

**UK BALLAD
ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN 2016**

UK BALLAD ASSOCIATION

Chairman – Cmdr.Tim Burne (Poppin) Secretary/Treasurer – Janie Smallridge (Duchess)
Committee Members - Cathy Noakes (Shara of York) Chris Tyrell (Summertime)
Webmaster – Mick Pindar Newsletter – Ken Morgan (Shebeen)



Cover – Shebeen racing in Poole Bay – Photograph by David Harding (Sailing Scenes)

A CHANGE IS NOT AS GOOD AS A BALLAD

I know it is a feeble excuse for missing this year's Championships, but an invitation to help bring a spanking new Hallberg Rassy 412, *The Grey Silkie*, home from Sweden was too good to miss, especially with a passage taking in 2 sides of a triangle via Norway, the Caledonian Canal, Ireland and around Lands End. Press button winches, in mast furling, retractable bow and stern thrusters, heating(!) and touch screen plotters – all just a bit different from our usual Ballad comforts. Early May and a cold front coming down the Norwegian coast required 7 layers to keep warm. The chart showed DANGEROUS WAVES in capital letters just off the southern tip of Norway – yeah – we know all about overfalls. Well these were big and confused, driven on by a strong and biting north wind. The Hallberg was the perfect boat for the conditions but the wheel steering right aft with an open transom felt horribly exposed, especially compared with the Ballad's long tiller allowing one to snug up under a spray hood.

8-9 knots were easily achieved making for a fast passage through the oil fields to Inverness and into the Canal. The weather through the mountain pass was suitably Scottish with low scudding clouds and driving rain so no worries about the dreaded midge plagues. Instead we were wearing ski goggles to give some protection sailing along the Lochs.

Emerging at Fort William with a hint of some brighter weather, the familiar and distinctive sight of a Ballad -*Schonbrunn* - greeted us. After 29 years of living with *Shebeen*, I still get an unreasonable thrill from meeting another of her lovely sisters.



Schonbrunn resting off Fort William May 2016. In September she was listed for sale at £22250 but now (Oct) no longer available.

A glorious passage down the west coast through the islands, a quick look into Dublin, several hours of playing with dolphins off SW Wales then around Lands End into a humid, misty grey dour English

Channel passing Plymouth in the early hours with the Ballad Championships due to start just a few miles away after breakfast.

A lovely boat, but not enough to do, too much to go wrong and those berthing fees!

To compound my playing away antics, much of the following month was taken up with the YM Triangle, alas not on *Shebeen* (she did it in 2008), but on a very peculiar beast – a Jeanneau 349. Hard chined with twin rudders and wheels, an enormous hinged keel, wide swept back spreaders and no backstay to allow a flat topped main. She was called *Spruce Goose* and was a cruising development of *Red Rooster*, the Sunfast 3400 on which we did the 2014 Triangle. Lots of clever features and toys, but over designed with too much concern about style and innovation rather than simple practicalities like handholds to cope with her extreme angle of heel close hauled. Yes, we were close hauled, hard on the wind for 52 hours with a southerly leaving Torquay, a westerly from Start Point to Lands End and a particularly unpleasant strong north westerly up to the Irish coast. Somehow we hung on, living on bananas and breakfast bars but, forgetting the human element, she went like a train. A Plymouth based Contessa 32, *Katisha*, was knocked down just a short distance behind. The organisers reckon it was the toughest leg they can remember in the history of the race.

Coming back south to Treguier we were off the wind with an asymmetric and, for me, the very strange sensation of blasting off at angles away from the majority of the fleet under symmetric kites, before gybing and blasting back through them again. All great fun in a rolling sea until we had the mother of all wraps at 0300hrs on an extremely dark night.

Suffice it to say, yes, it was all great fun but after these two very different and modern boats with all their speed and wizardry, I yearned to get back and sail my Ballad.

