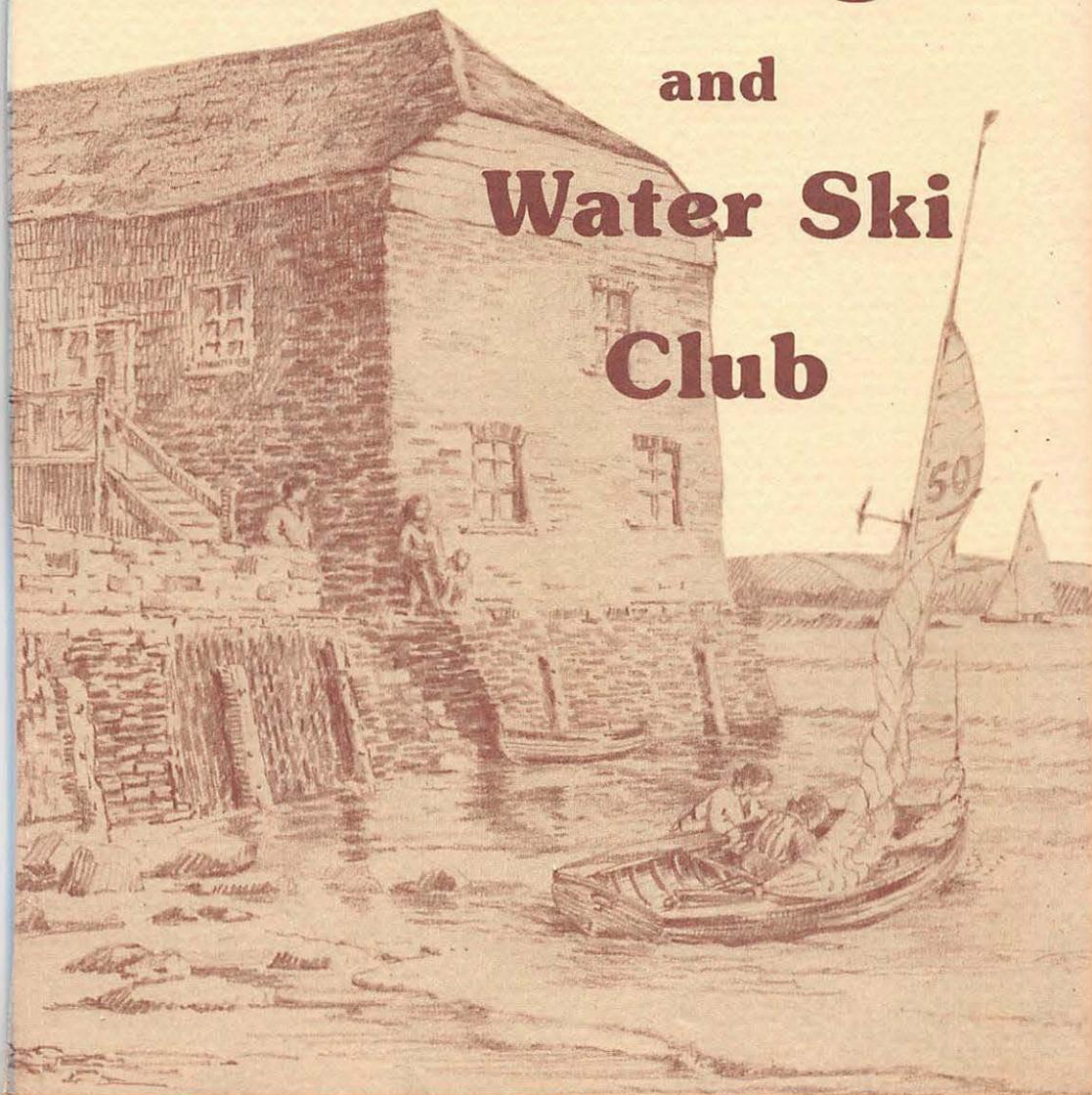
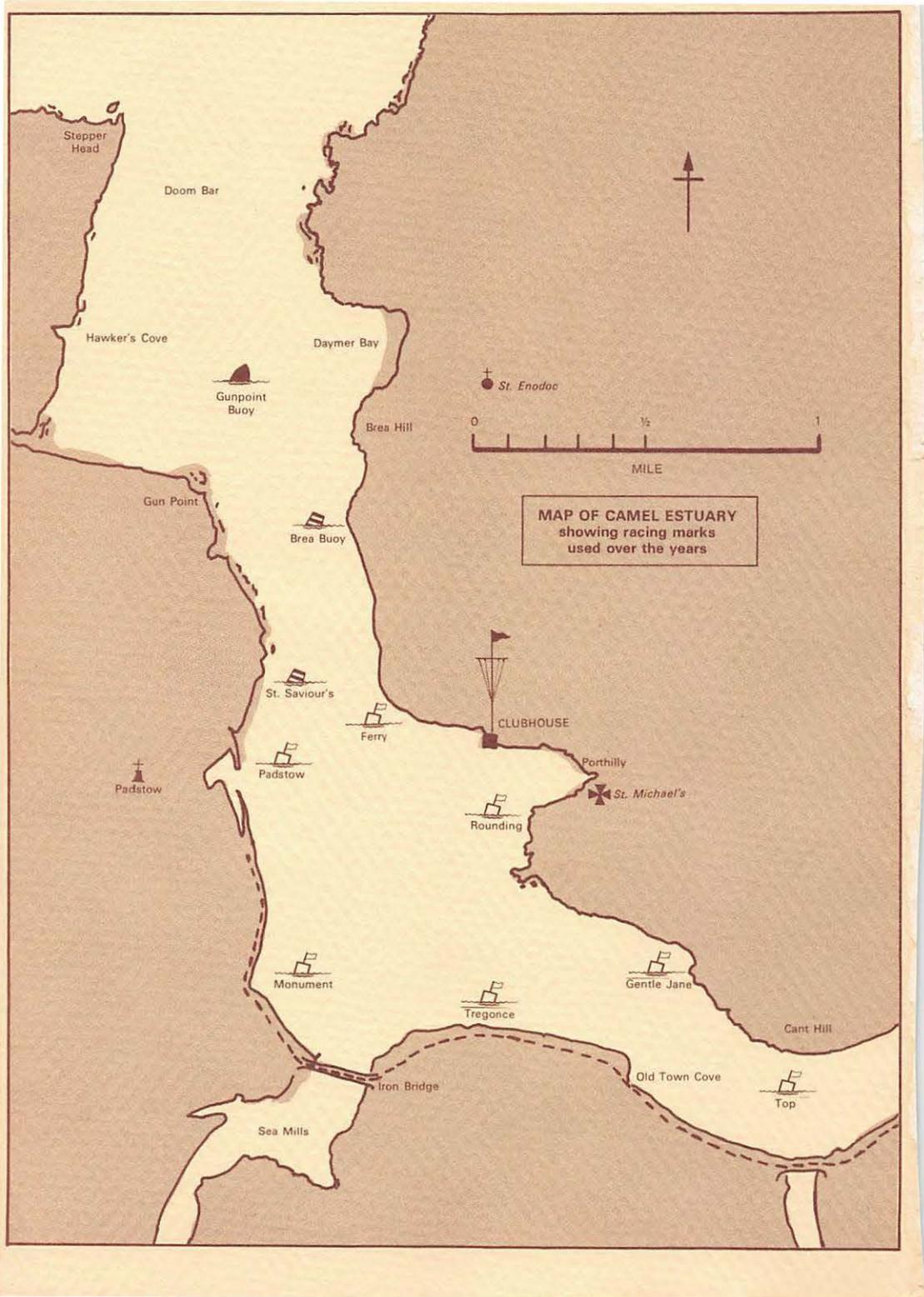


