shove off. But then again, there's the mud with 'no bottom' that will gobble up a paddle and an oar, and might be the undoing of a warthog. There's a plateau of this mud between your homecoming Scow, and the Club; you should turn sharply to port out of Hawkers to avoid it, and to join the main channel, when time and tide won't wait for you.

No applause merited, then, for timing; as for your invitation, how many can you fit into your Scow? Well, I hear that a Scow under full sail was seen, four up with a baby on top. Be that as it may, I was lucky to be let off. The beloved twins were press ganged by their wicked uncle of buccaneer fame, into his Wayfarer, and my daughter and I followed in *Black Magic*, sailing downtide to Camber Lake. So blue the sky above, and so filled with meringues of cloud, but from below the odd warning sound of gravel under the centreboard. The red sail showed ahead as we followed it back up Hawkers; we saw the boat reach the foreshore, but where exactly had it turned to rejoin the main channel? As the smiling Club enticed us closer, and as I was indulging a pleasant fantasy that cream teas were being served on the lawn, we stuck fast.

My stout, new paddle was to hand, and we shoved off hard from the moored boat beside us, but below us the water now looked like cling film being rapidly pulled over light beige icing. Under that glaze-coffee topping, the oars stuck in rich, black, chocolate cake. There was so much of it that I won't want 'le feeve o'clock' for a long time, and, please, don't even mention cream teas.

By now, the evasive channel was showing clearly a few yards downstream. And that was where we weren't going. No way! I was reminded that a twin once refused to paint landscape at Keyhaven. 'Only cartoons' she said firmly, and drew a soporific man, arms behind his head, in a boat on the strand, with the caption, 'Little does he know he'll be here all night!' Well, my estimate was two or three hours to come unstuck. I can't say I was much bothered. What's three hours, on a sunny afternoon?

Why, you could spend three hours wondering why 'mud in your eye' meant health and prosperity.

Ah, but we had been spotted, and Andy appeared, and heroically set out across the main Channel towards us, while David Walters stood by in his boat. We clambered out of Black Magic onto the moored boat beside us, and then back into the Scow again, after it had been dragged to nearby water. From there, pushing a horizontal oar through the mud ahead of him, Andy waded waist deep with the painter to David waiting in the main channel, an exhausting but effective manoeuvre. Saved!...but covered with the mud of health and prosperity, as if taking a famous Keyhaven cure, much to the amazement of a returning ferry. Andy had earned an ovation, but I had not expected to get a round of applause, as we struggled ashore. Yet it came! The beloved twins were thrilled to see such unlooked for drama, so much black mud everywhere..., and leapt to the hoses to sluice down their mother, myself, the sails, the oars, the ropes, the entire inside and outside of the boat. It made their day! And mine!

But hang on a minute! Why has health and prosperity gone along with 'mud in your eye'? Well, can you spare three hours? No? Well then, it probably refers to the healing by Christ of a blind man, when mud was used to restore sight. John, the evangelist tells of it, in chapter nine of his gospel. And that's enough said about mud right now.

Some days later, I met an acquaintance.' Saw you sailing the other day', he said. Really? Was this to be a compliment for Black Magic, or for my seamanship? 'Well not sailing exactly', he grinned, 'stuck in the mud'. OK! OK! Have a good laugh. But don't forget to buy a drink for the heroes who might dig you out of it. You never can tell what may happen in a Scow. Here's mud in your eye!

**2009, Karen Brett & Peter Mills, Storm Kitten, 377**

**A Season in the Life of a Scow**

This is my story of my life as a Scow. I live in the Royal Lymington Yacht Club Dinghy Park, not a bad venue for Lymington \* certainly 'South of the High Street' and with riverside views and glimpses of the IOW. I understand many people would offer good money for such a location. Of course like anywhere these days you get a few undesirables down here in the evenings, the local youths swigging their cider and using the adjacent car park for roller blades, skate boards and car tuning events.

My season normally begins at Easter or late April when I am rolled out of my winter quarters to be pressure washed, my wood oiled and my bottom polished (nice!) after months in hibernation. After that it's on to the road trailer for a short bumpy (when will the Council fix those potholes) ride down to my makers for a buoyancy test, where someone pumps up my tanks with air and the potential exists for everyone to run around tut-tut ting and remarking on how they've never seen air leaking from there before. With my tank lids done up extra tight and with an often unreadable squiggle on the certificate it's down the club to take up residence under a once-waterproof blue cover.

By the end of April, the majority of old friends reappear from their winter quarters and we might even have some new to talk to. No one has an allocated parking slot so it's first come first served and we may not be next to Mrs X of last year and we have to shout above the tinkling of the rigging and howling winds to continue last year's conversation!

My friends, the other scows and the bigger dinghies that I can see in other sections of our residence appear to have regular exercise on a Monday night and the occasional Tuesdays and Wednesdays, but I understand that my owners work away from Lymington and cannot get home in time to get me to the start line in time, so here I remain, staring out from under my leaky blue cover.

Some boats race and some don't. Me, I primarily get used for cruising through the marshes [on warm sunny days with a can or two of Pimms] and to go on a foreign treat every two years. I call "foreign", a treat but 300 miles behind a car for only a few days of sailing does seem a bit of a long way to go when the local slipway is only 100 yards from my normal berth. In 2007 this trip was mostly IN THE RAIN! Have my owners forgotten that Scows are for summer, not to be sailed in dry-suits and thermals? That said, on the two days I was able to get afloat, we had some stunning sails in warm temperatures and being one of the smallest boats in a grand parade of 750 plus, was something different, and with the French CRS providing the rescue cover it makes the trip worthwhile. I saw it all, but one of my crew definitely had her eyes shut at key times.

After the adventure, it's back to Lymington for minor repairs and another bottom polish to take out the scratches from the lunchtime and overnight mooring / beaches and then back to my friends in the dinghy park. Just occasionally I get used for racing; and the 2007 Nationals was stunning fun at times. I did not know that I could go that fast! The photo of me planing towards the leeward mark is stunning,

reminiscent I'm told of my helmsman's time as a National Solo sailor except that in a Solo it would definitely have ended in a swim! My master decided that 'sense was the better part of valour' and came back in to the lure of the tea and cakes but he should have carried on...1 would have looked after him, honestly!

This year (2008) for the most part I've been left to talk to the stinging nettles in the compound with even less use than usual, just one trip out through the lakes with an obligatory Pimms and then a gentle spinnaker run back up the river. Hullo, it's gone dark - is this an eclipse? No it is the big ferry blocking out the sun!

So there we are. The season's gone and it will soon be time to join the road trailer again for the short ride back home for 4 months in that dusty spider-ridden place they call the snug winter quarters. I'll spend the time dreaming of clear blue skies, moderate winds and next year's foreign holiday to the Morbihan and fighting off the occasional foray of my mistress's cats when the garage door is left open. Still, it will soon be spring again. But hold on! What's that I hear? The owners have joined a Gym, to get fit for proper sailing, bought dry suits and they are going to use me at Christmas and during the winter? I think not! Hey I'm here. Can I come home please? The garage is all right, very nice; I'll put up with the spiders, and the mice and the cats; don't leave me down here, it's terribly lonely and you don't get the same class of conversation talking to a Merlin Rocket or yourself.

### Scows to Poole

Sunshine, blue seas and a steady Force 4 in the right direction. Eileen Holloway had been planning this expedition to sail in Poole Harbour for nearly a year and her arrangements for the weather as for everything else were faultless. Her difficult decision on Sunday evening to delay by a day for a better forecast proved very sound.

Eight Scows and a Topper with a baker's dozen of sailors left by road from Keyhaven on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June to the large, almost empty car park and slipway in Harbourside Park at Baiter. There was no difficulty rigging and launching the boats and padlocking trailers to cars. A reasonable fee of £9 covered parking a car and trailer and any harbours dues. Wendy Pawley set off westwards at high speed in her Topper like a Mosquito pathfinder while a Scowful of Davids (Pawley and Tong) initially seemed to be meandering eastwards. Once we were all more or less sailing in the same direction following Wendy we made a series of long tacks along the harbour, keeping between Brownsea Island and the deeper channel of the ferries. It's surprising how quickly a distant cargo vessel, seemingly moving at snail's pace, encroaches on a Scow! Poole harbour is reputedly the second largest natural harbour in the world and some of us had no difficulty believing this by the time we reached a beautiful inlet at Ame and ran up onto the beach. Fortunately it wasn't a male who selected and landed first on the sand or remarks might have been made about the influence of bikinis on the choice of landing spot. The warmth of the day was demonstrated most attractively.

After an enjoyable picnic supplemented by Eileen's walnut delights, it was an easy run eastwards to the south of Brownsea Island and then a broad reach round the end of the Island and back to the slipway. With the wind still keeping steady there was no danger of being drawn by the tide past Sandbanks and the seaward return route to Keyhaven. We'd covered about 6  $\frac{3}{4}$  nautical miles as a RIB would travel, somewhat more under sail but so much more satisfying!

This was the first time I'd trailed my Scow any distance and the first time to sail her away from Keyhaven, Lymington and the Solent. Others have been more adventurous but we all enjoyed the variety and I felt my Scow expertise, such as it is, boosted by the change. Poole has an advantage of space within enclosed waters compared to Keyhaven though not the charm, and there are several more estuaries within an hour or so's drive that might warrant an occasional visit for Scows to add variety to our sailing. Whither next? Perhaps we should make such an expedition each summer and attract others from the Association to join in.

**Was it all Worth it?**

"What?" I hear you ask, "is she talking about?"

I will now tell you. I mean all the hard work that goes into a successful long potter.

Initially it is with those who have decided the programme; tides might suggest a voyage to Newtown or to Hurst (that is starting from Lymington).

Next it is the work of the designated officer for the day.

I now propose to tell you of the RLym Scow Division potter to Newtown.

I was asked if I would lead this. My first recourse was to the tide tables and to the tidal atlas, because I needed to know when the tide was going to turn. My next was to find rib drivers and crews. For this voyage I thought that I would need two ribs with at least one where one of the crew could take over sailing a scow if this proved to be necessary. I also listened to the weather forecast very carefully.

When I have been Officer of the Day I have developed the habit of having a briefing on the forecourt before we leave because this means that everyone knows what the plan is and what, if any, are the constraints on the day. I determined that I would do this but also sent an E mail out to the division members outlining the plans for the day.

This stated that we needed to be away on time and that the briefing would be at 10.00 and the boats would be ready on the slipway but no sails up. We needed a quick get away because of the tide. I wanted to leave Newtown and get across back to the mainland. The plan would be to sail out of the river and turn East to meet at Pylewell buoy where the final decision would be made whether to go across or stay on the mainland side.

Well so much for the plan, now for the sail. The weather was fine and the wind a not too strong westerly, and there were about eight boats, some of which had not ventured across the Solent before. There was some anxiety and one was not coming across, a decision made for personal reasons. We all met at Pylewell and I made the decision to go. The one returned as planned and one other returned to Lymington.

The rest sailed in good order to Newtown and landed on the beach to the west of the entrance and immediately the sandwiches etc were consumed, and even this activity could not hide the feeling of achievement, of having arrived! While we were eating, another scow sail was spotted coming in our direction. Who was this we wondered? It was Chris Willard, some said, and lo and behold it was! He was effusively greeted and congratulated on sailing all the way from Keyhaven. He explained that their potter to Yarmouth had been cancelled owing to the forecast, so, knowing about our plans he had decided to join us. What a pleasant surprise, though our time together was limited since I then chivvied everyone to reef their boats and to get ready to sail back.



The tide had not turned on the island side and it was a close fetch to go straight across. This was safely accomplished (with only one boat needing a rest for a little while). They were nearly all the way over and merely needed a tow into smoother water. The voyage was then completed by sailing through Pylewell Lake in smoother water, so we all returned in good order to Lymington slipway.

The yacht club was kept informed of the number of boats out and how many returned and when we left Newtown and then when we arrived in Lymington. This was done by phone because the boatmen are not always within hearing of the radio.

Chris Willard sent me an E mail saying he had safely arrived back in Keyhaven and thanking me for making him reef. The wind had increased!!

So!! Was it worth it??

I say yes, Yes! Yes! Their faces told me all I needed to know. They had enjoyed the day and had such a sense of achievement. Where can we go next, was the cry!!

That is not for me to decide, but I would be willing to run another voyage!!!

## 2009, Stephen Boyd, *Spindrift*, 339

### Father, Stephen Boyd, and Son, Harry, in Scow SPINDRIFT 2008/9

I think it was as a result of doing Youth Week at the R.L.Y.C. with my son Harry that the decision was taken for him to sail our boat on an ongoing basis and for me to crew.