Ok – more confessions. Whilst I have raced *Shebeen* this year on the Round the Island and also our offshore series – Guernsey, Solent, Cherbourg etc, we have not been doing the evening round the cans races. In Poole, with limited time, the cruisers are more or less confined to the dredged channels. As a consequence the courses are dominated by too much processional reaching and little scope for a tactical beat. This, compounded by light evening breezes and flat water, just doesn't give a Ballad the opportunity to sail to her rating. Ratings are supposed to reflect a mix of sea and wind conditions with the expectation of a balance of up and downwind courses. We weren't getting Ballad winds, Ballad waves or Ballad beats. By the end of 2015 I realised that I just wasn't enjoying it. Instead I was frustrated, beating up myself, the crew and the boat, invariably losing out to much slower boats with stupid ratings. I was intrigued to hear that similar frustrations over Ballad ratings have surfaced in Plymouth.

My answer has been to join with a pal in buying an old R19 – a strict one-design peculiar to our Club with between 15 and 25 competitors sailing typically sausage triangles in the shoal waters around the top of the harbour. It's brilliant fun and I reckon the running costs shared 50-50 are on a par with my savings in not beating up *Shebeen*.

But really of course, the best racing we get is at the Ballad Nationals – one design – completely fair and nowhere to hide.

Talking of Ballad Nationals, what did happen in 2016 while I was away? After much door knocking and surreptitious phone calls to anonymous participants, the following report may stir a few memories (or it may seem to be a description of a completely different event). Anyway, please make due allowances if the wrong boats, wrong sailors, wrong dates or wrong locations are mentioned.

THE 2016 BALLAD NATIONALS

Tuesday 24th May 2016 Dun Laoghaire – an English sailor on a shore run off a rather smart Hallberg Rassy is spotted in the bar of the Royal Irish Yacht Club wearing an Albin Ballad One Design shirt. Word quickly spread down the coast to Waterford where Rene Wubben and his faithful crew were busy fettling **Seven Whistler**. *"Well that's interesting. If he's here in Ireland, he's not got time to get on to Poole and then back again to the Ballad racing in Plymouth. You know lads, I think this is our chance to snaffle that lovely Voyager Trophy and bring it back to the Emerald Isle."*

With only 3 days to go, there was no time to waste. Grabbing some sandwiches they were off with a moderate north easterly on the beam and an easy sea. Fast sailing down to Lands End and the wind went east on the nose. Nip into Falmouth for more sandwiches and to change their Euros, then beat on across the bay to Plymouth in good time for the Friday briefing at the Royal Western.

With 9 entries, mostly Plymouth based, and a light forecast, it seemed that local knowledge would be the key. Saturday was predictably light with just S1-2 and limited vis. The OOD, understanding that Ballad skippers only knew how to sail Olympic triangle sausage courses and also how they would insist on going back in for lunch, succumbed to the inevitable. Race 1 and, according to well established custom, the Noakes family on **Shara of York** proceeded to notch up their first win ahead of **Duchess** and **Bandit**.



View from the RWYC Committee Boat

Luncheon was duly taken ashore, whereupon the bemused Race Officer waved the AP claiming reduced visibility. Replete Ballad sailors were mystified looking across from Mountbatten pier to the Plymouth breakwater some 2 miles away, wondering just how much room they needed for their triangles and sausages. Never mind, there's always tomorrow and this gave more time for tea and scones to get in training for the evening supper at The China House. No – nothing to do with chicken flied lice – the name derives from china clay used for England's first hard porcelain produced in Plymouth. The China House, seen in a 1666 watercolour of Sutton Harbour, has been used for a variety of purposes, including as a hospital for ailing mariners, a most appropriate choice for Ballad sailors who were kept in their own private room discretely hidden from normal folk.

Sunday and fully re-energised, the Race Officer briskly got in 2 pre-prandial races. Visibility was good and despite the light S2 breeze, Race 2 proceeded smoothly once more allowing **Shara** to claim her rightful place, this time followed by **Balladier** and **Windwhistle**.

Then the joker – Race 3 set off with a dying SE breeze but, much to her amazement (which she still chunters on about), Janie’s *Duchess* was leading at the windward mark ahead of *Balladier*.....and then the wind died. After a short pause it came back from the NE as a steady 2-3. In the meantime one of my spies recalls a clearly frustrated *Duchess* somehow slipping through a normally impassable reef off Drake’s Island before skulking in to 5th place on the Club line. You can guess who won, this time ahead of *Poppin* and *Windwhistle*.

