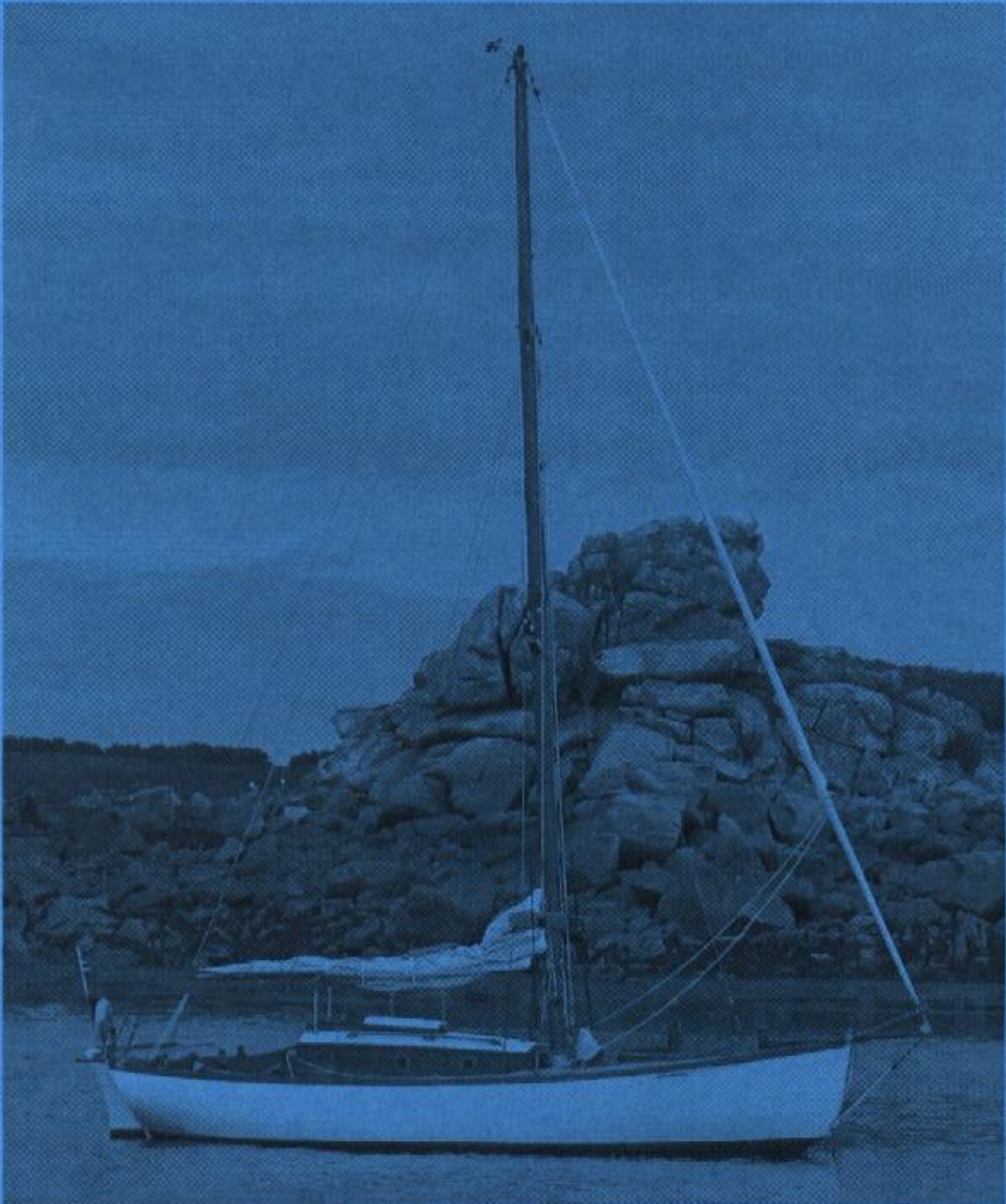




THE HARRISON BUTLER ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER No: 63

WINTER 2006

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February 2006 to February 2007

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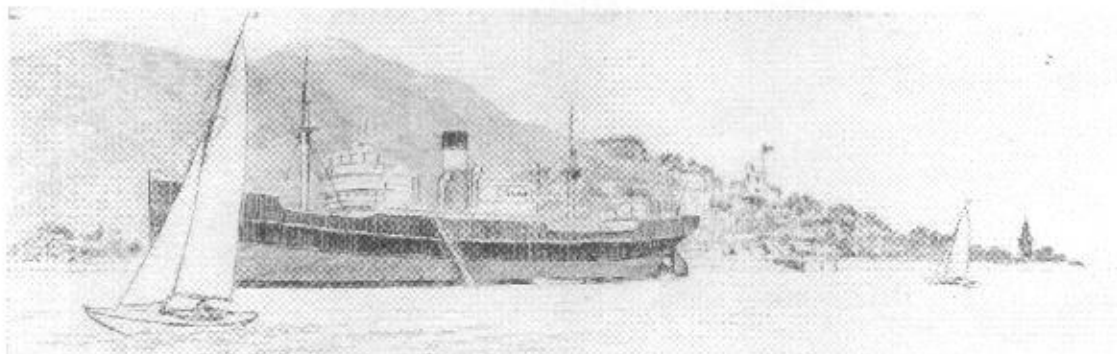
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Holy Loch. 6th July 1931.

