

THE SALCOMBE YAWL OWNERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1993



*Salcombe Sailing Club Regatta, 1948. Y16 'Ariel', Y9 'Priscilla', Y7 'Choice'.
Note that 'Choice' is not carrying a bowsprit.*

NOTE FROM THE HIGH CHAIR

Welcome to the spring edition of our newsletter. At this time of the year, with plans taking shape for the season, it's time to sum up 1992 and look forward to this year's sailing.

The past - well, what a lot to talk about (most covered later). The winds were light to start, windy/v. windy in the middle and all over the place to finish. Another year with very few solid sea breezes setting in. Where have they gone? Any theories?

The racing was as competitive as ever with several new boats joining the party. Talking of parties two excellent parties last year, thanks to Ian (98) and Nick, Richard and Jude (107).

It is of interest, looking through the results, that a different boat won each series and likewise the open events (a rare occurrence).

Looking back, the highlights last year for me were:

Barney's (138) win in the Sailing Club series

Arthur (110) finishing under full sail to take 3rd place in the Regatta's most talked about race

Simon's (141) reluctance to wear the capsized belt!

Losing the yawl cricket challenge to Seve's (80) lot!

So to the future:

Our measurer (John D), being a computer buff, has written a handicapping programme which we hope to use for an overall handicap cup for the summer series. This will be based on your results in earlier races. NO sandbagging please.

The Yacht Club are also going to hold an extra Yawl weekend on the May Day Bank Holiday weekend (see Diary Dates for 1993) so out with the sandpaper and varnish early this year.

May I wish all Yawlies a happy and fast 1993 season (but not too quick!).

Finally a big thank you to the Gibbens family for their race tactics to end our run!!

FROM THE EDITOR

Well, here it is at last. I think this is the 5th Newsletter now since we started three years ago.

What a season it was. Surely the most spectacular day must have been Thursday 13th August, when five more helms and crews joined the famous Upside Down Club.

Thursday August 13th, 11.33 hrs. Brixham Coastguard issue the following gale warning: 'Plymouth S.W. gale force 8 imminent'.

13.20 hrs. Faces peering from behind trees on the Portlemouth shore to see if any faces were peering from behind houses on the Salcombe shore, to see if any mizzens were being hoisted. No!

13.45 hrs. A sail is seen to be hoisted on Y74, four more sails appear on other yawls. Y74's sails come back down. Finally 14 yawls set sail for the start line.

14.20 hrs. The race is on, to the deafening and expensive sound of flogging sails.*

contd.

On a more serious note though, this sort of day and weather clearly demonstrates how vulnerable the Salcombe Yawl is to a capsize, and what a dead lump it is in the water. All the yawls that capsized had to be taken to the beach and refloated, so whatever you do never capsize a yawl outside the harbour.

There would appear to have been no serious damage this year during racing, apart from spars. Most of the damage seems to have occurred on the moorings. Just before Regatta Week Y74 was rammed on her moorings. She needed new decks all down the starboard side. The culprit has never been identified.

All the yawls at Salcombe have been ashore since December. As far as I have heard there have been no orders placed for any new boats. Y20 and Y35 have both returned to Salcombe after a long absence. It's good to see them both back in the harbour; a yawl never looks right away from Salcombe.

The winter sports season is well under way as usual. The Yawl Downhill Run has been open for some time, from the top of the Salure Mountain down to Courchevel, 1300m. Just time yourselves down. The present downhill champs are Woody Woodward Y141 (mens) and Lesley Shove Y99 (ladies). Their times of course are unofficial, but we believe them! Who wouldn't? After all they are yawl sailors.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all good sailing in 1993.

Scratch

Y22

*See Fin's report elsewhere for the gory details!

FOR SALE AND WANTED

A For Sale and Wanted column in our magazine would be of benefit to all owners and potential owners of Salcombe Yawls.