Luncheon enjoyed ashore again of course and the full complement of races completed in the afternoon with a lovely S3 sea breeze. *Shara of York* got first place to claim their Grand Slam, leading in *Duchess* and *Bandit*, all in good time to spit and polish boats for the Concourse d’Elegance and to wash and brush up crew for the Prizegiving Dinner in the splendid surroundings of The Royal Western YC.

The final results were:-

1. SHARA OF YORK
2. DUCHESS
3. WINDWHISTLE
4. BALLADIER
5. BANDIT
6. POPPIN
7. SUMMERTIME
8. SEVEN WHISTLER
9. MATUI



Photos by Jonathan Haigh

Trophies were duly awarded as follows:-

The Jean Ellis Memorial	First overall	Peter Noakes (SHARA of YORK)
The Upper Deck Trophy	Second overall	Janie Smallridge (DUCHESS)
The Toms Trophy	Third overall	Martin Jones (WINDWHISTLE)
The Julian Foye Trophy	Concourse	Richard Mason (BALLADIER)
The Noakes & Habermehl	Furthest Travelled	Rene Wubben (SEVEN WHISTLER)
The Variety Trophy	Best Endeavour	Rene Wubben (SEVEN WHISTLER)
City of Plymouth Trophy	Best Plymouth Yacht	Tim Adams (BANDIT)
Rocky's Spoon	Last Overall	Paul Jagger (MATUI)
Pam Sheridan Trophy	Best Fowey Yacht	No Fowey Yacht competing. Trophy Lost / missing.

And on Monday the Pursuit Race – destination up the Yealm. Martin Jones (*Windwhistle*) went ahead to deploy his local knowledge as berthing master. In short order the fleet arrived, predictably close together with *Poppin* leading to take the 'The Old Ferry Inn Trophy'. She had excelled herself getting past *Matui* and *Seven Whistler* only to have a nasty moment negotiating the infamous channel, spotting rocks extremely close on the wrong side. She got through unscathed but to her consternation saw *Seven Whistler* trustingly following this clearly experienced local ancient mariner. *Seven Whistler* hit a rock, shrugged, got a diver down to report on just a slightly gouged keel, ate her lunch (well, her crew did), turned around and beat off into a westerly home to Ireland muttering something about other Ballad sailors.

We hope she comes back next year.

Wonderful Weekend of Fun, Food, Friends & Sailing!