We purchased 'Spindrift' a couple of weeks before RLymYC Week last year. She came all the way from Milford where she had previously been owned by Norman Woodwell. Pure chance really as I had wished to buy a Scow and had already asked John Claridge where a second-hand one could be purchased. He said I would be very lucky to find one, but if I did I should have the chequebook ready. Jenny Wilson also had a hand in the purchase of the boat as she forwarded an e-mail notifying the Scow Class of the impending sale.

'Spindrift' was rigged in the drive of our house to check all was well and, while the years had been kind to her, it was clear that a little updating would be required. A jib and the associated kit were purchased, along with a new mast tube and rigging.

Enough of the preamble; we managed 3<sup>rd</sup> in Lymington Week, we won the Double Handed Nationals and Harry won the Solent Class at Youth Week with me crewing.

When we heard the forecast on the Friday before the Nationals this year we were very apprehensive: would the racing be run, would the boat hold together and would we last for two days?

Saturday dawned fine and breezy and, in the dinghy park all the talk was that this should be our weather. However, because of the weather preceding the event neither Harry nor I had sailed very much. It was an interesting sail down the river to the start, as we both struggled to reacquaint ourselves with the workings of the boat.

Having won last year on 3 port tack starts, it was something of a surprise to discover that a similar start was required. In fact we started all three races on port and only had to duck one boat. The conditions were very testing with Harry requiring both hands on the helm on the reaches and runs.

### **Another triumph for Haribo** (or how the Nationals of 2008 and 2009 were won)

At some stage in my children's upbringing they were introduced to Haribo. For those of you who are not acquainted with them Haribo are children's sweets that come in a vast array of shapes and flavours but share two things in common. The first is they come in handy sized packets which supply enough sugar to make the average child 'hyper' for about four hours on a single packet. The second is that children (including my son Harry who doesn't 'do' sweets) will do anything for a bag. Thus we started last year and it would be true to say that Team Boyd, as written in the august journal that is The Lymington Times, are powered by Haribo. The harder it blows the more I have to bribe Harry but, as can be seen the results speak for themselves.

After last year's narrow victory in the Double Handed Class, I decided to quit while I was ahead and hand the stick to Harry.

### **Scow Nationals 2009**

The most difficult part of the 2009 Nationals was persuading my son Harry to continue down the Lymington River after the first big gust. Having been in the boat only infrequently since the start of the season owing to a combination of factors such as weather and homework he had not regained his "sealegs". I should explain that the reason Harry was to sail the boat is that we won the Nationals last year with me helming. That meant that I had to either defend my title and risk glory or the depths of despair. Thus I retired from helming Spindrift to let Harry progress his sailing career.

When we approached the starting area just to the west of the river mouth in the entrance of Oxey Lake, we went through our usual procedure of sailing up to the starting line and seeing which was to be the favoured tack to start on. Last year I had started all three races at Keyhaven on port tack not something you would normally do. To our surprise there appeared to be sufficient bias on the line to allow a port tack start. We discussed our tactics and decided not to show our hand until right before the start. Just before the start another boat joined us: the Hughes, sailing to windward and slightly ahead. I told Harry we could not stay in that position for long and he managed to sail the boat not only higher but faster as well to put us in the windward berth. Once clear of the starting area and on the windward leg, making sure not to over-stand the windward mark prove the next priority, which we made a mess of on the first round letting the Hughes through on the way to the gybe mark. At the mark with lots of wind, reasonable sea bravery was called for. We managed to sail inside the Hughes as they executed their gybe and have the inside line to the leeward mark. Once in front we held our nerve and retained first place on the subsequent round and to the finish. We were disappointed that the Hughes retired after the first race.

The second race we decided to execute in a similar fashion to the first and were this time joined at the pin-end by the Urwins. We made no mistake and ensured we had the perfect start being on the buoy for the GO. Very shortly after the start we looked around to see where the Urwins were only to see the sorry sight of their boat with the mast folded in two. For the remainder of the second race we were chased hard by Midori Claridge and Mumi Knight, just managing to keep clear water between us to the finish.

I need to add at this point that in between races the crew of Spindrift were being sustained by Haribo, a children's sweet renowned for its sugar content and high number of "E" numbers. However, such was the effort required that no ill effects were felt.

For the third race we decided that as we had obviously hit on a running formula we should continue starting on port. At this stage I was more than a little surprised that this time no one joined us. Again we managed to stay ahead of the chasing pack, once more led by Midori and Mumi. We were most relieved to hear the finishing gun. The real high point for us was not the fact that we had won all three races in testing

conditions, rather that we had succeeded in winning the Nationals with two generations of the same family in consecutive years, something of which we are truly proud.

I have asked my father if he is available for next year's Nationals, to see if we could see if we could make it three generations. However, we still await his reply!

## 2009, Chris Willard, *Flying Turtle*, 321

### Scow Tourism with a few Birds on the Side

A week ago I was asked by the secretary if I could write a few words about the recent adventures of my trusty little LRS, Flying Turtle.

We have all read about sex tourism. Then came health tourism. It was obviously only a matter of time before Scow tourism arrived. This year there have been successful sailing visits to Poole and Christchurch while in previous years Scows have been sailed at Beaulieu and Dartmouth.

For me, and my personal sailing craft, six days' sailing in the Golfe du Morbihan had to be the highlight of recent adventures in Turtle. Even though I know it has been done before and written up a few years ago by fellow 'Scowers', I felt that it merited another airing from a different slant, because it was such a rich experience and because a number of friends have expressed interest in following the trail.

The great thing about the LRS is its great ease of mobility owing to its lightness and the good design of the stainless steel trolley and the road trailer system, which make towing the 140 miles to Vannes an easy option and preferable to sailing it down! It is also quite a green form of tourism with no flying and the transport, once there, is either wind or oar powered. As a former oarsman I am always surprised at how well a Scow will row.

As with all good holidays the other people were crucial. The dramatis personae, a fascinating and diverse bunch, included:

Jane Willard, Jo Lewis, Roy and Vivienne Rolf, Aiden de la Mare, The Slumdogs, The Singing Spaniards, The Wayfarers, and Tous Les Francais, including campsite staff, festival organisers, rescue boat drivers, chefs and Breton musicians, singers and dancers.

Jane, the skipper's wife and crew member of Flying Turtle, was also tent and provisions organiser, map reader and co-driver.

Jo, a Keyhaven neighbour, travelling companion and fellow LRS skipper of Bahini was doing a return visit to La Semaine du Golfe.

Roy, a fellow Solent Skipper and former colleague on The Solent Protection Society Council, sailing his home built 12ft all wooden and immaculate Porchester Duck, was also on a return visit.

Vivienne, non sailing wife, is a well known local historian and renowned expert with a PhD in *Bath Houses*.

The Slumdogs, their own name after their home made garden shed (made of wood) style tent, were our campsite neighbours and comprised Nick, a retired dentist from Devon and Andrew, a yacht designer from La Rochelle, and they were sailing their own self-built wooden open Lugger for a return visit.

Aiden de la Mare (relation of the writer), a seasoned dinghy cruising sailor from Yarmouth IOW, was sailing his classic 1920 Thames wooden day boat and sleeping out every night under the thwart and an umbrella! He was also on a return 'Semaine' visit.

The singing Spaniards comprised a robust male judicial enforcer and his psychologist wife from Barcelona, who were sailing their 14 ft Drascombe type dinghy, on a return visit. Their sunny humour and operatic arias in the shower block are never to be forgotten!

'The West Country Competent Crews' (our name for them) were very enthusiastic members of the Dinghy Cruising Association and on a return visit, sailing their 2 elderly Wayfarer dinghies.

The Maritime Festival, La Semaine du Golfe, is a regular late May biennial cruising, rather than racing, sail and oar six day event. It is held in the natural harbour of the Golfe du Morbihan (comparable to Poole harbour) but containing approximately 40 small islands, and is very well organised by the Vannes Town Council. It has been running for about ten years and has spawned a British equivalent in Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire National Park called Seafair Haven. The next one of these will be held from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> July 2010 as it runs in alternate years to The Morbihan. To take part, contact: <seafairhaven@mpha.co.uk>

At 'La Semaine', the format is organised camping on a well equipped site and most people take their own tents although one can stay in local B&B or hotels, if preferred. There is a daily bus service to take sailors from and to their boats. The days are quite long and tiring and the nights could be cold, requiring appropriate bedding. The sailing takes place in flotillas according to the size and style of boat and average about 150 craft with a total at the festival of about a thousand vessels. The designs vary from Viking square sailed skiffs to classic motor sailors and tall ships. The majority are Old Gaffer type craft. The LRS was almost the smallest boat but handled beautifully in the challenging conditions. She looks the part because of her lugsail rig and particularly so if she carries a Breton red sail above her GRP hull as does Jo's! The 2 Scows frequently raised eyebrows of interest and admiration. The daily cruises in company were between 10 and 15 miles and revolved around a lunchtime destination, often with a local Breton band concert, dancing, singing, oysters and a glass of wine. Breakfasts were provided and 2 evening meals were included in the total package, which also covered the campsite and coach service for an amazing 58 Euros per head.

Here beginneth the travelogue of how it was for us:

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009:** Took the overnight Brittany ferry with cabin from Portsmouth to St Malo. Return cost for double cabin, car + trailer return £530.

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>:** Towed scow to Vannes Municipal Campsite at Conleau 90 miles, erected our 38 year old canvas honeymoon tent which despite a strong gale and heavy rain on the first night kept us dry all week, although Jo's fancy new French tent collapsed from pole failure! We were soon off to explore Conleau, some 3 miles away, on foot.

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>:** Drove to Séné Nature Reserve for a bird watching walk where we enjoyed close views of Black Winged Stilts and Avocets with their chicks. Registered for the event and collected our bag of data and freebies.

**Monday 18<sup>th</sup>:** Trailed the scows to Arradon and rigged them before dining at a Michelin restaurant in Arradon.

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup>:** Sailed with a miscellaneous assortment of 215 boats in our flotilla to the Ile d'Arz where we were welcomed with a free lunch of paella and wine and serenaded by Breton singers and dancers with 'des chansons de mer'. Returned to Arradon for night time mooring. Non sailors took the ferry from Conleau and hired bicycles.

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup>:** Free sailing day. The 2 scows sailed from Arradon to Ile aux Moines. Hired bicycles and explored the island which was notable for its wild flowers and celebrities' country retreats with painted letter boxes. Evening festivities were a free meal by the canal leading to the centre of Vannes, an excellent band, old sea shanties and watching the sun go down behind the plethora of colourful classic boats moored alongside the quay.

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup>:** Sailed with the flotilla around Ile aux Moines and back to Arradon having lunched at Larmor-Baden. Wind eventually died, affording a chance to flex the rowing muscles before a tow rope was offered and gratefully received!

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup>:** After a 6 am breakfast, sailed to Locmariaquer for lunch at Pointe de Kerpenhir with a dozen oysters, Muscadet and a band dressed in traditional costume which included a Breton Harp and a charming bespectacled soprano who sang several songs but especially a lovely rendition of Sweet Molly Malone in English. This was all in perfect sunshine overlooking the dramatic setting of the whirlpools and narrow 200 metre entrance to the Morbihan. For me this was the ultimate experience of the week. We then sailed away 7 miles north to Le Bono for more music, dancing, dinner and mooring for the night.

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>:** After an early start, sailed from Le Bono to Port-Navalo across the dramatic swirling 10 knot ebb of the 200 metre wide Atlantic/Morbihan entrance, in pouring rain. After lunch in the rain when the festive spirit never wavered and the band played on we sailed off to Port Anna in 20 knots of wind and got rammed by a skiff, rowed by 4 women but helmed by a man who was either not looking where he was going or was unaware that oar gives way to sail in Nelson's navy! On the way to Port Anna we all had to assemble for the Grand Parade to allow the spectators on the shore to have their photo opportunity. The boats spent the last night here, while we returned by coach to the campsite.

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>:** 2 scows sailed back in 1 hour to Arradon where we trailed them up and broke camp. We had decided to extend our holiday for 3 more days and so motored off to a B&B near Le Bono. That evening, the walking and bird watching kicked back in with a lovely walk by the Auray River where we saw a Honey Buzzard, a Cirl Bunting and Terns nesting amongst the coiled ropes on a barge.

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup>:** Another 6.30am breakfast and just caught the 8am ferry from Quiberon to Belle-Ile-en-Mer. Explored the lovely island on hired Italian electric/pedal bicycles. The island was particularly notable for the most luxuriant mixture of wild meadow flowers I had ever seen. The good birds were Choughs, Fulmars, Cuckoos and half an hour watching House Martins gather mud from the low tide seabed. They were building their nests under the eaves of a row of period terraced multi-coloured cottages, while we took coffee in an open air café.

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>:** We had a final retail therapy trip to the old historic town of Vannes before visiting the famous tourist attraction of the 'almost too good to be true' historic town of Rochfort-en-Terre. I thought that it was worth a visit but it was slightly reminiscent of Chipping Norton in the Cotswolds.

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>:** We finally left the region for our drive back north to our last Alastair Sawday B&B near Ploubalay.