For Sale

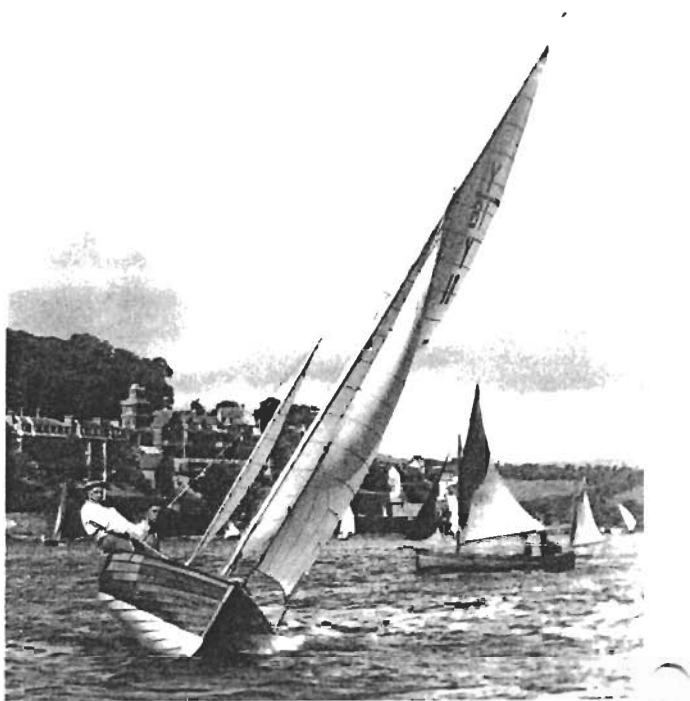
Y93 - PETE THORNING Highly recommended. Choice of colours.

Y98 - IAN McCORMICK Complete with dental floss.

Y144 - JON ALSOP Low mileage.



Y17 sailing comfortably, circa 1950.



Y16 just after she was launched, 1948.

Wanted

HELMSMAN - must be a good swimmer - apply Y103.

Rear view mirrors, to keep an eye on the rest of the fleet - Y145.

Dinghy with yawl crew - Y106.

Maintenance free bronze keel - all Salcombe Yawl owners.

For Sale

Salcombe Yawl with maintenance free bronze keel - apply Alec Stone.

Wanted

Owner for spare Salcombe Yawl - The Commodore, Y33.

Decca navigator - Y138.

A set of matching bathroom fittings - Y148.

A Salcombe Yawl - 149!

A new Gibbens/Morrison Salcombe Yawl complete with proven helm - Graham Morell.

Some ski waxes - the Shoves.

Some bungy for mizzen shrouds - Y61 and others.

THE EDITOR would like to apologize for this light hearted introduction into the commercial world and would be pleased to receive any genuine 'For Sale and Wanted' items for inclusion in the next issue of the news letter.

Anyone who wishes to put an entry in or who needs more information please contact David Gay on Kingsbridge 581014.

THE NUFFIN CHALLENGE CUP

Bigbury Golf Club again shuddered as the start of the Yawl Owners Association golf day arrived. We all shuddered when we saw Simon Gibbens wearing a canary yellow ensemble that was the nearest to a birdy he was to get all day.

Yet again the weather was kind and 36 holes were played in magnificent conditions. I believe all 25 of us thoroughly enjoyed a well run and most entertaining day.

Over the next decade the yacht increased steadily and in 1967 three new boats, Y25, 26 and 27 were launched from Goodheller; they cost £250. Around that time I sold 'Ariel' to the Island Cruising Club - for not much less than I had originally paid for her.

