

SALCOMBE YACHT CLUB



The First Hundred Years



Sonia F.G. Parkinson

ILLUSTRATIONS

No.	Caption	Page
1.	<i>Kittiwake</i> , whose first recorded race under SYC auspices was in 1898 (<i>courtesy H. Thorning</i>)	Front cover
2.	Admiral Warren's yawl, built in Salcombe in 1890 (<i>courtesy J. Cruikshank</i>)	4
3.	SYC Regatta, 1899 (<i>SYC</i>)	8
4.	Yawl with standing lug: pre-1914 (<i>courtesy S. Blackaller</i>)	10
5.	Cliff House c. 1922 (<i>courtesy Cookworthy Museum</i>)	13
6.	Race for Lady Polson's Cup: <i>St. Patrick</i> and <i>St. David</i> sailing off tie (<i>SYC</i>)	15
7.	A7 <i>Juanita</i> and Miss Elizabeth Jennings (<i>courtesy Miss E. Jennings</i>)	17
8.	A Class Racing: A7 <i>Juanita</i> leading A4 <i>Wiluna</i> (<i>courtesy Miss E. Jennings</i>)	18
9.	Salcombe B Class Racing (<i>courtesy H. Thorning</i>)	19
10.	Frank Cole sailing Y7 <i>Choice</i> , formerly <i>Edra</i> . Photograph post 1945: note <i>Choice</i> still has no bowsprit (<i>courtesy K. Jago</i>)	20
11.	C Class Racing, C17 <i>Hiker</i> in foreground (<i>courtesy H. Thorning</i>)	22
12.	Nationals and Fireflies heading out of the estuary, Sharpitor rocks in the background (<i>courtesy Miss Tyler</i>)	23
13.	Allcomers' Race 1948. <i>Foam</i> , formerly Andrew McIlwraith's boat, still racing (<i>courtesy H. Thorning</i>)	27
14.	Hornet Class off the Yacht Club, 1960s. New Watch House on left of lower terrace and former one at the right (<i>courtesy Miss Tyler</i>)	32
15.	Merlins racing (<i>courtesy T. Newberry</i>)	34
16.	Alec Stone in Solo 1212, <i>Whitehall</i> , in which he won the Solo World Championship in 1971. Solo 847, <i>Uncle Sam</i> (R. Petit) is also shown (<i>SYC</i>)	35
17.	S.Y.C. Cruiser Rally, St. Peter Port, Guernsey, June 1990. Party on board <i>Gemma</i> . Other cruisers: <i>Marsella</i> , <i>Pinjarra</i> , <i>Trumpeter</i> , <i>Truantina</i> , and in the distance <i>Arun Swan</i> (<i>courtesy B. Coates</i>)	36
18.	Start of the East Rutts Race 1993. Won by <i>Leopard</i> on handicap (<i>courtesy B. Coates</i>)	37
19.	Winner, East Rutts Race 1993 - <i>Leopard</i> (<i>courtesy B. Coates</i>)	38
20.	Mirror Launching Party, Bakerswell, April 7th 1968	39
21.	Modern Yawls racing	41
22.	Andrew McIlwraith, to whose gift the Club owes its present premises (<i>courtesy Miss Jennings</i>)	Back cover

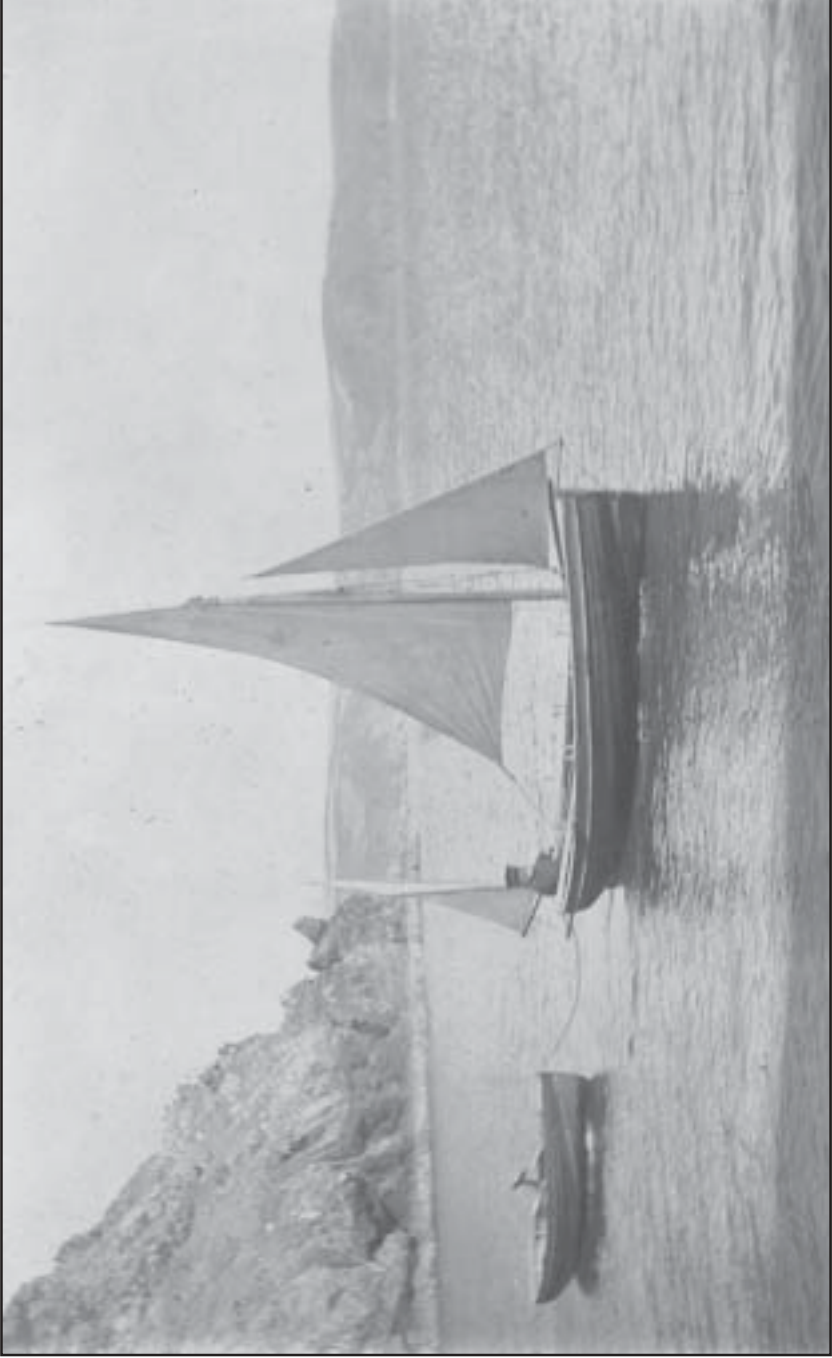
Author's Preface

In writing this short history of Salcombe Yacht Club I have been dependent on archival and oral sources. We are fortunate that so many Club records have been preserved, including full runs of the Minutes of the General Committee and of the Annual General Meetings. We also have many Membership Registers, Visitors Books and Letter Books, together with later files of Correspondence and the Club newsletter *Masthead*. There are innumerable files relating to individual topics such as the Sports Council or the Nature Conservancy Council, as well as the separate records of the Salcombe Yacht Club Co. Ltd., architects' drawings, full records for the Cruiser Class from 1976, and some books relating to the Salcombe Sailing Club before amalgamation. One could wish for more Sailing Committee Minutes and Race Records but unfortunately some of these have been lost. Any quotation without a source given in the text comes from the Club's records, as I did not want to append a mass of references to what is intended as a celebration of S.Y.C.'s centenary.

Many people have kindly taken time and trouble to discuss aspects with me and to loan photographs. I am very grateful for such help from Miss Elizabeth Jennings, Mrs. K. Stone, Miss Shirley Tyler, Mr. and Mrs. Jago, Mr. and Mrs. J.J. Petit, Dr. and Mrs. D.H. Twining, Messrs. T. Bass, S. Blackaller, M. Bullar, B. Coates, J. Cruikshank, M. Honey, D. Murch, M. Squires and J.M. Stone. Malcolm Darch, Edward Hannaford and Harris Thorning have been most generous in sharing their knowledge and advising me. Harris Thorning not only lent me relevant documents from his private collection but also read the MS through and made helpful comments. My thanks go also to my husband, Brian, for holding a watching brief throughout.

Sonia F.G. Parkinson
Salcombe, 1994-95.

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2. Admiral Warren's yawl, built in Salcombe in 1890 (courtesy J. Cruikshank)

Origins and Early Days 1894-1918

On 12 November 1894 a group of eight gentlemen met in Salcombe, Devon, and founded a Club which they named the Salcombe Sailing Club. These founder members were Charles Rodick, E. Hopkins, Dr Arthur Pearce, W.J. Shaw, Major J.R.J. Bennett, T.W. Latham, the Rev. E.W. Edmunson and Cyril Turner, and the Club they founded was to be known from the Spring of 1896 as the Salcombe Yacht Club. They resolved not to be affiliated to the Minima Sailing Club of Plymouth but to be an independent organization. By the end of the meeting they had adopted a set of rules, established a Committee of Messrs. Rodick, Hopkins, Bennett, Froude, appointed two auditors and acquired an Honorary Treasurer in Commander Herbert and an Honorary Secretary in Cyril Turner, who was to serve the Club in that capacity for nearly quarter of a century. Since they were able to consider and adopt drafted rules and appoint to office men who were not present at the meeting, it is clear that this first formal meeting was the culmination of detailed past planning. The impression one gains from the surviving records is that Charles Rodick, who chaired this first meeting, was one of the most active founders, keenly interested in the promotion of sailing. The Rodick family was to maintain its links with the Club for some eighty years. Those present in November 1894 agreed on the hire of a room from Mr. Patey at £15 p.a., and with the first Committee meeting planned for a week later on 19 November, the Salcombe Yacht Club was launched.

