

# The BOATER



January to April 2025 Issue 153

THAMES VINTAGE BOAT CLUB

# The Boater - Issue 153

January to April 2025

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**Cover Picture:** Detail from Brian Thompson's winning photo

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# TVBC Calendar for May to September 2025

Events that TVBC participate in and/or organise are in large bold print.

Further details are emailed to members throughout the year.

If you don't receive emails and are interested in attending an event, please ring 08454 672428 for further information and to book your place.

May	ADLS 85 <sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative return to Dunkirk: 22 <sup>nd</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> May
June	Chartered trip on DLS GRETA: Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> and Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> June  <i>Organiser: Jane Percival <a href="mailto:janepercival@icloud.com">janepercival@icloud.com</a> See further details on page 6</i>
July	Henley Royal Regatta: Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> July to Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> July  <b>Royal Swan Upping: Monday 14<sup>th</sup> - Friday 18<sup>th</sup> July</b> (TVBC boats provide the towing, the club does not organise this event.)  Henley Festival: Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> July to Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> July  <b>The 46th Thames Traditional Boat Festival, Henley:</b> <b>Friday 18th July, Saturday 19th July and Sunday 20th July</b> (moorings and landside facilities will be available from Thursday PM) <i>The TTBF is <u>not</u> organised by the TVBC. <a href="#">Please refer to the TTBF website for further details.</a></i>  <b>Complimentary drinks and nibbles for TVBC members on the riverbank on Saturday 19th July</b>
August	<b>TVBC Three Day Cruising Rally: Friday 1st – Monday 4th August</b> <i>Contact Malcolm: <a href="mailto:malcolmljones2@hotmail.com">malcolmljones2@hotmail.com</a> See further details on page</i>  ATYC Rally at Shepperton Marina: Saturday 23rd August – Monday 25th August am (not organised by TVBC, TVBC boats attend) <i>Contact Theresa for further details <a href="mailto:honsec@thamesvintageboatclub.com">honsec@thamesvintageboatclub.com</a></i>
September	<b>St Katharine Docks Classic Boat Festival: 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> September (TVBC boats attend)</b> email: <a href="mailto:marina.reception@skdocks.co.uk">marina.reception@skdocks.co.uk</a> or call 0207 264 5312 to book  <b>Totally Thames Festival:</b> <a href="https://thamesfestivaltrust.org">https://thamesfestivaltrust.org</a> <b>Southampton Boat Show:</b> Friday 19th September – Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> September

# Would you like to participate in the THREE DAY CRUISING RALLY?

Below is a taster and meal pricing for the event; overnight moorings are booked at all three venues. The full itinerary will follow.

**1<sup>st</sup> August: Penton Hook Marina**

Restaurant booked for 7pm - Two Course meal - £20.00 per person including tip.

**2<sup>nd</sup> August: Hammertons Ferry**

Restaurant booked for 7pm - Two Course meal - £37.00 per person including tip.

**3<sup>rd</sup> August: The Swan – Staines**

Optional visit to Ham House prior to leaving moorings (extra charge)

Restaurant booked for 7pm - One Course meal -£30.00 per person including tip.

If you're interested in participating, please contact Malcolm and Janine  
[malcolmjones4545@outlook.com](mailto:malcolmjones4545@outlook.com)

## IMPORTANT

Please note limited places are available

**THE CUT OFF DATE FOR REGISTERING IS 31ST MAY 2025**

Places will be allocated by email on a first come first served basis so places could be filled before this date.



## Welcome Aboard



### *From the Boater Editor*

With Easter just behind us, our summer events begin to unfold and this year we have the exciting addition of the 85th Anniversary Commemorative 'Return' to Dunkirk, so May will be a particularly busy but special month. Over 20 DLS are also TVBC member boats, therefore a large number of our membership will be taking part, as well as in the support vessel and spectator fleet that will also be crossing the Channel to welcome the Little Ships on their arrival to Dunkirk scheduled for the afternoon of Weds 21st May (subject to weather).

Due to covid in 2020, it has been ten years since the last pilgrimage to commemorate Operation Dynamo and the evacuation of over 338,000 British & Allied Troops from the beaches and with over 70 Little Ships preparing to converge in Ramsgate Harbour the anticipation is building for an amazing event.

Our Thames Boatyards are a hive of activity 'finishing' many of the fleet in readiness for the groups of vessels making their way to

Ramsgate for the weekend of 17th-18th May, prior to departure.

If you can visit Ramsgate for the build up, you will be bowled over by the scale of the event, with the largest number ever to register for the crossing at 06:00hrs Weds 21st, returning spring Bank Holiday Monday, 26th May.

The next Boater will be a Special Edition, dedicated to this important event.

June will be your opportunity to sail onboard Dunkirk Little Ship *Greta*, the oldest working Little Ship. She's a Thames Sailing Barge and National Historic Ship and with your support, we are hoping to charter her for a whole weekend. Full details are on page 6.

In July we will again be staging The Young Boaters Cruise on the Saturday afternoon of the Trad. This year, I have invited Boatbuilding Apprentices from the Academy at Lyme Regis as well as a group of 20 'Women in Boatbuilding' from many sectors of the industry, Waterman's Apprentices and trainee Marine Engineers, all of which represent the

future preservation of our historic fleet, and they are very excited to be invited as our guests for the Sailpast. Again, I will be asking for owners and skippers to support this initiative.

August is also a bumper month with the 3-day Cruising Rally and ATYC Rally at Shepperton Marina, details for signing up are

in the Club Calendar and on page 3.

As always, detailed briefings will be issued by our Hon Sec as summer progresses.

It's going to be an exciting few months ahead.

With Best Wishes

Jane

## A message from the Treasurer

The subscription for the TVBC is a very modest £30. For this, members get three magazines per year, opportunities to take part in training sessions and boating events such as rallies which are paid for by the club (the value of the rallies alone exceeds the subscription price). We do not intend to increase the subscription in the near future which has remained the same since 2010.

However, every year I have to chase up outstanding subs from late payers who nearly always pay eventually, sometimes months after the AGM, which in theory is the deadline for payment.

Therefore, at the last meeting, the committee decided that all new members would have to complete a Standing Order form which will instruct their bank to pay on 15<sup>th</sup> January each

year. As from 2026, existing members who do not pay at or before the AGM will have to repay the joining fee (as per the club constitution) and will only have the option to pay by standing order.

There is no risk in paying in this way; it is a simple matter to cancel the instruction with your bank. If your payment is made even though you intended not to remain a member, a refund would be made if notice is given by January 31<sup>st</sup>.

One final request, could all members who currently pay by Standing Order check that the payment is setup to be paid on the 15<sup>th</sup> January and change to this date if it is not. Processing all payments on the same day will make my job much easier.

Peter

## DLS **GRETA**

### Weekend sailing from Whitstable Harbour

Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th June 2025

Whitstable may be famous for its Oysters, but it is also the home port of Thames Sailing Barge & Dunkirk Little Ship, **GRETA**.

**GRETA** is the oldest operational Dunkirk Little Ship.

Members of the TVBC have previously enjoyed some fantastic times onboard her with owner and skipper Steve, his partner Penny and the ship's canine crew.

It has always been a part of the TVBC's aims to support historic vessels and those on the National Historic Ships register. Even more deserving are those privately owned and operated by individuals who fund the ongoing preservation of their vessels by keeping them working.

This allows their supporters to experience the bygone era of commercial sailing vessels.

We would like to charter **GRETA** for both days so that 12 members can sail on either:

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> or Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June.

The cost per person is £60 for a 6-hour sail from 11:30, taking in the WW2 Maunsell Forts whilst witnessing the skills involved to manoeuvre a vessel of this size from her mooring out to sea and back to port.

To express your interest in supporting this event, please email or text our Vice Commodore Jane, stating your preference for Saturday, Sunday or Either day:

[janepercival@icloud.com](mailto:janepercival@icloud.com) or text to: **07799 811318**

With your support we can help support DLS **GRETA**.

Visit [www.greta1892.co.uk](http://www.greta1892.co.uk)

Please note access to **GRETA** is via the Harbour wall ladder and is therefore not considered an accessible event for everyone.

# New Members and Boats

We welcome the following New Members and Boats to the Club

## A Dora Blu

*A Dora Blu* (NVET 165) was built in 1931 at Stephens Brothers yard in Stockton, San Francisco as a twin-screw motor yacht. She was built from long grained Port Orford Cedar, from woods north of San Francisco, on Oak frames with Teak superstructure and decks.

In 1942 she was seconded by the US Navy; skippered by commissioned Naval Officers, she patrolled San Francisco Harbour checking the steel torpedo nets. In 2006 a Dutch marine engineer bought her and transferred her overland from California to the East Coast of the USA; it took 3 months for her to reach The Netherlands. She then underwent an extensive 3-year restoration.