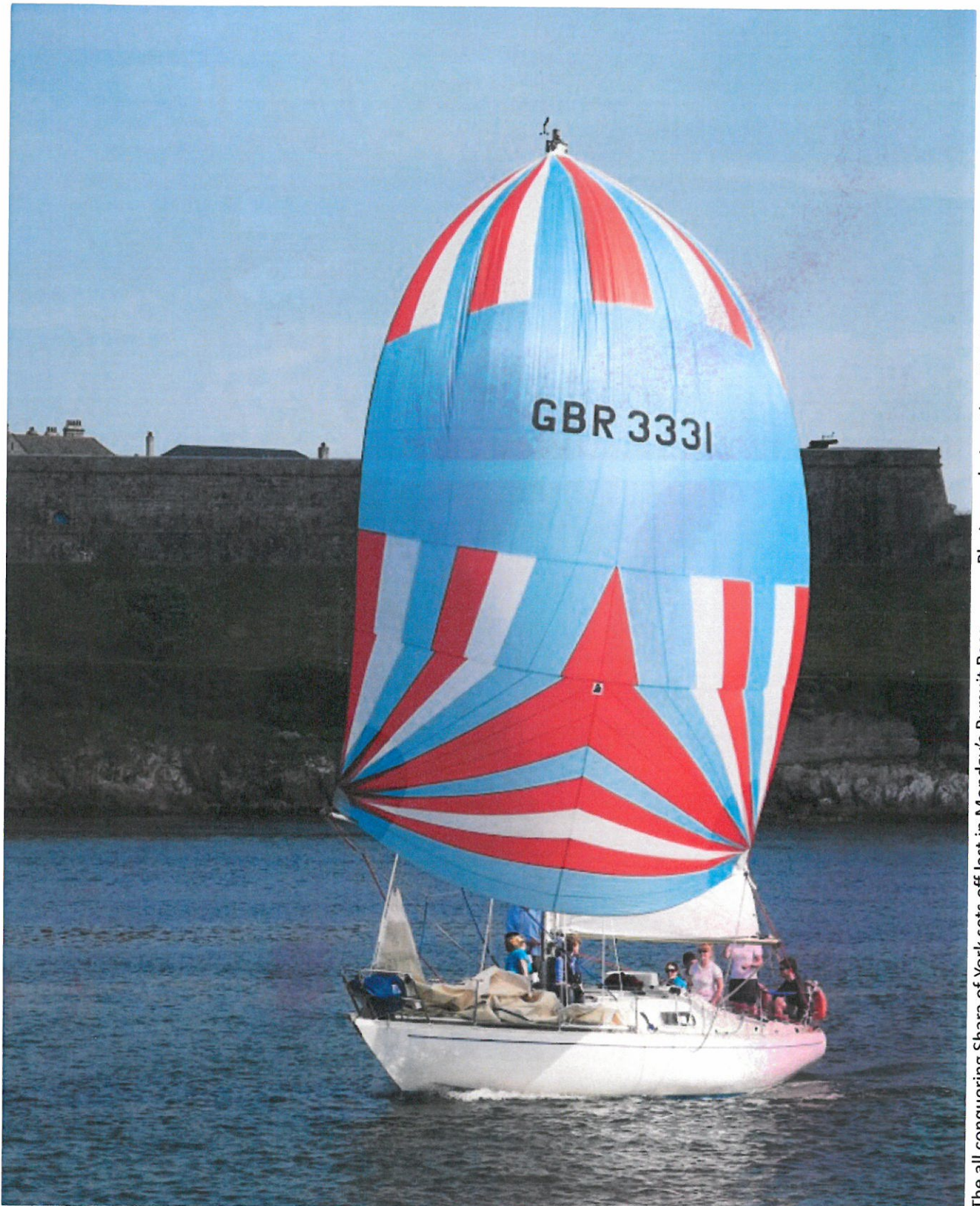
I have vague memories of standing on tables in the Royal Fowey Yacht Club during a Ballad National Championships Prizegiving singing sea shanties, my sister Victoria standing alongside me entertaining the sailors. We also still have the two fluffy yellow ducks received for our courage at being out on the water in the horrendous weather we had one year. At the time the ducks were almost the same size as us. It was so windy that weekend our main sail tore in half! These memories and memorabilia serve to remind me of the wonderful weekends we have spent with fellow sailors and their families throughout the years and this year, 2016, was no exception. My husband and I were very happy to extend our trip the UK to make sure we could be involved in the sailing and socialising. This is after all one of the highlights of the Noakes' Family Calendar, as I'm sure it has become for many of you.

The Championship weekend began on the Friday evening with the traditional briefing outlining the racing and social events scheduled for the weekend, this year hosted by the RWYC in Plymouth. Waking up on Saturday to a foggy, light wind morning was not the best start but with the energy and exuberance that can only be found at a Ballad National Championships, we all chipped in to make sure everyone was ready to kick off racing. This is one of the few competitions I have ever been part of where the camaraderie between competitors is so great. Many Ballad design differences were discussed before racing began, including rigging, bunk layout and even engine exhaust design. Getting together once a year is a great way for us all to learn from one another – something I have seen time and again over the years.

The first race went well, as always a time for the crew to settle in because more often than not it will be the first time they have raced together in a National Championship Competition. I know we had a few tense moments onboard, especially concerning personal attire with an unlucky hat bearing the brunt of the frustration! Shouts could be heard from other boats too. No major issues and all 9 boats finished the race before heading in to Mountbatten Marina for lunch. Rafting up alongside one another, 9 Ballads do look rather spectacular, I do have to say!

The fog rolled in once again over lunch resulting in a frustrating postponement in the afternoon.

The China House was the location this year, a beautiful spot to watch the sunset with friends and reflect on the days racing. A fantastic spread was put on in the function room, and demolished by us all! The night came to an end and sensibly (but unusually!) all headed home to bed (something about being fresh for the next day of racing apparently!).