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>:** At 10.30 am we caught the ferry from St Malo to arrive at Portsmouth at 7.00pm.

We felt that it had been a great Scowing experience with 6 days' sailing in French waters, so much enhanced by the welcoming Gallic festive attitude, the unexpected bursts of music from spectators and sailors alike and of course the local oysters and vin blanc. I hope that I have given a taste of what La Semaine du Golfe was like for us. I recommend it. We are about to book our week in Milford Haven for next July.

**Postscript:** Flying Turtle has asked if she can have a word in edgeways, pointing out that we would not have gone to Morbihan if it had not been for her. She wishes to add the other adventures which she has supported this year, notably transporting her owner to Newtown and back to Keyhaven in 20 knots of wind over tide conditions without tipping him out; giving him an idyllic sail to Yarmouth and up to The Causeway before a stonking beam reach back to Keyhaven in half an hour; and finally winning the Keyhaven 3 day regatta Scow class when her owner had the good sense to allow his daughter to sail her. She says that she has not been properly sailed like that for years.



## 2009, Sebastian Chamberlain, *Zacyntha*, 473

### What's in a Name?

I have just taken delivery of a beautiful new scow. When I asked John to build her for me there was never any doubt as to her name. No endless looking through the lists of names to make sure that no one else had already called their scow, or any other yacht for that matter, by the same name. She would be named with the same name that my eldest daughter was christened with. As was my mother, her mother and, indeed, her mother.

The story that I like to tell is that it all stems from an Ionian island governed by one of my ancestors during the Crusades. However, that is just a good story. The truth is much younger.

In 1809 a British force liberated the island of Zacynthos from the French. In 1815 after Corfu, the last of the Ionian Islands, had been liberated, the group formed themselves into the United States of Ionian Isles. But there were fears of a Turkish invasion and the islands were placed under British protection. General Sir Lorenzo Moore, my maternal great, great grandfather, served there with the Protection Force on the island of Zacynthos. He was so enchanted with the island that when, in 1819, his daughter was born she was christened

Zacyntha Antonia Lorenzina.

One hundred and ninety years later I am so very pleased to be able to name my own, very first, brand new boat 'Zacyntha' after her, my grandma, my darling mama and the island of Zacynthos.

## 2010, Mike & Robbie Urwin, *Psi Psi Na*, 308, then *Nutshell*, 424

### The End of the Beginning....?

"Dad, I'm going to steer today. The beginning of the end? For me perhaps, but certainly the end of the beginning for Robbie.

We had started racing a borrowed Scow (thank you neighbour Steve Vincent) occasionally during the summer of 2001. It was now June 2002 and we had successfully completed a number of races with me helming and had enjoyed both the number – up to 25 boats on occasions – and the variety of competitors. Robbie at 9 is one of the youngest. I at 49 am very far from the oldest. I haven't asked, but am quite sure that more than one of our competitors will never see 70 again, and quite possibly 80.

The racing is competitive; it's also fun. But above everything else it is friendly. Monday evening racing at the Royal Lym, and perhaps the Scow fleet in particular epitomises what our club is all about: people with all sorts of reasons for going boating doing just that! And it is not just the sailors it is the race officers, the rescue boaters and everybody else involved. A big thank you to all these people. I hope that they enjoy it as much as we do.

So how did we get on? That first race with Robbie in the back and me in the front, we finished 4<sup>th</sup>. Which both Robbie and I thought was pretty respectable. Another 4<sup>th</sup> the following week followed by an n OCS. Well everybody gets it wrong sometimes (the race officer that is...)!

Then a disaster. 1<sup>st</sup> to the first mark only to be hit by another boat sailed by somebody who knows lots better but just got it wrong! The collision tacked us and with the mainsheet cleated, the result was inevitable! My first involuntary swimming practice for some 20 years! But we finished the sense on a high note with Robbie's first victory. Celebrated with a coke and bowl of chips amidst the rest of that evening's racers.

Postscript.

I wrote the above for R Lym's PotterShip Magazine in late 2002. It was certainly the 'end of the beginning' for Rob who has now moved through Optimists to Lasers. There was another 'Dad I'm steering today' just after Christmas last year when we did the Penguin Trophy together. We (he!) finished 3<sup>rd</sup>. And for me? Well hardly the 'beginning of the end'. Ros and I now own and much enjoy racing 424 *Nutshell*. And for those of you who hadn't noticed, you made the mistake of electing me vice chairman of LRSCA last year!

## 2010, James & Henry Marsh, *Challenger II*, 455

### Success in the Nationals Junior Class

It had been a long time since I had sailed at Keyhaven and I did not remember it much, but I was greeted at the club with cheery faces and tea and biscuits (always a winner!) Henry and I took our boat which had been kindly towed over from Lymington (thanks to Edward Harrison from Wednesday Junior Sailing) and rigged it, plenty of time had been allowed therefore we were in no hurry and no panic. The briefing explained Saturday's schedule clearly and everyone knew when the racing was due to commence.

After an early lunch the fleet launched into a strong 16 knot breeze which increased throughout the afternoon (Henry spent most of his time bailing out the water and shielding me from most of the waves!!). We sailed well in the heavy weather and managed to secure two 1sts and a 3rd (double handed and juniors combined) and two 1sts and a 2nd (just juniors). Henry and I were very pleased with these results and we were looking forward to the next day of racing; our moods were lifted again as we were greeted onshore by lots of cakes!

The next day we headed to the yacht club knowing that the racing might be cancelled as the forecast had predicted very bad weather. At the club we found that the Race Officer had gone out on a rib to check out the conditions. He came back with bad news: the racing was cancelled for the day, therefore prize giving and more cake followed shortly.

Henry and I were very pleased to have won our first Scow National and we were very grateful to all that had helped with the event. Overall, Keyhaven Yacht Club pulled out all the stops to host an immaculate Scow National. Thanks.



**2010, Chris Willard, *Flying Turtle*, 321**

### **The English Raid: 'Flying Turtle' Goes Raiding**

2010 saw the first Viking style raid on The Solent since the Armada threat in the 16th century. No arrows were fired in anger although mackerel were caught in hunger by raider John Claridge. About forty friendly sail and oar vessels raided the Solent in the last week of July. They were not plundering its ships for treasures but simply taking inspiration from its beauty. The raiders came from far and wide, including France, Germany, Holland and Russia.

LRScow 'Flying Turtle', crewed by Chris and Jane Willard, entered the fray along with three other similar Scows and a West Wight wooden built version. The voyage was around sixty miles over four days, starting and finishing at Keyhaven. The experience started on Wednesday July 28th with the arrival in Keyhaven of various craft on trailers which had to be parked in J & D Edgar Ltd.'s field and the boats launched at the quay. That evening there was a Pimm's reception for all participants on the lawn of Hurst Castle SC followed by an excellent welcome dinner at the 17th century Gun Inn, which had the perfect atmosphere of an old smuggler's hostelry. Foreign visitors were hosted by local members and we were fortunate enough to have two families from Moscow staying in our house. They were Oleg, Kate, Ksenia, Dasha, Sasha, Jania and Nikita, interesting people, who told us that life is better under democracy overall particularly for the better-off but that the USSR did do some basic services well. They borrowed a Thames based, old wooden 28ft whaling boat, 'Collingwood', which had a tendency to leak. They were also noticed to wear unusual clothes when sailing, including skirts, but no life jackets. However they always seemed to be enjoying themselves.

We left Keyhaven at 8.30am on Thursday in sunny conditions and a 7kt SW wind. It was a gentle sail eastwards along The Solent with a flooding tide under us. The other Scows, from Lymington, were nearby and we received booster rations of biscuits from Michael Hobson in his rib, acting as voluntary Scow rescue cover, off Gurnard. Being the smallest boats in the fleet the Scows decided to press on to Cowes without putting in for lunch at Newtown Creek. We reached Shepherd's Warf in about three hours, by 11.30am, when as often happens the 6 wind became variable and unreliable. So with the Red Funnel Ferry and Red Jet coming and going all around us we remembered our 'IF' and 'kept our heads' but transferred to oar power. Chris coxed and Jane (the lady's preference) set to with rollicks and blades to just beyond the Chain Ferry, where the wind returned.

As it was too early for lunch, a reach up the Medina River to The Bargeman's Rest Pub was agreed for the next unscripted leg of the Raid. There we were joined by the other Scows and two Lymington Prams plus Michael in his rib who obviously did not want to miss out on all the fun his wife, Diana, was having in her single handed Scow. After a jovial pint or two over lunch we all tacked our way down the Medina to The Folly Inn. Having moored alongside the congested pontoon and collected our baggage from the mother-ship, all of which had been well organised by George Trevelyan and his team, we pitched tents in the car park. Terra firma was now reinstated with a gentle stroll across the meadows and up the hill to Whippingham Church where we paid homage to the gravestones of Lord Mountbatten and Uffa

Fox. The views from the church on that sunny evening across the Isle of Wight were stunning, though not enhanced by the power lines and pylons. After our return to the inn the raiders enjoyed a barbecue with a choice of delicious puddings. The night was spent under canvas by most, although a few luxuriated in local B&Bs.



Raiders approach



Raiders at bay

Day two of the cruise started with a ham butty breakfast in The Folly, a briefing and weather forecast from George and a tow down The Medina to Cowes by some of the boats which had auxiliary engines, as the morning was windless. By 11.00am there was a 7kt SW wind and we felt confident to dodge the container ships and cross The Brambles Bank into Southampton Water, following in the tracks of our two big sister dinghies, the Dan Bran designed and John Claridge built Lymington Prams, helmed by Jo Lewis and John. Crossing the shipping lanes and skirting around Calshot Spit we sailed up Southampton Water, turning left into Ashlett Creek for the small sailing club which was once owned by the Esso Oil Refinery. The creek is very shallow and narrow and we all had to row for the last two hundred yards to the pontoon. It was a real experience, rafting up alongside with such a wide variety of boats. Having achieved this feat over 45 minutes outside an already moored shabby 34 foot yacht, we could hardly believe our ears when the skipper, who had seen it all, suddenly said that he had to leave immediately in order to catch the tide at his next port of call, Bembridge. As a result we now had to untie the whole network of moored rafts in order to release the yacht from inside them, which then promptly went aground within seconds and only just managed eventually to clear the bottom on departure. The skipper's family looked as bemused as us.

Fortified by a pint and lunch we all left by 2.30pm to sail back to The Solent and westwards to Beaulieu River and Gin's Farm. It was by now a westerly ebb tide so we would have to punch tide up the river. Despite this some boats decided to race across the Solent to Gurnard Ledge on their way back to Beaulieu River. This was not for Flying Turtle which enjoyed a beat to the river entrance in a good 14kt SW wind and a challenging tack up river to moor with the other boats on the Royal Southampton Yacht Club pontoon. Our tents were pitched on the grass outside the club with a spectacular eastwards view across the Beaulieu River. The day ended with an excellent dinner in the Club.

Even though the weather became wet overnight, our tiny Parisian €25 pop up tent kept us dry if not in the lap of luxury. Having consumed a breakfast bacon bap delivered by the catering firm and deposited our luggage for the mother-ship transfer

to Lymington, we sailed away at 10.00am on Saturday morning. As we were hosting a farewell barbecue on Sunday afternoon we had to be back home to meet the Waitrose delivery van. Skipping the last day's sailing, we tacked back to our home port, Keyhaven, against wind and tide to arrive 5½ hours later at 3.30pm. This was indeed a test of Scow endurance in deference to the great provider, Waitrose. A return car journey to the RLymYC that evening allowed us to sample the official Raid dinner accompanied by live music, choral singing, speeches and prizes. On Sunday, while the other raiders were doing their final leg from Lymington to Keyhaven via Yarmouth, we were preparing a rolling barbecue (2.30-9.30pm) for the final sailors' farewell.



Folly Inn



Mother ship and protégés hiding at Keyhaven

Flying Turtle had transported us safely for 45 miles in 3 days in the Western Solent. It had been yet another exhilarating Scow cruise in company with many interesting people and craft. Keyhaven had not enjoyed such an international flavour for many a year, thanks to The English Raid's visit to its tranquil creek.

## 2010, Marigold de Jongh, *Speedwell*, 428

### Three Scow Sailors (and a Moody Mate) from KYC on a Turkish Delight!

The sun shone and the wind blew for a fantastic sailing experience in 'Raina de Bruxa', a Sunsail Jeanneau 39. Ken (the Moody skipper), John, Leslyn and Marigold (all LRScow sailors) set off along the Gulf of Gorkova from Turgutreis in western Turkey on 1st October. Seven other boats joined us - mostly crewed by two except for one sailed by three girls from Emsworth. The ninth was our lead boat, Hula Hula, crewed by Paddy in overall charge, Kat, hostess, and George, engineer.

