



ABOVE: A Yeoman race start at Norfolk Broads YC

Salute the Yeoman: it's 40 this year



Andrew Musgrave bought one. Then another, and another – truly “a husband and wife team with my crew Daphne.” Here Andrew profiles the Yeoman ahead of May 23-25, the class’s 40th anniversary regatta and celebration event

Our entry list of helms for the Yeoman national championships will range from teenagers to those in their late 70’s - not a bad age range?

Certainly the first builder, Leslie Landermore, would be proud of yet another success.

The first Yeoman sailing boat, a 20 foot

half-decker was built of wood in 1969 and formed the basis of moulds for all subsequent boats built of GRP, and now numbering over 200. The idea of the Yeoman is attributed to Mr Ernest Yeomans, a friend of Leslie Landamore who persuaded him to design and build a 20ft Bermudan rigged boat with a smaller sail area and lower maintenance costs than the traditional Yare and Bure One Design.

Leslie wanted all the boats to be named after semi-precious stones such as Zircon, Topaz, Amethyst and Cameo, but this plan foundered early on, as did the numbering sequence as he gave in to requests for ‘special’ numbers. Landamores built all the boats, including some supplied as kits up to November 1977, when the licence passed to Moores as Landamore concentrated on bigger boats. Records show that boats were



ABOVE: Yeomen at Wroxham

delivered to London, The South Coast including the Isle of Wight, Scotland, Devon and Northern Ireland. More recently boats have been traced to Hong Kong and Dubai where the owners have been pleased to make contact with the National Association.

The earliest boats were rather basic as befitted the 'general purpose' nature of their design, but they were raced in the early 1970's in the Allcomers series, and subsequently at Queen Mary Reservoir, Rutland Water, The Exe Estuary in Devon, and various Scottish Lochs. Early racers in the Wroxham fleet included Dick Hendry (Yeoman No 2), Jim Campbell (No 6), Alan Eades (No 14) and Chris Mahoney (No 17).

It was at this time that racing modifications began to appear starting with gear and hull strengthening, and it is thought that Jamie Campbell was the first to experiment with a spinnaker reputed to have come from a Dragon in the mid 1970's. The next generation of racers saw Hugh Batchelor virtually unbeatable in No 43, and later Mike Evans was the man to beat in Yeoman 124, before changing allegiance to the Yare and Bure OD.

In recent years various members of the Harston family have found considerable success, as have the Browns who travelled weekly from Essex for some years to sail at Wroxham. Current National champion is Sally Dugdale who has proved virtually

unbeatable in the last two years, and will defend her title again this year.

The 'Kinsman' lifting keel version of the Yeoman was never considered to be quite so competitive, especially on the Broads, with extra weight and different keel and rudder shape, but they are raced with considerable success on more open areas such as Rutland Water, and approximately 50 boats have been constructed.

Being developed in inflationary times, the initial £1000 price of the Yeoman, rose dramatically to £2500 by 1978 and £5000 by 1984, but the boat is not a 'One Design' and has been steadily developed and improved over the years. The first modifications involved the introduction of the larger Genoa, to the extent that it is now larger than the mainsail, and this in turn made jib-furling desirable, and today most racing sails are now 'high aspect'.

Some modifications have been universally welcomed, such as the provision of built in buoyancy chambers (the early boats had none!) and the conversion of side deck mounted winches to a single centre cockpit winch has made life much easier for the crew. By the 1990's most racing boats were using spinnakers, and the class association supported the development of a chute set into the fore-deck. In recent years, the construction licence passed to Philip Betts, who carried out a subtle re-design of hull,

mast stepping and rudder to become the '300 series Yeoman'.

To some, this was a step too far, resulting in resignations from the fleet and a change to more traditional boats. The re-design was however accepted by the majority, even to the extent that similar modifications have been made to older boats, and some have been 're-born' with new 300 series hulls. The current boat is undeniably an improvement on what was already a good design, and now complies with more stringent recent legislation, and can compete with other designs currently on the market.

The sturdy and stable nature of the boat has made it particularly suitable for allowing the disabled to experience the joys of sailing, with organisations operating on Rutland Water where boats have been converted to wheel steering. Locally, The Nancy Oldfield Trust at Neatishead operates several Yeoman. Today, the largest Yeoman fleet remains at Wroxham (NBYC) with approximately 40 boats and with fleets also at Coldham Hall and Horning (HSC) and during the winter as Snowflakes SC. There are fleets further combined into a national organisation with a newsletter, manual and website www.ykboats.co.uk

This year sees the 40th anniversary of the Yeoman/Kinsman, and the National Championships are being held at The Norfolk Broads Yacht Club (Wroxham Broad) over May Bank Holiday (23-25th). Sponsorship is by Hugh Boswell Insurance Services, also from Jeckells Sails.

The sailing programme will involve 6 races with 5 to count. Celebration events in the evenings and all inquiries to: Roger Claxton (01603-433209) or Andrew Musgrave at 01603-720529



ABOVE: This Yeoman carries a spinnaker