The all conquering Shara of York sets off last in Monday's Pursuit Race. Photograph Jonathan Haigh

Sunday morning brought a very different state of play; the fog had disappeared but the wind did not want to materialise, certainly not from a constant direction. The Northerly winds of the early morning became light and were being battled against by the sea breeze making setting a suitable course extremely difficult. This is when the expertise of the Race Officer and the team that support him come to the fore. Once the sea breeze had gained strength we were off!

Finishing the third race there was jubilation onboard Shara of York as that was her third win and meant first place for the Championship was now decided. As per family tradition the helm was handed over to a daughter for the final race, this time it was my chance. A nerve-wracking prospect when your father/the owners are onboard and you have that result to live up to! The start of the final race was just as exciting and tense as the previous three had been but this time I was at the helm! The first beat was up towards Kingsand/Cawsand from near Mountbatten Breakwater and the fleet split, with some deciding to head towards Drake's Island and others into Jennyciff. Luckily our decision, and knowledge of our local waters, paid off and we made it first to the windward mark. Then there was another difficult decision to be made.

Plymouth being a large Naval Port presents a few problems for yacht sailors, this time with a large anchored RN ship in the Sound. We had to decide which side to sail down, tricky because on one side you were subjected to wind shadows and on the other the strengthening tide. Being out in front is also always a double edged sword as you have to make that decision first. I have grown up knowing that if you are in the lead you just keep yourself between the finish line and the next boat, but even with that being said I made a risky decision and chose the North side of the ship, splitting the fleet once again. Luck stayed with me and we were still in front at the mark rounding, just! The view of the fleet with their spinnakers flying is such a spectacular sight and one that I never tire of, as seen in the photograph from taken from the safety boat Lady luck stayed with me (that and the support from my fantastic crew) and we crossed the finish line first. I have to say I was both relieved and elated!

Second and Third place were highly contested in the Championship with nothing decided until the final finish so I'm sure the third race was very tense for others as well. The overall result; Duchess in second place with Janie at the helm and Windwhistle took third with Martin at the helm and only one point clear of Balladier and Bandit. A very tight, exciting competition indeed.

A first for this year was the new entry from Ireland. After a difficult trip over, the patriotically coloured green Ballad, Seven Whistler, and her crew added new blood and an element of the unknown to the Championships. Her owner Rene has said that he picked up a great many number of tips for other ballad owners to tweak the boat and the rigging. His twin boys also came along, both making the long drive back together. They added that they thoroughly enjoyed the event, a sentiment echoed by the entire crew, and we look forward to having all of them and the boat back next year.

Looking forward to next year and extending the fleet further.

THE 2017 BALLAD NATIONALS

We're going back to Fowey next May, partly to look for that missing trophy, but mostly because it is my favourite place to race an Albin Ballad. Details will be posted in due course but book the dates – Friday May 26th for the Briefing, Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th to go Racing; and Monday 29th for the Pursuit Race.. It will be a lot of fun – Be there!

BALLAD ASSOCIATION 2016 AGM

Please find below the notice for the 24th AGM of the UK Ballad Association. You and your crews are very welcome to attend this convivial evening. The menu choices are set out below the Agenda.

Notice of AGM

Notice is hereby given that the 24th Annual General Meeting of the UK Ballad Association will be held at 7.30pm on Saturday, November 19th, 2016 at Royal Plymouth Corinthian Yacht Club

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Approval of minutes of 23rd AGM
3. Matters Arising
4. Report by Honorary Secretary/Treasurer
5. Report by Webmaster
6. Report by Newsletter Editor
7. Report by Chairman
8. Review of Subscription Rates for 2017
9. Progress Report on 2017 Championships
10. Date and Venue for 2018 Championships
11. Any other business

Honorary Secretary:- Janie Smallridge,
The Willows, Ludwell Lane, Exeter EX2 5AQ
01392 279112 [email: janiesmallridge@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:janiesmallridge@tiscali.co.uk)

A £15.00 menu will be served with choices of:-

Deep fried battered cod, chips and mushy peas served with fresh lemon and homemade tartar sauce

or

Braised steak, vegetable and Doom Bar ale pie topped with crispy puff pastry served with mash potatoes and garden peas

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Homemade Apple Pie served with custard

or

Honey, Almond, Cherry sponge served with dark chocolate sauce and vanilla ice-cream

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Fresh filter coffee or tea

Please let Janie me know your choices by October 30th. [email: janiesmallridge@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:janiesmallridge@tiscali.co.uk)
01392 279112



The late Paul Dixon's Kotuko

BALLAD ONE DESIGN FLEECES

Janie has also been busy organising something to keep you warm – North Fleece Jackets 300gsm in sizes XS to 5XL.