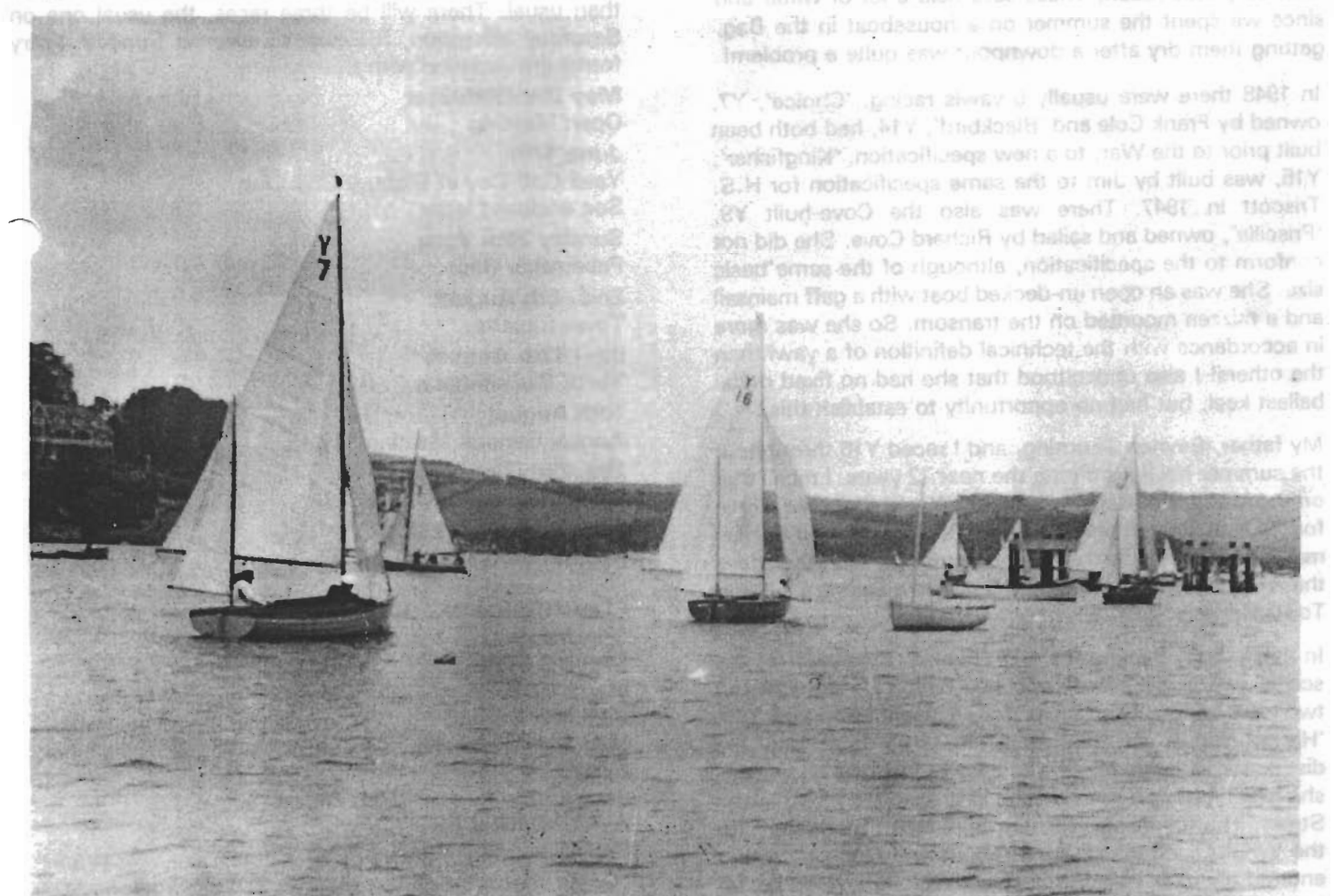
We are grateful to James Thorne for his article on yacht racing in the 1940s and 50s and also for the photographs of several of the earlier yachts in action which appear throughout this newsletter.

ARIEL AND THE EARLY POST-WAR YEARS

'Ariel', Y16, was built by Jim Stone in 1948 and the cost of the complete boat was £250. I have tried to apply inflation to this figure to arrive at a comparable figure today, but the results have varied from £8,000 upwards to £10,000. She was planned in detail; suitable manrope was difficult to obtain and a similar problem arose with ply for the decks. The hull was varnished and white andouling used for the bottom. There was no coaming along the side decks, but it extended outwards in a V from a point about 9 inches forward of the mast. I think the idea was to add to the ease and comfort of the crew. However, there was an occasional problem with water swirling over the lee side; this was changed to the present configuration.



L to R: Y14 'Blackbird', Y15 'Kingfisher', Y17 'Blinkie', Y7 'Choice', Y16 'Ariel'. Blackstone Mark, 1950



Y7, Y16 and Y14 in line astern passing the Yacht Club, circa 1950.

ARIEL AND THE EARLY POST-WAR YEARS

Ariel, Y16, was built by Jim Stone in 1948 and the cost of the complete boat was £250. I have tried to apply inflation to this figure to arrive at a comparable figure today, but the results have varied from £6,000 upwards to £10,000. She was planked in larch; suitable mahogany was difficult to obtain and a similar problem arose with ply for the decks. The hull was varnished and white antifouling used for the bottom. There was no coaming along the side decks, but it extended outwards in a V from a point about 9 inches forward of the mast. I think the idea was to add to the ease and comfort of the crew. However, there was on occasions a problem with water swilling in over the lee side; after a few years we changed to the present conventional layout.

