



South Coast Social at Warsash Sailing Club

Twenty-four of us gathered at the Warsash Sailing Club on Saturday, 21st February to enjoy a luncheon followed by a talk given by Charlie of North Sails.



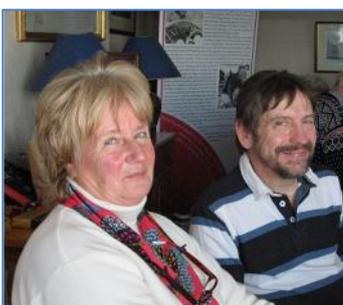
Hon. Treasurer, John Cade, Alf and Pat Tracey

The Association's Greek division was present in force. Simon and Joanna Bound base their Victoria 34, CALADH in Messalonghi Marina. Susan and David Macgregor base their Victoria 30, VICTORIA ROSE in the very same marina. So where is Messalonghi? It is in the Gulf of Patras at the western end of the Gulf of Corinth and not too far from the Ionian island of Keffalinia. Sailing east through the Gulf of Corinth would bring you to the Corinthian Canal, a rather expensive short cut towards Athens that would avoid sailing around the Peloponnisos. Why not visit both CALADH's Log and VICTORIA ROSE's Travels on our website?



Simon & Joanna and Susan & David – home for the winter

David Macgregor is also our East Coast Regional Organiser and serves on the Committee.



Dee and Tim Clarke base Victoria 30, WIDGEON at Marchwood, Southampton Water.

They are organising our South Coast Rally to the Folly Inn, River Medina on the weekend of 5th & 6th September this year.

Dee and Tim Clarke

Once lunch was over, the prize draw for the raffle took place under the watchful eye of John Cade, who had been selling strips of tickets pretty well continuously. A considerable sum was raised to augment Association funds. Our thanks go to John for all of his efforts.

Then, it was downstairs to listen to the talk, given by Charlie, on behalf of North Sails. We never did discover his surname but he came armed with some mighty impressive videos of yachts climbing out of the water on hydrofoils and achieving speeds approaching forty knots. We also learnt about manufacturing 3DL sails on blow up moulds from paper-backed Aramid yarns.



Charlie with his laptop and large display monitor

Our thanks go to Charlie and to Jon and Lynda Spencer for organising the Social.

Victoria Yachts Caps



The Association was given a large number of 'VICTORIA YACHTS' caps, which have been offered For Sale at just £1 each, until recently. They are good quality navy blue with red embroidery.

To clear the remaining stock, the price has been reduced and they are now FREE!

Contact John Cade at ahoy@cadeho.eclipse.co.uk or on 01707 323619 to have one sent to you but only while stocks last, so don't delay.

Constitution

The Annual General Meeting approved some changes to the Constitution of The Victoria Shadow Association on the 16th November 2014. These changes remove references to an auditor and in paragraph 15 describe the mechanism for our self regulation of the Association's finances.

Every Member should have access to the present Constitution. The Constitution is available for download as a portable document file (.pdf) from the Association's Website, without the need to log-in. Follow the link to Publications and you will find a further link at the top of the right hand column.

Those members still receiving their Newsletter by post will find a paper copy enclosed.

Simon's Offshore Sailing Challenge

Simon Fayers has been a loyal member of the Association since 2002 and SHEBECA is the second Frances 26 that he has owned. We fully approve of his latest charitable endeavour and trust that he gets all possible support for his 'challenge'.



Lifeboats



THE FISHERMEN'S MISSION

**“Going off the shelf and out of soundings”
“Raising Funds for the Lizard Lifeboat and the Fishermen’s Mission”
“Simon’s Offshore Sailing Challenge”**

After competing in the Jester single handed challenge - Plymouth to Baltimore, Ireland in June 2015 Lizard lifeboat man Simon Fayers, with his 26 foot yacht Shebeca, will head south to a position off the continental shelf, south of 48 degrees latitude and west of 8 degrees longitude, returning to Helford via Brest, France. A round trip of some 900nm which Simon hopes to complete in under 10 days, attempting to navigate by sextant and compass, only resorting to GPS for furthest position verification.