They are £18.00 each including VAT and the name of your yacht embroidered beneath the logo as shown below



Crew not included within your price

Please send your orders on the form at set out below to Janie Smallridge – The Willows, Ludwell Lane, Exeter, Devon EX2 5AQ – with a cheque made payable to the UK Ballad Association.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

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.....

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Tel. No.....

E mail.....



Check colour availability with Janie

Size	XS	Small	Medium	Large	XL	XXL	3XL	4XL	5XL
Chest (inches)	35-36"	36-38"	38-40"	41-42"	43-44"	45-47"	47-49"	50-52"	53-55"
Colour									
Number required									

Ballad Name(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Sail No (if required)

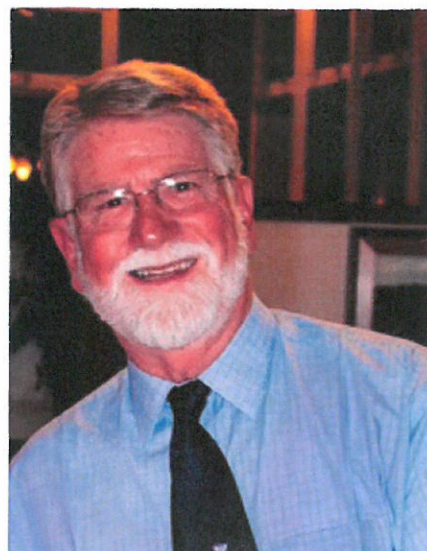
I enclose a cheque/have paid online for Fleece at £18 each = £

Plus postage (if applicable) @ £3.00 for 1 fleece = £

Alternatively, please email your order to Janie janiesmallridge@tiscali.co.uk and pay by BACs online with your boat name as reference to 30-97-28 a/c no 00643554

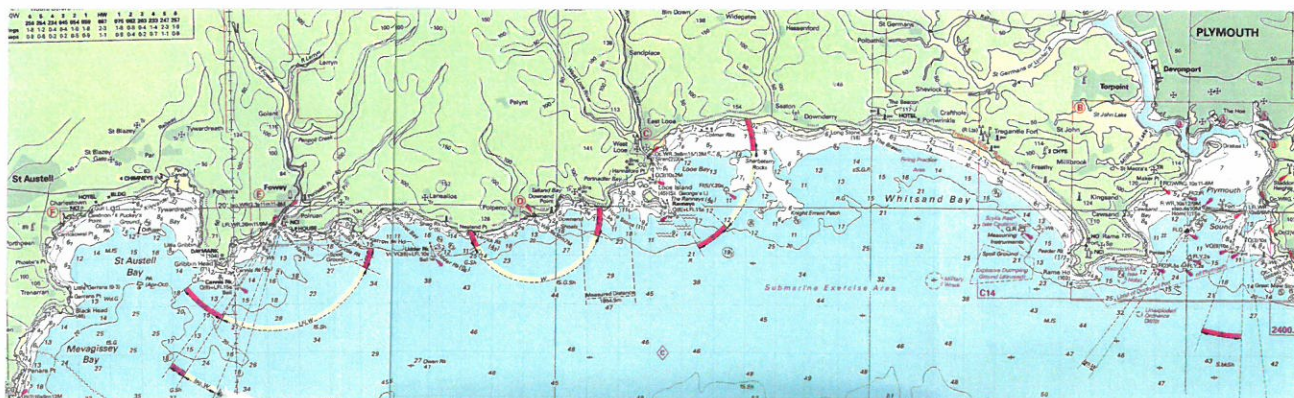
GO IT ALONE

If your crew can no longer match your own high energy ; if they go to sleep on the rail;; if they keep repeating themselves ; or if they just don't turn up; do as our eminent Association Chairman does – race singlehanded. Seriously this looks like good fun – challenging and eminently satisfying. Tim Burne reports that there are now four Ballads regularly participating in the Plymouth based RNSA Single Handed Series – **Poppin, Gancia Girl, Balu** and **Flute**. As a taster, Tim describes the 2015 Plymouth-Fowey race:-