The First Fifty Years
of the
Rock Sailing
and
Water Ski
Club





THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS
of the
ROCK SAILING AND WATER SKI CLUB

by

Pat David

Cover design - Philip Brooke

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PREFACE

I was much flattered, and not a little daunted, to be asked by George Hough to write this history. It has been a fascinating exercise involving a very large number of people. My thanks are due to all those who have patiently answered my enquiries, and raided their albums for photographs. I am particularly indebted to Philip Brooke for designing the cover, supervising the illustrations and advising on printing and publication. Also to Ann, my wife, who has had to put up with a lot besides spending hours at the typewriter. I am sure she would be happier on the jib sheets!

With no records existing before 1946, and so many people involved, there are bound to be some errors and omissions, despite careful checking. If anyone feels offended I do apologise! I hope, too, I will be forgiven for making parts of this book a personal account. I could not have done it in any other way. For me personally the whole operation has brought nostalgic memories, renewed friendships and great satisfaction. I trust the result will bring pleasure to others.

Pat David
Orchard House
Sandhurst, Glos.
January 1988

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INTRODUCTION

My earliest memory of the Rock Sailing Club was in 1938 when, out sailing in a hired 16 ft. lug and mizzen, I saw off Gentle Jane a group of slim white sails. They were circling before a race and looked like a cluster of white butterflies. As a boy I was mad keen to learn to sail. I was taught by Padstow fishermen in lug and mizzen dinghies. They were all scornful of the idea that the Camel Estuary would ever be suitable for pleasure sailing. "Tides too strong and too many shifting sandbanks - far too dangerous." Little did they know what that cluster of white sails portended for the future.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ROGERS ERA 1939-1953

I joined the Club in 1939. To be a member you had to be a boat owner. I had achieved this state, despite my parents' objections and the imminence of war, by spending all my savings on the purchase of an Island Class 14 footer, Nicky II - my pride and joy.