Monies raised will be split equally between the Lizard lifeboat Station and the Fishermen’s Mission, a charity that provides emergency support and practical help to fishermen and their families.

If you would like to pledge a donation, please forward your email address, plus amount pledged to s.fayers1@btinternet.com. You will be notified on completion and receive a short narrative log of the passage. You are under no obligation should for whatever reason Simon fails to complete the passage.

However, if you would like to give a donation now please follow this link uk.virginmoneygiving.com/simonfayers You can also pledge an amount in person at the Lizard Lifeboat Station most days between 10.00am – 16.00pm.



If you wish to contact Simon for more information regarding his offshore challenge, please email above or ring and leave a message on 01326 290644

Your support is greatly appreciated.

Simon, in an e-mail to the Association this January, wrote,

“I had an active season last year and competed again in the Laberwrach race, this time single handed.

I was lucky with the tides out of the Helford and the wind which backed to a southerly for the later larger yachts. I had a beam reach for the most part.

Anyway, I was the first boat home (by 3 hours!) the first boat under 30 foot and the first Helford boat, so a good result!

On the strength of that I have set myself an offshore challenge this summer and was hoping that it could be featured in the Spring Newsletter. Simon Fayers”

New Members

Please welcome Peter Koorstra and Lorena Pammer to the Association. They sail a Victoria 800, LETHE and base her at Medemblick in the Netherlands. They live in Haarlem.

They tell us that LETHE was built in 1997 and was shown at the Hiswa boat show in Holland in both 1997 and 1998.

Peter was the first to use a new on-line Membership Application form that had been added to the website by Paul Townsend (Website Editor.) Read on ...

Website On-line Membership Application Form

Rather than having to print off a double-sided page and complete it by hand, before posting or scanning it and returning it as an attachment, it is now possible to enter all the necessary information from a computer or smartphone and have it reach the Association instantly, the moment you press the 'Submit Membership Application' button.

Paper forms will still be available to those who have not embraced the latest digital technology, of course. Just a trial at the moment, the new form is expected to become the norm in future.

Mike Hall and Practical Boat Owner

Our member Mike Hall alerted us to two articles that were about to be published in PBO. Mike owns and sails the Frances 26, GRAYLING and this was the subject of a very favourable four page article by David Harding in Practical Boat Owner 584 March 2015 that should still be readily available in bookshops.

The second article, now available in Practical Boat Owner 585 April 2015, is by Mike Hall himself. The cover of this edition shows a large photograph of GRAYLING under sail on its front cover and the article inside is described thus, “Get the right boat: Why a reader swapped his 40ft ocean cruiser for a Frances 26.”

Mike has clearly done a splendid job of restoring one of the earlier Frances 26 boats and done all Frances owners a great favour by allowing his boat to be the subject of a sea test. His own article will surely re-inforce the attention that Frances 26 boats receive in future. Many thanks, Mike.

Jan van Miltenburg and TESSERA

Many of you on the South Coast will remember the Victoria 34, TESSERA and Jan's solo voyage home to the Netherlands right at the end of October 2010 that was documented in the April 2011 Newsletter.

In a recent e-mail to our Treasurer, Jan wrote,

“I look forward to carrying our membership burgee while sailing via Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Denmark again and Germany back to Holland, in May and during the summer. I feel that I will be enjoying TESSERA as she's made to be used.