Cmdr. Tim Burne (Poppin)

The RNSA single-handed series is one of the best supported events in the Plymouth yachting calendar. It is a Corinthian affair which can be summed-up by an extract from the SIs: *Aggressive use of the racing rules (and boat handling) is discouraged, so it is not expected that single-handers will wish to protest each other. Please be aware the start is always a risky area and things can happen quickly, so leaving more 'water space' than in crewed racing is strongly advised. The offer of a convivial drink after the race is considered the more effective remedy for any inconvenience suffered. However, should a protest be considered necessary, such protest must be made in writing on the back of a £50 note. After the protest has been considered by a refreshed Race Committee the change will be donated to the RNLI.*



The race to Fowey on 8th August attracted 28 entries of which 23 started and finished. Three of the competitors were Ballads: Dick Brown in *BALU*, Mike Bagley in *GANCIA GIRL* and Tim Burne in *POPPIN*.

The start was between Queen's Ground buoy and the Breakwater and, despite the warnings about aggressive starting, the first three over the line were the three Ballads though we were soon overtaken by faster yachts.

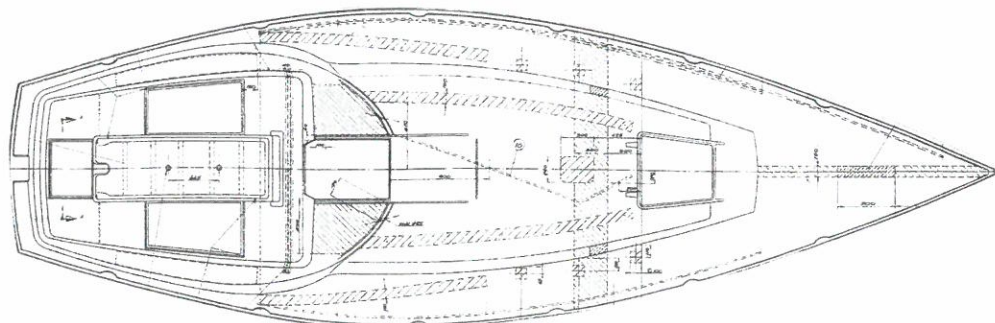
Light westerlies "with holes" and a flood tide into Plymouth made the leg to Penlee much longer than anticipated and, in retrospect, there was plenty of time and a lot of benefit to have been had from flying a spinnaker but the three of us, led by *BALU*, arrived at Rame Head in close company with white sails on starboard tack



Offshore, the tide was favourable only until about 1100 so with a westerly breeze the game plan was to tack into Whitsand Bay to cheat the tide when it turned against. Dick duely tacked inshore on port, followed shortly by Mike but I decided to stand-on for a while which was mighty fortunate for me because the breeze progressively backed and filled so when, half-an-hour later, I put in my tack onto port I was just about able to lay the heading for Fowey. This left *BALU* and *GANCIA GIRL* well to leeward. The tidal stream was only 28% springs so the advantage they had from being inshore was matched by having to point higher and, eventually, having to tack out in order to be able to lay the entrance to Fowey.

The finish off Punch Cross was a tad hairy for many of us with the harbour entrance thick with Troys and other dinghies hell bent on local races but all was well and the three Ballads finished in the order *POPPIN*, *BALU* and *GANCIA GIRL* with only 11 minutes between us after 5 hour's racing. Once handicaps had been applied that put us 5th, 8th and 11th respectively. Happy with that!

There was an excellent run ashore and dinner at the RFYC (we sail alone but drink together!). Someone said that single-handed sailing is not about the solitude but the achievement. Amen to that.