In 2024 her new owner and TVBC member Douglas Mancini piloted her across the Channel from Rotterdam to the UK; he commented “she fared very well, cutting through high waves crashing over the bow and up to the wheelhouse windows – a testimony to her solid construction designed for the choppy San Francisco Bay.”





## Brown Owl

*DLS Brown Owl* (NVET 166) is a 42ft ketch-rigged twin screw motor sailer designed by John Bain and built for cruising the Western Isles by James Silver at Rosneath, on the Clyde in Scotland. She was named *Brown Owl* on launching and was first of the class named after her and built by the Silver Yard between 1928 and the War.

This was a popular design costing £1,650 new, which was not cheap in 1928. She is thought to be the *Brown Owl* that, in November 1929, the famous Captain O.M. Watts navigated all the way from Rosneath through the Forth and Clyde Canal and down the Past Coast to Chelsea, on the Thames.

By Dunkirk, *Brown Owl* had had two changes of name, first to *Brisk* and then to *Wairakei*. The only record of her participation in Dunkirk is a list of her crew. Later in the War she apparently returned to Scotland for Naval patrol, since she was reported as being in the River Clyde Small Boat Pool, RN 209 up to 1948. When she left His Majesty's



Service in 1948, she was re-named *Vivanti* and registered in London. In 1991 she reverted to her original name of *Brown Owl* and her owners at that time kept her at Limehouse in London. She is now owned by Kevin Finn, who as Commodore of the ADLS will lead the DLS fleet back in her for their 85<sup>th</sup> year commemorative return.

## Christobel

### *Christobel* (NVET 167)

Retaining her original name, this 1911 Edwardian Gentleman's Day launch was built for a hotelier in Norwich as a steam harbour launch. She was moved down to the Thames in 1932 after being purchased by Sir Stanford Cooper, who was at



that time the chairman of Morris Motors; he naturally had a Morris Vedette installed. This was then replaced by an 8 HP 'GUY' compound steam engine and a Langley 'Kingdom' No.1 coal fired boiler. She was later gutted, re-timbered and rebuilt by Trevor Green & Co. of Hambleden, and fitted with a modern Ford Watermota Petrol Engine. In 2017 she was purchased and fully restored by new TVBC member Andy Golding of Golding Bros. of Windsor; since 2022 she has been in operation as a private charter in Windsor so watch out for her when you're in that area. More details about her history can be found on their company website: [www.goldingbros.uk](http://www.goldingbros.uk).



### The Club on Social Media



For those interested in following the club on social media, here is a reminder of where you can find us:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/groups/thamesvintageboatclub](https://www.facebook.com/groups/thamesvintageboatclub)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/thamesvintageboatclub](https://www.instagram.com/thamesvintageboatclub)



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NAUTICALIA YARD, FERRY LANE, SHEPPERTON

# History of the Thames Boatyards: Hart, Harden & Co of Hampton Wick Pioneer of the Petrol Launch

*This little-known yard takes pride of place in the 'Guinness Book of Motorboating Facts and Feats' as the first British firm claiming to design and build a high-speed motor launch. Later, it built the Thames Conservancy's first motor patrol boat.*

There are no surviving examples of motorboats from the Hart, Harden & Co yard at Hampton Wick, but at the beginning of the last century they were among the pioneers of motor launch builders on the Thames, although they did not make their own engines. They began by building punts in the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at their yard just downstream of Kingston Bridge, and as these were deemed suitable to be driven by the new-fangled internal combustion engine, motorboats naturally followed.

Perhaps they were encouraged into this field by Burgoincs, their neighbours, who bought one of the first motorboats to the Thames in 1887. This was a 30ft, 4½ hp de Dion. It proved to be the first of many of this marque.

Harden's first high-speed launch of note was *Vitesse*. It was designed by A Harden (I have not been able to discover the forename, but he has been described as a qualified naval

architect<sup>1</sup>). The boat was 34ft 6in long with a beam of 4ft 6in. She was the first launch to carry her oak engine bearers the whole length of the hull, and these supported a water-cooled four-cylinder 12hp engine designed by F C Blake of Kew<sup>2</sup>. The clutch was fitted inside the reverse gear.

In what seems curious for a high-speed boat she was provided with wickerwork chairs to seat eight people. Surviving racing boats we are familiar with on the River such as *Fixitor* of 25ft, by an unknown builder c1900, and *Scolopendra* of 30ft designed by Thornycroft in 1903, have extensive decks and only two seats.

When in the 1902 season *Vitesse* with a speed of 13½mph was the fastest motorboat on the Thames, she inspired a meeting of gentlemen interested in forming an association to regulate and encourage motorboat racing in Britain. It became known as the Marine



Motoring Association and its first secretary was the celebrated boat designer Linton Hope. Four racing classes were established: dinghies not exceeding 15ft, launches of 20ft, launches of 25ft and launches of 30ft. This established the sizes that would be followed by many future classes of Thames launches.

*The Motor Boat* reported in September 1905, that Harden's had just experienced a record week having turned out four new launches. Two of these were described in detail. The first, carvel planked in teak was for use in India and was 25ft long with 5ft beam and a maximum draught of 2ft at the propeller. She was decked in for about 3ft forward and 2ft 6in aft, leaving plenty of room for passengers.

Her lines were described as very graceful, with a straight stem, and a "Harden stern", which appears from the photograph to have been similar



*A 25ft launch for India of 1905. Note "Harden stern"*

to a bustle stern. Power was provided by a de Dion four-cylinder 15hp engine. Of particular interest was her exhaust system known as the Rankin Kennedy type. This took the cooling water through an annular space surrounding the exhaust pipe and mixed it with exhaust gases thus rapidly cooling them. As in many early petrol-driven launches there was no reverse gear and a change of direction was achieved by means of a reversible propeller. This was a Meissner two-bladed propeller of 18in diameter which was expected to achieve a top speed of 11.5 knots. The article went on to describe this craft as a fine-looking boat that would probably do much to make motor boating popular in India.

The second boat described was *Flamingo*, carvel-built in mahogany with straight stem and square transom stern, 24ft long with 5ft beam and draught of 1ft 8in. She was designed as a sea boat and fitted with a folding spray hood with celluloid windscreen.

Power was provided by a Thornycroft 2hp two-cylinder engine fitted with a silencer and condenser. In this system the exhaust gases were taken into a tubular condenser arranged in a similar way to a steam engine



*'Flamingo' built for J W Miller in 1905.*

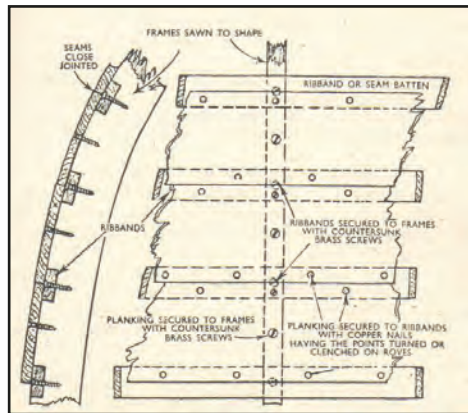
condenser and then carried astern. The circulation was maintained by a pump driven by skew gearing off the crank shaft, the same water being used for the cylinder jacket. A Thornycroft propeller was fitted, being driven through a metal-to-metal cone clutch. The gear for shifting the propeller blades was a vertical hand wheel on a screw shaft of coarse pitch, which in addition to activating the reversing gear enabled very delicate adjustment of the pitch of the three-bladed propeller which was 16in in diameter. This was expected to achieve a speed of nine knots.

Wheel and tiller steering was provided, and the boat could easily be controlled by one man. The spark advance throttle and air levers were very compactly mounted on a board abaft the engine.

A "substantial" petrol gauge was fitted – a convenience often omitted in many future launches.

In 1908 the same magazine reported the completion of a 23ft

teak carvel-built boat for a Montevideo client. It was designed by Mr Harden to meet the trying conditions of the South American climate. This construction involved increasing the moulded depth of the timbers for the topsides and just below the waterline and letting a fore and aft ribband into the plank seams, laid with thick varnish, and through-fastening to planking between the timbers. *The Motor Boat* commented that this made a fine job where weight was of no particular object. The deck was of spruce ribbanded in the same

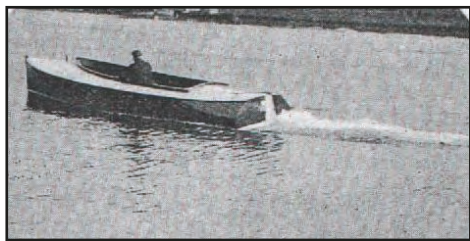


*Diagram of Ribband or Seam Batten Construction from Motor Boat and Yachting Manual, 1944.*

manner and covered with canvas with mahogany mouldings.