On that first day we sailed 28 miles downwind - our destination was Cokertme, just a few houses in a sheltered bay. This was our first experience of mooring stern-on to the jetty. There was considerable competition between lads from the several restaurants on the shore to gain our attention. On sight of a yacht coming into harbour, each would leap into a small dinghy and power towards it. However they could go no further than the length of the "lazy line" which would attach the bows to a chain underwater. The successful youth threw the line (attached to an empty water bottle) on to the yacht then leap deftly on board himself to secure the end sufficiently tightly to prevent the boat from moving too close the jetty. Once secured at bow and stern our crew then had to face a hazardous walk ashore along a narrow "gang plank", sometimes at an acute angle and crossing the dark waters of the bay.

At Cokertme all crews ate together at the restaurant Marie Rose, whose proprietor dressed as a pirate complete with parrot on his shoulder. This gave us the chance of meeting other members of the flotilla. There was a large choice of fish and, of course, the Turkish favourite lamb kebabs.

Next day we sailed on to Tuzla, a quiet bay further down the Gulf where, after a lazy lunch, we kayaked and snorkelled - gazing at the many colourful fish to be seen below the surface. The wind got up during the afternoon and we had an exhilarating sail to our next stop at Akbuk. We decided to swing on a mooring buoy rather than jostle on the pontoon which, in the continuing wind, was quite a challenge. The voyage to land for supper was also quite demanding with four of us balanced in the dinghy, with John at the outboard, and a continuing brisk wind. However on arrival at the beach we were greeted with punch and nibbles and the rest of the crews. That night was not the best - Leslyn was disturbed by the kayak constantly knocking against the hull (she thought it might come through!) and wailing in rigging. More than once one or other of us rose sleepily to check the mooring and was reassured to see that Paddy was dutifully doing the same for us.



Akbuk

In contrast next morning the wind had diminished and we had a stroll round the bay - stopping for coffee under some trees. We then picked up the dinghy and kayak and went to a tiny bay where we could swim, snorkel and generally laze in the sun. That

afternoon we had a comparatively short sail across to the south side of the Gulf to Degirmen Buku - an enchanting place where we watched the sun going down. The restaurant was the prettiest with the best food so far.

Next morning we enjoyed the early light on smooth sea as the sun rose over the mountains. The wind as we left the bay was lighter and both Leslyn and Marigold had a good opportunity to helm Raina, beating back across the Gulf again towards Cokertme. However just after midday the wind rose to a force 5/6 and we were forced to use the engine to arrive in time before dark.

We were due in Bodrum for the next night but decided first to anchor in a pretty bay at Pabut for lunch on board. Again time was too short after that to sail against the wind so we motored to Bodrum. This is the main and historic town of the area, with thousands of boats moored in the yacht haven, the 15<sup>th</sup> c. crusader castle standing out on a promontory and a ship yard still making the traditional wooden Turkish 'gulets' that abound hereabouts. John skilfully manoeuvred us astern down a long line of boats and we arrived successfully at the quay. 'All mod. cons.' were welcomed by us all – but John had lost his shoes.



Castle of the Knights of St. John, Bodrum

Here we were informed that there was to be a model boat race on a swimming pool at Turgutreis Yacht Club the following night, so ideas were soon being exchanged between Ken and John as to how our craft should be constructed.

We all looked for John's shoes.



The last sail was an exciting beat in force 5/6 - Leslyn managed to suppress her screams as we heeled over to 45 degrees - to Turgutreis where a race was held around Catal Island, but the strong wind deterred some of us from competing. One of the yachts (not us!) managed to tangle their mainsheet round their propeller but the ever-helpful Paddy swam to their rescue and, with some difficulty, cut it away with the use of our bread knife. This he collected and swam back with it clenched between his teeth.

Prize-giving on the last evening was held at the sumptuous yacht club, preceded by the model boat race. Our entry was complete. A piece cut from a large water container formed the sail and, having eaten a Chinese meal in Bodrum, we used the chopsticks for spars. The hull was made from a whisky bottle now partly filled with gravel and Leslyn's nail file made an excellent keel. Micropore provided the joining material and the craft was complete. When the race took place there was a stiff wind behind the boats and, miraculously, Spirit of Keyhaven won!



Winner: 'Spirit of Keyhaven'



Back to the boat to hunt for John's shoes.

Our final day after handing back 'Raina' was spent sight-seeing in Bodrum, reached by two buses from Turgutreis. Even this was not without drama. On reaching the town Marigold, in charge of the 'kitty' purse containing all our joint money, discovered that it was missing. A quick search by Marigold amongst the scores of buses in the bus station for the one we had first used and - a miracle! - the driver had found it and returned it intact. This was just one of the examples we found of Turkish kindness and honesty towards visitors. This drama over, we headed for the impressive castle where 12thc. BC pots were on display, rescued from wrecks around the coast. We also saw the remains of one of the seven wonders of the ancient world at the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus.

Back to base and, guess what! They'd found John's shoes! \*

*Conclusion: The flotilla made an enjoyable change from pottering in the Solent, with sufficient local advice and varied company without being overly controlled. Early October proved an ideal time with good winds, warm sea and a pleasant temperature but possibly that part of Turkey is not as interesting from a pottering point of view as some other parts of the Med. Fellow Association members will be pleased to know that although it was only our model boat that won a race, we did gain the award for most miles under sail – in the real boat!*

*\*Editor's (privileged) note: they were my walking shoes, stowed away in a safe place for the duration!*

**2011, anon**

### **The Scow and I**

I was twelve years old when I first saw a Scow on the River Alde in Suffolk. It was love at first sight. Sixty years later, after speaking to John Claridge at the boat show I ordered one and gave up racing my Foxer dinghy on the Hamble. The Scow is a super boat under sail.

**2011, Peter Woolner, *Kim II*, 470**

### **The Bursledon Regatta with Kim II**

Since the mid-seventies I have taken part in the regatta racing a variety of keel boats and dinghies. It is an early launch on regatta day as I have to sail from Warsash Sailing Club to the start line at Bursledon. On arrival we join the eighty odd other dinghies to check course instructions from the Committee boat secured to a navigation pile just downstream from Swanwick Marina. There are five starts at five minute intervals from 10.30 a.m. As the countdown commences things become slightly chaotic. The channel is quite narrow, there is a procession of large yachts and power boats coming downstream from the marinas and numerous Oppies whose young helms are more interested in chatting to their friends than keeping a lookout or keeping away from the start line.

My start is number 4 (PY1201-1600) in one of the larger fleets. The trick is to find a gap and hit the line spot on with some momentum and hope for clear wind. The Scow's low rig can be a problem! We now race downstream against the flood to a turning mark off Hamble Point Marina. This might sound easy but one has to take into consideration the build up of traffic on a weekend exodus called the 'Hamble Scramble', plus the tree lined riverbanks giving all sorts of wind shifts and flat spots.

Once round the turning mark we head upstream, by now the faster handicap boats that have sailed a longer course are overtaking and blanketing the poor little Scow. The worst is yet to come. The finishing line is off the Jolly Sailor pub at Swanwick where there is invariably a flat calm. It is possible to gain or lose a dozen places in the final hundred yards. Keep calm and let the tide do the work; what a relief when you get your gun.

Now it is back to Warsash, four lengths of the navigable river in a day. Put the boat to bed, time for a shower and hopefully a phone call from the OOD. Good news, we have won our group for the second year running. It is back to the Elephant Boatyard for the prize giving in the evening followed by a magnificent firework display.

Same again this year? You bet!

**2011, Carolyn Howden, *Bocca Lupo*, 335**

**A Scow to the Rescue**  
– a true tale of gallantry and devotion

Once upon a time, long ago, a gallant young man and his beautiful lady set forth aboard a Wightlink ferry to the distant shores of an island called Wight. Their destination, the little port of Yarmouth, where they did feast and make merry in a local hostelry.

At the end of a happy day, upon the return journey to the mainland, the beautiful young lady, to her deep consternation, discovered that she had mislaid her beloved ring at the island inn.

The gallant young man did comfort his mightily distressed lady, vowing at all costs to retrieve her precious ring. Our intrepid hero realised that he must make haste to his ever trusty scow and they did sail forth from the balmy creeks of Keyhaven. The little vessel battled through the turbulent waters of Fiddlers until our gallant gentleman and his lady found themselves swept upon the rusting metalwork of an ugly jetty below an ancient island fort.

The young lovers were forced to leap overboard to save their little boat from being dashed to pieces. Our young hero struggled ashore, his beautiful lady upon his shoulders, towing his trusty little scow behind. With their boat safely tethered upon the beach the lovers made their way to the hostelry and miraculously retrieved the lost ring!

The little scow awaited the young couples' return, smiled at their joyfulness and did merrily ply her way homewards. Her sturdy bows bobbing obediently through the waves to the safety of her home port.

The beautiful lady was mightily impressed by our young hero's gallantry and devotion and yes, dear reader, sometime later the beautiful lady agreed to marry the handsome gentleman!

Of the trusty little scow, well she still sits, smiling and waiting contentedly for her next adventure in the little harbour of Keyhaven.

### Requiem for a Lost Love

Her name is lost in the mists of time. It was September 1952. She was a little clinker scow based at the Island Sailing Club at Cowes. I was about to turn 17 and spending the last part of a magical summer holiday in a boarding house in Cowes. She was in the charge of a kindly elderly fellow guest who, hearing that I longed to get back on the water, asked if I'd like to borrow her. I didn't think twice.

My sister and I used to sail her through the anchorage, up and down the Medina, past some old 'J' class hulks, and over to East Cowes where two of the great Princess flying boats lingered on the slips. But we kept clear of the Solent where the other Princess would take off daily for Farnborough and the great transatlantic liners would sweep by to and from Southampton. Those were the days before buoyancy aids - and I can't even remember any tanks or bags in the scow. We must have had a pair of oars but I cannot recall ever using them. And the cotton sails – remember them? – had to be carefully hung in the boathouse after each outing to prevent mildew.

Years later – after sailing in naval whalers and RNSA 14s and owning a couple of Gulls, a Wanderer (bought from Margaret Dye herself) and a Drascombe Lugger (bought in the days when I felt flush) – the time had clearly come to get something smaller. A boat I could load on and off its trailer, rig, launch and sail – by myself. The trailer was essential because, by then based in land-locked Cambridge, sailing was restricted to a fortnight a year in Devon or, occasionally, Norfolk, and the odd day on the Broads or Rutland Water. The single-handed element was necessitated by guilt at always having to press-gang my long-suffering wife into helping me manoeuvre and rig larger boats.

It was time to regress – and what better than to a scow? I located all the scow builders, perused their literature and came to the obvious conclusion, a John Claridge-built Lymington River scow. Contacting him, I learnt that No. 255 was for sale. It had been built for his sister and named *Poppy* after, I seem to remember, their father. Appropriately, she had a poppy red hull and tan sails. There was just one condition, I couldn't change the name. I didn't want to but I did ask that it be altered from gothic script to something rather more architectural. It was – and I took ownership.

She was a beautiful little boat with timber spars. For some years John used a photo of her being sailed with a very small child onboard in his advertisement. As I write, I can see a copy of it on the pinboard above my computer. The only slight problem was the lack of any comfortable sitting-space forward of the thwart for any grandchildren accompanying two adults. After a few years I discovered that John's latest scows had extended side tanks – thus correcting the 'problem'.

By now I had retired but an unexpected consultancy enabled me to commission John to build a new scow for me and to sell *Poppy*. The new boat was called *Dainty*. An odd name you might think. It's a traditional name for small warships and recalled the beautiful Daring class destroyer of the same name that I remembered from my time

in the Navy. I'd always been amused by the name on her crew's cap bands: they used to get ribbed about it quite a lot!

396 *Dainty* had a dark blue hull, white spars and cream sails, a very elegant combination. Wherever I sailed her, as with *Poppy*, people would lean over yacht rails or stop me on the seashore, remark on her beauty and ask about her.

For years my annual sailing fortnight had usually been at Dittisham in Devon. The Dart is a staggeringly beautiful river with, both up and downstream of the village, a splendid variety of sailing areas. There appear to be at least two other Lymington River scows permanently based there. It's a splendid place in which to unwind and Dartmouth itself is a lively town.

But scows are small and I am tall – and cramp would occasionally creep in. My crew, freed of the hassles of unloading and loading, enjoyed the occasional sail but was finding the constrictions of the 'cockpit' too much. OK – call it age. It would have been different had we sailed more regularly over the years but that was not a possibility. With huge regret we trailed *Dainty* back to Lymington.

*Dainty* now has a new owner and I hope she enjoys her as much as we did. A huge thank you to John Claridge for producing and perfecting a truly beautiful little craft and being such an approachable and efficient Class builder. And another thank you to the Class Association for its excellent handbook, website and lively newsletters.