I'll make notes and take pictures. If there's a story to be told I'll be happy to send it in. Jan van Miltenburg”

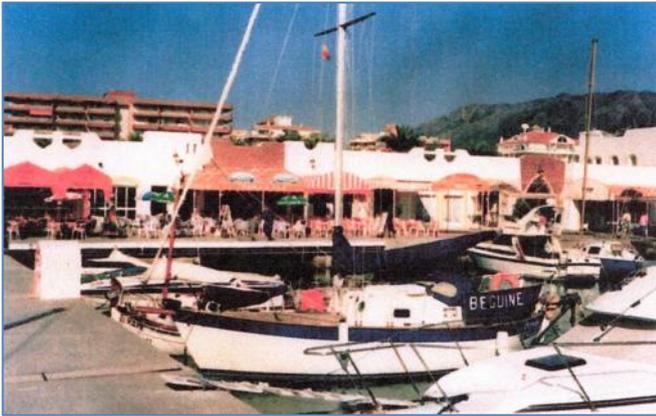
Important Announcement by Jon Spencer (Chairman Yachts)

VICTORIA SHADOW ASSOCIATION 25th ANNIVERSARY

It is 25 years since the publication of a launch flyer by Peter Gregory of Victoria Marine Limited to ensure the maintenance of contact between owners of the company's yachts and motor boats, at home and abroad. There were messages of support from both Chuck Paine and Bill Dixon, the respective designers, and plans published for rallies and meetings. In the intervening years little has changed in the overall aims of the Association, as articulated within our Constitution.

The development of the Association, since the inaugural meeting, held at Warsash Sailing Club on the 10th March 1991, can be plotted through the Newsletters and Waterlines Journals published and distributed by a host of willing volunteer owners, which are tabulated within the Publications area on the Association Website.

To mark the occasion the Association Committee has decided to hold a 25th Anniversary Luncheon and the Commodore of Warsash Sailing Club has granted permission for that to be at our spiritual home in the Club, overlooking the River Hamble. There will be further announcements between now and next year, but it is hoped that all members will mark Saturday 12th March 2016 as a date in their diaries not to be missed.



I first saw 'Beguine' a 26ft yacht, cutter rigged with a cheeky short bowsprit one beautiful May morning when wandering around the marina at Puerto Duquesa on Spain's Costa del Sol. Sporting a 'For Sale' notice 'Beguine' looked very new and VERY well equipped. The yacht broker's office was only about 200m from where 'Beguine' was moored so I popped in to get some details. It appeared that she had been built for an American who had intended to sail her back to the USA. He had hit a bad storm crossing Biscay and had decided that sailing was not for him. On arriving in Gibraltar he had put the boat up for sale and the broker had bought her for stock. I was invited to take her out for a trial sail so I returned the next week and took her out for about four hours.

'Beguine', a Frances 26 Cutter built by Victoria Yachts at Warsash on the Hamble River. She was designed by Chuck Paine, an American designer. A cutter rig is a sloop but with two foresails. The first owner had obviously given her a lot of thought and had many areas of the yacht strengthened and had oversized rigging fitted. I liked the fact that she was a 'double ender' and that the keel was an integral part of the boat and not bolted on. Included was an Aries wind vane self-steering as well as an electronic system. Both Decca and Loran C navigation were fitted, state of the art in the days before GPS. VHF and Single sideband radios and even a device that picked up radar signals and set off an alarm if you were on a collision course were included. She was equipped with a 'Yanmar' 10hp diesel engine and a heavy duty battery charging system. Even the bunk cushions were double the usual thickness. The other extras were too numerous to mention. Except that there was a collection of charts covering the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea as far east as Turkey.



'Beguine' when new from a Victoria Yachts brochure

The broker had showed me the original invoices for the boat. The basic cost was £15,000 but the total with all the extras was just over £35,000. She told me she had paid the owner £9,000 but felt she'd made a bit of a mistake as I'd been the only person to show any interest. I realised that she'd probably be happy getting her money back so I offered her £9,250, the extra £250 to cover her mooring and other cost. My offer was very firmly rejected. A month later I got a phone call and she said if I was still interested she'd accept my offer. I couldn't believe my luck. The next week-end a friend drove me to Duquesa and I sailed her back to Fuengirola, single-handed. It was a perfect day, warm sunshine and a steady force four. I even managed to sort out the Aries self steering which I'd never used before. Much simpler than I thought it would be. A masterpiece of engineering!

I took the charts home with me and started to think. My eldest daughter and her family live in Virginia not far from Washington DC. The nearest port is Annapolis in Maryland, a beautiful town I had visited several times.