The engine was a twin-cylinder 6-8hp Blake, fitted with reverse gear and metal-to-metal clutch. The exhaust was discharged into an

expansion box at the engine, with water jacket and was carried out



*A 23ft boat built in teak for Montevideo, Uruguay.*

direct by a continuously falling pipe through the stern.

In 1910 Hart, Harden had more than 30 boats in their yard when

visited by a reporter from *The Motor Boat*, and he considered them to be one of the busiest yards on the River. Among the craft was “that pretty little Harden boat *Tabasco*, which with her 12hp Delahaye motor figured prominently in many BMBC (British Motor Boat Club) races last year”.

*Tabasco* later went on to win the Motor Club Trophy.



*'Tabasco' with her 12hp Delahaye motor was prominent in the BMBC races in 1909.*

In the early 1900s a noted motorboat trialist called Jacobs commissioned two boats from Harden's: *Viatic* and *Viatic II*.

In 1912 the yard built a 30ft launch of their own design to the order of the India Department for use on the River Ganges during the building of the Sara Railway Bridge. She was planked with  $\frac{5}{8}$  in teak on frames at 4in centres and there were water-tight compartments fore and aft. Her foredeck was cambered in a form described as “turtle”, which was characteristic of Harden design.





### Horse Power V Cow Power:

*'Viatic II' a 35-footer was built in 1908 for a Mr Jacobs and fitted with a 30hp Belsize motor. She was the second of two boats of the same name. The Motor Boat reported in 1905 that a cow had got trapped in the water between Sunbury and Walton and at the time Viatic I went past had defied all efforts to get her out for 14 hours. The boat soon settled the matter when its owner got a rope round the animal's withers and pulled her out under full power.*

Power was provided by a four-cylinder, two cycle Ricardo engine built by Browett, Lindley and Company of Patricroft, Manchester. In this engine the gas/air mixture

was delivered to the working cylinder by means of displacer pistons, and the 41hp engine provided a speed of 9-19mph.

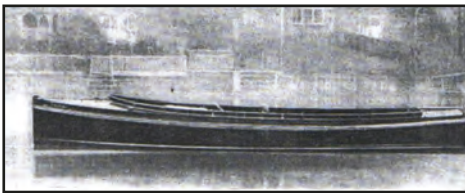


*Example of a turtle foredeck on  
'Fixitor' c1900 builder unknown.*



It must have taken some courage for early boaters to accept the petrol engine, which ran on such a frighteningly volatile fuel. Naptha, a kind of paraffin wax was thought safer, but the reek of paraffin infused the whole boat and the clothes of its occupants. The gas it gave off was dangerously explosive. Some leisure users started the engine on petrol and then changed to paraffin which was safer and more readily available in remote spots.

In September 1911 *The Chiswick Times* reported that a private launch kept at Harden's burst into flames 300 yards from the yard. Two ladies on board were rescued by boatmen who heard their screams. Their male companion tried to extinguish the blaze with sand, which he must have kept handy for such an emergency, but he had to abandon ship and the launch was burnt down to the waterline.



*Harden's overcame the Thames Conservancy's prejudice against petrol engines and this former passenger launch 'Ember' became the authority's first motor patrol boat.*

The Thames Conservancy, responsible for enforcing the speed limit with horse-mounted patrols, had taken a rather dim view of motor craft before the First World War, so it was something of a tribute to Harden's that in 1914 one of their boats became the Conservancy's first motor patrol vessel.

She was *Ember*, formerly named *Teign*, which had been designed by Harden and used for passenger trips on the River until September of that year. She then underwent a series of trials to test her speed, workmanship, manoeuvring and stability under the direction of the chief engineer of the Conservancy. Her length was 24ft 10in by 5ft 6in beam and 1ft 10in draught, and she was carvel-built of mahogany on American elm timbers spaced 4in apart. The steering wheel was of car style which had become practically standard for river and racing craft.

The engine was a four-cylinder Chapuis-Dornier, lubricated by a piston pump worked by an eccentric on the cam shaft. An auxiliary oil tank and pump was fitted on the dashboard in case the mechanical pump failed. The exhaust was carried into a water-jacketed silencer taken aft through a 2in pipe, the circulating water being led into the pipe after leaving the silencer forming a perfectly cool and



### Film Star:

*The Hampshire punt is a rarity on the Thames being designed for the shallow, slow-moving waters of the Avon. A dinghy in plan, the flat sides and bottom have much in common with the North American dory. 'Zoe' was rescued from destruction and underwent considerable restoration in Constable's boatyard in the 1980s and made a brief appearance in the film Hope and Glory in 1987. This was about a boy's experience of World War Two and his joy at being moved from London to a home close to the river. Scenes were shot near Shepperton Lock.*

noiseless exhaust. The engine ran through a Gaines reverse gear to a three-bladed propeller 14in in diameter. She attained 19mph on her trial run.

I can find no reference to Harden's in *The Motor Boat* after 1914, so we do not know if they were involved in war work. Like some small yards they might have survived by hiring out unpowered boats. There was good demand for these from soldiers stationed in local barracks or home on leave who had little else to do in summer but take their girlfriends out on the river.

After the war Harden's returned to the building of unpowered punts.

One of these survived to appear at the Phillips Henley boat auction in 2000. This was *Zoe*, a 12ft Hampshire punt which was described as having been built in the 1930s by the yard then known as A Harden, Yacht and Boat Builder. She had a pine bottom and mahogany planks and was fitted with a single sculling thwart which could be removed, and small bow locker with a top of alternate striped planking.

It seems appropriate that the last reference we can find to this yard takes us back to its origins as a builder of punts.

cont.....

<sup>1</sup>*Edith's Streets* is a website listing London street by street including items of historic interest. The entries for Hampton Wick include a reference to Hart Harden: "These were present in the 1920s near Kingston Bridge. Mr Harden 'naval architect' worked on motor vessels in the early 20th, (sic) selling them as far afield as India and the Far East. 'One of the busiest firms on the river'. Some of their boats are now noted in national collections."

<sup>2</sup>Blake, of Station Road, Kew, registered a patent for a reversing gear for boats in 1905. The company built narrow gauge locomotives and cars but focused on creating motors for use in boats. By 1906, it was advertising a line of engines for "Auxiliary Yacht and Launch Work".

Sources: *Motor Boat & Yachting* archives, Sept 7 1905, Oct 22 1908, May 5 1910, Jan 1 1914; *The Thames from Source to Tideway*, Peter H Chaplin. *The Guinness Book of Motorboat Facts and Figures*.

## A History of Motorboats on the Thames

1886: First motor installed in a boat by Gottlieb Daimler on the River Neckar.

1893: First British motorboat built by Dr F W Lanchester of Warwick. It was a punt with a paddle wheel powered by a 2hp single-cylinder engine built at the Forward Gas Engineering Works, Birmingham.

1894: The boat was brought to Oxford and launched at Salter's yard, becoming the first motorboat on the Thames.

1900: By this time petrol/paraffin engines had become well-developed. Within the next few years many pioneering engine constructors appeared on the Thames, such as Ailsa Craig at Chiswick; Maudslay at Lambeth; Thornycroft at Hampton and Caversham; Hutton at Thames Ditton; Lagonda at Staines, Stirlings at Twickenham and Saunders at Goring.

1909: Motorboating is so well established that Temple Press published the third edition of their *Motor Boat Manual* of 396 pages.

John Llewellyn

# *The Thames Electric Launch Company*

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LADY CHARLOTTE 1914 43ft 6in



CASINO ROYALE 1939 30ft CHRIS CRAFT



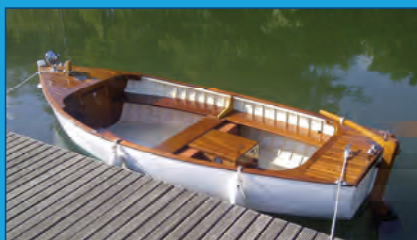
LADY EMMA 1926 THAMES CANOE



PIKE 1898 30ft SALOON LAUNCH



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# AGM & Annual Awards 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2025

## The Bridge Hotel, Chertsey

The Committee decided to hold the AGM this year in The Bridge Hotel as some of us have previously enjoyed a lovely Sunday lunch at this venue. We were pleased with our decision – the buffet and service were superb, and the venue itself is in a very appropriate location for our club with a great view of the Thames from the room we were allocated which gave us access to the terrace. All the facilities are on ground level and there is ample parking. We will be returning to The Bridge for next year's AGM. The occasion is always viewed more as an informal social event with the formalities being kept as far as possible to a short section of the overall programme. 50 in total attended this year which contributed to the successful event. After the buffet lunch Michael O'Brien gave an enthusiastic and highly informative talk about how he converted *Lockheed* to electric power, illustrated

with numerous slides, which inspired a range of questions from the floor afterwards.

The committee remains the same with the welcome addition of Ed White who was co-opted on after the AGM. You will find us all listed on the inside cover of this issue. Unlike many clubs, our Flag Officers, Treasurer and Hon. and Membership Secretaries hold their posts for 3 years; 2025 is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the cycle.