## 2011, Pam Moore, *Piccinin*, 367

### It All Led Up to a Scow!

Hi, my name is Pam Moore and I was elected Hon Treasurer of the LRSCA at the recent AGM, replacing Dunlop Stewart. Dick, my husband, and I are relatively new to the area and new to Scows. After moving to Hordle in April, by mid July we were already active in the Scow division of the RLymYC having been able to borrow a boat from a very close friend. We are not however new to sailing or racing!

At the age of 11 I had my first boat, a YW Cadet, which I raced keenly at Tamesis Club and then Minima YC on the Thames. From there I moved to the Welsh Harp in north London where I raced in Merlin Rockets in the mid 60s. Here I met Dick and we continued to race dinghies at various clubs until we got bitten by the cruising bug and bought our first keel boat in 1978. By then we had two children and a dog and spent many happy hours in the Solent and on the north coast of France.

But always at the back of our minds was a desire to go further afield. So in 2001 we said goodbye to family and friends and set off in our Hallberg Rassy 36, *Aliesha*, for what was intended to be a three to five year circumnavigation. We soon adapted to life afloat. The years rolled by and we were having the time of our lives, making many new friends and visiting wonderful places. Three years after we left we were still only crossing the Pacific. Five years after departure we were still only making our way up the east coast of Australia so patently we weren't going to make our deadline! All was well at home; indeed we had collected a son-in-law and a granddaughter by then and so we continued on through Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand and then across the Indian Ocean to the Maldives and up the Arabian Sea to Oman.



Pam and Dick at the Murray River, Australia

The next leg of the voyage was the dangerous one as pirates were already operating in the Gulf of Aden in 2007 although nothing like on the scale that they are today. Nevertheless, we travelled in convoy with two other yachts and were very relieved to make Aden unscathed. We had quite a few adventures travelling up the Red Sea including the loss of our engine which we had to replace in Egypt, not an easy country for doing such things, and we finally arrived in the Mediterranean in the Spring of 2008. For the rest of that year we explored the northern Aegean and Turkey. In 2009 we came through to the western Mediterranean and 'officially' completed our circumnavigation at the entrance to Gibraltar after some 47,000 miles.

We wanted to finish our voyage on a 'high' before returning to these shores so in 2010 we set off from Lagos for the Azores which are some 1,000 miles out into the Atlantic. The trip out there was uneventful and we found those islands that we visited quite delightful. We added a painting representing our circumnavigation to the amazing gallery of artistic works on the sea wall at Horta, mecca of ocean sailors. After leaving the Azores our trip to Brittany was rather more eventful with a full-blown gale along the way. However, the lasting memory we shall always carry of that last ocean passage was the sight of hundreds and hundreds of dolphins all closing in on

*Aliesha* as we neared the French coast. Dolphins had been our constant companions around the world and it seemed as if they had come to say goodbye. It was a very moving moment for us both.

We arrived in Berthon Marina, Lymington on 9th September, 2010, just over nine years after we set off from Chichester and with some 52,000 miles on the clock, to be greeted by our family which had grown even more and with the announcement of another one on the way! It was time to swallow the anchor.

We now have our own Scow which is enabling us to continue enjoying sailing in the Solent, exploring the muddy creeks and lakes, and to take part in some very competitive racing.



**2012, Chris Willard, *Flying Turtle*, 321**

### **‘Seafair Haven’: A Welsh Scow-Cruising Tale**

After our great experience at la Semaine du Golfe du Morbihan in Southern Brittany, my crew and I decided to sample the British equivalent in 2010. This involved a tow of 250 miles to Pembroke in South Wales.

The event was called Seafair Haven and was organised by the Milford Haven Dock Authority with support from charities such as The Prince of Wales Trust and from many volunteers. The first such festival was held in 2005 and was modelled on the Morbihan which started 10 years ago. As the two venues now alternate, this was the third one for Milford Haven. About 140 traditional sailing and rowing boats ranging in size from Square Riggers to Lymington Scows crewed by about 500 mariners attended for the 8 day jamboree.

The venue was set in Milford Haven and on the River Cleddau in the stunning Pembrokeshire Coastal National Park, which in 1955 was the first National Park to be created. Despite the beauty, there was an air of under employment and under investment in the towns with the welcome sight of very few cars on the roads in the July holiday season. The local people were enthusiastic and obliging and seemed delighted with our influx to their area. The organisation of the event was good if a little over-cautious on occasions and attention was also given to cultural, mostly musical, activities outside the sailing.

While South East England was basking in a heat wave, South Wales was affected by a series of low pressure bands heading from Scotland. Despite this, only one sailing day was lost to gales and we had six great sailing days and two land based days for the crew to investigate some of the many interesting and historical local places. Many of the larger craft had live-aboard crews but the accommodation provided for our sail and oar group was a choice of camping or bunk-bedded double rooms in the Pembroke Activity Centre. My crew chose the latter, while I resided comfortably on my launching trolley. There was a reasonable refectory on site, serving crews with three daily meals. The good company along my crew’s corridor consisted of the other visitors from Lymington (David and Kate Wagstaff with their LRS ‘Wyndsong’), and couples from Cumbria, Yorkshire, Cornwall and Sussex. I was very interested in the other assorted open and with-cabin day boats. Although not being either wooden or old (unlike many of the other boats), I received compliments about my appearance and especially my performance to windward. The sailing was not racing but consisted of day cruises of between 5 and 24 miles. The skipper of the other LRS, said that he was not in racing mode when he was in front. I suspect that mine might have had similar thoughts!

To give some insight into the Seafair Haven experience my crew offers some details from the log:

*Friday: Following 5½ hours bouncing on the road trailer rather than the waves we arrived at the Pembroke Activity Centre and registered for the event.*

Saturday: Those boats in the sail and oar group made a 3 mile passage along Pembroke Reach and River into the tidal pool beside the 12th Century Pembroke Castle. We felt like Viking raiders as we moored in the sun beneath the high walls of the castle. The skipper and his wife enjoyed an amusing guided tour of the castle followed by sea shanties and supper at Neyland Sailing Club across the Cleddau Bridge.

Sunday: I had a day of rest under the lee of Pembroke Castle due to gale force winds and rain. Meanwhile the crew explored the local area by car and visited the picturesque coastal town of Tenby and the fascinating Manorbier Castle with its beautiful walled garden. With the return of the sun after lunch, they walked across the stunning Barafundle Beach and the wildflower-covered headland out to the high cliffs of Stackpole Head, where chough and guillemot were seen. In the evening their auditory senses responded to a concert by local male and female Welsh voice choirs in Milford Haven.

Monday: My crew returned to sail me back to our base at Llanion Quay and later we explored the shallow and unspoilt rural creeks of the Rivers Cresswell and Carew.

Tuesday: This was a sociable and sunny day when all the mixed sail and oar vessels proceeded up the River Cleddau to attend an excellent boatswain's lunch in a huge marquee at Coedcanlas some 5 miles distant.

Wednesday: It poured with rain until mid afternoon and only a few intrepid sailors ventured forth. Fortunately my crew was amongst them and we had a very interesting day, sailing up the Cleddau to the little market town of Haverfordwest. Much of the river was wild and steeply wooded and my hull had covered some 25 miles as the crow flies before we returned to our home base. The evening was spent at a sociable BBQ on the cricket pitch at Lawrenny.

Thursday: My skipper took me for an early start cruising westwards along the Pembroke estuary past the oil refinery, the Irish ferry terminal and the liquid gas storage plant to delightful Angle Bay where he met his other half' to consume a fish stew at the Angle Point Inn with all the other mariners. It was good to meet all the other boats which had sailed round while the crew stretched their legs and enjoyed a bird watching stroll around the Angle headland.

Friday: I was given a day off to rest my sails, rudder and plate but quite frankly I think that the skipper was 'all sailed out' and needed a change. So the crew went sightseeing by car to the smallest cathedral city in Britain, St Davids, which is a cultural centre with an astonishing 12<sup>th</sup> Century Norman Cathedral, characterised by a sloping nave floor, outward leaning pillars and a spectacular carved oak ceiling. Afterwards the crew took a 2 hour evening motor boat cruise to Ramsay Island and Bishop's Rocks. The very young captain gave them a memorable experience in turbulent 18 knot swirling tidal currents and large swell as he dodged the surface rocks which have caused many wrecks in the past. A plethora of birds, including puffin, Manx shearwater, razorbill, guillemot, fulmar and kittiwake were seen close at hand by the towering rock faces. Witnessing the evening return of thousands of sea skimming Manx shearwater, returning to their nesting burrows on Skomer Island after a day fishing 50 miles off shore was unforgettable. The crew ended their day

*with a barbeque and more sea shanties at Cresswell Quay, a magical place only accessible for 2 hours at high tide, and boasting only a quirky unlabelled tiny pub almost obscured by ivy and leading to stepping stones across the river.*

*Saturday: This was our final day when all 140 boats took part in a 'Parade of Sail' by passing along Pembroke Reach to be viewed by the general public off Neyland Point. Unfortunately it was a misty and wet day so not many people came to see us, which was a pity because we were a fine collection of traditional boats sailing in a good breeze. Anyway the crew enjoyed the Seafair stalls and concert on Neyland Quay where there is a memorial to the great engineer, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, who was born nearby. The day ended with a good dinner for all the crews with 2 bands and screened photos of the week.*

*Sunday: We had an early departure after I was trailered up ready for the long journey back to Keyhaven. As well as sailing in some new waters, I had really enjoyed meeting so many interesting boats such as Tideways, Bay Raiders, Square Riggers and of course my mate LRS Wyndsong.*

I had the impression that my crew also enjoyed their sailing and meeting many new and interesting people. It also whetted their appetite for taking part in the first English Solent Raid a few weeks later.

### Amelie Rose August 2012

The Pilot Cutter Amelie Rose was scheduled to sail from Plymouth at 18.00 on Sunday 12 August. I had received an email about possible crew places being available. I passed it on to Richard (Tromans) saying “R, Well? R.” He phoned me and said yes but it was very much a jokey game of bluff and bravado at that stage.

Now we were off to Plymouth and probably wondering what we’d let ourselves in for. We had decided to rent a car which seemed to be the best way of getting to the Sutton Harbour Marina. It had its problems however and these resulted in our nearly having a car each for the journey to Plymouth.

We arrived in Plymouth at about 16.00 and after several phone calls to the skipper of the Amelie Rose, we eventually found her looking small and rather insignificant amongst the many large gleaming plastic boats. We were the first to arrive and were welcomed aboard by the skipper Steve and B (Belinda) the first mate. Steve had been a professional musician and composer but following what he called a mid-life crisis had gone to sea and hadn’t (so far) regretted a moment of it. Belinda was originally from South Africa and had lived and worked on boats all her life.

The other members of our crew arrived in ones and twos having made calls to Steve for directions. He was the first to admit that he didn’t know Plymouth.

So we were to have a total of nine on board including the skipper and mate, one more than had ever previously sailed on Amelie. Richard (we had three Richard’s) and Chris a brother and sister spent most of their spare time sailing on classic boats, particularly Pilot Cutters. Chris would be sailing in Amelie in three weeks time to the Channel Isles and Richard would be on another Pilot Cutter off the coast of Scotland. There was Pete, an Australian computer man who whilst not sailing, was competing in Triathlon events up and down the country. He turned out to be the fittest and most competent member of the crew (even counting the Richard’s Tromans and Linaker). Finally, there were the private school chums, Eloise and Georgina who were young 30 year olds, well educated, obviously with wealthy parents and without wishing to be too unkind, were both somewhat challenged by the practicalities of life – they were practically useless, but very sweet nevertheless. They had arrived on board separately, Elie first saying that Georgie had booked a double berth – “whatever that meant?” Her arrival resulted in the skipper having to go out and buy gluten free bread and soya milk to augment the goodies which she had brought with her. They both had too much baggage and the chart table had to be cleared of floral patterned bags each morning to enable weather and routes to be studied.

Steve ( skipper) welcomed us on board and stressed the need for care in avoiding going overboard and then went over the “man overboard” drill and I must say, the prospect of a Pilot Cutter with all sails up having to go about to scoop someone out of the water, was certainly something to think about. He also explained that there was a complex low pressure system to the west and that the sailing programme would have to be fairly flexible if we were to avoid the worst of the weather which

was clearly lurking in the vicinity. He also said that we had to be back at Poole by Wednesday evening because Amelie was to be Chartered the following day.

Following the briefing we went off for a meal at the China House which luckily was only a short walk along the quay. It was a good chance to get to meet everyone (bonding and all that ) The common bond was of course sailing and most of us had had quite a lot of experience – and Eloise and Georgina had been on several courses and certainly looked the part with their smart sailing gear.

My “friend” Richard T likes to remind me that I asked where the towels were which he seemed to think was hilarious. Anyway, I had to share his which served him right.

We were up early on Monday and all tried to be prompt about using the single loo - a potential bottleneck. However Georgie took longer than the rest of us put together with her ablutions - and then returned to her bed!