The founding members had the winter months in which to develop their plans before the first sailing season of 1895. Given the date, the Club was, of course, for men only, and in establishing it they were not only fostering sailing in the vicinity of Salcombe and in the estuary itself, but creating in Salcombe something which the town lacked, a social meeting place for gentlemen. Hence, although the election of Flag officers was postponed to the General Meeting called for February 1895, the Committee meanwhile selected the papers and periodicals to be taken by the Club and appointed two of its members as wine stewards. They took *The Graphic*, *The Field*, *The Yachtsman*, *Punch* and *The Times* in that first winter, and the Club was open daily. A member perusing these at his leisure had to pay 3d (1.25p) for a 'small whiskey'. Heating and lighting were provided every evening from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. by Mr Patey for 3 shillings (15p) a week.

By the Spring of 1895 the Club had elected its Flag Officers and Sailing Committee. The Commodore was Ashley Froude from Collapit who became the first Chairman of the newly-established Salcombe Urban District Council in that same year. The Vice Commodore was Commander Herbert who lived at The Grange in Salcombe, and the Rear Commodore was Harcourt Turner, whose membership address was 22 Sackville St., London.

We have no surviving records of the actual matches sailed in the first season but can glean some information from the Sailing Committee's Minutes. The first race occurred in March, with another in April, two in May, two in June and one on August 22nd. These were handicap events over a six-mile course, the handicaps were expressed as 1 second per inch per mile, and the Club Measurer was instructed to measure boats 'from fore side of stem to aft side of stern post or stern board, whichever is furthest aft'. The race on 20 June was limited to boats of 15ft. and under. The advertised conditions

for the August race were a six-mile course, a two-hour time limit, and length was now to be measured as length on the waterline plus half the overhang. The prizes offered were £1, 10s. (50p) and 2s.6d (12¹/₂p) if five boats started, 10s., 7s.6d and 2s.6d if four boats started, and 10s. and 7s.6d if only three started. 'Three to start or no race'.

One suspects that entries were few, for the Register of Matches which begins with the 1896 season shows that in that second season only four boats raced, *Tra-la*, *Kingfisher*, *Shamrock* and *Arrow*. *Arrow*'s photograph and her lines may be seen today in Salcombe Museum and the boat herself is reportedly still sailing in Chichester Harbour. These four raced ten times between May and September, and although the Committee discussed holding a Regatta, it is perhaps not surprising that instead they ran three Club handicap races, putting £7 of the money members had subscribed for a Club racing cup towards prizes for these races and the balance 'towards the improvement of the Club premises'.

There are no surviving racing records for 1897, but by 1898 when eight results are recorded, the number of participants had increased. *Kingfisher* no longer appeared but *Tra-la*, *Shamrock* and *Arrow* were joined at various times during the summer by *Sappho*, *May*, *Kittiwake*, *Freda*, *Minnie*, *Sabrina*, *Kathleen*, *Lizard*, *Zephyr*, *Brat*, *Gloria* and *Lurline*. The photograph of *Kittiwake* taken in 1918 (see front cover) shows a yawl, gunter-rigged, with a bowsprit and a sprit-rigged mizzen. *Tra-la* was sailed by one of the Heriots from Cliff House and *Lurline* by the Hon. Secretary, Cyril Turner. The increase in numbers meant that for the first time entries were divided into two classes in 1898. We have only the lengths of *Kittiwake*, 16ft. 1in., and of *Shamrock*, 16ft. 3ins, in pencil in the Register to guide us, together with a note on the mount of the photograph of *Kittiwake* that her length was 17ft. 6ins., presumably her l.o.a. Certainly by 1905 the two handicap classes had become fixed at exceeding 15ft. 6ins. but not 20ft. overall, and 15ft. 6ins. in length and under, with a time allowance now of 6 seconds per mile. Both *Arrow* and *Sappho* were still racing then in the class for the longer craft. Boats were measured on the water with the ballast carried during a race but without their crews. Length was still length on the waterline plus half the overhang, and a note indicates that *Arrow* measured 16.23 and 17.31 - presumably feet. Competitors were not allowed to shift ballast during a race.

Not all the boats which raced belonged to Club members. Non-members (who were not, of course, entitled to use the Club's premises or facilities) paid an entrance fee of 2s.6d a race, later reduced to 1s. Having a boat measured cost member and non-member alike 2s.6d the first time and 1s. whenever necessary after that. Presumably many of the non-members' boats were local craft of the kind described by Tim Street in *Classic Boat* of June 1989 as 'open or quarter-decked work boats, between 14ft. (4.2m) and 18ft. (5.5m) long, all owned in and worked out of Salcombe for fishing and as hire boats for picnic parties'. Many would have been gaff-rigged, although some early yawls had a standing lug (illus. 4). According to Street, the local boat-builders and fishermen were used to sailing against each other in the Salcombe Town Regatta first held in the mid-nineteenth century, and one suspects that the most skilled frequently went home "in the money" after competing in the Yacht Club races. The Club award of a bronze medal went to *Sappho* for the 1898 season.

The Salcombe Yacht Club obtained recognition from the Yacht Racing Association in 1897 on the understanding that it sailed 'its matches under Y.R.A. rules and that the members are as now of amateur status'. The Club's representative in this

matter was C.E.Newton-Robinson, a member who was lord of the manor of Salcombe and a founder of the South Devon Land Company which was offering building sites for sale on the hillside above Devon Road. His permanent address was in London and so he was well placed to present the Club's case to the Y.R.A.

Over several years the Club offered to give the prizes for the sailing races on the day of the Salcombe Town Regatta, provided that the Club ran them, an offer which may or may not have been taken up by the Town committee. However, the Yacht Club did loan its premises to the promoters of the proposed Salcombe Recreation Ground in 1897, and so it was not aloof from town events.

In 1899 the proposal was made for the first time that the Yacht Club should acquire the lease of a house in order to improve its facilities. Given its financial circumstances, a lease of a whole property on the water front was too ambitious, for the balance in hand on 23 October 1899 was £11 8s 10d. However, developments in Salcombe were ultimately to force a move on the Committee. Capt.Samuel Ryder appears to have become the Club's landlord while acquiring property in relation to the development of his York Hotel (later to be known as the Salcombe Hotel). He gave the Committee notice in 1905 but at the same time offered them a similar room in 34 Fore Street. Within a few years the Committee were looking for better quarters, and after investigating several suggestions, they finally accepted an additional, adjoining room from Ryder with a balcony, steps to the garden from the balcony, private landing, fire, light and cleaning on a three-year lease for £25 p.a. 'The above subject to Mr.Turner mooring his boat at your steps and the sanction of the Licensing Authorities to the alteration - as you would have to be actually fenced off from the above Hotel for Police supervision'. Twelve members undertook each to contribute a sum not exceeding a guinea a year for three years to offset any deficiency arising from the move, and Ryder's offer was finally accepted.

Samuel Ryder had been a Club member since 1897. Born in Salcombe of a father who was captain of a sailing ship, he had literally run away to sea as a boy, timing the escapade carefully to coincide with his father's absence on a voyage to Australia. A ship's master and R.N.R. officer at 23, he had later, in 1899, taken the *Venture of Baku*, built in Dundee, from the Tyne to the Caspian Sea via the Russian waterways. Because he had acquired a reputation from his previous voyage to Russia, in 1904 he was offered the job of taking the yacht *Caroline*, registered with the Royal Cork Yacht Club, from the ship builders in the Isle of Dogs to Libau in Russia. The *Caroline* was 152ft. 6ins. long, with a 15ft. 6ins. beam and very shallow draught, 4ft. 6ins. forward and 5ft. aft. Because of heavy weather and the *Caroline*'s likely reaction to it, Ryder decided to take her through the Kiel Canal. The problem was that Russia was at war with Japan, and the *Caroline*, although carrying no guns, ammunition or torpedo tubes, bore a distinct resemblance to a torpedo boat. As an R.N.R. Lieutenant Ryder had commanded a torpedo boat and he recognized what he was delivering to a belligerent power via neutral Germany and the risk that the German authorities would stop her passage. A fraught journey through the Canal was nearly over when he received a message to go ashore and speak to a German Admiral on the telephone. Instead, Ryder ordered full steam ahead and 'shot clean out of the lock' (S.W. Ryder: *Blue Water Ventures*) into the open sea. The German guardship fired a blank, but the *Caroline* had escaped and Ryder delivered her to the Russian navy at Libau. Ryder felt he had successfully concluded a job he had been employed to do, but found himself part of an international incident which produced

a cartoon in *Punch* and threatened to escalate to the proportions of a second *Alabama* incident. He even found it healthy to retire discreetly to Paris while the legal furore was at its height. His fellow Club members must have followed the newspaper reports with interest - and probably some relish - as they read them in the quiet of the Club room. Ryder was just one of the members who then, as later, had a professional knowledge of the sea. In 1930 James Napier Rodick was to be made an Honorary Life Member of the Club 'in recognition of his brilliant service in bringing his ship *Jamaica Settler* safely through most trying circumstances when disabled in the Atlantic'.