The Annual Awards this year were particularly special as they included the first presentation of the Mike Phillips Photography award. Brian Thompson, the winner, was sad he was unable to attend to receive it; Theresa read out a statement from him. Moira Phillips, receiving the trophy on Brian's behalf, gave a moving speech about the award in memory of her husband, then admired Brian's photo for the skill and effort it had taken to produce it – she fully approved of the Committee's decision!

Theresa



Michael in action  
photo by David Knight

## John Llewellyn, the TVBC's President, presented the Annual Awards for 2024.



Ed White was delighted to receive  
The Tony Sanders Attendance Award



Bryan Cox received the  
Boat Handling Trophy



Best new TVBC boat at the Trad  
Festival 2024  
Marcus and Rachel Sharp  
*Iorana*



The Longest Cruise of 2024  
Douglas Mancini  
*A dora Blu*

Photos by Hannah Bramwell



**Mike Phillips Photography Award**  
Moira Phillips talked about the award in memory of her husband



Brian Thompson proudly holds the trophy in front of his winning photo 'A Special Morning Visitor'



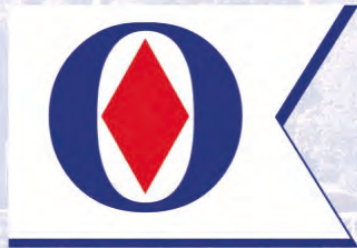
**The Silver Salver: for the best TVBC boat of the year**  
David Knight  
*Grey Lady*



**The Robin Newlands Trophy for contribution to the TVBC**  
Presented to Steve and Dilly Bil by Liz Newlands

The winners of these awards were unable to attend the AGM:  
The John Mauger Trophy for 'Best Amateur Restoration': *Cassandra*, Nick and Anne Berridge-Sharp  
Illuminated Cruise Trophy: 'Best TVBC presentation in the Traditional Boat Festival 2024': Nigel Hughes - *Shackleton*





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# Papillon

## Our Featured Boat of the issue

With just a few days to go until the 85th Anniversary of ‘Operation Dynamo’ and the Dunkirk Little Ships ‘Return’, members Jodie Smith & Geoff Turner share the story of their ownership of *DLS Papillon* over the last 10 years.

Living in Cowes on the Isle of Wight, you would expect us to be heavily involved in sailing and boating but in fact, we had only sailed in the Solent, mostly in a mirror dinghy when we were at school.

We never had any intention of owning a boat, let alone a wooden one. In fact, who would be mad enough after hearing all the salty sea dogs repeating the phrases “the happiest day of your life is when you buy a boat and the second happiest is the day you sell it” and “BOAT” stands for “Break Out Another Thousand”; phrases repeated to us by so many people on the Island. In May 2015 we went to Dunkirk for the 75th anniversary of Operation Dynamo (the evacuation of British and French troops from the beaches in 1940) as Jodi’s Grandfather, William Smith, was the Captain of *Gainsborough Trader* (M.F.H. in 1940). *Gainsborough Trader* was going to be there along with a number of other Dunkirk Little Ships who had returned for the Anniversary.

We went to Ramsgate to watch the Dunkirk Little Ships sail out of the Harbour. On the day of departure, we walked to the Quayside to witness a fantastic sight. Many people had

gathered on the Quayside, some in period costume, and it was difficult to make our way along the harbour wall. Below in the outer harbour lay 50+ Dunkirk Little Ships of all shapes and sizes. There was a hive of activity as crews were busy making preparations to set sail. The only Little Ship we knew about was *Gainsborough Trader*, a 70ft 46-ton steel Humber Keel barge. She was easy to spot in her red livery amongst the many smaller white hulled wooden vessels.

The weather conditions were perfect, blue clear skies with little wind and the sea state was calm. The fleet eventually set sail to the sounds of a lone piper stood at the entrance to the harbour, a sound and sight that made the hairs stand up on the back of your neck. Once the fleet was outside the harbour, it formed up and a flypast by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight completed the tribute.

With the fleet underway, we got in our car and made our way to Dover to catch the ferry to Dunkirk.

During the weekend in Dunkirk, we spent some time visiting the Commonwealth War Graves and other commemorations on the beaches. We also got the chance to speak with some



owners of the Little Ships and went on board *Gainsborough Trader*.

The sight of the Little Ships dressed overall with their information boards displayed was truly inspirational. As we walked along the Quay, we both discussed the idea of owning a Dunkirk Little Ship and that it would be wonderful to own one for the next return in 2020.

Despite all the horror stories about owning a boat, our hearts ruled our heads, and we decided we would look for a Dunkirk Little Ship with the intention of a purchase around 2018, in time for the next return. Once we returned from Dunkirk, we made a tentative enquiry through the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships (ADLS) and soon received a reply from the then Commodore Ian Gilbert. He informed us that his boat *Papillon* was for sale along with a couple of others. Jodi phoned Ian to discuss our intentions and was suitably interrogated. A comment that sticks in her mind to this day was "Have you ever owned a wooden boat before?" Jodi swiftly replied, "Yes, my Father owned a mirror dinghy when I was 5 years old".

Ian mentioned that he was taking *Papillon* to the Thames Traditional Boat Festival in July and would we like to visit. We duly accepted with the intention of just having a look.

At the TTBF we met up with Ian and Karina who invited us on board *Papillon* to accompany them on the sail past. That was a genius stroke of salesmanship on Ian's part because as

soon as we stepped on board and smelt the wood and varnish, the boat was sold to us. Ian again interrogated us both to make sure we were suitable candidates to own his boat. If you know Ian, you will know that he is so passionate about the Dunkirk Little Ships and keeping them alive.

We became the custodians of *Papillon* in August 2015. On the day of handover, Ian took us out for some "boat handling familiarisation". Handshakes done, we were left alone with our new purchase. Realisation then set in, and we questioned our sanity. We had organised a low loader to take *Papillon* from Shepperton Marina to Saxon Marine in Southampton the next day, so we decided to stay onboard for the night.



*Papillon on her way to the south coast 2015*

The following morning, *Papillon* was lifted out of the water by crane and placed on the low loader. We followed the transport down the M3 to Southampton in disbelief of what we had done. Once back in the water, an experienced sailor friend came over from the Isle of Wight to help us with the passage to Cowes, to her new mooring.

In October 2015 we took her out of the water to paint the hull as there were a few areas where the paint was lifting. Funds were limited so we decided to do this ourselves. We anticipated, naively, that the works would take a week, however one week soon turned into sixteen. We ended up stripping the hull back to bare wood, sanding, filling, priming, undercoating, top coating and antifouling. Hard work but extremely rewarding and a good way to get to know your boat and learn new skills.



*Papillon undergoing hull repaint 2015*

In late February 2016 *Papillon* was finally ready to go back in the water. It took an anxious few hours for the water to stop trickling in where the seams had

opened up whilst she was out of the water.

The bilge pumps worked overtime until she took up. Within 48hrs she had stopped taking on water. Once back on her mooring, we then moved our attention to internal works: removing Ian's workshop and converting the forward cabin area into a double sleeping bunk, the seating was reupholstered, lots of varnishing and brass cleaning!



*Papillon being lifted back in the water 2016*

Our attention then turned to planning our first trip which would be to Ramsgate for the ADLS Commemorative Cruise in May 2016. Geoff wasn't too worried about the navigation as he had used maps before, and we had the current paper charts and Electronic Navigation system on board. Anyway, how difficult could it

be, come out of Cowes, turn right and keep the land to the left and in sight!

What we didn't think about was the effects of tidal flow, wind and weather, sea state and how long it takes to get anywhere in a boat that has an average cruising speed of 7 kts. *Papillon* only has a beam of 8'6" and rolls around quite a bit in even moderate seas.

The first overnight stopover was at Newhaven; never again!

We were moored opposite the Newhaven/Dieppe ferry which docked in the early hours before leaving again. We were rolling about a fair bit on the pontoon, and it was very uncomfortable. Our second overnight stopover was at Dover and we made Ramsgate on the third day to a very warm welcome from Ian and Karina, who we think didn't expect us to show up.

That year Christopher Nolan was filming his new feature film 'Dunkirk' and had approached the ADLS asking for original DLS's to take part.

We declined as we had to get *Papillon* back to the Island and work got in the way. However, as we were weathered in at Ramsgate for ten days it then made the idea of popping over to Dunkirk a doable proposition.

In June we left Ramsgate with eleven other Dunkirk Little Ships bound for Dunkirk for a week of filming. This was an incredible experience and one that we are glad we could make. Four days of filming resulted in two seconds screen time for *Papillon*!