I have been sailing since I was seven years old when I worked it out for myself in a dinghy on Lake Zug in Switzerland on the family's first holiday abroad after the war.

During my 20s, 30s & 40s I had owned a succession of sailing boats including a Drascombe Driver, a Cornish Shrimper, a 31ft motor-sailer that I lived on for about three years in Spain ending up with a wooden cutter. Hell I'm only seventy-two and probably haven't finished yet. The last total was fourteen boats I'd owned myself plus one I shared with a friend. Anyway lets get back to 'Beguine'.

That summer I took my three youngest children, Sam age 9, Francesca 6 and Ross 4 cruising from Fuengirola to Ibiza and Formentera for six weeks during the long school holiday. 'Beguine' behaved beautifully. The little Yanmar diesel getting worked hard as there's very little wind in the Western Med at that time of year. On our return I decided that I wanted to test both the boat and myself and started to plan a single handed voyage to Annapolis and back.

I had 'Beguine' lifted out and removed the mast at the same time. Much easier to replace and check the masthead fittings, than having to climb the mast whilst at sea. The trusty Yanmar was serviced by the local dealer and I gave the hull several coats of hard anti-fouling. I also replaced the rudder bearings. Then it was back with the mast, having checked the standing rigging and replaced all the running rigging, re-varnished the woodwork and polished the hull. The sails went to a sail loft in Estepona for checking and cleaning and they made me a cruising chute, in red white and blue of course. Included in the extras on board when I purchased 'Beguine' was a brand new set of bright orange storm sails. I never had to use them in anger although I did set them over the jib and main to make the boat more visible in busy areas.

My first days sail from Fuengirola was unusual because it was raining with a south easterly gusting to force 6. I arrived in the marina next to the runway of Gibraltar Airport in the early evening by which time the weather had improved and the sun was out again as is usual in those parts. That is apart from the cloud that sits almost permanently on Gib's summit. The next morning, having been woken far too early by some very noisy RAF Jet fighters, it was off to Tesco. I had quite a large shopping list as my favourite hobby after sailing is cooking. The great thing about the Gib Tesco is that it's close enough to the marina to be able to push the trolley direct to the boat. Of course I was very careful not to take any cardboard cartons on board. Cockroaches do not make good sailing companions. It took me two days of hard

work to unload trolleys and get everything stowed where I wanted. A stowage plan on any boat is a must.

Whilst one can generally ignore tides in the Med the Straits of Gibraltar are a very different matter. To catch the westward going tide meant a 3.15am start which frankly is not my favourite time of day, but, as it happened turned into a truly magical experience. Sailing along the Spanish coast in a light breeze at about 3 knots all of a sudden the wake started to give a display which I can only describe as sailing through a sea of diamonds. I'd seen this before but never quite like this. One of life's experiences, to be forever etched on my memory.

After leaving the coast behind I headed 200 miles out into the Atlantic and turned south towards the Canaries and the Azores where I had a break in Horta. Two days longer than planned waiting for a gale to blow itself out. I'm not very brave and to tell you the truth I'd rather sail in force 6 or below rather than above.

I had my birthday, May 17th in Horta and after sleeping most of the next day cast off on the 'Big One'. 'Beguine' had behaved perfectly on the leg from Gibraltar to the Azores. And I quickly got into a routine of sail changing, cooking, navigation and cat naps that make up 24 hours at sea.