Once the new agreement with Capt. Ryder was implemented, the Edwardian members had a Club in an excellent position. The rule book for 1909 gives a glimpse of the Edwardian scene:-

The Club shall be called 'The Salcombe Yacht Club' and shall be comprised of Yacht Owners and Gentlemen desirous of encouraging Amateur Yacht and Boat Sailing in the neighbourhood of Salcombe.

One doubts if many of the members owned cruising yachts at this time. Yachting was a



3. S.Y.C. Regatta, 1899 (SYC)

rich man's pastime and cruisers usually expensive. Primarily the Club seems to have been concerned with racing for Rule 4 states:-

The Funds of the Club, after providing for the necessary and current expenses connected with the efficient working of the Club, shall be appropriated to the Prizes to be sailed for by Yachts and Boats, the Committee always taking care to have a balance in hand.

The subscription at this time was 1½ guineas p.a. for a member living within three miles of the Club and a guinea for anyone living further away. A Kingsbridge address constituted country membership then when ownership of a motor car was restricted to a very few families in the Salcombe area. The Committee had the power to elect as honorary members for 7 days at a time all officers on full, half or retired pay of both H.M. Services, as well as 'owners of yachts belonging to any recognised yacht club'. Some idea of the limited amount of cruising taking place can be obtained from noting the few yachts' names entered in the Visitors Book which begins in 1902. There were 2 in 1905, 4 in 1906, 2 in 1907, 2 in 1909, 4 in 1910, 4 in 1911, 1 in 1912 and 4 in 1913.

Three of the recorded entries are for the same name, but none of the other yachts recorded a repeat visit. Some of the S.Y.C.'s members may have cruised, and there is one cryptic minute for 3 May 1900, 'Opening cruise 26 May'. That date was a Saturday in 1900 and so yachts may have taken part in a week-end cruise to Dartmouth or Newton Ferrers perhaps, still favourite short-haul sails for members today. The implication is that other cruises followed during the season, and this pattern may have been repeated annually without leaving any surviving archives, but certainly the successive Sailing Committees confined their records to the races sailed.

Racing is well recorded from 1905 to 1908. The Sailing Committee would meet two days before a race to determine the conditions, such as, 'Crew limited to three. Sail unlimited'. Entries had to be with the Hon. Secretary by 10.30 a.m. on the day of the race, when the sailing instructions were issued. Courses were simple and of three or four rounds duration. 'The code flag B hoisted during any round will denote that the race will finish at the end of that round'. Markboats were used, not buoys. 'Start at 2.30 p.m. across an imaginary line between the Club flagstaff and the mainmast of the *Bulldog*, round a markboat inside the Blackstone and round the *Samphire*. Four times round'. Markboats changed, of course, according to what were available in the estuary. Some Club members such as the Hon. Secretary, Cyril Turner, turned out regularly, but for these few sport would have been very poor without the participation of non-members from the town such as F. Cole in *Ariel*, W. Yeoman, C.P. Giles, W. Patey and others.

Ladies - like dogs - were not allowed on the Club's premises at this time. Although the Victorian founders appear to have agreed that ladies might be permitted 'on introduction' on race days to watch the proceedings, this concession must have lapsed, for in 1908 H. Sarah moved that ladies be allowed in the Club room between 3.0 p.m. and 5.0 p.m. on race days, only to be defeated by the casting vote of the chairman. However, women were taking part in the racing now. Miss Herbert raced in *Still Waters* on 6 August 1908, when she broke her mast. Miss Herbert was back, apparently undaunted, on 27 August when *Still Waters* took second prize, in a start of three boats. If Miss Herbert actually helmed (and the race records seem to give the names of the helms and not necessarily the owners at this date) one suspects that the beaten H. Sladen in *Jolly Jane* had his leg pulled unmercifully in the town after the race results were known. Unfortunately no records survive for 1909 and 1910, but in 1911 Miss Pennell sailed regularly in *Alert*. Two well-known local boat firms' names appear that season with E. Cove's *Mariska* and Cook's *Spray* racing. The records for 1912 and 1913 are missing but those for 1914 suggest a shift in policy. The Sailing Committee was authorized 'to accept entries for some of the races if they think fit' from non-members. Possibly the increasing number of members' boats racing led to this change. Certainly in July 1914 there were races for Club members only and just the one open race, duly advertised by poster. For the first time the Club put on a race that season for motorboats owned and steered by members. 'Motors not to be used and propellers not to be removed....Only working sails to be used'. *Tarpon* owned by E. Fox and *Busy Bee* owned by Capt. A.G. Street were the only two contenders.

Busy Bee first appears in the records in 1911 and according to Tim Street she was the first yawl built purely for pleasure (but see *illus. 2*). She was 15ft 6ins. long, half-decked with a centreboard, bowsprit, gaff-rigged mainsail and sprit-rigged mizzen. Apparently she had been built in 1906 but Capt. Street found her slow and subsequently installed an engine. Inboard engines were becoming widely used. 'In 1911, out of a fleet of

60 boats, only three crabbers were not motorised. Motor power brought about rapid development to the design of boats. The fishermen found it was possible to work twice the number of pots with less labour' (M. & D. Murch & L. Fairweather: *Salcombe Harbour Remembered*). Clearly the convenience of a motor had impinged on the amateur too.

Technology was having an impact elsewhere. Although the Club had decided not 'to take the telephone' in 1910, a typewriter had been bought (although no one seems to have used it) and in 1912 it was reported that Capt. Ryder was 'prepared to place radiators in the Club. Resolved, the Committee see no objection to Capt. Ryder's proposal'. This sounds rather ungracious, but possibly the Committee feared subsequent higher costs. In these pre-war years the balance in hand varied from £8 to £25. Of course, in addition to the one and a half guineas subscription, members were expected to donate from time to time to the Entertainments Fund or to special prizes. From the earliest years the practice of re-selling the magazines and newspapers had been adopted, which was just as well since by 1913 the Club took twenty-seven publications, ranging from railway timetables to the *Navy List*. Of the twenty-seven only four publications were directly connected with boating and they were *Yachting Monthly*, *The Yachtsman*, *Motor Boat* and Lloyd's *Yacht Register*. However, since *The Sporting Times* and *The Winning Post* were taken, other interests were catered for.



4. Yawl with standing lug: pre 1914 (courtesy S. Blackaller)

The gentlemen of Salcombe were safely ensconced in the last years of peace in their own preserve, which now included smoking room and writing room, and was safe from intrusion by ladies or dogs. The composition of the membership can be roughly deduced from the General Minutes and the first Membership Book. Of some 130 men who held membership during the years 1895-1912, addresses are given for 106 of them.

As one would expect, 74 gave only a Salcombe address, 3 gave only a London one, 2 gave London and Salcombe, 2 gave London and another place, and the remaining 25 addresses stretched from Croydon to Aylesbury, Swanage, Guernsey, Ivybridge and Plymouth, including of course Kingsbridge at the head of the estuary. The social composition can be inferred from the fact that of the 106, 23 were serving or retired officers (including an Admiral and a Major-General), 8 were doctors, 5 were clergymen and one had the rank of baronet. Admiral John Borlase Warren served on the Club's Committee from 1911 to his death in 1918 and was described at the A.G.M. as an 'old, respected and loved member'. His yawl with its loose footed lugsail and his boatman at the helm in Starehole Bay appears in illustration 2.

By 1914 the Club was small but securely established. It hosted the West of England Yachting and Boat Sailing Conference that year and was to have hosted the Boat Racing Association's proposed dinghy week, but this was cancelled in June. No reason is given, but one wonders if coming events were casting a forward shadow? It seems unlikely. Members' boats racing that season included *Foam* which belonged to Andrew McIlwraith, the Vice Commodore: she continued to be raced for many years (illus. 13) and is currently in Edward Hannaford's boat store. The others were *Queen Mary* (Lionel Wells), *Sabrina* (Cyril Turner), *Sea Maid* (W.E. Montgomery), *Lotus* (A.G. Hervey), *Thalassa* (Dr. Wilcox), *Perfect Terror* (E.M. Collins), *Falcon* (C.N. Rodick), *Busy Bee* (Capt. A.G. Street), *Tarpon* (E.S. Fox) and *Molly* (H.M. Stone). *Arrow* turned out once again on 30 July 1914, the last recorded race for four years.

The outbreak of war in 1914 presaged a period of quiet for the Club in which it was maintained by the support given by local, largely retired, members such as Admiral Warren. Those who were on the reserve, like Ryder, went back to the Services. Annual General Meetings were held but the quorum had to be lowered. In 1915 there were three Committee meetings, but one only in both 1916 and 1917. The turnout of seventeen members at the A.G.M. in February 1918 must have heartened the Commodore, Dr. Cock. Cyril Turner was combining the duties of Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer by now, but there was little business to attend to, apart from investing £50 in War Savings Certificates. However racing appears to have started again on 10 August when four boats sailed a course round the lower mooring buoy and a markboat off Collapit Creek. Two open races were held on 24 August, the first with unlimited sails and the second with cruising rig. (Just before the war spinnakers had been specifically excluded from some matches.) Ten boats started, including *Kittiwake* and *Arrow* from the pre-war group, and Col. Glover entered in *Becassine*, a yawl which was to be part of the Salcombe fleet for many years. Although the war did not end until November 1918, in Salcombe the post-war scene was taking shape.