*Papillon during filming off the beaches of Dunkirk 2016*

Since owning *Papillon*, we have tried to participate in as many events as possible. We have been to the Royal Dartmouth Regatta, Weymouth, Ipswich, Burnham on Crouch (where *Papillon* was built), attended the TTBF and gone upriver as far as Bentley. In 2019 we took part in the D Day celebrations at Portsmouth and escorted the 'Ship of Veterans' out of



*Papillon on the way to Portsmouth 2019*

the harbour and continuing on to the Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes. We have even featured in the Ch4 documentary '48 Hours to Victory'. In May 2022 we sailed to Oostende for the Oostende Voor Anker Festival. Whilst there the weather forecast for the return journey was not looking great so we decided to leave a day early. We left Oostende and made it back to Cowes in 26 ½ hrs.



*Papillon in calmer weather*

We couldn't afford to stop as we risked being weathered in somewhere so had to stay ahead of the weather front, not something we would like to repeat! We have also cruised around the Solent, having weekend stop overs at Weymouth, Yarmouth, Lymington, Hamble, Bucklers Hard and Brighton, although there have been many a time that we had intended to have a trip out or away which was curtailed due to the wind and tides that made it impossible to get off our mooring!

In the ten years of ownership, many repairs have been sprung upon us. The mast broke in half resulting in crafting a new one from an old XOD mast

languishing in a local boat yard. We have had the entire hull re-caulked. We have both learnt new skills including replacing rotten decking and beams. We have added countless coats of varnish.

*Papillon* is now based on the Thames at Teddington, and we are now in the process of getting *Papillon* ready for the 85th anniversary return to Dunkirk in May. The endless task of painting and varnishing is about to start all over again.

We now fully understand the true meaning behind Ian's question "Have you ever owned a wooden boat before?" It is a lot of hard work, dedication, time and money to keep a wooden boat ship shape, but is it worth it?....in our eyes, "Yes definitely."

The pleasure *Papillon* has brought us is invaluable and we have made so many good friendships on the way. Would we do it all again? "Probably yes."



*Papillon at Teddington Lock*





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# News from the Boatyards

## C & M Traditional Boat Repairs

With Spring making a welcome appearance, the yard is buzzing with activity from 7am 'till 7pm. Thankfully we have been able to double our yard space since moving to Harleyford two years ago.

Once the rush to finish boats ready for the Dunkirk return in May tails off there will be a push to complete restorations heading for the Traditional Boat Festival.

ADLS Deenar will be ready for Dunkirk and Elenora, a 36' Camper and Nicholson motor yacht, will be finished ready for the Traditional Boat Festival.

We will also have Kyrenia re-planked and painted ready for a return to the Festival. Starstream has been with us for a complete strip, revarnish and paint job which revealed a couple of minor issues which we have repaired. She will be back on the river this Spring ready for the season.

Maria Christina has chosen to take a mooring at Harleyford now that we have replaced her wheelhouse.

The slipper launch Leisure, which is owned by Harleyford, is receiving a new keel and garboard planks. We will replace a couple of frames prior to painting and varnishing.

As a direct result of the work that we are carrying out on Leisure we have

been asked to carry out similar works to her boat shed neighbour Crescent Moon.

Deglet Nour has come to our yard for some love, care and repair.

The seams on ADLS Lady Sylvia have now been raked out and faulty planking is being removed ready for new frames. It is always a pleasure and privilege to receive visits; recently from legendary boat builders, Rob Dean, Colin Messer, Guy Wootten and Colin Henwood; not forgetting John Tough, all full of praise for what C & M have achieved in the two years at Harleyford with the amount and quality of work that we produce with our growing team. Thank you for the endorsements for what we are achieving.

C & M are delighted to introduce a new inter boatyard 'Tea Break Challenge'. We are excited by the uptake in this 'bit of fun'. Our first challenge involves Maltesers!



*Making the engine box for DLS Deenar*



*DLS Deenar - destination Dunkirk*



*DLS Peggotty being prepared for the 'Return'*



*DLS Lady Sylvia, in need of corrective structural work.*



*DLS Lurline, one of the oldest in the fleet to be restored.*



*Kyrenia. under new ownership*



*Starstream*

# Andrews Boathouses

Neil Garside describes their Contribution to the war effort  
1939-1945



Andrews Boathouses was founded in 1925 by John Andrews on the site of an old wharf off Hedsor Road, Bourne End, Bucks, and had continued to grow throughout the 1920's and 30's building motor launches and motor cruisers and becoming famous for their Greyhound Slipper Stern River Launches. They also ran a hire fleet of cruisers and launches and maintained, moored and stored private craft.

At the outbreak of World War II the firm was very soon on a war footing firstly letting a large portion of the boathouses to G. Beaton & Son Ltd of Beatonson Works, Willesden, London NW10, an engineering company who produced aircraft components including wing components for Spitfires. Their tenancy started on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1939 with Andrews' staff initially making benches, unloading machinery, making and



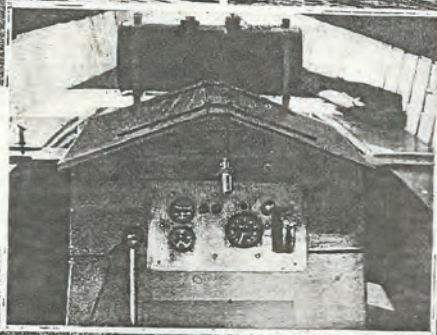
## 25-ft. Diesel-engined Naval Tenders



(Above) A check-up  
by the Admiralty's  
Inspector.



(Left) Looking for-  
ward from the after  
cockpit.



THAT the very small Diesel engine is finding favour as a power unit in Naval ships' tenders is proved by its installation in the 25-ft. motor cutters which we illustrate. These are powered with two-cylinder Fowler engines delivering 11 h.p. at 1,000 r.p.m. Electric pre-heating plugs and starters are fitted. The fuel is carried in a cylindrical tank on a thwart forward of the engine, and the large water-jacketed silencer is beneath a thwart aft of the engine.

The hulls are lightly built of wych elm, the planking being  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. thick

on 1-in. by  $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. timbers at 8-in. centres. Canadian elm is used for the thwarts and Columbian pine for side benches, the flooring being of mahogany with central gratings. Forward of the engine is a bulkhead, with one bilge pump forward of it and another aft. The cooling water enters through a large, accessible strainer.

Stern gland lubrication is by a grease gun fixed at thwart level.

A point of interest peculiar to these craft is the provision of light, removable shelter roofs constructed mainly of plywood. The forward hood or

shelter has an outer surface of  $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. plywood and an inner surface of  $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. plywood, with  $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. internal framing between them.

The roof over the engine is of  $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. plywood, covered with canvas, its eight windows being of a thin plastic material. At the time of our inspection two of these craft were undergoing two-hour acceptance runs at full speed. The performance of the twin-cylinder Fowler motors was as smooth as that of four-cylinder engines. At 1,000 r.p.m. the speed was in the neighbourhood of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  knots.

fitting blackout shutters and partitioning etc. This was to be a satellite factory for Beaton & Son Ltd throughout the war, their other factory at Acton, West London was actually bombed a year later. At Bourne End they even added to the buildings and had four air raid shelters and a canteen built all of which remained until the site was redeveloped in the late 1990's.

Andrews Boathouses' first wartime contract for J.I. Thornycroft & Co. Ltd., placed in early December 1939, was to build 2 x 35ft. tunnel stern motor lighters for a client in Africa at a cost of £700 per boat, engines and stern gear supplied by J.I. Thornycroft.



*Andrews 35ft Motor Lighters*

On completion the boats were requisitioned by the Admiralty and used in the evacuation of Norway and from there in use on other war duties and never did get to Africa. Andrews was awarded their first Admiralty contract on 16<sup>th</sup>

September 1940 which was for 4 x 25ft. clinker-built diesel-engined motor cutters which were used as tenders to naval ships. From 1940-1946 Andrews built and delivered 47 of these craft from a succession of Admiralty contracts; 51 were actually ordered but 47 completed, the remainder of the last contract being cancelled owing to the end of the war and some compensation paid.

These craft were fitted with Dorman or Fowler engines. The cost of these cutters was £569-15s each by the end of the war less engine and stern gear which were supplied by the Admiralty but installed by Andrews. After the boats had finished trials the charge for hauling out and cartage to Bourne End station for despatch by rail was an additional £3-10s. The cartage to Bourne End station from Andrews Boathouses, which is a distance of roughly one third of a mile, was carried out by John Andrews towing the cutters on a trailer behind his Rover car assisted by members of staff.

Andrews' hire cruisers spent the war years as houseboats moored on the opposite side of the river from the boathouses as there was no petrol to run them, but they were let firstly as a safer haven from the London Blitz and later on for holidays for those who could take them.



Throughout the war Andrews Boathouses still managed to give service to their private customers in the way of maintenance, moorings, storage and general service even selling new craft that had just been completed before war broke out; second-hand boats were also bought and sold, somehow people got petrol to run them and time to use them.

