

# BALLAD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2023



Matui at 2013 Nationals

## Chairman's Greeting

Well, it has definitely been a different year with a fantastic June (we were away on the Algarve in Portugal where it became too hot!), followed by a lousy July with very little enjoyable sailing weather for us cruisers (okay if you were racing possibly!) and an even worse August and now lovely weather in September!



However, at the end of May, the Ballad Championship was hosted by the Plym Yacht Club and favoured with pleasantly warm, sunny weather albeit including fluky wind conditions. These were tempered by a stalwart race officer and his side kick (Dave Curnow and Sam Marshall) who manoeuvred the fleet around the racecourse to take the best advantage of the little wind there was in order to provide the 2 races a day with a long lunch break, formula that is requested by the relatively ageing owners and crew - well done them.

Thanks must go to the PYC along with all those Ballads who attended, all of which crew's appeared to have an enjoyable weekend, with the final act being a pursuit race up to Saltash Sailing Club which happened to be won by a single hander (Dick in Balu) who was joined by Ken (Shebeen- who's engine was mortally wounded!) - Ken finally won something and wasn't he happy. SSC provided a welcome lunch eaten out in the sunshine on the decking with almost as many young people (including my first grandchild only a few months old!) as us oldies. What a lovely chaser to our 50th year of Ballad sailing celebrations in 2022 in Fowey.

Looking forward, we had several discussions over where and when for next year 2024. The 'where' needs to be decided soon as also does the 'when', and below I make a few points and suggestions. Your committee would be very grateful to have your thoughts sent back to Janie, as secretary, in short time so that any clubs can be contacted prior to our AGM which will be held at SSC Saturday 11th November 19.00. Votes can then be taken with a final decision for destination and weekend.

The Ballad Championship was initially held over a weekend in September by invitation of the RFYC. From this event, the association was formed, and a decision made that the championship be sailed over the "Whitsun" bank holiday at the end of May- at the time this was because several of the owners had young children and/or were teachers and getting time off outside school holidays was difficult. On the whole, we no longer have this concern and the problems that are currently appearing are those of costs of holiday accommodation, being much higher, as well as availability of both crew and accommodation being more problematic. So, when would you like the championship to take place? Earlier in the year say the May Day bank holiday? Not a bank holiday? August bank holiday? September? Please let us know your preferences.

In terms of where it could/should be held:

In 2021 a delayed Championship was held in Dartmouth, in 2022, the 50th anniversary of the Ballad sailing championship was held in Fowey as the instigators of that first one design meeting. In 2023 the Championships returned to Plymouth, hosted by the PYC.

Looking at it as we have done for several years it appears that it is the turn of somewhere down west- so possibilities for 2024 are:

Falmouth, which could be RCYC, St Mawes Sailing Club, Restronguet Sailing Club, Flushing Sailing Club or Mylor Yacht Club, Mount's Bay-Penzance Sailing Club or Mount's Bay Sailing Club, possibly using Newlyn Harbour for berthing or Penzance Wet Dock.

If we decide to go further east, Ken may not win the Traveller's trophy(!), but we could consider:

Brixham Yacht Club and the marina there, or Royal Torbay Yacht Club and marina.

Please send us your preferences so that your committee can start the ground work towards organising 2024 Championship, which I am sure that you will all be keen to attend. On this note, your chairman will sign off whilst wishing you an enjoyable last few weeks of this year's sailing season, and hoping to see you all at the AGM when we can discuss our past adventures along with plans for our future ones.

Wishing you fair winds,

Catherine

Shara forging ahead



## From the Editor

Dear All,

It has been a remarkable season weather-wise with extreme heat one week and the imposition of a hosepipe ban, to unseasonably cool and wet the next! Nonetheless, I hope that you took your Ballads out regularly during the season, and certainly more than I did. Six weeks off following an accident in the boatyard, and then a long wait for the yard crane to receive and fit some vital set of parts, meant that Vivacious was eventually re-launched on 21 July!