The thing that makes Atlantic sailing different from say the Med or the Channel is the size of the waves and the constant wind velocity. During the voyage down to the Azores, I've always thought of south as down and north as up, the wind was a Westerly blowing a steady 30 knots which was frankly as much as I felt I could handle without reefing although 'Beguine' loved it and averaged 5.2 knots for hour after hour. The Aries self steering was invaluable and completely reliable for the whole trip. At night I double reefed the mainsail and let out a drogue over the stern to slow us down which made for stress free nights. I always have a fishing line out and on the third night out caught a rather fine Dorada which made a delicious breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Let me describe a typical day on a long distance sail. Firstly sleeping is quite different because although I had a radar warning device I didn't altogether trust it. So catnaps are the order of the day. I expect that I often slept for more than the twenty minutes that I intended. It's amazing how the body gets used to the unusual, but I digress. I would make myself a cup of coffee at about 6.30am and drink it in the cockpit. This gave me the opportunity for a quick look round. Then I'd check my position using the Loran C equipment. The chart table folded out over a seat on the port side of the boat and was left down for the duration of the voyage. Until close to the 'other side' exact position, say to the nearest mile is not that critical but I always mark my position on the chart every two hours. Always have and probably always will. Then breakfast, I had installed a cold box which was switched on during the hour and a half that I ran the engine each day to charge the batteries. So bacon and eggs was the usual fare, or flying fish if I was lucky. After breakfast it was time for 'boat check'. Starting at the bows I checked all the rigging screws and using binoculars gave the masthead fixings a more than cursory glance. Fortunately as all the rigging was oversize I never had a problem with any of the masthead or deck fittings. The genoa was on the usual roller reefing system and I would grease it every morning. The inner jib was fitted to a self tacking system so that was the next item looked at then I'd look at all the running halyards looking for wear. Every other day I'd come into the wind, drop the mainsail and examine it for wear too. By then it was usually coffee time and a position check usually followed. Then back to work on the engine this time, oil level, water pump etc and giving the shaft greaser a couple of turns. Then back out into the cockpit to grease the Aries self-steering, although I didn't wear a life jacket during the day I

did wear a harness and lifeline at all times whilst in the cockpit or on the deck, I was always hooked on to something. The deck was fitted with a 'Lazy Jack' each side. In 'Beguines' case they were plastic covered steel wire. These days a very strong flat fabric is used. Wire rolls underfoot, not clever on a wet deck.

After the morning check and maintenance I would try to have half an hour reading a book and just relaxing. It was then time for some internal housekeeping. Most of 'Beguines' interior is white with teak trim, very easy to keep clean. This is a very American style interior. Most European yachts of this period have wood interiors.

Then it was cooking time. The galley (kitchen) consisted of a small stainless steel sink with a two burner hob and grill, no oven. My secret weapon was a pressure cooker. With a handle each side I would tie it onto the stove. It's quite amazing the variety of dishes one can cook this way. This together with three different sized thermos flasks ensured I had a good supply of hot food and soup available.

Time for a mid day sun sight using my trusty plastic sextant that I'd had for many years. I think on the entire voyage of 27 days I only had two without sun. I took a rather unusual route across the Atlantic. Most crossings are from the Azores or the Cape Verde islands to the Bahamas or thereabouts. My target was Annapolis which is in Chesapeake Bay. I wanted to avoid busy shipping routes and decided that a landfall around Cape Hatteras and Norfolk Virginia would be ideal. The first port of call would be Norfolk to deal with the usual rigorous US Immigration Control. As it happened it couldn't have been easier. The Customs officer who came on board was intrigued that such a small craft had crossed 'The Pond' and after inspecting my passport and the ships papers welcomed me to the USA. Sorry I've got a bit ahead of myself again.

One early morning at about 5.30 local time I was woken by a very strange sound. A whooshing noise, with gobs of water landing on the deck. I pulled back the hatch and climbed into the cockpit to see I was being watched by a huge whale swimming about 3 metres off my starboard (right) side. "Good morning Mr Whale" I said. "it's really nice to see you but I think you're just a bit too close." He, or maybe she, kept me company for over an hour. Another magical experience except that whales have rather bad breath. Over the years I've had many pods of dolphins keep me company but a 35 foot whale is something else, believe me. The wildlife in the middle of the Atlantic is as always a reminder that we're not alone, even a thousand miles offshore. Animals like turtles seem to be just as interested in us as we are in them.

During the afternoons I always try to put an hour aside to listen to some music and perhaps catch up on some reading. I had a selection of my favourite tapes and had taken some Dickens and Hemmingway with me.