1940's to mid 70's, but that's another story.



Andrews 40ft HireCruiser *Sun Chief* 1965



Andrews 30ft Hire Cruiser *Sunflare* 1959

When the war finally came to an end and the last of the motor cutters were being completed, and despite shortages, peacetime boatbuilding returned to Andrews. They delivered their first new post-war Greyhound launch named *Son-Ray* in May 1946. Beaton & Son finally left Andrews at the end of September 1946, and, in spite of the austerity of the early post-war years, the scene was now set for what many of us consider to be the finest years of Andrews Boathouses, the late

John Andrews sadly died in August 1963. The business continued until 1983 when it finally closed prior to being redeveloped for housing which did not take place for a number of years. Many of us who trained and worked at Andrews, in spite of the poor wages and harsh working conditions, still hold the place in great esteem. The memories and many of the boats and designs still live on.

### Points of Interest

While all this was going on at Andrews Boathouses, the property next door, Mill House, a beautiful Thames-side mansion with its spacious grounds and own swimming pool at the mouth of the River Wye, was very soon requisitioned when the US entered

the war and came over in force to the UK; it became the personal HQ of General Ira Eaker, Commander of the US 8<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force. Early in 1944 General James Doolittle took over command and moved in. While the Americans were at Mill House many meetings were held there to plan the strategy of the war involving high ranking members of the Allied military forces. There was by all accounts a continual round of entertainment with visits from Clark Gable and various starlets. Also, Bing Crosby was there on at least one occasion as a member of Andrews' staff at that time told me that Bing came over to ask him if he'd seen his lost golf ball. No doubt

the fliers amongst the visitors and staff at Mill House would have been very interested when newly completed air sea rescue launches passed by on the river from time to time on passage from their builder, J. G. Meakes of Marlow, to the sea and thence to be commissioned into active service. Motor cutters built by Andrews would also have been a regular sight on trials with naval personnel on board before being signed off ready for dispatch to the Navy.

John Andrews, Founder & Owner of Andrews Boathouses, served as an Army Motorcycle Despatch Rider on the western front for the whole of WW1.

Footnote: Other local boatbuilders who contributed to the war effort were:

Bonds of Maidenhead Bridge built 25ft motor cutters for the Admiralty.

Townsend of Wharf Lane, Bourne End, built ship's lifeboats for the Admiralty.

Wootens of Cookham Dean built 20ft. motor cutters & 10ft. dinghies for the Admiralty.

J. G. Meakes of Bridge Works, Marlow, built 67ft. air sea rescue launches as sub-contractors to J. I. Thornycroft, for the Air Ministry. From 1941 to 1945 Meakes built and delivered 16 of these craft.

John Bushnell of Wargrave further upstream built craft for all three-armed services.

The numbers of craft built by the other four firms mentioned above are not known.

Main source of information – Andrews' Sales Ledgers and personal memories.

Note:

Air Marshall Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris, Head of Bomber Command from 1942, attended many of the meetings held at Mill House, Bourne End, planning the war.

In June 1954 when living at Ferry House, Goring-on-Thames, he purchased from Andrews Boathouses a second-hand 30ft Andrews Greyhound slipper stern launch, Boat No. 311, named *William Tell*; he renamed her *Jacan*.

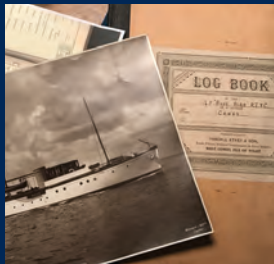
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## Practical Maintenance day at Tom Jones Boatyard

Marcus, my husband, and myself booked onto the course, and I for one did not have a clue what was involved. All I knew was do not wear nice clothes and bring a packed lunch. I have to say that although I have been in our engine room it was purely to replace rotting timbers not to play with the engines. That came under Marcus's remit.

It was a cold but bright day and started with being informed that Waze did not know the right way to the boatyard. It turned out Waze did!

We did not find a welcoming committee but met up with Alain a fellow student. After Alain's selfies with a boat in the shape of a swan,



*Alain with Grampus (Selfie)*



we entered a large shed and found chairs, heaters, and a table with refreshments -Tea, Coffee, Hot chocolate and biscuits, plus our lovely hostess. The day was looking up. We then met Steve our instructor who somehow got the impression I did not want to be there. Not sure why?

I took copious notes and pictures of the slides, only to find they would send us a copy. During the talk we kept being handed various bits of the engine, which were invariably covered in grease, as Steve did not want us to go home without having got dirty. They did give us paper towels to clean our hands and gloves for when we worked on the engines.

Despite this, when presented with an actual engine the theory went out of my head; I'm sure it was the cold, as the heaters were turned off when Steve was teaching. That or the fact my 71-year-



old brain is not as nimble as when I was in my thirties.

Marcus and I worked with Alain and managed to get the assigned tasks done in good time. We had to work on five slightly different engines and on one of them bleed air out of the system which meant turning the engine over until we got fluid coming out of the injectors, having cleared the air before that. We all got involved and each of us led on at least one engine. It was great fun. Marcus had attended an RYA course the year before but told us this was much better with more hands on and more information passed on.

Steve is a good teacher using humour to liven up his talk. He was also very helpful in the practical sessions, so that

at the end I felt I could change an impellor, check the oil and water, and gear box oil, and know not to try something that was outside of my sphere of understanding.

I now felt I could check my engines prior to taking our boat out without having to rely on my husband. So much so, that when we got home Marcus showed me where the sea cocks were, and how to clear the water filters. This was great as it meant that what I had learnt made sense on our engines. I am certainly not leaving it all to him as a result of the course.

I have to say I cannot recommend this course enough, even for a complete novice on diesel engines. I can honestly rate it 10 out of 10.

Rachel Sharp, DLS *Iorana*



Helen, Mark and Jess of Fedelma II working through the task list

James of Glitterwake & David Worthington find a tricky problem to resolve.



Last year I enrolled on the RYA Diesel Engine Maintenance Course and after a welcoming cup of tea settled into Steve Bil's gentle and laconic style of presentation; an enjoyable half-smile fixed across my face for most of the rest of the day. This year's Practical Maintenance Course - aimed at skippers of the forthcoming Dunkirk Little Ship's return to Dunkirk - was no less enjoyable as a good combination of Dilly's tea and likeminded chatter amongst attendees underlined the semi-social nature of the event; all of us shared a love of classic craft, accompanied (I believe) by a common trepidation of the hot and noisy stuff that keeps them afloat and moving.

A few days before the course I had looked at the agenda and was worried that it would just be a re-run of last year's RYA course. However, I decided to go ahead and as the day unfolded my decision proved correct; a more varied agenda than the RYA course was enhanced by seeing the same things for a second time, which gave me much more confidence when it came to tackling the questions of the practical session.



Whilst I now feel I could start undoing some of the nuts in my engine room without overly worrying that I was doing more harm than good, in reality the emphasis of the day was as much on how to analyse a mechanical problem as it was to fixing it. This approach consisted of *looking and listening* to what might be out of place and understanding what the tell-tales were for various problems; all this before rushing in and starting to undo things.

Of course, none of this makes me anything more than an imaginary engineer, but despite that I do now feel armed with enough knowledge to follow a series of clues towards the problem, with the result that even if the cure is too complex for me to handle, at least I can make an informed call for more expert help.

Thank you, Jane for organising, Dilly for tea, chat and biscuits, and Steve for imparting his years of logic and skill that may well enable some of the Dunkirk attendees to dine-out on their 'near-death experience' in the bar afterwards!

David Worthington



Sabrina of Seandor and Sean DLS Dorian, learn how to bleed the fuel system.



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Lazy as she is affectionately known, is a well documented and a proud member of the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships. At 34ft with twin screws she is a capable sea going vessel which suits inland cruising equally well. Lazy Days has a lovely interior featuring sleeping for four adults in two separate cabins, a decent head with electric toilet and shower plus a very serviceable galley, ample dining space inside and out. One of the particularly appealing features is the generous aft cockpit which is also perfect for entertaining 6-8 guests.



Atta Boy is a stunning and historic launch with an amazing naval history. The launch is in excellent condition and is available for viewing on a discreet mid Thames mooring near Marlow. Built in 1915 by J W Brooke, she is 30ft with a 6ft beam and there is plenty of grunt guaranteed by the Rover V8 under the forward 'bonnet'.



## NEPTUNE 1930

A classic runabout. Neptune is Scandinavian by design, built in 1930, 31ft 9 inches and handles beautifully on her single diesel engine. A sociable boat with a large rear cockpit, she is the perfect choice as a weekender for two plus two.

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# News from the Boatyards

## Dennetts

Amid the daily rhythm of life at Dennetts, one vessel has dominated the scene for the past year: the impressive steel hull of *Llanthony*, a 77ft Camper & Nicholsons yacht. Her sheer size makes her hard to miss on the Thames. It was a proud moment for us all when she was relaunched last summer to wide acclaim.