Between the Wars 1918-1939

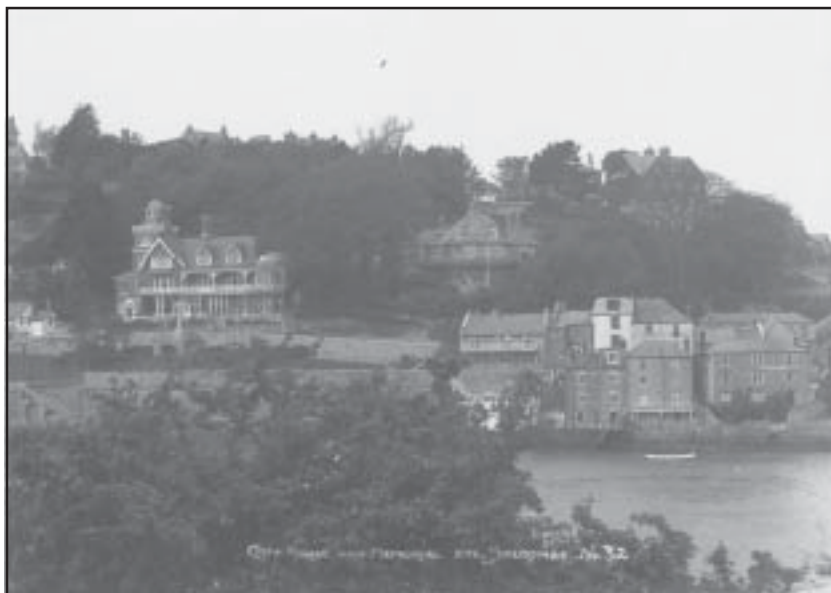
During 1918 the Club received a gift from Lieut. Lindsay Smith of four 18 ft. British Racing Association One Design dinghies. These were named after four Saints and of course required Club moorings and upkeep. Notes exist which appear to refer to these contingencies. 'Procure sail covers for dingheys (sic) sails. Pay man 2/6d a week for looking after dingheys. Permanent members to pay 1/- a day and temporary members 2/- a day for use of dingheys.' A match between two of the *Saints* is shown in illustration 6. Perhaps not enough people hired the *Saints* for when it came to the winter of 1919 the cost of storage was deemed too great and it was decided to let the boats remain on their moorings. This decision not unnaturally upset the donor who offered to take them back. The Committee promptly concurred 'as it was found by experience that the cost of upkeep was more than we could really handle'. A complication was that the Club's boatman had just resigned and special arrangements had to be made to clean the *Saints* and fettle them up for their return to Lindsay Smith. Wooden hulls and cotton or canvas sails required regular careful maintenance and, since gentlemen did not usually indulge in the DIY skills with which most dinghy sailors are familiar today (albeit often with different materials), labour costs had to be considered. The boatman's wages and insurance in 1919 came to £56 7s 6d and expenditure on boats was £46 9s 9d. By returning the *Saints* early in 1920, the Club reduced its total expenditure on dinghies for that year to £16 18s 8d, but lost the opportunity to adopt the 18ft. B.R.A. as its first one design class.

Club attention was in fact concentrated throughout 1919 on the Club's move to new quarters in Cliff House, where it remains today. Ryder wished to incorporate the area the Club rented within his expanding hotel, but the Club had found no viable alternative accommodation. The Vice Commodore, Andrew McIlwraith now came to the rescue. He had fallen in love with the Salcombe estuary while cruising and bought Woodville (now Woodcot) as his family's Salcombe home. He wanted to help preserve the beauty of the waterfront and was concerned about the future of his Club and the lack of certain facilities for the community. His friend and fellow member, Dr. D.O. Twining, drew his attention to the fact that Cliff House was on the market with its extensive terraced gardens down to the waterside. He bought it in 1919 in order to offer the S.Y.C. a home and then to make provision for new social amenities for Salcombe as a whole. The Club's 1919 A.G.M. was offered a choice of accommodation and asked to decide quickly so that McIlwraith could then proceed with his plans for the rest of the premises. The members chose plan B by which the Club acquired the lounge, reading room and billiard room, cloakroom and lavatory on the ground floor, five rooms and a dressing room, bathroom and lavatory on the first floor, together with six attic rooms. The 99 year lease also included part of the waterside terrace, that is the section of the lawn to the S.W. adjoining Bakerswell, and land at the other end of the terrace with a boathouse on it, together with all the foreshore rights along the terrace and half way across Bakerswell. The rent was to be £130 a year together with half the water-rate for Cliff House, but the S.Y.C. was also asked to take over a large front room on the first floor at an additional rent of £20 a year 'with a view to its being sub-let to a Ladies' Club'.

The Club's acceptance of Alexander McIlwraith's wonderful offer meant that it had to be put on a new financial and legal footing. Subscriptions went up to 2 guineas

a year with temporary members paying a guinea a month or half a guinea a week. For the first time an entrance fee was charged, and steps were taken to register the Club as a 'company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital'. This required the creation in February 1920 of the Salcombe Yacht Club Co. Ltd. to hold any leases or freeholds of property used by the Salcombe Yacht Club. Every existing and future member of the latter was to become a member of the former with limited liability in the event of the Company being wound up, a normal legal and financial situation for clubs of any standing. Some income was obtained by letting the top floor as a flat, the lease of which was taken by Col. Glover. Three other rooms on the first floor were termed 'apartments' and let to gentlemen who needed a pied-à-terre in Salcombe. Thus Lindsay Smith acquired one at the rent of £12 a year.

After the lease between himself and the Club had been agreed, McIlwraith created the Cliff House Trust to which he passed the freehold of Cliff House and its grounds, together with certain properties intended to provide an income. Cliff House itself was to house a Public Reading Room (now the Public Library) and an Assembly Room, and its



5. Cliff House c. 1922 (courtesy Cookworthy Museum)

grounds were to provide a pleasant park. Thus all the donor's objectives were achieved (illus. 5).

Considerable effort was expended in settling the Club into its spacious quarters and furnishing them. The site was - and is - a magnificent one, and members soon had a smoking room, a card room and a billiard room to enjoy. However, not all of them enjoyed having to allow members of the new Salcombe Ladies' Club access to their room on the first floor, and there were strongly worded complaints if any lady was forgetful - or reckless - enough to use the Yacht Club's private staircase or walk through its front garden, straying from the direct path. Little of what the Ladies did or left undone seems to have escaped notice. Alexander McIlwraith, whose attitude was clearly

more liberal, hoped that the S.Y.C. would grant the Ladies' Club the security of a long lease, but the Annual General Meeting of 1922 managed to avoid supporting this by a beautifully worded resolution, passed by 19 votes to 8:-

“That though unwilling to ask the Salcombe Yacht Co. Ltd. to accede to the request of the Ladies' Club for a 21 year lease of their Club Room, We in General Meeting assembled affirm our desire to accord them a continuance of the privileges they now enjoy, provided that no music or dancing be allowed without the consent in writing of the Company's Secretary. In doing so we fulfil the obligation on us to carry out the wish expressed by Mr. McIlwraith at the time the premises were offered viz. that the room be included in the Club's holding, with a view to it being sub-let to a Ladies' Club”.

So the Ladies' situation was one of perpetual probation, despite the fact that many were wives and daughters of the Yacht Club's members, and all belonged to the same social milieu in a very small town.

The Club now had the facilities to extend honorary membership to cruising members of the Royal Torbay, the Royal Dart, the Royal South Western, the Royal Fowey, the Royal Cornwall, the Royal Cruising and the Royal Western Yacht Clubs. The Royal Dart and the Royal Fowey reciprocated at once, as did others over the years, to the benefit of S.Y.C. cruising members.

Was the harbour becoming overcrowded in 1922? Certainly not by today's standards, but the Club agreed to approach the Urban District Council to discuss 'what steps can be taken with regard to the present scandalous absence of control in Salcombe harbour'. The month of that decision was August, which suggests that then, as now, holiday time brought its problems. Salcombe Urban District Council acted as agent for the Duchy of Cornwall in relation to the harbour at this time, and indeed until the Harbour Authority Act of 1954.

Internal criticisms were voiced in the Club's Suggestions Book e.g.: 'The Card Room is insanitary and should be ventilated properly. Many verbal complaints have been made to our worthy Hon. Sec. who refuses to entertain anything requiring expenditure.' The reply was: 'The Medical Officer of Health frequently plays cards and dines in this room and has made no complaint. The Committee therefore think that the Hon. Sec. is perfectly justified in not spending the Club funds on this room.'

Slightly nastier criticism appeared in *The Kingsbridge and Salcombe Gazette* in 1922 in a letter from a 'Salcombe well-wisher', apparently an annual visitor to the town. He complained that only three S.Y.C. boats had taken part in the Town Regatta race specifically for boats belonging to members of the Club. This literate, albeit anonymous, writer described these boats as 'old hookers in various stages of senile decay'. He claimed that:

'The executive - commodores and sailing committee collectively, have managed to reduce the sailing activities of the club practically to zero, or have transferred them to their young and active rivals, the newly established Salcombe Sailing Club who alone would seem to appreciate the opportunities for sport which your charming estuary affords.'

This letter certainly embarrassed the Salcombe Sailing Club whose Secretary promptly wrote to the S.Y.C.'s Sailing Committee thanking it for the use of its boathouse

at Orestone End, its flags and its mark buoys on the new Club's race days in the past - its first - season, and disowning the published letter. Whatever the author's intentions, he did not create trouble between the bodies named. Salcombe Town Regatta had the use annually of the Club's boathouse and portion of the lower terrace, just as the S.S.C. borrowed its boathouse and some of its equipment during the sailing season.