"Nicky II"

I found a club dominated by powerful personalities. The father of the club was undoubtedly Admiral Rogers, "Uncle Hext" to us. Following a distinguished naval career he had retired in 1935 when he moved from his family home of Carwinion near Falmouth to Roskarnon at Rock. His wife, affectionately known as "Aunt Aggie", came from

FOUNDERS OF THE ROCK SAILING CLUB



Mrs. Rogers - "Aunt Aggie"



Major Pyne - "Maister"



Admiral Rogers - "Uncle Hext"



Cecil Rogers

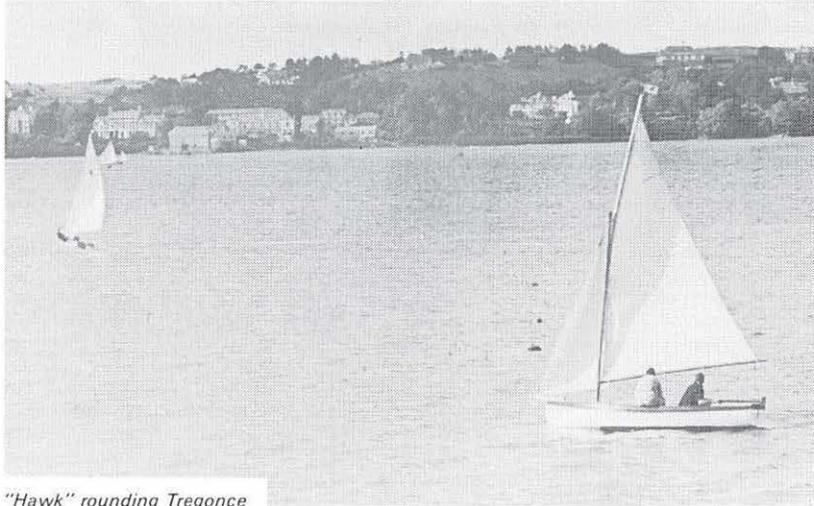
an old Cornish family, the Channells, and had been a notable sportswoman in her youth. She represented Cornwall in golf, tennis and shooting, and was Ladies Secretary and Captain of St. Enodoc Golf Club over many years. In Falmouth she won many races in her Quay Punt, an 18 foot fixed keel gaff topsail cutter. Their only son, Cecil, unfortunately suffered from a heart condition which left him paralysed in later life. Despite this he was a first class racing helmsman in his younger days, regularly finishing in the first six in the Burton Trophy for National Twelves. He was in the top class in the county in both National Twelves and Merlin Rockets.

These three virtually ran the club in the early years with Hext as Commodore, Cecil Secretary and Aggie Treasurer. It really was a family concern and quite delightful for that. But another key personality was Major Pyne, known as "Maister", owner of Gentle Jane, both house and beach. He was another ex-serviceman, the Army this time, with long service in India. Living in retirement in Bude he first rented Gentle Jane in 1933, bought it as a holiday home in 1935 and moved there to live in 1940. His daughter, Peggy Hooper, lives there now and must be our longest serving member. Major Pyne suggested that the Club might like to use his beach for starting and finishing races, and so Gentle Jane became the home of the Club for the first 14 years of its existence.



The Beach at Gentle Jane

No records exist of the origins of the Club so we have to rely on memories and conjecture. In the mid 1930's a science master at Harrow, affectionately known as "Boozy" Barrett (who gave him his nickname?) used to help to organise a regatta at Sea Mills on the other side of the iron bridge. His son Michael recalls rowing and sailing races and a greasy pole. It had to be organised for high spring tides as the creek was shallow, and visiting sailing boats had to be gunter rigged to enable them to sail under the bridge. The two Barrett boys had a 14 foot clinker built boat called "Hawk", specially designed with such a gunter rig, and I well remember them in the early Menagerie races, and winning the Brea Buoy Cup in 1947.



"Hawk" rounding Tregonce

Inspired by all this, and perhaps wishing to provide holiday activity for their son, the Rogers family called a meeting at Roskarnon in 1936 to discuss the formation of a new club. In addition to them, the meeting was attended by R.W. Dana and General Sir Maurice Taylor, two more powerful personalities. Mr. Dana, of whom more anon, had always been interested in sporting activities in Rock. At the time of his death in 1956 he had been a committee member of the Golf Club for fifty years. We also have a record of him having taken part in a sailing race off Padstow in his "Puffin" as far back as 1900.

Official racing did not start until 1938, the date we recognise as the foundation of the Club. The reason for this is that the founding fathers were looking ahead and organising the design and production of a new class of racing dinghy suited to our estuary. Cecil's influence ensured that it should be based on his first love, the National 12. But it had to fulfil three conditions - (1) it should be able to lie at anchor; (2) it must be able to sail under the iron bridge; and (3) it must be cheap. The result was the Rock One Design, designed by Peter Brett and built by Hunkin's of Fowey, with sails by Ratsey. The boat was virtually a National 12 hull, strongly built, with a sliding gunter rig which allowed for a short mast. The cost was £22. 10/-, less oars! (The Admiral was once heard to say, using a canine metaphor, "The pedigree of the Rock O.D. is an R.N.S.A. one design sired by a National 12, incorporating the best points of each breed".)

The first two built were No. 1 "Wren", owned by Cecil Rogers, and No. 2 "Pamela" for Brian Watson. Brian recalls the feeling of helplessness when competing against Cecil. It was not just the naval jargon floating across the water - "Let draw" and "stand away handsomely", but Cecil's boat was so meticulously tuned and prepared whereas "Pamela" lay swinging on her mooring while her owner was on the golf course, that it was not really a fair contest. Races were very one sided at first.