I mentioned an accident in the boatyard, and this is a salutary lesson for everyone. I had been polishing Vivacious' topsides and had removed the ladder to polish behind it. Having completed that job, I was finished for the day, so replaced the ladder, and climbed onto the boat to lock her up. Having done so, I stepped over the guardrail onto the top of the ladder, something I had done innumerable times before. You've probably guessed the rest! The ladder went one way and I went the other. Actually, I was very lucky, because my left elbow caught in the guardrail or on the deck edge, I'm not sure which because it was all a blur! However, the result was that my heels hit the concrete first and not my back or my head. For the first time that I can ever remember, I had forgotten to tie off the top of the ladder when I moved it back into position after the polishing. I hope that I am not stupid enough to do so again; it could so easily be terminal!



Vivacious relaunched at last

Please note Annex A on payment of Annual Subscriptions. Janie is keen that you all should pay your 22/23 dues as early as convenient.

I wish everyone a stress-free laying up and an early re-launch for next year's adventures. Oh, and please consider taking over from me as Newsletter editor.

Tim Clark

## Dates to remember

Dinner and AGM at Saltash Sailing Club on Saturday, 11 November (Armistice Day), 1900 for 1930. Janie has already sent out the menu choices, and has asked for your selection by cop Wednesday, 1 November.

## Condolences

Matui on passage

It is with great regret that we learnt of the death of Mike Luker on September 6th. Many of you will remember him as the Chairman from 2010 until 2013. He also taught us all that a furling genoa could be very competitive when racing his beautiful Ballad, Matui.

He will be greatly missed by Caroline and his family to whom, on behalf of the Association, we offer our condolences.





Matui is on the far left

## Ballad National Championships 2023



Ballad Nationals 2023 Prizegiving

### Results

Rank	Hcap	Name	Helm	Race 1	Race 2	Race 4	Race 5	Net Pts
1	1.0000	Sara of York	P&C Noakes	(1)	1	1	1	3
2	1.0000	Windwhistle	Martin Jones	2	(4)	2	3	7
3	1.0000	Duchess	Janie Smallridge	3	(5)	3	2	8
4	1.0000	Poppin	Richard Greenacre	(5)	2	5	4	11
5	1.0000	Shebeen	Ken Morgan	4	3	4	5	11
6	0.9570	Blavinge	Peter Askew	(6)	6	6	6	18

Many congratulations to Shara and her crew!



Shebeen powers on

### **Ballad Championships 2023 – Report from Shara of York**

This year for the Ballad Championships at the end of May, we were fortunate to have two of the A-Team sailing with Catherine and myself namely Anneliese, our daughter, and Adrian Gibbons, one of the four Gibbons brothers all who have sailed with us at some point. Stephen who had sailed with us a few times was part of the crew and he was going to do the fore deck instead of our youngest daughter Anneliese on Sunday as she had other commitments (how dare she!) and the final crew member was Mike, who had not sailed a Ballad before but was an experienced sailor. As it happened, our middle daughter Victoria, was able to come out on Sunday once Anneliese left and was able to encourage Stephen on the fore deck! We don't seem to get out so much on Shara these days and had not raced this season before the championship, so we took advantage of the Friday night Plym race for everyone to get used to the boat and each other and when we didn't beat the other Ballads, we had to make up some excuse so we thought giving the others a false sense of security was a good idea. I think being beaten on the Friday night shook us all up and made us ready for the championship on Saturday and Sunday. (Might mention Adrian and Mike had driven back from France having been racing there for the past two weeks and Anneliese and Stephen had a busy week at work).

We always race with six up as there seems to be so much to do on a Ballad and of course the sails are quite heavy. Catherine organises all the crew and keeps us all in order making sure the sheets are going to run in the cockpit which makes a big difference, leaving me time to worry about whether or not we have enough fuel in the tank (fuel gauge is temperamental- although I think the tank was still full from the winter!) to where the start line is going to be and work out which of the 59 courses we were about to explore. Most importantly of all ensuring there is little water in the tank although there always needs enough to make a cup of tea, even if that is at the end of the race!