Not to be outshone, the elegant 33ft *Bou Saada* made her own dazzling appearance at Henley, draped in bunting; a far cry from the algae-covered wreck we first welcomed into our main shed.

It has been an absolute honour to see not just one, but both these boats entered and win at the Classic Boat Awards. *Llanthony* was awarded Best Powered Vessel Over 40ft; *Bou Saada* the title for Under 40ft.

A heartfelt thank you to Classic Boat for a wonderful evening at the Royal Thames Yacht Club during the Classic Boat Awards. We are truly honoured and humbled to have received two accolades and are immensely grateful to everyone who voted and followed the journeys of these restorations. Your support means the world to us. These awards are not just a recognition of craftsmanship, but a celebration of maritime heritage and the enduring legacy of Dunkirk. Most importantly, our sincere congratulations to the owners who entrusted us with these

remarkable vessels. It has been a privilege to bring their visions to life and return these boats to their former glory. Next stop: the anniversary crossing to Dunkirk. We wish *Llanthony*, *Bou Saada* and the entire fleet fair winds and calm waters.

The short strip of sea that separates Dunkirk from Britain has become a legendary journey, most notably in 1940, but also through the many peacetime returns that the surviving fleet of the ADLS has subsequently made. Still, nothing quite prepares you for the emotion of the first time you make that crossing with your fellow Little Ship friends and supporters.

Among the many classic vessels being restored and maintained at Dennetts is *Ona II*, a boat with a remarkable story. For much of the year, she sat beneath the wall of nameboards that honours over five decades of restorations here. Owners of Dunkirk Little Ships, many from outside the traditional boating fraternity, are motivated by their respect for the boats' heritage, and in the case of *Ona II*, this has been a heartfelt restoration underpinned by the relationship between a father and son. Built in 1931 by Staniland and Company at Thorne in Yorkshire, near the River Ouse, *Ona II* is a typical 36ft (11m) motor yacht designed for sedate cruising on English rivers.

Official records show that she crossed to Dunkirk in 1940 and saved 20 soldiers. By the time her glory was forgotten, *Ona II* was languishing in Paris at the end of a five-year sentence of dereliction. An Englishman, Chris Westcott, instructed a local surveyor, not having seen the boat himself. The resulting report, despite being in French, was clear enough in its condemnation of *Ona II*'s condition. But in Chris's study hangs a small black and white photo of a motor yacht once owned by his father. Family investigation revealed that this was, in fact, a Little Ship, so for Chris, owning one of his own became a lifelong dream. He bought *Ona II*, sight unseen. *Ona II* arrived at Dennetts, quickly followed by her eager new custodian on a site visit to see his new boat. As fate would have it, sitting outside the front of the yard was another Dunkirk Little Ship awaiting her turn on the slip. It was *Maimonde*, the very boat from the photo in the study.

Time had not been kind to *Ona II* and much of her planking and structural framework has now been replaced, along with a new wheelhouse and deck. Chris looked to Dennetts to beautifully restore this special vessel, introducing some modern-day comforts and machinery below decks, but ultimately creating something indistinguishable from the family cruiser built in 1931. To that end, it is a boat that would make any father proud.

*Ona II* will return alongside steadfast members and newly restored boats to join the ADLS fleet crossing this spring.

It is going to be an emotional experience filled with preparation, excitement, hard work and, of course, a good measure of Dunkirk spirit.

Alongside the Dunkirk Little Ships, we are also witnessing a renewed enthusiasm for classic British river launches. One recent example is the completion of *Tarbes II*, now returned to her original name, *Sunny Morn*, a 1931 launch built by Brookes. In the end shed sits *Verity*, a Beaver stern launch currently undergoing a full restoration, following in the footsteps of her sister ship *Evensong*, which was completed a few years ago. Every detail is being carefully considered to breathe new life into this rare and elegant design. Beside her waits *Mila*, another Beaver stern launch, waiting patiently in line for her turn.

Beaver stern launches are excellent examples of post-war British boatbuilding at its best. Built by W. Bates & Son, a 150-strong boatyard based at Chertsey Meads, the yard's wartime efforts included building air-sea rescue vessels and seaplane tenders for the Ministry of Defence. After the war, under the leadership of James Bates, the company introduced the now-iconic Star Craft range in response to the growing presence of American Chris-Craft in the UK. Originally intended as hire boats due to uncertain demand, they quickly became popular for their quality, performance and affordability. Over a hundred were built and today their legacy is kept alive by dedicated owners, the Star Craft Owners' Club, and organisations like



the Thames Vintage Boat Club and events such as the Thames Traditional Boat Festival.

It's stories like these that make traditional boats so compelling, not just for their craftsmanship, but for the heritage they carry and the personal connections they create.

Spring at the yard is always a whirlwind, and not just for us, but for owners too.

The return to Dunkirk is no small feat, but even beyond that, the first bright days of the season remind us all why we keep these boats. Whether preparing to cross the Channel to honour Operation Dynamo or polishing up for the Traditional Boat Festival, every launch, wipe-down, and coat of paint is part of the tradition.

Heather Dennett

## VHF Radio Courses at Harleyford Marina

I was unaware when Chris and I relocated to Harleyford marina with our Traditional Boat Company that there was to be a RYA training centre setting up. Medical and Water Safety Ltd run loads of courses including an RYA VHF course. Toby Everett, myself and three others, signed up for a day's classroom tuition and an exam following a concentrated day.

Prior to the day a few hours homework needed to be done, including learning the phonetic alphabet. The classroom was set up with a radio set for each student (a group maximum of 8 is ideal). After a welcome cuppa and introductions, we made a start learning first about how a radio works, including radio waves, antennas, transmitting power and channels. We then moved on to making different types of calls, including radio checks, distress and link calls.

After tea we learnt about Navigation Teletext, emergency position beacons, false alarms and automatic

identification systems. In the afternoon we used the radio sets and carried out loads of practical exercises. At the end of the day, we carried out a trial examination prior to another tea break and an exam which started with theoretical multiple choice and then a practical.

Although it was a long day, with loads to take in, it was nice to complete it in one visit.

Harleyford Marina, just outside Marlow has great facilities and is a fantastic place to learn all things

boat related. Please contact [info@medicalwatersafety.co.uk](mailto:info@medicalwatersafety.co.uk)

and speak to Chris regarding RYA courses which they run several times a month. They also service and hire lifesaving equipment on site.

P.S. My other half has read the above and thinks I just had a day out drinking tea!

Malcolm Jones

C&M Boat Repairs

## Etiquette on the non-tidal river Thames

**As we approach the new boating season, here's a timely reminder to keep everyone safe.**

1. Keep to the right side of the river.
2. Be aware of what's behind you, as well as what's in front of you (look out for other river users and your wash).
3. Keep to channels where there is clear marking.
4. Stay away from weirs and be mindful of warning signs.
5. The boat coming downstream always has right of way.
6. Motorboats should give way to sailing boats, rowing boats and larger passenger vessels which may have difficulty manoeuvring.
7. The speed limit on the non-tidal Thames is 8km/h (5mph) over the bed of the river (EA Thames River guide 4/2003). Mind your wash.
8. Always slow down when approaching bridges, locks, bends or junctions, and when passing boats or anglers.
9. Turn off your engine & any music when you moor in a lock. The lock keeper needs to be able to hear what is going on in case there is an accident.
10. Heed the signs when there is a side channel, or you need to go around an island.



*Quisisana*  
by  
**C & M Traditional Boat Repairs**  
[cmtraditionalboatrepairs@gmail.com](mailto:cmtraditionalboatrepairs@gmail.com)

## Photography Competition

Here are the first four photos shortlisted for this year's competition



1. Ed White 'Bottompaint'



2. Paul Noon 'Nydia at St Kats'





3. Jan Stanton

‘Guarding my boat’

4. Roland Phillips

‘Lotus Rose’



# News from the Boatyards

## Classic Restoration Services

The New Year started with the yard full of client's boats as well as our own restoration of Dunkirk Little Ship *Tarifa*.

First and foremost were the five Dunkirk Little Ships of regular customers, that had to be ready for the 85th Anniversary of Operation Dynamo.

*Chumley*, *L'Orage* and *Fleury II*, were all booked in for general maintenance spring 24, which resulted in essential structural repairs and re-planking under the waterline to all three before they could be re-launched for ongoing maintenance - not unexpected in 90-year-olds but unwelcome all the same!



*Chumley*



*L'Orage*

Of the three, *Fleury II* was the biggest shock to all concerned - requiring months of corrective structural work on the slipway, but now she's seaworthy once more, just requiring cosmetic finishing and a new battery installation to replace the potentially dangerous existing one!