But as more O.D.'s were built competition became keener. There



Rock One Design. "Robin" leads "Shearwater"

were certainly nine built and possibly more. They provided the hard core of the racing fleet in those early years. They were tough, seaworthy little boats, but fast and very competitive. The fleet was usually led by Cecil Rogers in "Wren", closely followed by his great rival Marcus Zambra in O.D. No. 5. "Robin". Other notable O.D. skippers included Jan Channell, Bill Passmore (whose father owned the Rock Pub), Martin Morris and the Fox brothers. B. Bira, the racing driver, and his cousin Prince Chula of Siam also had one for a couple of seasons. (They kept their E.R.A. racing cars "Romulus" and "Remus" in a garage opposite Dormy House, and were said to be better in cars than in boats!)

The Menagerie fleet was dominated by Major Pyne's beautiful "Westward" and the Admiral's 16 ft. yawl "Cock Robin". Mr. Whateley's "Aileen" and my own "Nicky II" often ran them close and, especially when we were joined by the O.D.'s, racing was very keen. Most boats were moored at Gentle Jane and all races started from there. Two posts on the beach provided the line and Aunt Aggie started us off with a hunting horn! She was a formidable figure, always wore a hairnet when starting races and younger members soon learned to keep out of her way during race time! A simple standard course was used, a red or green flag determining which way we were to go round. Good seamanship was encouraged. Life jackets and rescue launches were unheard of and we were expected to look after ourselves, although naturally boats would break off from racing to help anyone in trouble. But capsizes were very rare. Meticulous attention to the rules was taken for granted - if a rule was broken retirement was obligatory. I well remember Cecil Rogers retiring at the start of a Commodore's Cup because he just brushed the starting buoy "by the thickness of a coat of varnish". Very honourable as no-one could have possibly seen it. And again Trevor Evans recalls going to the assistance of Major Pyne, run aground off Porthilly Point, only to be told "Keep off - don't touch me or I'll have to retire". They stuck to their guns too when in the

right, as with the Admiral creaming along in "Cock Robin" on starboard tack, white hair blowing in the wind, the typical sea-dog, bellowing in best quarterdeck manner "Get out of my bloody way!" We always did!



Many of us enjoyed cruising as well. R.W. Dana, or "Old Dana" as he was called (he was already 70 when the Club was founded) could often be seen pottering about the estuary in his "Puffin", usually single handed. He was a well known local figure of some renown. A retired civil engineer and shipwright, he had assisted in the construction of Tower Bridge and Kew Bridge and was Secretary of the Institute of Naval Architects, besides being on the staff of naval construction at the Admiralty. He lived at Cockmoyle (where John Bray lives now) and died there at the age of 89. He was very good to the Club, helping it financially - besides donating the Brea Buoy Cup, he always gave a bottle of sherry for the first boat home! Young skippers were told to keep an eye on Old Dana when racing, in case he had a heart attack! But his first love was cruising, the Brea Buoy Cup was after all intended to be a cruising race.

Many of us followed his example. With my sister in "Nicky II" I can remember drinking rum on board Breton crabbers sheltering under Stepper. These brightly coloured sailing craft were frequent visitors in those days. Cecil Rogers used to sail "Wren" up on the high tide to Trewornan Bridge (no barrage then), tie her up to the bridge, have lunch with his relation General Jan Hext at the manor, and sail back home on the ebb.

In 1941 I left to join the Navy. I travelled by train from Padstow, and from the train I had a last sight of the boats moored in Gentle Jane. The tide was high and I treasured the memory of that sight throughout

my war years. The Admiral was away a lot during the war as Commodore of Convoys. On convoy duty in destroyers in the North Atlantic I often wonder whether the commodore of our convoy was our own Uncle Hext!

Racing continued throughout the war with a much depleted fleet. All boats had to be registered with the R.N. in Padstow and had numbers painted on the bows in letters at least one foot high! The Commanding Officer in Padstow, who was also in charge of the coast patrol, was Admiral Campbell. He was quite a character, in charge of "Q" ships in the 1914 war, and was reputed to drink a whole bottle of sherry every lunch time at the Commercial Hotel. Servicemen on leave were allowed to sail any Rock O.D. which was available and most of them raced right through the war.