Saskia passing Strabo after the Race.

George F. Holmes

THE HARRISON BUTLER ASSOCIATION

FOUNDED 1974

No. 63

OCTOBER – FEBRUARY

2006/7

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At anchor off the Cornish Coast, Bogle Design 'Davinka'

The President's Letter

The Chestnuts
July 2006

Dear Members,

Its months and months since our last newsletter and it feels as if much has happened although probably it is less than it seems.

We of course had the AGM long, long ago now and I must ask you to refer to the Minutes for the details. We returned to The Bull for our lunch which was pronounced a success – and at a very reasonable price. Next year we shall not have post prandial coffee at the pub but you can have it here at The Chestnuts if you like. If we have it at The Bull it delays the start of the meeting as one naturally lingers over a cup of coffee. Also it adds £2 to the cost of the meal which I consider is money not well spent. (I am a dedicated coffee drinker).

One thing which I have discovered we didn't do officially was to ratify Loudon in his position as Honorary Treasurer, although he has been functioning as such ever since last year's Laying-up Supper. I discovered this fact because NWB lost the mandate for Loudon to sign cheques and he sent me a form to rectify the situation. I signed my name in the relevant places and also altered Chairperson to Chairman wherever it occurred and sent the form to Judy Giles to sign as Honorary Minutes and Meetings Secretary. She did this but in a blue ball-point and then discovered that it had to be black. She blacked it over but took it to her local branch of NWB to check that all was well. It wasn't. The document had been altered not only by her corrections but also by my alterations from Chairperson. (I was brought up that it was very ill-mannered to refer to anyone as a "person".) New form, signed by Judy and sent to John Elphinstone (Chairman) who then returned it to me and I completed my sections. Then, Loudon came to lunch both for HBA and for other purposes and I handed him all the relevant papers – but where was the mandate? I expected that it would turn up as soon as Loudon had left but no, it was 11.50 pm before I ran it to earth within arm's length of where I normally sit. In the course of my search through heaps and piles I came across several papers which were "out of sight, out of mind" and now they will have to be dealt with. Good has come out of our afflictions and Loudon should be in receipt of the mandate the day after I am writing this letter.

The next item on our calendar was the Bring & Share Lunch at The Crag on April 29th. All went well – with some members lunching on the terrace despite the wind – until, just as I had finished my coffee one of our members came down from the car park to say that they were leaving on account of her husband's migraine. I went up – path and steps – (but slowly) to say goodbye but reached only the car before theirs and draped myself over the bonnet. Whose car was it I wonder? Shiny and blue. My recollection is of an Audi but that could have been the next door car which I had passed. The next thing I knew was that I was lying on the ground looking up at paramedics. Patrick Gibson had summoned an air ambulance as well as a land one and the airmen had to negotiate a barbed-wire fence to reach us. To Lesley G's disappointment she and I went to Treliske Hospital in Truro by land. I spent the night there and a test the next day showed that I had not suffered a heart attack. I'm afraid it broke up the party and I do apologize.

I hope there'll be another lunch in October and I shall not go up to the car park to bid farewells. Meanwhile, cardiac paths are being trodden and the outcome is yet to be discovered.

HBA life doesn't stop and we continue to have new members. Look for their names in the Year Book. We shall also publish a list of "pipeline" members whose applications have not yet been processed but who will probably end up as members. Steven and Glynis Florence have taken on 'Free Spirit' (Philesia design) as a restoration project. They came to stay with me at The Crag but not for long enough. I wonder how all the other restoration projects are progressing? Do please write and tell us. I hope they are not just lying fallow. If you find it's all too much for you, do hand on the boat to someone else; don't just let her wilt and die. Parting may be a wrench but think of the boat. The boats are the corps of the HBA, the reason for its existence and as I have said many times, the owners are a bonus. We want HB boats not heaps of decaying timbers.

I had a late evening visit recently from 'two wild Irish people' – Rob's description, not mine – Rob and Marcia Bateman, owners of the Z4-tonner 'Kastag', who live in Cork. Marcia told of a panic telephone call to Peter Crook for an HBA tie for Rob to wear at their wedding, with little time to spare and here they were in England off to another wedding in London and THE HAT had been left in Ireland. Luckily I have a black panama which we were able to wet and stretch to fit her head and it sure did suit her. It was returned the next day. Any more candidates? It was a very pleasant evening and a chance to put faces to names.