The Salcombe Sailing Club had been formed to suit the post-war situation. The younger element, male and female, and the local boat-building fraternity wanted a club of their own formed simply to provide facilities and organization for racing, not the card room the billiards etc. - and the high subscription - that went with a gentleman's club. From 1922 they had their Sailing Club which raced on alternate weeks to the S.Y.C. during the sailing season, and from 1926 provided its own one-day Regatta. A few keen dinghy sailors belonged to both Clubs, but the Salcombe Sailing Club existed



6. Race for Lady Polson's Cup: *St. Patrick* and *St. David* sailing off tie (SYC)

independently until the two Clubs merged under the name of the Salcombe Yacht Club in the very different social and economic climate of 1964.

The S.Y.C.'s Sailing Committee was not inert. In October 1920 it proposed the adoption of some one design class to be officially known as the Salcombe One Design Class. 'The boats to be so built are understood to be the property of individual owners and would be maintained at their expense'. They had obviously learned from the brief ownership of the *Saints*. The 16 ft. Star One Design was adopted in 1923. This 16 ft. centre-board design was suggested to the Editor of *Yachting World* as a good class for Salcombe since 'in the last season these boats have proved the fastest in the Solent of all the small sailing classes'. The writer was the designer, Charles Nicholson of Camper and Nicholson, who suggested certain modifications to suit the Salcombe waters. These included a reduction of the sail area to 200 sq. ft., a wider gunwhale with the

coaming carried right aft, a short deck aft of about 18 inches, an elm rudder and 3 instead of 2 cwts. of lead ballast. The first Star was built to Camper and Nicholson's specification in the spring of 1923 by Richard Cossentine of Salcombe. Woods in the specification were English elm and oak, white and red pine and American rock elm. The centreboard was of galvanised steel. Cossentine's contract (part of Harris Thorning's private archive collection) is dated 6 Feb. 1923 and the boat was to be completed by 15 March, the total cost being £75. How many of these boats were built is uncertain, although a letter written by H.E.Chubb does imply that Cossentine had orders for four and therefore Chubb suggests that any orders for a fifth and a sixth boat should go to Chadder of Salcombe so that they could be on the water that season. Harris Thorning believes that only the four were built, *Southern Cross* for H. Emory Chubb, *North Star* for G.S. Philip, *Argo* for Turner and *Great Bear* for Shillitoe. For a few years these Stars raced for a Challenge Cup presented by the Commodore, Col. Glover. In 1923 and 1925 Chubb won in *Southern Cross* and in 1924 Capt. Summers was first with *Patience*, which may not have been a Star design at all, for shortly after that the class died out because G.S. Philip died, two syndicates sold their boats and 'our One Design had been rather swamped by boats not built to our plans', as the Hon. Secretary put it in 1930. It was the latter boats which became known as the Salcombe 16ft. Class, but that term was used very loosely, the restrictions apparently being an overall maximum length of 16ft. and - possibly - sails limited to main and jib. Local recollections of the Stars, as reported to Harris Thorning, suggest that they were a compromise between racing and cruising designs, fine for the relatively open waters between the mainland and the Isle of Wight, but much less suited, even with Nicholson's modifications, to the fickle wind conditions of Salcombe estuary.

Archival evidence for the 1920s consists largely of Committee and A.G.M. Minutes. Thus we know more about what happened ashore than on the water in that decade. At the February A.G.M. in 1924, a new Rule 6(b) was adopted stating that:-

'Any Gentleman who has done conspicuous public work or rendered distinguished public service in literature, art, science or music may be elected as an Honorary Life Member of the Club....'

Immediately after the adoption of this new Rule, Walter Shaw was elected an Honorary Life Member (presumably the first in the Club's history) 'in recognition of his reputation as an Artist and in gratitude for his generosity to the Club'. One of Mr. Shaw's seascapes hangs today in the Quiet Room, as does another presented by its painter, Alfred Pazolt, in 1925. The latter was a man of many parts, according to Malcolm Darch. Pazolt had, like Ryder, served in sailing ships and written about his experiences. He had exhibited at the Royal Academy, and had given S. Y.C. not only that painting, but also a model he had made of a Salcombe clipper, which model stands in the Club bar today. Many members contributed items such as a card table, an ash tray and even a gas chandelier to the Club in the 'twenties while they were furnishing their new quarters.

Club Regatta day in 1924 included tea for 200 in the billiard room and the band of either the Royal Marines or the South Staffordshire Regiment on the lawn. The next year a dance in the Assembly Room of Cliff House was added to the programme. It was called 'an evening At Home' and tickets cost 3 shillings (15p) each. One wonders what accident befell one lady guest that evening while the string band of the Royal Marines played, since she was later sent £1 2s 6d plus 10 shillings compensation 'owing to damages sustained by her on the occasion of the Yacht Club At Home.' Racing on that one-day

had consisted of three 'open' events and one for Yacht Club members only.

From 1926 onwards the practice was adopted of holding the Yacht Club and the Town Regattas on consecutive days in August. There was always also some collaboration between keen dinghy sailors of both the S.Y.C. and the S.S.C. and in July 1927 the former notified the S.S.C. 'of the wish of the Yacht Club to present three Cups to be sailed for during the season, one Cup to go to the winner of each of the three classes'. The three classes recognized locally between the wars were not strictly defined or nationally recognized classes in the sense that the term 'Class' is usually used today. They were known as the A, B and C Classes and their maximum lengths were the crucial measurements, being 20ft., 16ft. and 12ft. respectively. These formed convenient divisions in Salcombe of the local racing fleet. However the International 14ft. dinghy does appear to have been adopted sometime in the 1920s, for a letter of 1929 states that there had been seven races during that sailing season in the Points series of each of the



7. A7 *Juanita* and Miss Elizabeth Jennings (courtesy Miss E. Jennings).

S.Y.C.'s four Classes. Miss H. Belville had won the 20ft. Class in *July* (A3), D.S. Hadow in *Patricia* (B5) the 16ft., J.H. Rogers in *Quest I* the 12ft. C Class, and E. Cove had won the International 14ft. series in *Vim*. Yawls at 15ft. 6ins. must have come into the B group at first, but certainly had separate races, or at least prizes, in the Regattas of the early 1930s, and a separate Points series from 1935.

The 20ft. A Class raced on a time handicap based partly on length and sail area but also on past performance. The first of the beautiful keel-boats with their classic lines were built by Chadder in 1922 in Salcombe, and were named *Joan* A1, *Jean* A2 and *4th of July* A3. To these were later added *Wiluna* A4, *Pierette* A5 (which was sometimes called *Pippin*), *Sunshine* A6, *Juanita* A7, *Dragon* or *The Dragon* A8, *May* A10, *Shadow* A11 and *Atalanta* A14. These are the boats mentioned in the S.Y.C. archives. A8 is said to have been a Dragon Class yacht owned by F.B. Sherring which raced in the A Class just as a Flying Fifteen was to do in the early 1950s. None of the As was identical, not even Chadder's first three boats. According to Harris Thorning, each of these had a mean length of about 19ft., A3 being 22ft. 10ins. overall and 15ft. 2 1/2ins. on the waterline. Some As were keel boats and some, such as A6 and A11 built by Edgar Cove, had centreboards so that at times, as in the Club's Regatta of 1934, prizes were awarded for each category. S.S Macaskie had an excellent season in 1934 when his *Wiluna* took six

Regatta
 firsts in nine races and became a scratch boat. However *Juanita* beat her into second place in the opening race of 1935, the Jubilee Cup (illus. 8). *Juanita* was built by Morgan Giles of Teignmouth to the design of Andrew McIlwraith's grandson, Ian Jennings, and raced by Ian's sister, Elizabeth, with her professional crew. *Juanita*'s lines can be clearly seen in illustration 7. Miss Jennings was a keen helm who established a local reputation with many successes in *Juanita*, including, for instance, the A Points series in 1935, and the Hamilton and Macaskie Challenge Cup in both 1937 and 1938. A certain rivalry existed between *Juanita* and *Atalanta*, which had been built by Morgan Giles for the Misses Chorlton. Failing to challenge *Juanita* themselves, they had *Atalanta* tuned by



8. A Class racing: A7 *Juanita* leading A4 *Wiluna* (courtesy Miss E. Jennings)

Morgan Giles and then entered a race with him as their helm. Apparently neither boat was much concerned with any other entries, and concentrated on their own needle match. Miss Jennings still remembers with amusement that *Juanita* won her protest after Morgan Giles attempted to round a buoy inside *Juanita* without establishing a proper overlap early enough. None of these ladies was a Salcombe Yacht Club member, of course, although from February 1937 Miss Jennings, like other 'Ladies resident in Salcombe who are relations of members of this Club (S.Y.C.) or are members of the Ladies' Club' was allowed to fly the Club burgee. (She was in fact a member of the Salcombe Sailing Club.)