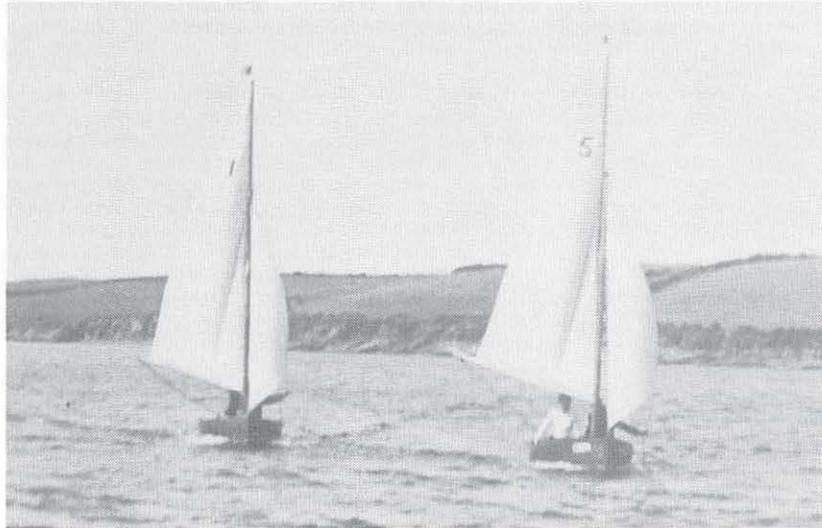
Jeremy Zambra recalls an amusing incident in connection with this - the saga of the "Flying Pants". Some Fleet Air Arm Officers were racing and capsized. Marcus Zambra lent one of them a change of clothes which were duly returned, minus a pair of underpants. Some days later a Swordfish flew over Gentle Jane, from which floated down the missing pants!

When peace came Club membership stood at 64 and there was an influx of new blood. Major Watson and Captain Jeffreys joined us with their Yachting World Knockabouts "Cormorant" and "Shellduck" and also a number of officers from St. Merryn. For some time these had run races in the outer estuary from Hawker's Cove with a fleet of airborne lifeboats, designed by Uffa Fox to be dropped by parachute from Liberator bombers. A pretty sight they made with their coloured sails, but they were not really suitable for racing.

The 1947 review of the season comments that "Wren" and "Robin" continued to dominate the O.D. racing to a remarkable degree. So too did "Westward" and "Cock Robin" in the Menagerie, although now challenged by "Cormorant" which actually was champion boat that year. (Major Watson, formerly a hunting man, was learning fast.) There was also a comment on the reasons for this dominance and much good advice on sail tuning and ensuring a smooth bottom. For example Major Pyne always polished the underside of "Westward" with furniture polish, and I was encouraged to put on a concoction of blacklead mixed with white of egg! We were so keen to gain that extra edge at the start.

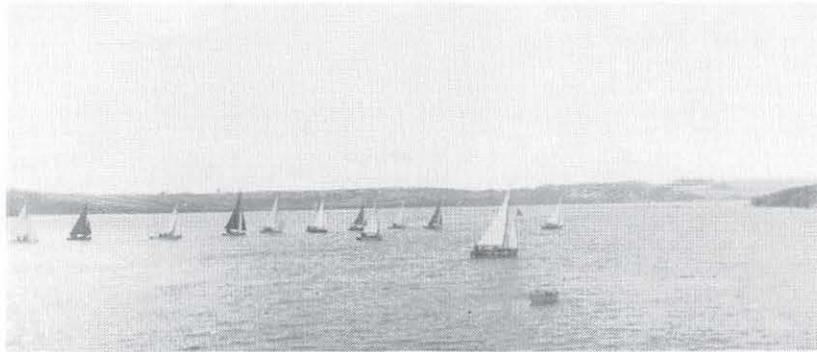
It is interesting to read the A.G.M. reports of the late 1940's and to note how they were almost totally concerned with the racing. An example is this extract from the 1947 review of the season:

"Some inquiry into the reasons for the successes of "Robin" and "Wren" might prove instructive. The most important was that they had the two most experienced helmsmen in the class but other reasons were: (1) At the start "Wren" averaged 14.75 seconds late and "Robin" 17 seconds - deplorable figures - but the others averaged from 23.6 to 27.1 seconds late which gave them a grave disadvantage. The average should be under 5 seconds. (2) Both "Robin" and "Wren" were kept clean and smooth under water, "Robin" being the better. The other boats were not scrubbed often enough. A smooth under water finish is particularly important in a light wind season. (3) Both owners spend a great deal of time in improving rigging, set of sails, sheet leads etc.



The rivals - "Wren" and "Robin"

whereas the others seemed inclined to think that it was sufficient to bend on the sails at the beginning of the year and leave them untouched, irrespective of wind and weather. In this respect "Wren" had a great advantage for her mainsail is one of the most perfect imaginable.



A start, from Gentle Jane

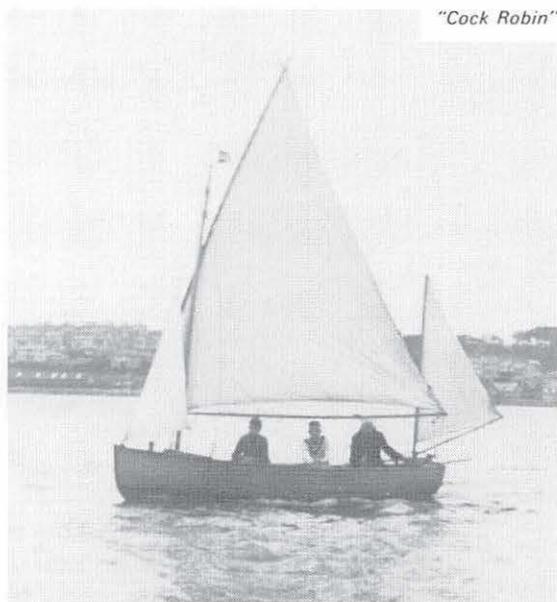
During these years the starter's hut was erected at Gentle Jane where it stands to this day. An extra cup race was introduced in 1945 to supplement the Commodore's Cup originally presented by the Admiral in 1939 (and won by him once and Cecil four times). This new trophy was the Brea Buoy Cup presented by Mr. Dana. Typically of him he specified a cruising race taking in Brea or Gun Point buoy, and then up to Cant Cove to round a buoy up there, and back to Gentle Jane. In 1947 it suffered by turning into a spinnaker run both ways. But what fun it was, with those fickle winds off Cant. Incidentally

spinnakers were not allowed in the Commodore's Cup. In an all-in non-handicap race they were not considered to be quite fair!