You'd hardly believe it but I had a repeat performance of my débacle at the B&S Lunch at the Thames Traders Traditional Rally in mid-July. I was walking with Paul Cowman alongside the Thames at Fawley Meadow when I felt I needed a little more support than my two sticks and took Paul's arm. Next thing, his arm was round me and he was calling for help. Incidentally, when Robert and I became engaged a senior member of the BBC engineering staff, by the lovely name of Marmaduke Tudsberry, said of my father 'if he designs his daughters on the same lines as his boats, you'll be all right'. As you know, HB boats are not light displacement craft: no wonder Paul called for help. I was aware, vaguely, of a male shape approaching and my next vision was a crowd of people including Paul, Peter Edwards and Colin and Lucie Henwood, all of them HBA members and the inevitable paramedic (Roger, efficient and delightful) and an equally delightful St John Ambulance lady. Very soon I was helped into Peter's car and he and Paul brought me home. Both were staying with me for the weekend and they returned to Fawley the following day, leaving me here to re-charge my batteries. They were joined by Jill Betts whom I see reasonably often as I do Alan and Judy Giles.

I apologize for the anxiety I caused. I think it's worse for the observers on these occasions: I was gloriously oblivious and none the worse. I am however having an angiogram on August 7th and provided my arteries are serviceable I am to have an aortic valve replacement in the near future. Just in case I am in the unfortunate 10% I should like to say how very much I have enjoyed my Presidency of the HBA because of all you lovely members and the warmth of your affection. At the end of December we shall be 33 years old and I hope that a new valve will enable me to continue for a few more years. I apologize for my shortcomings.

I had a letter from Geoff Taylor in late May complaining of having to wear a thick overcoat. Another more recent one remarks on the perfect summer. For me, this Mediterranean weather was unbearable when sailing there in 1975 but to have to endure it here in England is totally unacceptable! Luckily, my flat is comparatively cool especially when I can sit in a blast of air.

Geoff has twice tried to sever his connection with 'Watermaiden', this and with his French boat, and now with his Hurley. He says:

'I shall be getting 'Watermaiden' ready soon and have tentative plans, if all goes well, to take her down to Spain where I managed to get back into Ayamonte marine.

This is on the Spanish side of the Guadiana river which separates the Algarve (Portugal) from Spain, and about three miles upstream from the coast. It is a very pleasant town with all the Spanish character although it has seen a rise in tourism in only the last three years. The marina has been shut to new customers while dredging was in progress and this dragged on until the end of March. Once I had left to haul out I could not get back until they re-opened. However, I now have an annual contract and the berth is long enough for 'Watermaiden' so, if we get down in August I can haul 'Monique' out and ready her to return to Plymouth the following year. I missed living on 'Watermaiden' and, although the Hurley is fairly comfortable and seems to sail quite well there is something lacking. Perhaps it is the knowledge that, with 'Watermaiden' I was always equipped for an Ocean passage and had confidence in her past performance. One builds this up over many years without realising it and it is the continual little improvements and additions one makes that help to produce an efficient sailing unit with reliability (plus, one is never short of a job where varnish work – or should I say brightwork – is concerned).'

A later letter will be reproduced elsewhere. As usual it is full of useful information including the holes in your hulls. My father deprecated the boring of unnecessary holes in hulls as, for instance, for sinks in small boats.

The Laying-up Supper will again be in Woodbridge this year, at the Bull Hotel, on Saturday 23rd September. At the time of writing I don't know if I shall be there. If I have an aortic valve replacement it may be at around that time. If I am not with you it will be the first one I have missed in all our years and I shall be very sorry. But don't let it stop you from enjoying the occasion, as we always do.

I hope to be in touch again in the Winter Newsletter and to see some of you before then. Meanwhile, keep you fingers – and toes – crossed for me and keep on with the good work of the HBA.

With my very best wishes
As ever
Joan.

What have I forgotten? I wonder.

At Yew Bank House, Ibworth.

19th October 2006

Dear Members,

A codicile to my letter to tell you that I am out of hospital at last and recovering with Colin and Karin and hope to be back in Theale soon.

Things are progressing but slowly.

Love to you all,

Joan.



'Dawn II' a misty June morning off Shingle Bank, The Solent.

Editorial.

I must begin my editorial with a sincere apology, regrettably the second apology this year for the late publication of the newsletters. Due to other commitments such as concerts and shows and the fact I am now, in the words of Pooh-Bah, a 'salaried minion' my free time is somewhat limited. In my defence copy has been rather scarce and the usual 'pressgang' has been in operation, I shall quite understand if I am not re-elected as editor at the next AGM.

Perhaps a more streamlined, quarterly newsletter could be considered, with the usual content, but providing a more regular contact for those members geographically and actively on the periphery. The 'boats for sale' section would be more up to date and notices of events could be included. Anyway, food for thought.

With the increase in postage cost, according to size, the newsletter now falls into a small packet or large letter based on a weight of up to 100 grams, exactly the weight of the last newsletter. Letter post now has an increased maximum weight of 100 grams too, so a reduced volume, quarterly newsletter would now cost the association the same, as would an A5 format, which seems to have been adopted by most yacht clubs and associations. The A5 size also complies with the new letter post price levels.

Anyway matters we can consider in February.