The weather was going to be a challenge for both the boats and the Race Officer. The fairly light north-easterly was bound to be cancelled out by a sea breeze so at some point during the day there would not be a breath of wind. The skill of the Race Officer, Dave Curnow, was demonstrated by the way he mastered all of the shortening of the courses at the right time taking buoys out of the course if the wind direction and strength reduced to a point where it made it sensible ( that of course was just one more thing for the skipper to put into the mix) whilst trying to sail the boat as fast as possible in the most advantageous direction, taking into account the wind shifts and tide to the next mark.

The 4 championship races all set off towards New Grounds on the light, north-easterly, with spinnaker starts at times, racing to get to the leeward mark first in order to cover the boats on the way up the beat.

A couple of times we raced into F buoy under Jenny Cliff, which can always be pretty fluky. During one race, when F buoy had been taken out, we were racing from New Grounds to the finish. Having sailed quite well on starboard to Drake's Island, Shara noticed Windwhistle getting a 30° lift to make the finish line off Mountbatten Breakwater. Shara tacked and managed to get across to Windwhistle and tack underneath her and slightly ahead to finish just in front!

Those of you who were racing will remember well the race to New Grounds where we could see the sea breeze coming in with boats just outside the breakwater on a beat going in a southerly direction. And we were sailing, with our spinnakers up, running to New Grounds also in a southerly direction! Shara just managed to round New Grounds, 20 yards in front, but it was enough to then sail back on the north easterly breeze whilst everyone else got stuck between the gradient, offshore wind and the onshore breeze.

We do enjoy these light wind races, pitting your wits against the elements when there is so little wind to use.

We have been known to hold cigarettes up to find out the direction from which the wind is coming - - and none of us smoke! Many years ago, returning from France we declared nothing but it was an occasion that the customs decided to inspect the boat and, on finding a packet of cigarettes, asked "What about these cigarettes"- but that's another story!

What a fantastic weekend, Shara and crew are looking forward to next year, sharing in the bonhomie of the Ballad fleet, visiting another port and experiencing another club's hospitality.

Thanks to all those who were involved in organising this year's event- once again, a memorable weekend.

Shara of York and her crew.

### **Ballad Championships 2023 - A View from the Sharp End**

I've always maintained that you get a rather different picture of how a race is going from the foredeck and when Janie asked me to produce a report about this year's Championships, it seemed an ideal opportunity to offer a few thoughts from the front.

On Duchess this year, we had a great blend of age and experience: for two of the crew, it was their first Championships, whereas Rob and I have been to over 30 between us. We also took what was perhaps a slightly unconventional approach where the three of us who were not in the cockpit shared out the tasks in a fairly fluid manner – whoever was in the best position to do something at any given time was the person who did it. This worked well for us, and we all enjoyed ourselves thoroughly.



**Duchess takes the inshore route**

Janie has suggested a few topics for me to cover which included “Crossing Shebeen’s bow on port, while they went backwards”. To be honest, I didn’t remember this in detail, as I’m sure we were busy doing something important at the time; all I do recall was looking up and seeing a boat awfully close, but Janie still managing to miss. Port? Going backwards? Well, I guess both are possible, but I would be a most unreliable witness!

Most years, there’s some comment on deck that becomes a theme for the weekend and this year was no different. Us up front had been having a quiet chat about how to do something better next time round\*\* and a voice from the stern, thinking they were missing something, asked what we were talking about. The reply came swiftly, “Oh, just foredeck intricacies, not for cockpit discussion.” Perhaps rather impertinent, but it got a good laugh and “foredeck intricacies” became the phrase of the weekend.

\*\* Actually, I’ve been reminded, we’d noticed that there were two small holes in the spinnaker and we were discussing when we would mend them and, more importantly, when we would tell Janie about it!

Other memories included:

Blavinge catching everyone up during the sea breeze fill in, when Shara got away after the first mark and the rest of us were confounded by the wind shifts;

Shortly after this, Duchess going to seaward of the warship and getting to F buoy first behind Shara in final race;

A glorious moment with four boats with spinnakers up all in a line abreast and nothing to choose between them;

Hon Sec – Behind you!



Nearly catching Balu off Saltash Sailing Club in the Pursuit race – only seconds in it;

And from our skipper – “Can’t remember anything from first day except not being able to identify the start line in the mornings because it was looking straight into the sun!”