In 1950 there was a minor hiccup in the form of a dispute between the Club and the new ex-naval owner of Cant Farm. This was over the use by members of the private road to Gentle Jane. It had all the makings of a first class row between senior naval officers, one a Captain and one an Admiral, but happily the argument was resolved. However, access to the beach was limited and in any case more and more members were keeping their boats at Rock and sailing up to Gentle Jane for the start. At the 1951 A.G.M. a long held ambition was achieved when it was announced that a club hut at Ferry Point was now available for members to store their gear. This was the first hint of the transfer to Rock that was to come. At this same A.G.M. it was proposed that Admiral Rogers should be elected Commodore and to remain so for as long as he wished.

This resolution was the apogee of the Rogers era. Times were changing. The advent of planing dinghies made boats like "Cock Robin" out of date, and the shift of emphasis toward Rock made change inevitable. Then, sadly, Aunt Aggie developed cancer and died in 1953.

Heartbroken, Admiral Rogers resigned as Commodore, sold Roskarnon and moved back to the family home on the Helford River. He died two years later. The influence of the Rogers family on the Sailing Club was immense. Without them the Club might very well not have come into existence. To them we owe the early tradition of good seamanship, keen racing and the happy family atmosphere which survives to this day.





*Kemphorn Ley at the helm of Rainbow No. 1. Roskarnon and Admiral's Boathouse in background
(Photo by R. Bishop)*

CHAPTER TWO

THE WATSON/CHURCH ERA 1953-1972

The departure of the Rogers family coincided with the demise of the Rock O.D.'s. Jan Channell recalls taking part in the last of the old style Padstow regattas in 1958, and winning in his "Cirrus", the last one built. After that we hear no more of them, although he continued to sail "Cirrus" on the Fal until 1965 with his wife Mary as crew.

Now, in the early 50's, new personalities and new classes came to the fore. Marcus Zambra took over the helm for two years, assisted as Rear Commodore by his next door neighbour Admiral Taylor. Admiral Taylor, a very practical man, constructed an ingenious contraption of sliding wooden flags on the starter's hut to simplify the work of the race officer. Sadly he died of a heart attack while out sailing in his scow in July 1956. Marcus Zambra was succeeded as Commodore in 1955 by Major Harry Watson, who held the post for the next six years, and again in the early 70's.

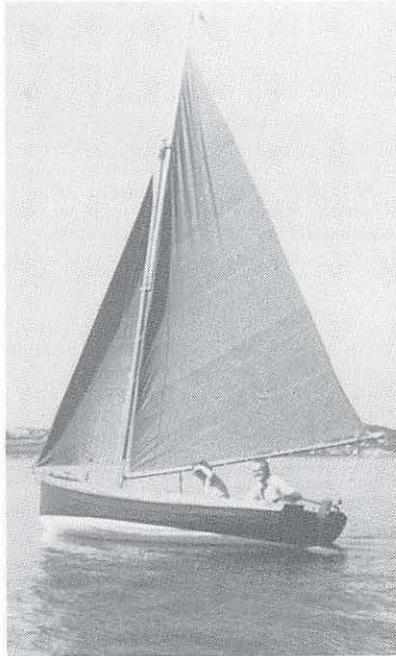


Harry and Moira Watson



*Marcus Zambra,
Commodore 1953-55*

Harry Watson was another formidable figure. Known as the "Worthylands Watsons", to distinguish them from Brian and Pam Watson of Moiety Cross, Harry and Moira came to live at Worthylands, Trebetherick at the end of the war. A first world war veteran who won his Military Cross on the Somme, he always had a military bearing and direct manner. He did not suffer fools gladly! He loved driving fast cars as befitted one who had briefly been in the Royal Flying



"Cormorant"



"Kestrel"



Harry Watson, Anthony Jeffreys and Major Pyne with the new Kestrel

Corps. Jane Diplock recalls hitching a lift with him from Wadebridge one day, and vowing never to do so again as she was frightened to death! Even in his 80's he thought nothing of driving up to London to have his hair cut, and returning the same day. Horses and hunting were his first loves, but all his energies were transferred to sailing in the second half of his life.