The B Class were the 16ft. centreboard boats many of which had been built locally in the 1920s, and possibly earlier. Some, as we have seen, had raced against the Stars. When the West of England Yacht and Boat Sailing Conference resolved in the early 1930s to adopt the Salcombe 16ft. as a Class officially recognized by the Conference, it was 'with a view to the preservation of the existing wholesome and seaworthy type of

boat and the avoidance of unnecessary expense'. The W.E.C. already recognized the International 14ft. as its No.1 Class, and what it termed the 'outclassed' International and W.E.C. 14 footers as its No. 2 Class. The undecked International 14ft. was the aristocrat of the dinghy world already, having achieved international status in 1927, and the W.E.C.'s definition of 'outclassed' was any boats not less than three years old which 'have not won a prize in the International 14-foot Class within a period of three years.' The third class adopted was to be known as the W.E.C. Salcombe 16 foot (half-decked) Centreboard Class. The specification included maximum length not to exceed 16 ft., nor the sail area 200sq. ft. Sails were limited to one mainsail, one working foresail, one small foresail and one spinnaker. A boat electing not to carry a spinnaker and spinnaker boom might have a foresail boom and a balloon foresail. Any rig was permitted,



9. Salcombe B Class Racing (*courtesy H. Thorning*)

and both gunter and Bermudan rigs can be seen in illustration 9. No spar was to exceed 28ft. overall. The minimum beam was 5ft. 6ins., and depth of hull amidships 6 ins. either side of the centre line was not to be less than 2ft. Carvel or clenched planking was allowed, and either two water-tight wooden bulkheads or buoyancy tanks were necessary. Centreboards were to be of iron or steel and of a maximum weight of 250 lbs. Rudders could be solid or lifting. No aluminium was to be used in the construction of the hull, centreboard or rudder, and only rigging screws might be nickel, or chromium or otherwise plated, although any iron and steel work might be galvanised. 'The deck to be covered with canvas painted or varnished, or with linoleum, as preferred'. No boat was to use more than a single suit of sails in any one season unless an accident occurred. An anchor weighing not less than 15 lbs. had to be carried while racing, together with 12 fathoms of 1½ ins. manilla anchor line, one lifebuoy or buoyant cushion and a ringbowl or bailer. The racing crew was limited to three persons, which suggests a rather odd accepted safety factor of three people to one lifebuoy.

A Class B race in 1932 is shown in illustration 9. However, some of the 16ft. boats

owned by S.Y.C. and S.S.C. members were not going to fit these W.E.C. rules, and so once both Clubs had adopted them, the S.Y.C. regatta in 1934 had to include a race for 16ft boats under W.E.C. rules, which became Class B, and another for the Old Salcombe 16ft. boats which became Class B2, and were set off earlier. Class B never exceeded five boats in the races of the mid-thirties, although boats did also take part in the W.E.C. elimination series, and the Salcombe winner presumably went on to compete elsewhere. *Blue Peter* B14 (Lieut. J. Waterhouse) and *Daphne* B2 (Major P. Cottle) seem to have shared the honours. It is interesting that when the protest of *Daphne v. Kitty* went on appeal to the Y.R.A. in 1933, the former's crew was described as her owner and two paid hands, one of whom was helming at the time of the incident. *Kitty* had a Club



10. Frank Cole sailing Y7 *Choice*, formerly *Edra*. Photograph post 1945: note *Choice* still has no bowsprit. (Courtesy K. Jago)

member representing the owner and two paid hands on board. Competition was obviously keen, but after 1937 there were not enough boats racing to constitute an S.Y.C. Club Class any longer.

When the W.E.C. stressed the avoidance of unnecessary expense on adopting the Salcombe 16ft. boat, it was possibly influenced by the Depression which followed the Wall Street crash of 1929. The S.Y.C. was not immune to its effects. Although membership dropped only from 98 to 91 between 1929 and 1931, some of those who left frankly admitted the need for retrenchment. The business man who owned *July* A3 wrote resigning and saying that she was up for sale in Cove's boatyard after seven seasons' racing, with both cruising and racing rig, for £100. He offered a 5% discount to a buyer who would keep her in Salcombe to race with her sister A Class boats. Unfortunately her name does not appear in the S.Y.C.'s sailing records for the 1930s despite that offer. It is difficult to tell whether the B Class was at all affected in the late 'thirties by the gradual increase in the number of yawls. Without any surviving detailed Club racing records for the 1920s, we do not know how yawl racing was then organized,

but they probably took part in the over 12ft. and under 16ft. category. We do know that Jim Stone in his *Blackbird* (later numbered Y2) was far more successful than any S.Y.C. yawl owner. Yawls may have had their own races in the Regattas, as they did in the 1930s. For 1933 we have the yawl results in the S.Y.C. Regatta when, out of five starters, *Evelyn* sailed by R. Pepperell beat *Blackbird* into second place, with the Commodore's *Beccasine* coming third. In 1934 the yawls' Regatta race was specifically for yawls up to 15ft. 6ins. and the winner was W. Trinick's *Shag*. 1935 saw the beginning of regular S.Y.C. Class racing for yawls with their own start time. Soon they were allocated numbers and so in 1936 the following boats were recorded: *Sea Lass* Y1 (C. Saunders), *Blackbird* Y2 (J. Stone), *Evelyn* Y3 (R. Pepperell), *Blonde* Y4 (Dornom), *My Lady Joan* Y5 (W. Ball), and *Penelope* Y6 (usually sailed by a Cove), with *Blonde* the season's Points winner. Three more boats, Yawls 7, 8 and 9, were added to the fleet in 1937 when R.E. Morris sailed *Brunette* Y7, Drew raced *Boy Tom* Y8, and Edgar Cove converted a Salcombe 16ft called *Priscilla* into Y9. *Marie Louise* Y10 appeared in 1938. The next stage in the yawls' history is a crucial one often confused in the telling. Edward Hannaford's knowledge has helped interpretation of the Club's records. He understands that in the late 'thirties some of the Flag Officers, L.A. Clayton in particular, were interested in the development of the yawls as a Class. Two new ones were therefore ordered from Mashfords of Cremyll; the one, Y11, was bought by R.E. Morris and named *Edra* and the Commodore, Col. Glover, bought Y12 and called her after his earlier boat, *Beccasine*. In her sixth race of 1938, Morris sailed *Edra* into second place, but the first place went on her first outing to Lindsay Smith's new Morgan Giles-built yawl, Y15 *Auburn*. She was fast, based on the Teignmouth Corinthian One Design, and is said by Tim Street to have been built of cedar wood, and have had an iron keel and plate. R.E. Morris then sold his Mashford's Y11 at the end of the 1938 season, and F.Dornom appeared in her in May 1939 having re-named her *Endeavour*. The following week Morris raced his new Morgan Giles-built yawl for which he reverted to the number Y7, which he had previously held for his first yawl, *Brunette*. He called this new Y7 *Edra*, after his second yawl, and thus created a tangle for later researchers. A further complication is that after the Second World War Frank Cole bought Y7 *Edra* and re-named her *Choice!* (illus. 10). A myth exists that the two Morgan Giles' yawls raced as early as 1937 and swept the opposition off the estuary. This is incorrect both as to date and to effect, for Jim Stone produced *Blackbird II* Y14 for the 1939 season which, helmed by the young Alec Stone, had five 1sts and one 2nd in six races. So the local boatyard was more than holding its own. It is fair to say that all three, *Edra* Y7, *Auburn* and *Blackbird II*, affected yawl class design after the 1939-45 war, although *Auburn* itself was destroyed during the war.

The third local class, the 12ft C class, was the most numerous in the 'twenties and 'thirties. According to Harris Thorning, the design originated in a competition held during the First World War for a boat which could be used as a ship's tender for one to three people, but also ship a mast and provide single-handed sailing. The Salcombe C was probably a modified version. With a maximum length of 12ft. and a maximum sail area of 100 sq. ft., it was clinker built with a heavy centre plate, and the one gunter-rigged sail. Although it was intended for single-handed racing (see illustration 11), the C could carry a crew. Cossentine apparently built C1 *Quest* and subsequently others, but many local yards produced them, such as Stone's, whose output included C18 *Mischief* for the Beck family. *Mischief* has the enviable reputation of never having been

beaten in a race, and belongs today to Alec Stone. Nearly fifty are said to have been built - some by Morgan Giles - but C35 *Bee* is the highest number to appear in the S.Y.C. records in the 1930s. Like C34 *Whisper*, it was built by Stone. In 1932 R. Martins won the Points series with C19 *Uncle Charlie*. Once the National 12ft. restricted Class became popular in the late 1930s, the C Class and the National 12s often started together, although awarded separate points and prizes.

The National 12ft. was introduced by the R.Y.A. in 1936 in order to provide a thoroughbred racing dinghy for those who found the International 14ft. too expensive at about £200. Spinnakers were not allowed and there was a price limit initially of £50 without sails, but it was a restricted, not a one design, class. The first two to appear on an S.Y.C. race record were present on 12 September 1936. A year later nine or ten were racing regularly and probably it was about this time that S.Y.C. adopted the boat as one



11. C Class racing, C17 *Hiker* in foreground (courtesy H. Thorning).

of its Classes. Although there was often provision made in the Club's programme during the 1930s for International 14s and Snipe to race, neither won much support locally. In the 1936 Regatta five boats entered in the category '14ft., Snipes and Bermudan dinghies'. This race was won by *Irene*, the International 14 helmed by Dan Twining and crewed by his brother John, sons of 'Dr.Dan', as Dr. D.O. Twining is still remembered in the town. The National 12 was the first of the national classes to become at all popular in Salcombe, and in its 1938 Regatta the S.Y.C. provided a Challenge Cup for this Class open to all comers.