We motored out from the marina, through the Sutton Lock to the Sound where we had our first lesson in hoisting the main sail. We were certainly going to learn the meaning of the phrase “learning the ropes”. Then on and out to sea and although the wind strength was not bad the sea itself was clearly going to be a problem. The sea state soon worsened and we put the jib up but the bowsprit was still plunging deep into waves as we rolled off the top of other waves, usually on the skew. Water was coming over the bow and the windward side of the boat as we surfed down waves. One by one people were becoming groggy and most decided to lie on their backs on deck even though water was washing over the deck. No one wanted to go below and few wanted anything to eat. Elie was on deck flat out but Georgie decided that she’d rather go below. A little later there was an almighty crash as Georgie fell out of the bunk. Richard Tromans was on the helm and having dosed himself up with pills, seemed all right but said that he couldn’t go below. I was bending whilst coiling some rope as was Pete the Aussie and suddenly we were both overcome with sickness. Pete dashed below and was sick, I stayed on deck because I didn’t think that I could get through all the bodies without incident. I tried to focus on a distant object but it was difficult because one moment I was looking down at the bowsprit plunging into the sea and the next at the sky as we seemed to climb another impossible wall of sea.

Apparently, there were pasties for lunch.....

It had been a hard sail and we eventually agreed to put into Dartmouth for the night. It was late evening before we moored, had something to eat and were able to go ashore for a shower and a very welcome drink at the Dartmouth Yacht Club. We nearly capsized several times whilst showering! Over a drink Richard T and I discussed the trip so far and he said that he would never ever read an email of mine again! We agreed that the worst bits were the bunks, which were only shelves, the washing routine in the morning and the queue for the loo – and the sea!

Georgina had decided to visit an old friend of her Grandmother and was lucky to catch the last water taxi back at 23.00

I think that we all slept well that night.

We were to sail at 06.00 the following morning to try and beat the strong wind which had been forecast and to get as far east as possible before the wind and rain caught up with us. We headed out to sea and stayed about five miles from the coast for most of the day. The wind was gentle and the sun was warm. One by one we hoisted all five sails and Amelie Rose looked every inch the beauty she was – it was really very pleasant and a very welcome change. We crossed Lyme Bay to transit the Portland Race before heading towards Weymouth. Georgie thought that it was very cool that we might see a race at Portland!

Our music loving skipper was always looking for an opportunity to have a sing song and asked if anyone could play. Knowing that there was no piano on board we were quick to say that we 6 could only play the piano. Steve played various instruments and kept finding different ones to play. They seemed to be stashed in different places about the boat. It was a great sail – we could almost have been in the Caribbean.

Georgie slept either on deck or down below throughout the day - and Elie just slept.

In the afternoon the wind was South Easterly and we had to decide whether to put into Weymouth for the night and risk a very windy and wet sail on the final leg to Poole or, to flog on and try and get to Poole harbour that evening. We decided to carry on but it was getting late. We were trying to make it around Anvil Point without having to tack but it became obvious that we weren't going to make it so rather than tack and add more distance and time, we would motor past and then sail in to Poole on a reach. Amelie attracted much attention as we neared the shore. A boat sped up to us to warn us that the Condor ferry was coming and that we should stay clear but we were in the small boat lane and were entering the home port of the Amelie Rose and so we carried on serenely.

The girls were below and coping with the washing up – actually Elie was standing with her hands in front of her as though waiting for the Marigolds to appear.

We eventually tied up to a buoy off the Lake Yard Marina at 22.30

We could hear the Plymouth coastguard giving out warnings of gales off Plymouth. The wind and rain finally caught up with us at about 04.00 in Poole harbour the following morning making our final trip ashore very wet and very windy - but we had beaten the gale.

We even thought about going home and sleeping on a shelf!

**2012, Carolyn Howden, *Bocca Lupo*, 335**

**“Yesterday I sailed my scow to France”**

I was not alone, seven little boats departed from Keyhaven at 1030hrs. The wind was a light westerly F3 and the waters of the Solent were eerily calm. As we left the shelter of Hurst pit, the flooding tide created wallowing whirlpools which dragged on the hulls of our boats, swirling us first one way and then the other. Our instructions were to keep our fleet together, sail up tide to allow for the strong currents and set a course for the port entrance.

The shipping lanes were clear apart from a glimpse of the paddle steamer Waverley plying her way westwards.

Approaching our destination, our leader made contact with the harbour authorities and indicated that seven boats wished to enter the harbour, pass through the bridge and sail up the river. A friendly female port assistant opened the bridge earlier than usual in order to speed our progress. The bridge light turned from red to green. We waved our thanks and reached along the river.

At first we passed the pontoons of moored yachts and an old mill on the east bank glowered down at us. The river bends westwards and we tacked along the shore, passing a beautiful stone house with lawns sloping down to the water. Rumour has it that the lady of the house has invited us to tea on the lawn some day. A few more twists and turns, it gets shallow here and one of our fleet went aground whilst trying to answer his mobile! Time to get out the oars!

Our destination was in sight. We made landfall on a small area of beach and tied our painters to the railings beside an old bridge. One or two curious natives smiled, enquired where we had come from and then continued on their journey. Sails dropped and picnic bags ready, the crews snuggled down in the long grass behind the wall and enjoyed the September sunshine.

All too soon, an hour had passed, the ebb had begun and we had twenty five minutes to sail down the river for the 2pm bridge opening. Despite technical problems for one of 7 the fleet we were all present and correct as the bridge swung open. Our little flotilla was much admired as we eased ourselves out of the harbour into the ebbing tide.

We could see the mainland and sailed for home allowing for the strong ebb current.

There is an interesting bouncy area called Fiddlers but scows are not worried about that and were soon behind the friendly sheltered mass of Hurst Castle. Tea and cakes waiting for us on the Clubhouse terrace.

It has been a lovely trip to France!

Overheard on Milford beach, a conversation by holiday makers from Brummie. “Owh, look owver there Fred, oi didn’t know you could see France from ‘ere”!

### “The Yar versus The Nile”

“At last; thank goodness” said Bahini as we prepared in late September for the KYC Potter up The Yar. She had been feeling miffed all year having been deprived of foreign navigation. At least the Isle of Wight is almost foreign being across the water. But what grated was that she had been denied the cruise up The Nile even though I had explained that while the Morbihan is easily manageable, Egypt was out of the question for an LR Scow. But it still rankled.

Thursday 20 September dawned fine with a gentle SW breeze – so gentle that there was initial discussion whether there would be sufficient wind for an overseas passage. Fortunately the boss was persuaded and the small fleet of 6 Scows, accompanied by two carers, made the crossing in 45 minutes arriving at the bridge in Yarmouth harbour with time to spare for the midday opening. The boss had efficiently forewarned the bridge authorities and as we approached the cars were halted and the road bridge swung away to allow us passage straight through. The beat up the river allowed time for me to compare the two rivers.

OK, so The Nile is a bit bigger and longer than The Yar but each share verdant banks and many of the same birds, eg blackheaded gulls, cormorants, little egrets, grey herons, pigeons, swallows, sparrows and buzzards. The Senegal Thick-knee, Glossy Ibis and the Purple Gallinule are amongst birds missing from the Island. On The Nile our ship (the m/v Nile Commodore) had to pass through the bridge/lock at Esna, where a few vendors attempted to persuade us to buy their wares of gellabiyas and table cloths. They would throw the items up to the ship’s deck for inspection and we would chuck them back with much hilarity. No such fun occurred in Yarmouth where only a handful of passers-by silently watched us sail through. Bahini was chartless heading south up The Yar but I kept my eyes open and relied on experience to avoid obstacles. During an early visit to the Nile Commodore’s ‘bridge’ I discovered that the same applied there and that the captain, Atif, had neither chart, compass nor echo sounder to help him steer a safe course south up The Nile. A lifetime of navigating the river had taught him where dangers lay.

Religious establishments are another common feature although All Saints, Freshwater is far outstripped in number by the mosques in the towns and villages along the Nile. And of course there are ancient temples beside the river from Pharonic and Graeco/Roman times. The temples we visited in Upper Egypt are spectacular and at Kom Ombo we moored close to the entrance of the temple, which is devoted to two gods: Sobek (the crocodile god) and Horus (the falcon god). Here were another two similarities with The Yar. Although we saw no kestrels or peregrines above the Yar that fine Thursday, both these falcons occur on the Island. And, since the construction of the High Dam at Aswan, there are apparently no longer any crocodiles in The Nile below the dam. Nor did I spot any in The Yar. We left the Kom Ombo temple via the Crocodile Museum which displays a large collection of mummified crocodiles, some of which looked longer than a Lymington River Scow.



The former railway line from Yarmouth to Freshwater is now a pleasant path along which we saw walkers heading, perhaps, to The Red Lion. The railway lines along The Nile continue in their original role of transporting goods and passengers. From my cabin window early one morning I watched a train head north disturbing the calm and polluting the air. While river traffic on the Yar was almost non-existent, the Nile provides an important thoroughfare for barges and other craft loaded with sugar, rocks, fodder and all manner of other cargoes, including tourists. An occasional sailing ferry crossed the river with local passenger traffic of people and animals and there were many small boats and fishing skiffs. The tourist trade in Egypt was going through severe decline as visitors stayed away so the number of operating tour boats has dropped dramatically. We saw many such vessels mothballed and tied up to the bank near Luxor. On the Yar, only the sailing yachts are moored in trots above the bridge and are, hopefully, still taken out to play.

Our wonderful day's potter concluded with a close fetch to the entrance to Hawker's Lake and safe arrival at the Quay. It was a much shorter journey than the return from Luxor with our brilliant guide's plea to encourage friends to visit The Nile ringing in our ears.

## 2013, Biddy Brown, *Sea Fever*, 435

### Things,..... well, they just happen.....don't they?

'You walk in here at this time of night with a .....,', says the horrified Irish Nurse at Lymington Small Injuries Clinic.

But let's go back to the beginning of the story.....

That morning, we're playing Bowls in lovely hot sun, with a gentle lazy sailing breeze blowing on my back. The Solent and the Needles background haunt and taunt. What on earth are we doing here? Why aren't we afloat?.

'Gordon, I've just had an idea, you know *Seafever* (435) has to be got to John Claridge's yard for Gelcoat repairs, and you know he's moved to Lymington right on the River, well to save the fuss of borrowing a trailer to get her there, why don't we sail her there. Today? It would be great: a lovely gentle sail. We shouldn't miss the opportunity. We could grab a quick lunch, get the end of the ebb to take us down the river (Keyhaven), pick up the whole of the Solent tide, sun and wind on our backs, a nice gentle run round to Lym, take our Bus pass to get us home. Should do it easily if we get cracking.

Gordon in shorts, thin sweat shirt, protesting about not needing a spare pair of trousers. Everybody gets a wet bum in a dinghy. I throw a couple of pairs in. I mean we are coming home on a public bus. A bottle of water, no food. We'd just eaten a good chicken salad, fruit cheese etc. that would take us through. 3min. hike round to KYC to launch the boat. Slightly more breeze here. Still the wind's a Westerly so no matter. Sky's darkening a bit. Not so clear. Sun's still there. Oh! Well modify the day dream of hot sun on the back and enjoy the sail. Gordon returns from checking the Forecast on the River Warden's board outside his Keyhaven Office. It predicts a W 3 to 4. Mmm I think but say little until we get to the ever increasing vast area of mud and little water at the launch area. Where's it gone? Are our times out? Oh! No Gordon we're just a bit late, we'll not be able to sail down river in this wee stream. I'll row us out to deeper water, where we can sail offers Gordon. Will you really be able to row against this freshening wind right on our nose? I ask. . Well it's not far and remember when I rowed us in from the far end of Hawker's Creek? I say nothing about that being almost 10 years ago.

Off we set. Rowing against the increasing wind is severely hampered by the ruck of Boom and main sail stuffed down the middle of our wee Scow. No matter, we make good progress, past the Ferry, we're getting there. Wind is beginning to whistle. Doesn't it know anything about weather forecasts? We hit the open area at the end of the sea wall/bank. Swiftly the rowing has fiercely to be done facing the Needles. We inch sideways towards what is now the unstoppable rapidly retreating water. It can't be done.

Things happen. We're in about a foot of water, I've got an oar out pushing into the mud, Gordon's rowing like mad, there's mud and water splashing everywhere. We've been taken over utterly and completely. We push, each with an oar. First the nose round, swinging the rear into the mud. Then the stern round swinging the nose

into the mud. Moored boats loom, we push off from them . We're dead exhausted, alone, no one walking the paths, no one in the river, black clouds charging in, the sun deserted totally, the wind now not only fierce but COLD. My sailing cap is keeping the garage warm, my neck is frozen. FOCUS I demand of my mind. Get out of this mess. First sort out the ropes, fold the sail more neatly, ignore the foul slimy mud we're now caked in and don't ask or even wonder what's in it. Just concentrate. Birds standing on the ever increasing mounds of mud remind that nothing can be done until the tide comes back in. BUT we have to do something for when it does come in it's merely going to blow and blow us further onto the great stretch of mud bank on the north side of the wide Hawker's creek. We HAVE somehow to make ourselves fast.