His great friend was Capt. Anthony Jeffreys, retired Clerk to the House of Lords who lived at Doom Bar House. When Harry took over, Anthony became Rear Commodore. When they first arrived on the scene these two quickly made their mark with their Yachting World knockabouts "Cormorant" and "Shelduck". Later on, inspired no doubt by Cecil Roger's exciting experiments with his new "Rocket" (which was a forerunner of the Merlin Rocket class) they bought simultaneously nos. 1 and 4 of a new class of boat, the "Kestrel". It was Anthony who took the initiative, being the proud owner of Kestrel no. 1, but it was Harry who won the races, including, appropriately enough, the Commodore's Cup in his first year as Commodore. When Anthony gave up sailing he kindly allowed Kestrel no. 1 to be used as a club boat for hire. This was much appreciated, not least by boys from my school on their annual sailing camp.

Ian Proctor told me an interesting story about the birth of the Kestrel. Apparently Anthony Jeffreys, tiring of his Y.W. knockabout and wanting something more exciting, went to consult him. He really wanted an Osprey, but Ian Proctor tactfully persuaded him that he and Dorothy were perhaps too old for such a high performance boat. As a result he designed for them a new boat, the Kestrel, which combined speed and excitement with relative stability. This is why Anthony acquired Kestrel no. 1, and it is nice to know that this class owes its origins to a member of our club. The name was chosen because Anthony and Dorothy, both bird lovers, had spotted a kestrel nesting on a ledge near their London flat.

Harry and Anthony were much helped by their wives. Moira Watson was a tower of strength, not only as Harry's crew, but also behind the scenes in club affairs. Dorothy Jeffreys was a colourful figure about whom memories abound. They were an elderly couple and Jeremy Zambra recalls the wicked glee he felt as a small boy as they always seemed to get into difficulties when setting sail or landing at Gentle Jane. Dorothy was a large lady with a passion for bird watching, a booming voice, and she always wore large bell bottoms and a floppy blue hat. Trevor Evans recalls having to tow her into Town Cove after a capsize as he could not heave her into the rescue boat. On another occasion Crispin Henderson tried to retrieve her hat with a boathook not realising she was underneath it! She certainly was an intrepid personality.

The great change, in these post war years, was the influx of the new fast planing dinghies. I had already had a foretaste of this in 1950 when I brought home from abroad my Firefly "Nassim" and to my astonishment, and the Admiral's fury, planed past "Cock Robin" with ease. A few years later I had a ride in Harry Watson's "Cresserelle" and felt that here was a new dimension to sailing. It was like a Bentley compared with my M.G.! An unusual boat to appear

was the Tornado "Zephyr" owned by Mr. Holroyd and later by Michael Yates. She was more correctly known as a "European Lakes One Design", an Uffa Fox creation, long and narrow with a sliding seat, very tender, often seen upside down, but she won the Commodore's Cup twice in the 1950's. She was last seen in Undertown garden being used as the Yates' childrens' playground. Incidentally Undertown, in Trebetherick, was Sir John Betjeman's childhood home.

Other new boats included "Robin Hood", an International 14 owned by Lawrence Grand who won the Commodore's Cup three times in her, and a number of Enterprises, G.P. 14's and National 12's. But the biggest change of this era was in a sense a perpetuation of the old traditions with the development of the Rainbow class. The Rainbow was the result of a joint initiative by Kempthorne Ley and Ken Robertson, both of whom in their different ways had a great influence on sailing at Rock.

Kempthorne Ley bought Roskarnon and the Boathouse when the Admiral left, with the intention of running a boat hire business and sailing school. He also rented the Warehouse and coal store on the quay. He started off with two X class 16 footers, one I remember named "Will o' the Wisp". His great delight was sailing round the island. He was helped by his son David, was joined in 1954 by Ken Robertson and, two years later, by Trevor Evans then aged 16.

When Ken Robertson joined him he had just completed his apprenticeship as a boatbuilder at Brabyn's Yard in Padstow. Ken, who originally hailed from London, recalls his earliest years living in a cottage on the quay near the hotel where his father worked. As a boy he was fascinated by boats and I well remember him aged about eleven helping me and my sister beach Nicky II. His first sail was with Michael Miller in "Wild Goose", followed by instruction from that old mariner Mr. Dana in "Puffin".

Ken's first experiment in boat design was in 1958 with a boat called "Fish", built by eye and instinct. It was an exciting boat but lived up to its name by being very wet, and Ken would be the first to admit that it was not a success. But his boatbuilding skills had earlier been put to the test with the building and development of the new Rainbow class. This was in a sense a last attempt to preserve tradition against the onslaught of the planing hull. They were heavy clinker built half decked dinghies, tough and seaworthy to suit a boisterous estuary and, with their many coloured sails, which gave the class its name, they made an attractive picture when racing. The original idea was to provide a safe boat for hire purposes and the Rainbow became the stock hire boat during the 50's and 60's. About 50 of them were built but Ken always maintains that Rainbow no. 1, built for Jan Fox, was the best. All the others were slightly broader in the beam, and by 1955 they had replaced the Rock O.D.'s as the main Club class boat and they became a keen and competitive class, out in all weathers. Their owners, men like Alfred Church, Colin Clements, Cyril Francis, Geoffrey Greaves, Col. Finney and Maj. Bird, became stalwarts of the Club throughout this era and beyond.