Unknown to me Jim also came up with another innovation which he had been using in Blackbird; a large wooden plate which was inserted into the space left in the centre box when the plate was lowered. Although I am sure it did reduce eddies it was awkward to put in position and a nuisance in the boat at other times. It was a considerable time before slot rubbers arrived in Yawls! After a few years we dispensed with the wooden plate and had the after top of the centre box covered in.

The yawls in 1948 had no jamming cleats but there was a fixed cleat mounted on the top of the centre box to ease the strain of the jib sheet if and when required. The absence of jib sticks added to the crew's problems on the run and it was a year or so before this changed. A short length of track was mounted on the after deck with a traveller for the mainsheet block. The mainsheet finally came down to a large fixed cleat on the after end of the centre box. The sails were of cotton and the main was cut with very little roach. These sails held a lot of water and since we spent the summer on a houseboat in the Bag, getting them dry after a downpour was quite a problem!

In 1948 there were usually 5 yawls racing. 'Choice', Y7, owned by Frank Cole and 'Blackbird', Y14, had both been built prior to the War, to a new specification. 'Kingfisher', Y15, was built by Jim to the same specification for H.S. Triscott in 1947. There was also the Cove-built Y9, 'Priscilla', owned and sailed by Richard Cove. She did not conform to the specification, although of the same basic size. She was an open un-decked boat with a gaff mainsail and a mizzen mounted on the transom. So she was more in accordance with the technical definition of a yawl than the others! I also understood that she had no fixed metal ballast keel, but had no opportunity to establish this.

My father, Beynon Thorning, and I raced Y16 throughout the summer holidays during the next 12 years. I recall that on the Monday of Regatta week the Yacht Club had a race for '16 foot sloops' and the yawls raced with their mizzen masts bare. Perhaps they went faster! On the other days the races were also run by the Salcombe Sailing Club and Town Regatta.

In 1950, E.H. Blinkhorn's Y17 'Blinkie' appeared on the scene, and in 1952 Jim, who had built Y17, brought out two new boats; Y18, 'Swift' for Dr. Hammond and Y19, 'Heron' for a Mr. Reeves. This latter boat had the distinction of being the first to capsize in a race. However, she is still (safely?) in existence in a boatyard along Island Street. The following year Jim built Y20, 'Stonechat' for the Wright brothers of Portlemouth and Douglas Winter entered the yawl building business with Y21, 'Coralie' for Lennox Shepherd.

Over the next decade the yawls increased steadily and in 1961 three new boats, Y35, 36 and 37 were launched from Goodshelter; they cost £350. Around that time I sold 'Ariel' to the Island Cruising Club - for not much less than I had originally paid for her.

We are grateful to Harris Thorning for his article on yawl racing in the 1940s and 50s, and also for the photographs of several of the earlier yawls in action which appear throughout this newsletter.

FOR SALE

Y119, Stone, new decks by Mike Atfield 1991.
Road trailer, good condition.

£2850.

(Bargain price as must sell).

Michael Power, telephone (0794) 40725.

DIARY DATES FOR 1993

April 1st

Subscriptions due, please - Full Member £10, Associate Member £2. Subscription form enclosed with this mailing.

May 1st/2nd

Open Meeting

A new event with lavish prizes promised by the Yacht Club, to tempt you out of your boathouses a little earlier than usual. There will be three races, the usual one on Saturday afternoon, followed by two on Sunday. Entry forms are included with this mailing.

May 29th/30th/31st

Open Meeting

June 17th

Yawl Golf Day at Bigbury Golf Club
See enclosed letter.

Sunday 20th June

Pacemaker Race.

2nd - 6th August

Town Regatta.

8th - 13th August

Yacht Club Regatta.

10th August

Annual General Meeting, 8 p.m.

28th/29th/30th August

Open Meeting.

Sunday August 29th

Cocktail Party, 7.30 p.m.

COMMISSIONING RACE

20th March

SPRING SERIES

March 27th - April 24th. 5 races*.

SAILING SERIES

May 8th - June 19th. 6 races*.

SUMMER SERIES

June 26th - August 22nd. 7 races*.

AUTUMN SERIES

September 4th - October 23rd. 8 races*.

*Dates should be confirmed with S.Y.C. Programme.

Many Yawls were represented by their drivers and crew, some more adept than others. Some of us have golf club grips on our Yawl tiller extensions. Scratch has a tiller extension on his golf club with the head held on by jubilee clips. His last fishing trip was obviously in a skip.