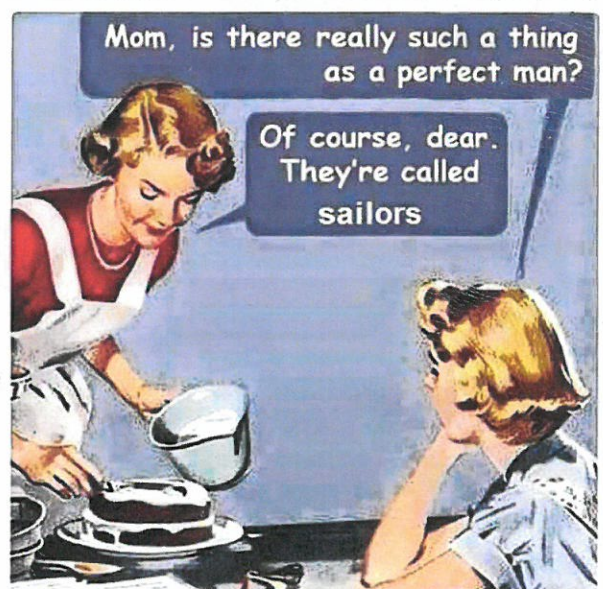
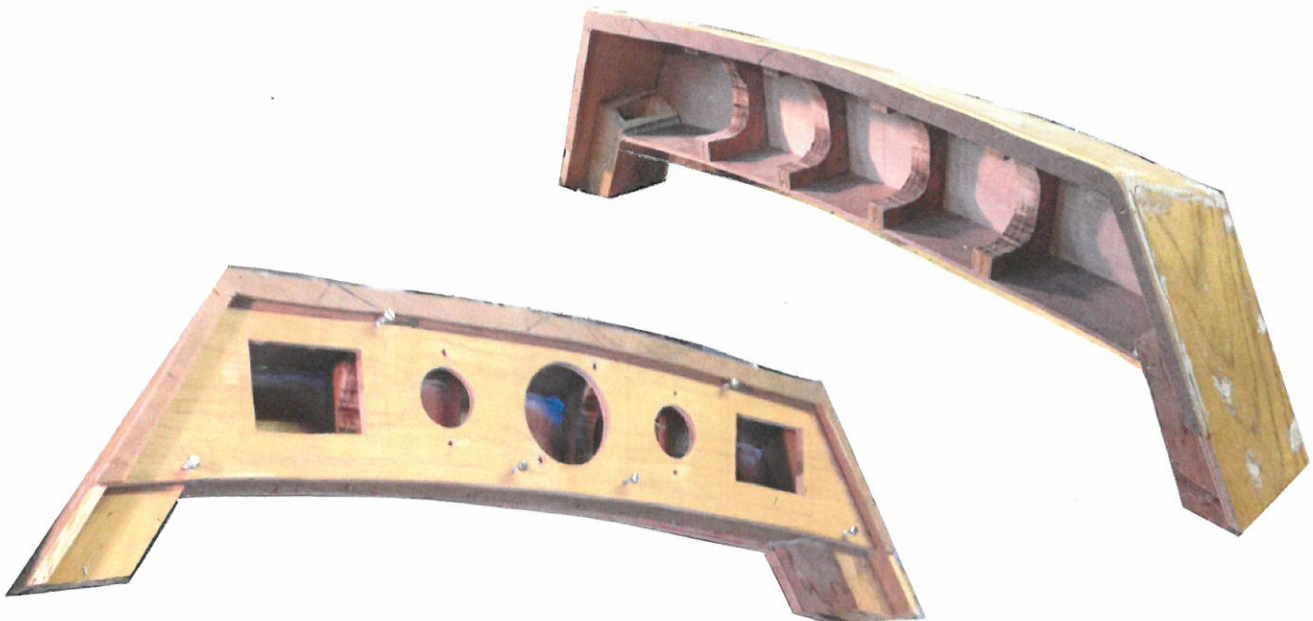


FURLING GEAR AND SAILS FOR A BALLAD

Another Irish Ballad owner, John Donnery johnmdonnery@hotmail.com, is looking for someone's un-needed old mainsail and furling genoa, with the furling gear. He's owned his Ballad for quite a long time, but would be delighted to hear if anyone has old kit they no longer need.

POSTSCRIPT

A rest from bashing round the cans allows a little TLC for Shebeen including replacing her 25 year old instrument bridge.



Bottom scrubbing beckons. See you in Fowey!