At the same time as the development of the Rainbow the question

of a Club presence in Rock itself began to make itself felt. It must be remembered that at this time (1955) all racing was controlled from Gentle Jane beach where many of the senior members had their boats moored. For others the sail from Rock or Padstow to the start, and the return after the race, was taken for granted as part of the whole exercise. At least we had the tide with us both ways! The Starter's Hut and a roped off area in front of it was holy ground, aptly named perhaps as Aunt Aggie's place had been taken over by the vicar, Mr. Henry. He and his wife Grace acted as official starter for many years and helped the Club greatly. Boats had to land before the race to pay their one shilling sweepstake. Peggy Hooper recalls the Marquis of Milford Haven, who always sailed bare topped, carefully putting on his shirt to come ashore like the gentleman he was. On one occasion, having no money, he was alleged to have offered his shirt in lieu of the race fee!

All this, while great fun in its way, quite naturally caused the members who kept their boats at Rock to begin to think of a Club Headquarters there. In 1955 a Mr. Thomas bought the old Warehouse on the quay and suggested that the Club might like to use part of it as a club room during the season. This building, the present Club House, was until recently a coal and corn store owned by Bray and Parken. I used to store Nicky II's long mast there while it was still a corn warehouse. Kempthorne Ley rented it as a boat store and workshop. Mr. Thomas's idea was that the Club should rent the upper floor for the nine week holiday season when it was not needed for storing boats.

The idea was discussed at great length at the 1955 A.G.M. (held at the Golf Club). It was clear that the Club was deeply split on the issue. The new and retiring Commodores, Harry Watson and Marcus Zambra, were strongly opposed and wished to play no part in a "social" club, which is what they feared it would become. However there was sufficient support to encourage a small sub-committee, led by Mr. Clements and Mr. Greaves, to explore possibilities. This resulted in an agreement on the use of the upstairs room as a Club room, and work was completed so quickly that the next A.G.M. in 1956, was the first to be held in our own premises.

By the following year, changing facilities were provided and Vera Buse had set up her organisation for providing sandwiches and hot drinks - very welcome for wet sailors at the end of a race. Vera and her husband Jack were familiar faces in the establishment in those days. Jack was always ready to help when a practical job needed to be done, and Vera used to prepare the refreshments in her home before bringing them down to the club on her bicycle in time for the race. By a happy coincidence they celebrate their Golden Wedding in 1988, the year of the Club's 50th anniversary. Congratulations!

Vera Buse has some amusing memories. She started off with a grant of £10 and she and Cyril Francis went to Padstow to buy 12 cups, saucers and plates, a jug, teapot and wash basin. Jack Buse fixed up a cold water supply. She used to arrive an hour before the start of the race, and stayed on duty until the last boat came in. Sometimes she had to wait a long time as helmsmen of the slowest boats felt in honour



Vera Buse

bound to finish. Jane Diplock, too, used to help her later on, and was full of admiration for the way Vera produced such delicious fare with rather basic facilities. She comments that people still ask for Vera's cheese splits, and hopes that her children did not eat up all the profits. They were, after all, there to help!

The establishment of a Club House inevitably increased the demand for moving the start to Rock. When first discussed in Committee in December 1957 it was clear that an overwhelming number of Committee members were against the idea. But membership rocketed from 86 in 1955 to 336 by 1960, and most new members kept their boats at Rock. On the other hand, the people who ran the club, Flag Officers and Committee members, were people who kept their boats at Gentle Jane and did not want to see the character of the club change. Increased numbers placed a great strain on the Flag Officers. For example, in 1960 there were 60 starters for the Brea Buoy race and the Sailing Secretary, Marcus Zambra, spent nine hours working out the results on handicap. I know this sound incredible. Perhaps he took time off for meals!

But the winds of change were blowing. By 1961 Marcus Zambra had resigned as Sailing Secretary and Harry Watson stood down as Commodore. His place was taken by Alfred Church, a keen Rainbow and Wayfarer owner. He had a certain style about him, proudly exercising his right as Commodore to display a swallow-tailed RSC burgee at the masthead. He was a most determined racing helmsman, as Bernard Kain learned to his cost when he suffered a ducking in a mix-up with his Commodore who had temporarily lost his glasses!

Alfred could be said to be a representative of the Rock boat owners. At the A.G.M. that year it was agreed to try starting at Rock for an experimental year in 1962. For the old stagers this meant substituting working the eddy to Ferry Point after the start instead of the eddy from Gentle Jane to Porthilly point. Those from Gentle Jane had to get to the start against the tide, as also getting home after the race. But despite this the change was welcomed by the majority and was confirmed as a permanent measure at the next A.G.M.

This major change in the club's history owes much to Alfred Church. As an architect working from his home above Lundy Bay he had the expertise and dynamic energy to make the alterations necessary to provide a starter's box with mast and flags on the south side of the Warehouse building. The new routine became sufficiently established to enable the club to host and run its first National Championship, that of the Wayfarer class in 1963, when several club members distinguished themselves. He also inaugurated several new Flag ranks - notably the honour of President for Major Pyne in 1962, and Rear Commodore for Dr. Fairbank, Harry Watson and Marcus Zambra. Major Pyne sadly died a year later when Harry Watson became President.