The morning round was won by Richard Murray with a splendid score of 40 points. He must be congratulated for only dropping 7 shots to par. Nearest the pin on the 17th was won by Robert Hitchin. Most of us failed to find the green, but Robert dropped the ball 2 feet from the hole.

The standard of the scoring was higher than previous years. There seems to have been a lot of sneaky practice going on and even the lunchtime drinking was curtailed - golf's equivalent to dry sailing? There were still however plenty of score cards which resembled a sailing course card with buoys near Kingsbridge predominantly used.

It was very encouraging to welcome Ollie Alsop. Next year we hope to find even more golfers or newcomers to golf so that the event can continue to flourish.

Immediately after lunch Andrew 'Seve' Read won the longest drive competition by outdriving Woody. A downhill wind behind a drive of about 300 yards was required.

The main event, the afternoon round, was won by Mike Treleaven and Mervyn Honey with a fine stableford score. The plastic fantastic putter for the players with most promise was won by Jon and Ollie Alsop. Ted Pearce proposed the toasts and it was again good to hear his old stories about older Yawls.

REGATTA 1992

You may remember that the Regatta was a week of brisk breezes with the climax on Thursday - a day to go down in the history of yawls.

Those of us who had the wisdom to remain on dry land cringed as sails flogged and sailors fought the wind in a sometimes vain attempt to stay in control.

After a vicious pounding just before the start with no casualties it seemed as if the brave might triumph against the elements. A smaller than usual fleet tacked to Blackstone then ran hastily up the harbour to round Snapes and head for Gerston - just in time to give us spectators time to regain our composure.

Y138, Barney and John, was the first casualty with a damaged spar. (So you have been "first", Barney!?) The fun was about to begin; the pecking order was very much as usual but it was to be a day when the only position that was to matter was the position of the mast, i.e. pointing at the sky or below the horizontal.

First to test the buoyancy was the Brown family, Y154, smartly followed by the Pike family, Y155, with what appeared to be a slow, elegant and successful capsizes.

On the final run to the line Gibbo and Woody, Y141, unable to pass Y145 on the water decided to try and "take off" to fly over the top of them - this resulted in a spectacular broach and another capsizes.

A short distance behind, John Smithers, Y143, was not to be outdone, anything they can do ... yes, another attempt at a take-off - a broach and splash!

Jon and Peter, Y144, concluded that a tactical reduction in power was required so they shut down the "main engine" and coasted home to a sedate second place.

But what was all the fuss about? **Arthur** and Jeremy, Y110, gave a display of heavy weather sailing with alternative crew position to finish third. A demonstration of how to sail in a blow without resorting to fancy manoeuvres!

David Austin, Y91, then did the opposite and showed half a dozen very intricate moves to end up with the final capsizes of the day. David said, "It seemed the right thing to do at the time!"

That evening the dinner in the club was the usual boisterous affair with Woody getting wet for the second time that day.

On Friday the wind dropped to a pleasant level for a pleasant sail to finish the week.

Overall winners were:-

Fleet A

1st Y145, Milkem and Ian

2nd Y144, Alg and Peter

3rd Y141, Gibbo and Woody

Fleet B

1st Y89, Jeremy Tabb and Mr. Bun

2nd Y99, Graham and Lesley Shove

3rd Y137, M. Beck and crew

(Let us hope that next year we can sail as one fleet).

Fin

Y148

Y CRICKET?

The DFT's (down from Townies) played a local S.Y.C. Yawlers Cricket XI on the Saturday between Regatta weeks.

A psychological advantage for the DFT's quickly emerged when Barney arrived at the Royal Oak wearing full MCC gear; quite a contrast to Nick Rowell's working clothes!

The locals batted first on a marvellous Malborough wicket in glorious sunshine. 'Smokey' Watts, Richard Gibbens and Toby Hodges all scoring well in a fair innings of 129 off 27 overs. With each fielder allocated three overs, it was quite remarkable that the locals scored so many. Not because the bowling was good, but because many of the balls were unplayable. Notable in that respect were Brian Clavin, Woody, Tim Law and Ian McGregor who bowled 16 wides in 8 overs.

Nevertheless, Tim Law obtained by deception the wickets of Ian Squire and Nick Rowell, whilst Woody took the wickets of Gibbo and Richard Murray. The surprise of the day was the fast bowling and impeccable fielding of Charlie Yeoward. Anybody would have thought that Lagos was in the West Indies.