How many S.Y.C. members actually cruised during the inter-war period is impossible to tell. Most probably they formed a very small minority. A few of the Secretary's letters refer to matters such as moorings or winter storage. Cruising must

have been on the increase however, since by 1939 the Club had to solve the problem posed by visiting yachtsmen who brought ladies with them. It was finally decided that the entrance hall be formed into a lounge and 'that ladies accompanying members of the Club or of affiliated clubs be admitted there'.

Thus by 1939 the S.Y.C. presented a different picture from that drawn by the critic who had written so disparagingly to the local paper in 1922, for it had developed an annual programme of greatly increased sailing activities, including Class Points series, the Regatta and 'holiday races' put on in August and much enjoyed by those who could not be in Salcombe for a full Points series. It seems probable that for some retired locals the Club's great advantage was still its social side with the provision of all they required from a gentleman's club, and one moreover in beautiful surroundings. The Club had certainly survived the Depression, but it had one potential weakness that does not appear to have been noted at the time, the fact that its membership was static. In 1939 it stood at 95, including one Honorary Life member and 4 'out-port', that is, members whose main yacht club was elsewhere but who belonged to S.Y.C. as well, at a reduced rate. The Club was viable so long as it was not put under pressures which disturbed its economic equilibrium. At this point the whole situation was changed by the outbreak of the Second World War.



12. Nationals and Fireflies heading out of the estuary, Sharpitor rocks in the background (courtesy Miss Tyler)

The Second World War 1939-1945

The Club's archives for the war years reflect the turmoil and restrictions of the period. The Secretary, R.P.L. Jeffery, was now expected to offer constructive replies to a wide range of queries. Some were simple, such as those from Bruce Banks in July 1940 when he wrote that he hoped to have two weeks' leave in Salcombe with his National 12, *West Wind*, and were there any restrictions on sailing in the estuary and any racing taking place? Any racing that took place was probably *ad hoc*, and indeed the suppliers had already notified the Club that because 'Our Arms and Ammunition have been commandeered' there were no cartridges for the racing guns. Jeffery was an officer in the local Home Guard, and papers inadvertently left in the Club's files show that members owning rifles handed them over to him for use by these poorly-armed volunteers. [Who, one wonders, handed in the U.S. model 1917 Remington which Jeffery issued to Corporal Dunstan along with 60 rounds of ammunition in 1942?] An indication of the coastal restrictions comes in a letter from a Plymouth doctor who wrote in March 1940 asking if he could obtain a permit to sail his 25ft. motor cruiser from there to Salcombe. Permits were issued in Plymouth, he wrote, but only for sailing in the Sound and within two miles of the breakwater during the hours of daylight. Jeffery passed that query on to H.M. Customs.

The Ministry of Information sent the Secretary 'a restrained and formal notice' to put up in the Club concerning the dangers of careless talk, together with drawings by the cartoonist, Fougasse, 'pointing the moral in a lighter but most effective way'. The Admiralty notified him that it was offering a number of temporary commissions in the Executive Branch of the R.N.V.R. to experienced yachtsmen in their thirties. Various Armed Forces' units suddenly arrived in the town, such as the 391 Coastal Battery R.A. and the No. 1 Motor Boat Co. R.A.S.C. and the officers were offered the facilities of the Club, as were those of the Training Ship *Arethusa*. There was the Spitfire Fund to support and the Club's premises to be loaned for all the fund-raising activities which were so important in these years, not only for the money they raised, but also for the morale-boosting effect of providing local, much needed, entertainment.

As shortages became severe, the busy Secretary was constantly chasing supplies of drink, particularly after the bombing of Plymouth. The Army and Navy Stores had always had a large part of the Club's custom, but stocks were limited and transport was sometimes difficult. Attempts to buy from new sources usually met with a polite but firm reminder that supplies were available only for regular customers. Local members continued to enjoy their bridge [points not to exceed 2s. 6d on 100 and side bets limited to 5s. a rubber], but even packs of new cards became difficult to obtain. Soon a Club whisky and soda cost 11d and port was 10d a glass. An irate letter arrived from a Brigadier complaining bitterly 'of the strange and extremely discourteous action of certain fellow members' who, 'in conspiring to deprive a fellow member of his share of the Club drink e.g. the port' had secreted it in the refrigerator. It is difficult to tell whether his near-apoplectic reaction was to their hiding the port or to their choice of hiding place! The custom was for members to help themselves to drinks and sign chits, and clearly this member was suspected of drinking more than his fair share of the available alcohol. There are indications that the affair caused some amusement, even to

the hard-pressed Honorary Secretary.

The most amusing letter he seems to have received was surely a plea for help in March 1941 from a member of the Royal Yorkshire Yacht Club, an architect and surveyor, who wrote, 'I am taking up an appointment under the Air Ministry at West Prawle near Salcombe I cannot find it on the map'. He appealed 'as one Yachtsman to another' for aid in finding both his place of work and living accommodation. Such farcical touches were the light relief of war-time.

However, by the Autumn of 1942 the Admiralty had requisitioned part of Cliff House, including the Club's billiard room, reading room and telephone room. It closed the staircase leading to the Public Library on the first floor of Cliff House and so access to the latter had now to be through the Yacht Club's premises. A year later the Admiralty required the whole of the building in preparation for the advent of the American forces, and the S.Y.C. found temporary accommodation in the billiard room at Sunny Cliff, the home of its Honorary Treasurer, Col. A.G. Street. Thus it survived through the support and devoted voluntary efforts of a handful of local members. A souvenir of this period is the print of the Schooner Yacht *America* which hangs in the Club's bar and was 'Given to the Salcombe Yacht Club with the grateful appreciation of the American Red Cross 1943-45 from their Director Mrs. Ian MacDonald'.

The Post-war Period 1945-1964

The immediate post-war years were a time of readjustments and shortages. Even bread was rationed now, but at least the Admiralty had left Cliff House by August 1945, and so there was furniture to get out of store, individual items to be retrieved from members who had housed them for the duration, and above all constant correspondence to be exchanged between S.Y.C., the Cliff House Trustees and the Admiralty concerning dilapidations and compensation. The process took months.

Meanwhile a letter had appeared in the local paper suggesting that Cliff House should become 'a general sports and social Club for the boys and girls returning from war service, to be run by the people under the guidance of the Council'. The proposer totally ignored the role of Cliff House Trust and the provision by it of the public Reading and Assembly rooms, and based his letter on the misconception that 'in the first instance Cliff House was given **to the public** by Mr. McIlwraith for the benefit of the people of Salcombe, not just to a select few who, since that time, have used the building mostly for themselves'. The Yacht Club was at least one of the writer's targets, but the General Committee was secure in its knowledge of its one-time Vice Commodore's intentions and actions, and decided no reply was called for. There seems to be a long history of underlying tensions relating to the Yacht Club's presence in Cliff House which have been both unfortunate and unconstructive in effect, but which were possibly inevitable in a small community squeezed from time to time by economic pressures and receiving a fairly constant influx of retired people, and later holiday home owners, many of whom joined the Yacht Club.

A few races were held in the summer of 1945, and then the following year brought changes. Col. Glover, now 88 years old and ill, resigned and L.A. Clayton became Commodore. Glover had taken office in 1920, and in recognition of his long service to the Club he loved, he became the Club's first, and only, Life President. Membership had risen with forty-nine new members bringing in new blood, and a subscription was opened to support a one-day Regatta on 9 August. Attention was paid to getting the Watch House at Oreston End in order and replacing the Club's mooring line. The Club motor-launch was back in use, but provision of teas had to wait until 1947 when a catering licence was issued and rations allocated. On behalf of visiting yachtsmen, the Secretary was instructed to write to the Commander in Chief, Devonport, pointing out that the Admiralty had removed the leading marks for vessels entering the harbour and these needed replacing.

The first major change under the new Flag Officers was the amalgamation in 1947 of the S.Y.C. and the Ladies' Club. Officials of the former made the initial approach. They were less conservative than some of their predecessors, and also hoped to increase membership and to gain control of the whole of their premises for possible future rearrangements. (They had already handed over a small room and a bathroom to the Cliff House Trust in exchange for the latter reinstating a bath in one of the Club's other rooms.) S.Y.C. pointed out that the benefits would be mutual, since the ladies would have the attentions of a full-time steward, the use of the other rooms in the Club with the books and periodicals taken, and also mixed bridge and billiards. The Salcombe Ladies' Club took its time replying and successfully demanded 'that the Ladies shall

have the sole right of using our present room for whatever purposes the Lady members desire, and also that our present members shall continue to pay their usual annual subscription of 25 shillings which shall not be advanced during their period of membership'. It was some years before they relaxed total control over their room, but equally, there continued to be a card room reserved for gentlemen. In fact in 1948 ladies were declared ineligible for the General Committee, a move which represented one of the last efforts of the conservative 'old-guard'. In 1952 Miss Shirley Tyler became Honorary Sailing Secretary, an office she filled until 1964. (She was also to be Rear Commodore from 1971 to 1978.) She was something of a pioneer, for it was usual at sailing clubs of the 1950s and 1960s for the assumption to be made when a new couple joined that the wife would help with the catering at special events while the husband was added, if at all experienced, to the list of potential O.O.D.s. Indeed, until 1954 no woman, not even the steward's wife, was allowed to serve behind the bar of the S.Y.C. The social climate



13. Allcomers' Race 1948. On left *Foam*, formerly Andrew McIlwraith's boat, still racing (courtesy H. Thorning).

was changing but possibly more slowly than some people felt at the time. Serious debate was caused in 1949 by the steward's behaviour 're entering into conversation with members at the bar'. (Today's steward crews a National 12 for the Vice Commodore, but this is forty-five years later.) However, from the merger of 1947 S.Y.C. had solved any problems of entertaining mixed crews off visiting yachts, and that was important since an outstanding feature of 1948 was the number of visiting yachts whose crews made use of the Club. Moreover, S.Y.C. membership was boosted to 234.