These memories are about the racing but there are a couple more from the bow end, which possibly fall into the category of foredeck intricacies. First was not being able to trip the spinnaker on Saturday afternoon, breaking the shackle while getting it unstuck and then jury rigging the lines so we could still fly the kite later in the race. Then there was the occasion where, during some extraordinarily fluky wind shifts, we were asked to: drop the spinnaker on the foredeck, drop the pole, *and* gybe - all pretty much at the same moment. Needless to say, things did not go well, and it took quite a bit of sorting out (understatement!). And there was a moment when I was on the leeward side of the boat, grappling with the stuck spinnaker, with my feet on the rail and under water. It's been quite a while since the last time *that* happened. And finally, watching us go past Melampus with only a couple of inches to spare and Janie commenting that she "hadn't realised we were that close"!

All in all, the championships had the familiar combination of camaraderie and competition, with nobody taking it too seriously, nor too lightly. Thanks to everyone for making it a most enjoyable weekend. Let's do it all again next year (please!)

Jonathan Haigh

Duchess

## For Sale

'Balladier' is hull no 202 and is a 1973, great, well cared for, example of this classic 30ft yacht.

2011/2012 Overhaul: Re sprayed using awlgrip in Oxford Blue, standing rigging, Selden Mast, Selden boom, Selden Spinnaker pole, Furlex 207X, VHF Icom radio, Simrad autopilot, Harken 2 speed self tailing winches added, 2 burner gas cooker and oven, Cushions throughout, Jabasco Toilet.

Further works include:

2013: new Yanmar 3ym 20 (21hp) was fitted with a shaft driven 2 blade folding prop. This has had a full service annually.

2015: new electrics and wiring were installed throughout, including 2 new leisure batteries, AIS (receiver transponder) Raymarine chart plotter and Raymarine 70i with transponder, Solar Panel.

2017: Mast step completely renewed (this is a known problem with Ballads which requires full repair)

2019: New lazyjack stackpack

2023: New sprayhood

Balladier has comprehensive sets of sails including a set of racing sails, a set of cruising sails, 2 spinnakers, older no3 and no4 jibs.

Other inventory include: fenders and lines, 2 anchors and chain, winch handle, steel boat cradle (in 3 sections for transporting).

Please note that the standing rigging is over 10 years old and the price reflects this. **£15,000**

This is a well cared for yacht, which has been used by our family for local club racing, Ballad National Championships, and local cruising.

Contact: Richard Mason, [gamehousecottage@gmail.com](mailto:gamehousecottage@gmail.com), 07785283291

## **Ballad Headsails**

Since changing to a roller reefing genoa I have 3 spare genoa hank-on headsails for sale, an almost unused No 1 (see photo below), a well-used but very much still useable no 2 and an old but very useful No 3. The Nos 1 and 2 were made by Sanders. Suggest £500 for all three, but open to realistic offers.

Contact Tim Clark on 07534 680305 or 01752 881415



## **Annex A**

### **UK Ballad Association      2022/23 Subscription request**

The rates (agreed at the AGM) are £10 per boat. There is also a category for past owners of Ballads who wish to remain in touch with the group, at £8.

**If Janie already has your details you can subscribe online to UK Ballad Association 30-97-28 A/c No 00643554 using your boat name as the reference.**

If not, please can you actively respond to give me permission to hold details of your names, email addresses, postal addresses and telephone numbers, in addition to details of your boat. These will only be used for distributing newsletters, meeting information and notes, Championship information and Ballad product and clothing information.

I agree to my personal details being used by the Ballad Association Secretary, as described above:

Name:

Boat name:

If you have the details of the new owners of your Ballad, it would be appreciated if these could be made known.

Please make cheques out to the UK Ballad Association and send (with this form) to Janie Smallridge at the address below:

The Willows  
Ludwell Lane  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 5AQ

Name.....

Address.....

.....

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Tel. No.....

E mail.....

Ballad Name.....

Ballad No.....

Sail No.....

Home Port.....

Please note the following change in my Ballad ownership details

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