After the break I spent some time on the radio speaking to any ships or other yachts in the area. Ships were a useful source of weather information and would usually be happy to forward information on my position to my family. My route was chosen to keep me well clear of the usual shipping channels and the nearest ship I spoke to was twenty-five miles away.

I was very lucky in that the weather for most of the voyage was just about perfect with no gales. In fact there were more days with less wind than I wanted and only one day when I had to reef the mainsail. At night I always shortened sail. I was not racing so ultimate speed was not an issue. The only scary bit was the usual fog over the Grand Banks.

Twenty seven days after leaving Horta I sighted the Cape Hatteras light. This was about three in the morning as it's much easier to identify a landfall at night. Then it was a gentle sail past Kitty Hawk and Virginia Beach and into the harbour at Norfolk. After an excellent lobster meal it was a long haul up Chesapeake Bay to Annapolis. I can honestly say that I loved every minute of my first Trans Atlantic voyage. Was I lonely? Not for a second and I had the return trip to look forward to. Luck, lucky me. I'd done it. ON MY OWN.

[Editor: The crossing described in the article was made in 1986, when the boat was one or two years old. John is hoping to do one more Atlantic crossing and says it will be in either another Frances 26 or maybe a Victoria 30, as these are just the right size for long distance single-handed sailing. He also tells me that he is planning to join our Association.

A Frances 26 Cutter, 'Beguine', is still around today; we think it is the same boat. The present owners are Phil and Angela Thorne, members of the Association and they base the boat on the River Medway in Chatham Marina.]

East Coast Social at Wivenhoe

About twenty of us met at the Rose and Crown public house on the quayside at Wivenhoe. The River Colne was conspicuous by its absence but this did not matter since none of us arrived by boat. It made a tentative appearance later in the afternoon.

After a leisurely lunch, we made our way along the quayside to The Nottage Maritime Institute. Chris Passmore already had his 16mm film projector set up but we were disappointed to learn that Michael and Anne Passmore were not able to attend on this occasion.



David MacGregor with our speaker, Chris Passmore

David Macgregor, the East Coast Regional Organiser, introduced Chris Passmore who told us about his grandfather and the yacht 'Prelude' that had been built on the parade ground at Aldershot. He moved onto the boat 'Thea' that was launched at West Malling on the Medway and later took part in the Fastnet Race, finally bringing us to the present day and the Passmore's ownership of the Victoria 34, 'Santy'.

We were to see two films that dated from the 1950's. The 16mm films were shot in colour and with sound, unusual for amateurs at such an early date. Some of us present had seen these films before in the Passmore's own cinema and knew the treat we had in store. Unfortunately, the projector played up somewhat and lost the upper loop between the capstan and the gate on a number of occasions. We were able to see both films but with a number of interruptions.



Chris is thanked by Jon Spencer, our Chairman Yachts

John Cade had been selling raffle tickets and after the prize draw was able to announce that £65 had been made from the proceeds. John was also able to give away a few more of the 'VICTORIA YACHTS' caps.



Susan serves up tea and cakes

The afternoon was rounded off with tea and some very fine cakes all baked by Susan Macgregor.

We had all enjoyed a splendid social and our thanks go to Chris Passmore for an excellent talk, John Cade for running the raffle and to David and Susan for organising the event.

East Coast Regional Organiser

David Macgregor has once again asked if anyone on the East Coast would be prepared to organise a rally at some time during the season. David cannot do it himself as he will soon be returning to Greece to continue his own sailing in those waters. If anyone out there is willing to do so, please contact David or any member of the Committee. Contact details for all of us are in the Handbook.

While he is happy to serve on the Committee, he feels that the East Coast would possibly be better served by a member who did their sailing in that part of the world.

Articles for future Newsletters

If you would like to submit an article, long or short, with or without photographs, please send it to Peter Cosker (Newsletter Editor) at: news@victoriashadow.co.uk or by post to: The Victoria Shadow Association, 4 The Grove, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3SJ.