The interval was passed quickly with the help of Pimms and cucumber sandwiches, courtesy of Mrs. Ballesteros.

The DFT's batted with consistency. Those who were good were good, and those who were unlucky - well they were unlucky (but very stylish). Yeoward, Lucocq, Greenhill, Pearce, Law and Woodward amassed between them 10 runs. David Stenbridge opened the innings with a fine 28 and Phil Holland and Seve scored undefeated 42 and 34 respectively to clinch a victory with 3 wickets and 3 overs to spare. The trophy was awarded to the DFT's but somehow next year the result might be different.

Our sincere thanks go to those who organised such a splendid event, Malborough Cricket Club for the use of the facilities, Nick Walker, Jude and Richard Murray for the Cricket Supper afterwards and all those who played and spectated. Let's hope it is a permanent fixture.

Seve.

A TRADITIONAL YAWL?

If the Church can have women priests then anything is possible, so why not a traditional yawl?

On one day last season we capsized five yawls, one going under on the beat! Fortunately no extensive damage was done. Also over the year 10 masts had to be replaced. At £500 each that is £5,000; presuming the insurance companies are going to pay for most of those there will have to be an increase in future premiums to meet it!

Although a number of new boats took to the water last year and others raced for the first time (Y146) we have lost sight of Y118, Y128 and Y63.

Over a period of time we have looked at metal masts as an answer to the increasing difficulty of finding good wooden ones. One does wonder if expense will one day force us into metal masts with all the hassle of d-section or needlespar having to be laid down, and thence to metal mizzens and booms.

Alternatively we could create a 'traditional' yawl by returning to the pre-roached sail, thus putting less pressure on the mast and lengthening its life. Both Y103 and Y148 used smaller sails last year on windy occasions and as a result have pointed higher even with a reduction in speed on the run.

Now obviously the folk at the front of the fleet with fast new boats and who are horribly fast do not want to go any slower - faster possibly and to hell with the expense! At the same time due to the restrictions on the number of boats on the line we already have two fleets in Salcombe Regatta. If instead of an 'A' and 'B' fleet we had a 'fast' and 'traditional' fleet people could put their boats to whatever strain they wished. (There was an instance last year when a chainplate pulled right through the deck!) This would then enable the fast boats to have full length (to the mast) top battens, bronze shoes, instead of cast iron ones, as well as bronze plates and any other 'go fast' ideas that may come along.

On the other hand by returning to the smaller unroached sail we could maintain the yawl as it was built and keep the wooden masts and rudder stocks as long as they are obtainable.

Now, you may ask what happens in club series racing when we only have 10 - 15 yawls of all shapes and sizes? First the traditional yawls could have a roached sail that they used in light airs, otherwise we could have a different handicap, say 115 for the fast yawls and 120 for the traditional ones. (The suggestion is a pure cockshy - not a calculated one). Again in club series we could have individual handicapping to make the racing more competitive and possibly more interesting. This would not prevent our aim of 60 yawls on the water in two fleets for Regattas or Nationals at Salcombe and could lead to there being 30 yawls in each fleet.

Food for thought?

Tom Newberry
Y131.

LETTERS

From Jeremy Hobbs Y110

I would like to suggest in some manner a method be adopted whereby other materials could be used for the keel box. I believe it was turned down last time because of the manner in which it was presented (a fait accompli) and because no agreement could be reached as to a suitable specification. I have no suggested specification but it is my opinion that, in the interests of the longevity of the boat, we should be allowed to use a more friendly material than the existing cast iron.

It is the opinion of our Company Secretary that any proposal put to an AGM should be specific enough to have a 'Yes' or 'No' decision rather than the inevitable counter-proposals and discussions. I would, therefore, ask if it may be suggested at the AGM that the Committee, in conjunction with the boat builders, could look into a specification that may be possible to bring to the next AGM so that other materials could be used. I appreciate that this request is out of date to be treated as a resolution at the AGM but I wonder whether it could be raised as an "Any Other Business" item?

Anyone with strong, similar or opposite views please contact Jeremy at Hobbs Holdings Ltd., Backwell House, Backwell, Bristol BS19 3PL.



Re-planking Y22 - Mike Atfield, who can still turn out a new yawl for £10,000.