Retrieve the Painter which somehow is in an impossible reaching position. Getting it I nearly go overboard: my legs get into the not so neat ropes around. But get it I do. Now then. Looking around we see a small yellow buoy between two moored boats.....right we'll use all our reserves of strength, work together and try to ease our way to it. 'Push, Heave, PUUUSSSHHH! We yell at each other. G's, pushing, I leap over him manage to grab the buoy, yelling 'quick help, my arm is being pulled out'. The painter retrieved, again! We get it through the loop. The green muddy slime flies into our faces as the line lifts and pings tight in the now fierce wind.

Blow wind, do your worst we are now securely fastened. Our 30 seconds smug gloat, like pride, ends in a fall as the realization dawns that even when the tide comes in we have a boat either side of us, mud banks both in front and behind. We cannot row against the wind, we cannot sail into it. We wait we get colder; we know that we HAVE to get back to Keyhaven. BUT.. HOW? Slowly the flood tide starts to be effective, the birds take flight. We HAVE to get the main up. Easy with the fierce nose to the wind. We haven't got it fully up. Calm now! We start again. It's up. Another triumph. Now what is the PLAN?

What we'll do is....mm..... well,..mm...I think the only thing we can do is sail off on Starboard, get the plate down as far and as quickly as possible, and immediately we get a bit of way on, we'll go about, we'll miss then both the moored boats, the mud and be facing towards Keyhaven.

We go through this again. Will it work? It will if we work together, and most of all if we YELL like mad else we'll not be heard in this wind. (As I write, I'm right there, I've got the fear and the butterflies in my stomach. One knew the impossibility of the task one didn't know the consequences, yet it had to be done.)

We go through the routine again. Right. But how to get the Painter free without swinging the boat round. Lengthening it only pushed the stern towards the mud bank and took us a few degrees away from being able to achieve. So, pull us back in. Right, we have to do it and do it quicker than quick. All I can remember is a rope flying into the sail, the grunge on it splashing over us, and in less than half a split second the main sheet is wrenched out of my hand, we're RUNNING towards Hawkers and the long line of moored boats, I'm yelling, I've NO control, OMG we'll hit a boat, Oh! No, I can do nothing. Gordon: 'Don't worry, just concentrate, we'll hit a bank of mud and that will stop us! Yells G.' By the gift of God we managed to be on the Starboard tack, the boom away from the boats, the wind kept them firmly, it

seemed dead centre of the narrow winding stream, whilst propelling us at an impossibly imaginable speed. Gordon I yell, we haven't hit any mud, look there's the Yellow entrance buoy, we're out in the Solent. How on earth did we ever get here?. That's crazy, it's impossible to do from where we were.

We look at each other and smile our slimy, green and black faced smile. All part of the fun and a continuation of the many hair raising sailing adventures we've shared together. Well, we can't go home now can we? No agrees G. let's go for it. We're Goose winging, lolloping frighteningly from side to side, the stern is lifting high, too high for comfort, we're surging on the crest of the following sea, and we're surfing wildly alone in the Solent. We're not afraid; we have the greatest confidence in our wee Lym River Scow. An orange Lifeboat, charging off towards the Needles wanders over. Oh! How comforting, how kind I think. He looks, decides we're coping and meanders off to the more needy. We relax, we're really going to enjoy this. Well as long as we don't do anything silly. Oh! Heck we have to Jibe In this wind. It has to be done: the ever nearing muddy shallow coast line cannot be ignored. I chicken out and do a 365.

No Problem. We won't go through any creeks we'll head for the River (Lym), mentally noting that it'll be pretty rough there and oh! Dear Ferry's-passing each other no doubt! In what seemed like 10 mins but in actual fact maybe 30.whatever, we've never 'flown-sailed' there so quick ever. We hit some mud, it shakes but doesn't tip us. . A warning just to stay out a little more, though no need to make for Jack in the Basket.

Oh! Good! the ferries have just passed each other, no prob there and certainly nothing else afloat. Oh! Except another L. R. Scow, brand new by the looks of it (can't remember the number...5?? ) a lone man having a great time zig sagging safely off Pylewell. We wave and begin to concentrate on a bit of going-about, whizzing through the Barrier, realizing the wind shifts of the ever increasingly enclosed river. No probs though until we pass the Royal Lym. and the slack and changing wind to tack into. And the next Ferry patiently waiting to leave.. I know they're long but really on our fourth tack needed to get past in the narrow channel between the multi zillion pound super yachts moored at the end of Berthon Marina and the Ferry. Attempting to tack with flapping sails, knowing that the Master of the Ferry was being ever, ever so patient...after 4 tacks we flipped-flapped out of his way. The hooter went, the ferry was away and so were we in clearer wind and water. Good-Ho!

Next, to get the sails down before the wind had more of its wily way. A convenient jetty, sails down and on with the rowing. Up opposite the Ship Inn came the realization that the rising tide was not yet getting us out of very shallow water. Also, that no way would the mast slide under the railway bridge.

'Can I help you, what are you trying to do?' (TRYING! I ask you!).

'Good evening Harbour Master, ( I politely said to the young, could be 14 or 15yr old lad. Course he couldn't possibly be could he? ) Thank you, we're taking our Scow up to John Claridge's yard and have suddenly realized that we can't get under the bridge.'

No need, says would be H.M. his yard is down in Lower Pennington Lane. We'd know if he'd moved. What you need to do is get over to the Ship, tie up for the night on the public pontoon there and come back tomorrow.'

Thank you so much for your help, I reply. He swings away. We change direction but NOT to the public slipway but to a more secure Aqua-boats old yard area. For no-way do we intend to fail at this stage, late though it may be. Tied up, and a surprised John Claridge phoned, (we've got him before he finished for the day). Immediately he offers to whiz round with a trailer to collect us, if we can get out at the Town quay. We can!

Meanwhile the reality that by now all the Lymington/Milford buses have finished for the day, we are both exhausted, wet and totally, totally perished. I phone nearby daughter who's already en route 'out'. She will arrange for car rescue by granddaughter.

Boat on trailer. Nearby loos for changing into dry trews, granddaughter arrives bearing steaming giant thermal mugs of tea and woolly rugs. We are well blessed. Except that it is not mud and grunge over my lower leg it is, seems like, can't possibly be, but is, thick black blood everywhere. This is the last straw What in heaven's name? Granddaughter asks. 'Granny, that needs proper attention' . 'Oh! No', I say, Gordon will be furious and where can I go at this time of night? Seems the small injury clinic at our wonderful new Lymington hospital stays open until eight o'clock. Good we're just in time. Can it really be that time already; it was only half past one a few minutes ago!

Off we speed. I somehow seem to jump a smallish queue. I'm sitting down the nurse smiles and says 'now we'll be looking after you, but first let's get the details.....And yes that's where you came in. You see they not only need to know name, age, address but how and why and WHEN.

'Well, I feebly replied, I was sailing, and well it was a bit rough and well we got onto the mud and well I suppose it must have somehow, well just happened' She gives me a 'don't give me that crap' look. I stutter on. Well you see nurse, well I just had to be concentrating quite hard to well, sort of survive and I suppose, well, I just, well didn't, well couldn't have noticed'.

'You come in here at this time of night, with a leg like that and you tell me that you don't know how, you don't know where and don't know WHEN you did it. . You've been doing what all these hours at your age, I'm half your age and I would not be doing a thing like that. No way would I. Let's get it really looked at and cleaned up. Mmm, I'm afraid it'll need some stitches, four strips, what a mess, I just hope it does the trick for you and heals well.

Now, how are you going to get home? Oh! Yer granddaughter will take you? Oh! So, your G'daughter has come to rescue her mad granny has she. I shouldn't say that to you, but that's what you are you know, a mad granny. That's what she'll be thinking, but of course she won't say that to you, no she'd never. She must love her old granny. She what, brought you steaming hot tea and rugs? Well I never, she stops dead and stares unbelievably, well what a lovely granddaughter you have for sure.

Shaking her head, she turns back to enter notes on the Computer.....stops.....'well I never did. What a coincidence, do you know we share the same birthday. Well I can't believe it. Only I'm only going to be forty. I'll be having a great celebration in my garden, all my family will come. Oh yes we plan to have a lovely time. And what will you be doing. You'll have to celebrate when you're 80. Well yes I say, I'm having a Paddling Party. A what? Well a Paddling Part. Well I've never been to one of those. Oh! And where will you be having that? Oh! No you'll be in the water again I guess. Well just you be careful....a paddling party well I never. Type, type type.suddenly STOP. 'You know, you're going out to that wild place and you know I'll not be on duty on that day, I'll not be here if you need me. Remember that won't you, you just listen now, remember that.'

'Yes' I say childlike.

Type, type, stop. 'Will granddaughter be there too?.....Oh! she will, now that's good. Yes, that's very good. Oh! Well if she's there then I'll not be worrying about you. I know she'll be looking after you, she'll be watching for you. Yes, that's, good, that's alright then.

Now then just you look after that leg and rest it well and get to your own doctor. As I leave, I hear 'I'm sure I just don't know!

PS. I know though that you'll all understand, that things, well just happen in a boat.

## Diary of a Scow

### October

I was cross - the boss loaded me on to my trailer and drove me home as he was going away. All the other Scows shouted nasty things as I was driven off on my trailer because they knew they had several more 'Potters.' Mind you these 'Potters' are supposed to be all friendly and not competitive. I keep trying to tell the boss that but he will not listen. He insists on pulling all my strings in different ways to see if I can go faster. If he just left my bits and pieces alone I would show him how to sail faster - just stop fiddling. I think the boss made friends with the kind Mr. Graham who watches over the Scow Potters because he went out with him in a motor boat. He came back saying that there were some very good bosses and I would have to try much harder if we were going to do well in the racing. I told him to lose weight and get fit and then we would go faster. He went off in a huff to do something he calls 'Kettlebells.'

### November

I had a quiet month as the boss went off to some hot spot in Asia - he did come back from a place called Yangon where the boats at the local sailing club did not get nearly as much attention as he lavishes on me. He said that the boats there were all wrinkly and had rough skins - I fluttered my shroud plates and said that if I was looked after I would look after him - particularly if he used a good anti-wrinkle polish on my skin. The boss has got worried about something called the Racing Rules of Sailing. I keep telling him that I don't want to hit any of my friends and I don't want other boats hitting me. Seems simple to me - just one rule: keep clear of other boats and sail fast. Just look ahead, think ahead, just like driving a car. I think the boss is going to want to talk to me more about this as he thinks some Scow owners are better car drivers than sailors.

### December

The boss came back from his travels and took me to see the nice Dr. John. He gave me a thorough medical and told the boss off for not getting me square on to the trolley when he hauled me out of the water. I knew there was something wrong with my left buttock but the nice Doctor put some filler in the grazes and polished all my bottom. Smooth as a baby's I think the boss said. Dr. John also gave me a buoyancy test - a very uncomfortable procedure when they blocked all my hatches and blew air into me to see if I had any holes in my innards - all very distressing for a modest young lady. The boss also took my Mainsail to Dr. Pete and she came back saying what a great day she had had at the spa. Lots of warm water and gentle massaging before being carefully dried and inspected. The Mainsail said that she was now happily rolled up and hibernating in her bag for the rest of the winter. She was however not too happy when the boss' wife said she had to go to the garage and that she could not live on the sofa in the drawing room.

2013, Wendy Stickley, *Doodle*, 347

I push out the nose, let the wind fill her sail  
I'm free as a bird – every stress is exhaled .....

Waves lapping gently against the hull  
Flocks of hungry herring gulls,  
Swans beat their wings, flying higher and higher.  
Bubbling geese rest amidst the samphire,  
Sounds full of wonder ..... Keyhaven, I vow,  
Is a wonderful place to be sailing my scow!

Sunshine reflecting like millions of stars,  
Overfalls marking the shallow sand bars,  
Whitewashed lighthouse against clear azure sky  
(Permanent grin on my face – can't think why!)  
Sights full of wonder ..... Keyhaven, I vow,  
Is a brilliant place to be sailing my scow!

A quick flash of blue where a kingfisher darts  
And the call of the curlew quickens my heart;  
The wind's in my face and I'm covered with spray  
All's right with the world on this beautiful day!  
Feelings of wonder ..... Keyhaven, I vow,  
Is the most awesome place to be sailing my scow!



**2014, Marigold de Jongh, *Speedwell*, 428**

### **A Tell Tale in Suffolk**

This is a land-based tale of the misfortunes of a scow in transit. I had been told by the Sailing Club at Waldringfield where I kept my scow, that I could no longer keep it in their dinghy park as it wasn't a racing boat, but that I could keep it at the top of a long hill in a field by the car park – where it would be impossible to drag her up. So I joined the Ipswich Sailing Club on the river Orwell.