*Fleury II*

*Hilfranor* has had her faded wheelhouse stripped and revarnished, revealing the rich mahogany colour once more. At the same time a foredeck repair was required, then general cosmetics and maintenance before going to sea.

*Hilfranor**Moonraker*

*Moonraker*- the little sailing yacht hasn't been to sea for over 20 years and the rigging and sails that came with her needed to be replaced with traditional wire rope and stronger sheets & blocks. Her mast will be stripped, revarnished and re-rigged, an 'in house' specialist skill. then she will be transported to Ramsgate for sea trials, ahead of the fleet and put through her paces by Colin & Stephen.

*Neenemoosa*, a steel hulled Van Lent with teak superstructure, which many will have seen at St Kats Classic Festival, illustrates that not only wooden hulls deteriorate and again, she was booked in for extensive refurbishment of her decks and superstructure, only to find the hull needing immediate attention, so the emphasis has to switch to the hull replating first before the superstructure can be addressed.



Whenever we uncover any major structural issues with a boat in our care, we always recommend that the services of a trusted wooden & steel yacht surveyor is engaged to give an independent assessment of our recommendations and subsequently sign off our work as it progresses.



On a lighter note, there is the pleasurable task of maintaining five more classic boats that have been permanently in our care for the past 10-25 years, which regularly attend the Classic Boat Festivals on the Thames & beyond.

## Princess Anne visits Dennett Boat Builders, Chertsey

Dennett Boat Builders of Chertsey welcomed HRH Princess Royal for an official visit on 7 February, recognising Dennett's services to British heritage as specialists in endangered, historic boats. The small, family-run yard is known worldwide for restoring all traditionally built boats, but in particular they are known for their restoration and maintenance of the surviving vessels known as Dunkirk Little Ships, a motley armada of about 850 private boats which sailed from England to Dunkirk in northern France in Britain's darkest hour, helping to rescue more than 336,000 British and other Allied soldiers trapped on the Dunkirk beaches. This May marks 85 years since Operation Dynamo and the yard is a hive of activity as Dennetts are working around the clock to get their client's boats shipshape for the 85th Commemorative Cruise to Dunkirk to mark this occasion.

It was a family affair as owners Stephen and Heather Dennett were joined by Stephen's dad Michael Dennett who founded the business over 65 years ago and son Elliott Dennett (aged 11), who shares his parent's love of the traditional boat world. Kevin Finn (Commodore) and Howard Brooks (Vice Commodore) were present, representing the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships, as well as the usual full crew of boatbuilders.

The tour of the yard took in key vessels including nine Dunkirk Little ships in various states of restoration. Of particular interest was the almost-complete 78ft, 1934-built Camper and Nicholson motor yacht *Llanthony*, and 1912 ex-Admiralty pinnace *Sundowner* famed not only for her Dunkirk story, but her owner Charles Lightoller and his links to the ill-fated *Titanic*. Other key vessels were *Jolly Brit*, an open Jolly boat used on HMY Royal Britannia and a 1907-built, 25ft canoe of great elegance, aptly named *Princess Beatrice*, belonging to the Rose Toop Collection. At the end of the visit, all present gathered to watch Her Royal Highness unveil a plaque commemorating her visit.

Stephen Dennett commented, "It has been an honour to welcome The Princess Royal to our yard ahead of the 85th anniversary commemoration of Dunkirk this year. Over the last 80 years we have witnessed the demise of many great boatbuilders along the length and breadth of the UK. Here at Dennetts we are proud to continue teaching and practising unique skills in the construction of traditional craft and are delighted to have had the chance to show the Princess who we are, what we do and how important it is to retain these practical skills and knowledge, without which, boats of significant historical and cultural importance are at risk."





A selection of photos of the visit by HRH Princess Royal  
Credit: Andy Newbold

# DENNETT



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[dennettboatbuilders.co.uk](http://dennettboatbuilders.co.uk)

## Commodore's Comments

Let us hope that the start of the season reflects what is to come weather wise.

With Easter upon us, I expect that you have been preparing your boats, as have I.

Having had a wet winter, which left little scope to work on any boats stored outside, the spring sun brought a late opportunity to get on with painting and varnishing.

*Shemara* went back in the water on 29<sup>th</sup> March a little earlier than usual, the good weather allowed the painting and polishing to go to schedule. I have enjoyed 2 weeks of good boating so far this season. All the locks around Bray have been working although Boulsters Lock bottom right hand gate still does not open fully; I think that is over 5 years now!

I have not seen any Lock Keepers or Staff yet this year. Having read with interest the "Lockkeepers open letter" to river users, this does not surprise me. What does surprise me is how often we do see Lockkeepers during the season with so few on duty at any one time and how the EA can sign off the Health & Safety procedures on the river.

Our Club AGM at The Bridge Hotel in Chertsey was very well

supported by the membership. Theresa arranged one of the best venues we have used, with friendly staff, parking, good food and a handy location. Your committee arranged a very interesting talk on electric propulsion in a boat by Michael O'Brien, which got most of the audience thinking.

Followed by the AGM, the whole event was most enjoyable. Thank you to the members for supporting this event.

I have just returned from a rowing training camp in Seville with my Upper Thames Rowing Club men's squad, enjoying temperatures in the high 20s. We rowed on a 7KM stretch of the old river docks, now blocked off at one end. This included a 2,000m 6 lane racing course. The site was used by rowers and kayakers; in our safety briefing we were told that the kayakers paddle on the wrong side of the river and then move out of the way. The first few times this happens is a bit worrying, however the system works. The kayakers sit looking forwards, the rowers row facing the back of the boat but are faster. So, this system was adopted to stop kayakers been rowed over, it is good to see a port authority





listening to the water users and able to think laterally.

A big thankyou to Steve and Dilly Bil for running yet another successful course, this time on engine and boat preparation for a sea voyage; this was especially useful for the Dunkirk Little Ships taking part in this year's return.

Wishing you all enjoyable and safe boating.

**David Lister MBE**

**Commodore**

## Solution to puzzle No92

### A well-known Christmas Carol

G	M	S	I	O	W	S	E	T	H	O	S	E	Y
L	S	A	N	R	A	O	R	I	O	T	W	C	H
A	P	W	S	S	S	H	I	P	S	E	D	R	A
D	P	C	O	M	E	H	T	I	S	N	H	A	N
Y	N	C	Y	A	G	N	I	L	I	A	S	N	I
M	R	S	C	C	A	S	T	A	H	A	A	L	L
T	H	D	N	A	H	N	S	H	O	R	H	A	T
S	W	A	I	W	G	R	I	A	L	S	I	N	N
U	A	H	S	L	W	N	I	E	V	Y	A	D	D
G	T	A	A	E	H	T	I	S	S	I	A	P	D
E	L	H	A	R	A	O	S	N	T	S	O	S	N
E	I	S	R	H	H	I	S	I	R	M	L	U	I
S	R	T	W	E	T	O	H	E	Y	O	A	O	R
I	E	L	W	A	E	S	T	A	D	M	M	S	Y



# THE BIG PICTURE



Greta (See page 6)



## Thames Vintage Boat Club

**The Club** exists as a non-profit-making members' club for owners of traditionally constructed craft of any age or type. The criteria for boat entry is that craft should demonstrate traditional building techniques in both their design and construction. The Club magazine, 'The Boater', is published to provide a forum and keep the membership abreast of forthcoming events.

### **The AIMS OF THE CLUB are to:**

- 1 Encourage the restoration and preservation of vintage craft.
- 2 Collate such information as is necessary to compile a detailed register of boats as an historical record.
- 3 Encourage and facilitate the exchange of information between owners.
- 4 Provide a members' club which will further and widen the interests and participation of people in all aspects of traditional boating.

### **Full Membership**

Applications are invited from owners of vintage craft for full membership of the Club. On acceptance, the boat is issued with an enamelled plaque bearing a unique identification number, which remains the property of the Club. This should stay with the boat if she is eventually sold, as a means of tracing her through her future owners and future name changes.

Applications are only considered when accompanied by a non-returnable good quality photograph, or high-res digital image, which may be used in compiling a club register.

### **Associate Membership**

Applications for associate membership are invited from people who do not have a traditional boat, but who have a proper interest in boating, and who will participate in and support, the activities of the Club.

### **Fees**

Subscriptions are payable from January 1st each year. Applicants joining after October 1st are deemed to have paid for the following year. Full Membership is £30.00 per year and Associate Membership is £20.00 per year. There is a one-off joining fee of £15.00. An online application form is available on our web site at [www.thamesvintageboatclub.com](http://www.thamesvintageboatclub.com) Any queries and requests for application forms should be addressed to the Membership Secretaries, whose contact details are:

Peter & Theresa Scrutton

Email: [memberships@thamesvintageboatclub.com](mailto:memberships@thamesvintageboatclub.com) Tel: 08454 672428

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