I had bought a new trailer for the boat and was towing it over the Orwell bridge – a long bridge on the A14 dual carriageway. Suddenly there was a scraping noise and I saw one of the wheels disappearing over the horizon in front of me. I stopped rapidly and ran to catch it before it went over the top and down the other side. But before I reached it, a lorry swung over into the slow lane and just touched the wheel making it fall over. So I was able to retrieve it. A police car appeared from nowhere and they closed the inner lane so that we were able to put the wheel back into place before driving to a garage to have it secured properly.

Fortunately this all happened before I picked up the boat, and the rest of the journey to Ipswich was uneventful. I asked Radio Suffolk to thank the lorry driver for me. When I contacted the supplier of the trailer, they told me that a youngster had fitted the wheels and just made the nuts hand tight!

## **2015, James Kennedy (age 6½)**

### **Bart's Bash**

I woke up and felt really excited because I was going to do Bart's Bash. That was the biggest sailing race in the world. It was in the memory of Andrew Simpson, a famous Olympic sailor who died in the Americas Cup.

We got up early and went to pick up Max Pemberton, my cousin. Then we drove to Granny and Grandpa's house at the edge of Keyhaven. It's called Aubrey House. You might have heard of their house because a famous writer once stayed there. (Tennyson).

We went to the Keyhaven Yacht Club and I put on my sailing gear which is a wet suit, life jacket and boots. It was sunny but really windy. We were going in a scow called "Flying Turtle". Grandpa got the boats ready and then Max and I jumped in.

The river was swarming with boats. We launched the boat and went sailing off to the start line. Grandpa was helming and Max and I were doing the jib. Pssst – don't tell anyone but we got a bit lost on the way.

We were covering our faces with our coat hoods to get the water off our faces. We were a bit chilling too.

The Solent was very rough that day and there were a lot of violent waves. I felt like I was having a heart attack because it was so wild. Granny was bailing water out of the boat and wanted to go home! We sang "Sing Hosanna" to cheer her up.

It was soon time to go home and we all collected certificates. I loved Bart's Bash.

### Life after Scow Sailing

Sadly, rising eighty I had to give up instructing the young Wednesday Junior Scow sailors as it had become increasingly difficult to balance the boat, and simple manoeuvres had become something of a nightmare.

However, bigger boats were not a problem and on a pontoon at the Haven a sailing friend kept his Maxi 1000 adjacent to our Westerly Fulmar, whilst another cruising companion berthed his Moody 33 on the river.

We three decided that given a fair wind and tide, a gentleman's cruise up the Beaulieu, Medina to Alum Bay, Studland or Chichester Harbour to enjoy lunch and a glass together should be a regular event. Thus what became known as the "The boys' day out" was established. But sunshine also called and for some ten years we took leave of our domestic duties to charter in the Mediterranean; the Ionian, Turkey and Croatia were our playgrounds, but in time the work of the Great Reaper reduced our numbers to two, later revived to three, built to four and then five. Being no longer young we value our own space and comfort; we wanted five cabins, two or three heads, good showers, a large fridge and a comfortable cruiser.

We found a boat which fitted the bill, a 60 foot Bavaria which sailed surprisingly well. We were not without experience: between us, many years of RORC racing, a couple of Fastnets, two early Atlantic crossings, cruises to the Azores, a bit of exploring in the Pacific islands and the usual Brittany and welcoming ports of Normandy. Thus all the crewing needs could easily be met. I have always enjoyed passage planning, navigation and pilotage, but being somewhat Stone Age I had more confidence in paper charts, parallels and dividers, than magic battery reliant instruments, so I carry these with my faithful had bearing compass wherever we charter.

The Med. isn't always the tranquil scene portrayed in the brochures and we have had our moments with severe weather. Two charter boats were lost during our mini cruises in Turkey and Croatia, but happily we were snug in secure anchorages, not having to seek one in really heavy weather. A bottle of bubbly was produced to celebrate a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. We calculated ages and combined we totalled some 435 years. Putting down his glass, the birthday boy thanked us for making a fuss of him, but felt obliged to say we had chosen the wrong day! We were 24 hours too soon.

I checked my passage plans and in the morning we set course for a discreet overnight anchorage in which there is a rather grand restaurant so that we could renew the birthday celebrations on the proper day!

However, scows are more than just a fond memory and I was privileged to be asked to present a trophy to the over 70's winner in the 2014 Nationals. From early days of a handful of boats to today's considerable and still growing fleet, it is a visual feast for ex scow sailors, and the public, to see so many colourful sails on the water, crewed by the young and not so young. Long may the class flourish.

## 2016, Chris Knox, *Goshawk*, 315

### Trailing *Goshawk* to Salcombe

The splendidly designed road trailer makes it easy to load the launching trolley (with scow attached!) and to secure everything for a long journey. Having achieved this, you are ready for the 'off' but don't forget to take a spare wheel. Also, it is important to append the lights in such a way that they don't fall off en route, as happened to us on the M5 near Exeter.

Hilary and I have trailed *Goshawk* to Salcombe every year since 2009, berthing her in the Batson Creek Boat Park, within feet of a superb slipway and pontoon. What fun it has been to sail in that wonderful estuary.

There are so many options. It is a short reach across to East Portlemouth Beach for



a bucket and spade afternoon with the grandchildren. A more challenging sail takes you to South Sands, at the mouth of the river. This is far more enjoyable than going by ferry and the ice creams are equally good! For a spirit of adventure reminiscent of 'Swallows and Amazons', a trip up towards Kingsbridge takes some beating. Then there is the beautiful South Pool Creek to explore, ending a short walk from a gastro-pub, the Millbrook.

We have hugely enjoyed taking *Goshawk* to Salcombe each year. It is a lovely town, seemingly untouched by the hurly burly of modern life. Instead of a supermarket, there is the incomparable Cranch's. The town boasts a wonderful bakery, an excellent butcher and plenty of purveyors of fish, especially crab. Great dinghy sailing adds hugely to its charms. It is an easy few hours motoring, provided you avoid the high summer season. Plenty of rented accommodation is available at reasonable prices, except during the school holidays. So, why not tow your scow to Salcombe? We might even arrange a mini regatta and frighten the locals!



Chris, first winner of the Trail Sail Trophy

## 2016, David Barnett, *Merhaba*, 500

### Sailing at Seaton, Devon

It suddenly dawned on me that there was an obvious lack of headroom under the rapidly approaching arch of the bridge. I was returning from a river race on the River Axe on a Friday evening. We have fortnightly river races from May until October. Dropping the mast at the club we row under the two road bridges (old and new) to an island on the other side where we rig the boats and sail up the river with the tide to our start line, dropping our buoys on the way. After racing we meet up on the green at Axmouth for drinks and nibbles, before sailing back with the turned tide to the aforementioned island which on spring tides disappears, as did I the first time I jumped out to de-rig. Finding a high spot to hold the boat I can now drop sails and mast without getting my feet wet. Rollicks, oars and off under the bridges, mast, gaff and boom tucked under the thwart and resting on the foredeck. The old bridge was opened in 1877 and is the oldest standing concrete bridge, a scheduled ancient monument and not in the least daunted by my feeble attempt to modify one of its arches with my burgee and mast head.



Pebble beaches come and go and change shape by the hour and Seaton beach is no exception. Sometimes in the winter storms virtually all the pebbles will disappear leaving behind a gently sloping sandy beach, oh, if only this could last through to the summer months, boats launching and retrieving would be so much easier and we would not lose so many sailing days due to breaking waves and nothing else.

The Club (Axe YC) has a digger which levels the shelved beach into a more manageable incline for our canvas mats - if we could convince the driver to go out another 70 metres to flatten the shelf our waves would flatten, but for some reason the driver is reluctant. Launching on an ebb tide can be quite an enjoyable exercise but landing 90 minutes later with an onshore wind and a four foot wall of shingle, knowing that as soon as you come in on one wave the next is going to fill the boat doubling its weight is another matter. "Many hands make light work" from the winch operator to the landing sailors pulling the boats above the surf line. Trolleys do not run easily, if at all, on shingle so by the time all the boats are safely at the top of the canvas mats we have all had a jolly good workout.

Launching into surf with an onshore wind can be a daunting experience, get it wrong and you are picked up and dumped unceremoniously back on the beach. Northerly offshore winds are a breeze, providing the fine shingle doesn't jam the plate making a solo windward return almost impossible on an ebbing tide. These are the exceptions rather than the rule, most of the time Lyme Bay and the River Axe are



lovely places to sail. We have a good friendly group of dinghy sailors, sailing a mixed fleet.

The highlight of the sailing year for me is when I put Merhaba on a trailer and head up the A35 to Keyhaven. Last year I also went with five Axe One Designs for a weekend sailing on the River Beaulieu based at Gin Farm. We had three days of relaxation from Bucklers Hard down to the Solent - no surf, no bridges, no shingle. BLISS!

### Tales from the Dinghy Park

Some of you will be aware that Scows, when resting in the dinghy park, do converse with one another and have a good old gossip about their owners, recent events etc. They can also be quite fashion conscious, they do notice who has been treated to a new cover or trolley and as for being left to fill up with rain water well.....! For the doubters amongst you, some years ago in 2008 the Tell Tale Trophy was won by Liz Watson when she advised us of the same.



This year my boat *MeMe* has been sporting some very flashy yellow mast head float bags; very neat they are and easy to fit. One day she was asked by one of the boats what they were. This poor boat was feeling rather sad, bruised and in need of some TLC. She had been out on a lovely windy day and all had been going well until she had capsized. She thought capsizing was quite fun until she went too far, turtled and got her gaff stuck in the mud. The indignity of being righted by the support rib still smarted. There was a lot of horrid smelly mud still clinging to the top of the gaff and sail. To add insult to injury she had lost her favourite burgee and she was sure there was some water in her buoyancy tanks. All in all it had not been a pleasant experience for her or her crew, who had left her in a bit of a mess whilst they went and warmed up and cheered themselves with a few bottoms up in the bar. One of the boats commented that it was lucky the support rib was there or she might still be upside down in the Solent; obviously not an Optimist!

*MeMe* felt very sorry for her as she could smell the mud and remembered being swamped during a very windy Figure of 8 Race, and that hadn't been much fun. She explained that she had been fitted with the two air bags on the top of her gaff because they were designed to prevent the gaff from sinking and the boat turtling. She had heard her owner comment that probably they weren't considered "very cool", whatever that means, but it was better than trying to right a turtled boat on one's own or with small grandchildren as helpers. A murmur went round the dinghy park agreeing with that one.



2016, Carolyn Howden, *Bocca Lupo*, 335

“On the Start Line”





2017, Carolyn Howden, *Bocca Lupo*, 335

### Time for a Face Lift

Well I am rather feeling my age!

My outer skin is certainly in need of attention. My cheeks are dull due to too much exposure to the sun and there is a nasty scar along one side. My rear end is wearing thin and my once smooth shiney bottom is grazed and rough! To add to this my sails are stretch marked and wrinkled.



All is not lost! My skipper has decided that I deserve an extra special Christmas present! I am being sent away to that caring clinic on the other side of the water. I am to be given a full body rub, tone up and new colourising treatment! I will then be enveloped in red sailcloth and delivered on a new cosy cradle!

I even have a sturdy blue overcoat to protect me from the elements.

Well here I am! My performance on the water may not be any better but, who cares, I feel ready for anything!

### WOW\* with no Wind

A lazy summer's evening on the Keyhaven river or a training exercise in rowing a rigged Scow? Without the advantage of oars, the rest of the WOW\* fleet of Qubas and a Laser needed to be towed up the river, which was also a good training exercise. Bravo for the versatility of our beautiful Lymington River Scows, allowing me to reach the Quay under my own steam and with a whisper of wind.

I have some small experience of rowing a rigged Scow. On one occasion many years ago I took part in an expedition when three of us circumnavigated the Isle of Wight in three Keyhaven Scows. Having threaded The Needles we ran out of wind off Tennyson Down. There was nothing for it but to take to the oars. We rowed and we rowed until we reached St Catherine's Point. There we decided to make use of our helpful mother ship, in the form of Ken Wreyford in one of his fishing boats, and towed round to Bembridge for the night. Next morning Ken towed us back almost to our stopping point and we were able to sail happily on round the Island as far as Wootton Creek for our second night. The warm welcome from and well deserved supper at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, Fishbourne were much appreciated. There was no need for oars during the rest of the expedition as we had fine weather and a steady southwesterly wind for the next leg to Newtown Creek, where we spent our final night. The passage from Newtown to Keyhaven brought a wonderful adventure to an end.



*\*WOW (Women On Water, previously known as Ladies Sailing) is a KYC group comprising a mixed fleet of sailing dinghies. Editor*