The pre-war pattern of the S.Y.C. and the S.S.C. providing racing on alternate Saturdays was resumed. S.Y.C. social activities increased, with billiards, snooker, bridge and table tennis tournaments being held, as well as the Annual Dinner in the winter, and the Club made provision for younger people by creating a Cadet section for those between 14 and 21 years in 1951 at a subscription of 10s 6d. The 1950s, particularly the second half of the decade, are remembered for the 'explosion' of dinghy sailing. Designs sponsored by the R.Y.A., or by the yachting press and newspapers, were offered in

complete or kit form and made use of marine plywood, synthetic materials and techniques developed during the war by the aircraft industry. The Royal Yachting Association had led the way as early as 1946 with the National Firefly, a 12ft. one design dinghy with a marine ply hull moulded under considerable pressure and heat. She was intended as a racing dinghy for the younger and less affluent, and although her price soon rose to equal the National 12's, she was cheaper to maintain and appealed to those who preferred, or perhaps could better afford, a one design rather than a development class like the National 12. The Annual Boat Show at Earl's Court from 1954 provided a popular show case which helped introduce sailing to a vast new, eager public. More people owned cars and had paid holidays, and some of them were happy to trail their new light-weight boats to open events or to the seaside. The package charter business, offering holidays abroad in the sun for all, was not yet in being, and so seaside towns like Salcombe experienced a boom, particularly during the school holidays when many families went to one place to stay for a fortnight. From 1955 the Town Regatta was reorganized to extend over a full week, and so the S.Y.C. and the S.S.C. agreed to expand their sailing programmes to fill another week, taking over the former days occupied by Town Regatta events. The present pattern of two consecutive weeks of August Regattas has therefore a forty-year history behind it, and has had a considerable impact on Salcombe's summer tourist trade.

The classes recognized by S.Y.C. inevitably changed during the 'fifties. In 1951 cups for the season's Points series appear to have been awarded to the A Class, to Yawls, Tridents, Tornados, Mayflowers, C Class and National 12s, as well as the Menagerie or Handicap class. There were two awards for the Salcombe Praams, one cup being for helms under 16 years. The una-rigged Salcombe Praam was Scandinavian in origin, and was raced here for about ten years. One example of the design is still seen sometimes moored on the Victoria Quay pontoon. The Trident and the Mayflower were West Country designs which did not spread, and the Tornado was used by a sailing school based on the estuary whose clients were allowed to race for a short while with S.Y.C. and S.S.C. craft.

The several protests heard suggest that the Tridents had particularly keen racing in the 'fifties. However they were not numerous enough to survive. Classes changed as new designs became popular. The Fireflies began to impinge on the National 12s, and from 1954 the two were combined as a Class for the Points series (illus. 12). The beautiful A Class boats were no longer being built, some were laid up and others sold away as their owners' circumstances changed. For a couple of seasons they were joined by a Flying Fifteen, just as they had raced with a Dragon in pre-war days. By 1955 however, it was agreed that unless three A Class boats entered the Regatta, they must be relegated to the handicap group. The Class died out. *Juanita* was being lovingly restored and sailed in Plymouth Sound during the 1980s, and there may well be another, or more, lying unrecognized in the West Country. The C Class single-handed boats were still around but they seem to have sailed first in the Menagerie and then in 1955 with the Tridents. As single-handers, they were being overtaken by the new *Yachting World* Solo, but some survive in this area today. In addition to Alec Stone's C18, mentioned earlier, Edward Hannaford has two in his boat store, and Tim Bass has one laid up. The Solo was a Jack Holt design with a l.o.a. of 12ft. 4ins., a beam of 5ft. 3ins. and a Bermudan sail area of 90sq. ft., and was first introduced to the estuary by Commander Kilroy. Then members of Wraysbury Sailing Club brought four Solos down and allowed interested

locals such as Shirley Tyler and her father (who both belonged to the S.Y.C. and the S.S.C.) to try them out. The number of boats owned by members grew so quickly that the Solo was adopted as an S.Y.C. Class in 1959 (illus. 16).

The co-operation between the dinghy sailing members of these two Clubs was getting closer, and had been formalized in 1953 when the two Sailing Committees set up a Joint Sailing Committee to consider all racing matters. Its members did not always arrive at an agreed conclusion, but clearly the popularity of a design across both Clubs was recognized as important. Their shared Regatta in 1955 included an All-comers' Pursuit Race, racing on three days for both the Salcombe Restricted Yawl and for the Keel-boats' Handicap, and on two days for the Solos, the Hornets, the Merlin-Rockets, the Enterprises, the Mirrors, and for the National 12s together with the Fireflies. Like the Solo, the Hornet and the Mirror were ultimately to be adopted by the S.Y.C.

By the mid-fifties the O.O.D.s had to cope with so wide a range of craft that the Menagerie was split into the A and B handicaps. Up to 1954 Club handicapping was related to past performance with some tentative attempts at incorporating the Langstone Tables. After that the O.O.D.s were happy to use the Portsmouth Yardstick and then the Secondary Yardstick, which was of particular help as an increasing variety of boats appeared during the summer holidays.

The S.Y.C.'s Secretary had reported the growing popularity of the Salcombe Yawl 'among those who do not like acrobatics in their sailing'. Harris Thorning, presently an S.Y.C. General Committee member, remembers sailing Yawl 16, *Ariel*, from 1948 to 1960. She was built by Jim Stone in 1948 and joined Y7, formerly *Edra* but now owned by Frank Cole and renamed *Choice* (illustration 10), Y14 *Blackbird II* and Y15 H.S. Triscott's *Kingfisher*, which Stone built in 1947 and which was apparently allocated the number used pre-war for the highly successful *Auburn*, unfortunately destroyed during the war. With them raced Y9 *Priscilla*, the ex-B Class dinghy sailed by Richard Cove. (She had had a mizzen added to her transom and remained undecked, features which were to lead to her disqualification as Yawl regulations were tightened once the Class expanded.) By 1953 *Blinkie* Y17, *Swift* Y18, *Heron* Y19 and *Stonechat* Y20 had all followed from Stone's yard, and then they were joined that year by *Coralie* Y21, the first yawl built by Douglas Winter's firm. Cotton sails, little coaming and no jamming cleats form part of Harris Thorning's memories, but by 1963 Y37 was launched, which proves there was some truth in the Secretary's report.

From 1960 to 1964 the Club was delighted to have as its Commodore a Salcombe man whose career had been in the Salcombe seafaring tradition, Capt. George Cove, whose last ship before he retired had been the *Queen Mary*. His successor as Commodore from 1964 to 1970 was Major Tyler who generously allowed Club members' racing dinghies to be parked on his private foreshore at Small's Cove. This privilege continues to be granted to this day by his daughter, Shirley Tyler. During the Regatta weeks of the late 'fifties, residents of Mill Bay allowed visiting entrants' boats to be parked on their private beach. These concessions made racing in the estuary on the new scale feasible, for not until 1958 was the town dump alongside Batson Creek turned into some parking space. These privileges have been granted S.Y.C. continuously for some forty years, and the Club is very aware of its debt to Miss Tyler and to successive owners of the relevant properties at Mill Bay. The line of parked dinghies there during Merlin Week and the Regattas has become part of the Salcombe summer landscape.

The Salcombe Council's reaction to the invasion by summer dinghy racers was

not wholly favourable. Some members proposed in 1957 that all sailing races should be banned in July and August, which would have meant no shared Club Regatta, an altered Town Regatta confined to the rowing races, and curtailment of the Points series. It was said that some of the hire firms were concerned that inexperienced holiday makers could be discouraged from hiring craft if the estuary seemed very crowded. The sight of a fleet of highly competitive, and often vocal, dinghy sailors bearing down on one can admittedly be alarming. However the argument prevailed then - and each time the question of congestion arose in the next two decades - that the races attracted both participants and spectators and assisted rather than hindered the summer holiday trade, particularly as the Harbour officials saw no insuperable obstacle. The move of the start line away from the ferry helped in 1961 to relieve congestion near the ferry steps, and the later provision of the buoyed Fairway off Cliff House Gardens gave non-participating boats a passage clear of racing dinghies in the vicinity of their startline. The S.Y.C. and S.S.C. Joint Sailing Committee did agree in 1958 that catamarans were unsuited to courses set in the confined waters of the estuary by reason of their size and speed, and laid on an 'outside' race for them in the Regatta. The Yawls promptly took advantage of this provision and had their own 'outside' race scheduled to start ten minutes after the catamarans.

The start line could be altered from 1961 because in that year S.Y.C. exchanged its boat and Watch House at Oreston End for a new Watch House, with some storage space below, near Bakerswell. The Mr. Broadhead who had bought Oreston End house wished to be able to absorb within his property the site and boathouse leased by Cliff House Trust to the Club and used by both the S.Y.C. and the S.S.C. The Club's leased building lay between his property and the water, and although he had a right of way over the roof and steps to the water, his access was limited. He offered to build replacement premises for the S.Y.C. at his own expense on their leasehold section of the lower terrace of Cliff House Gardens, near Bakerswell. The idea had been mooted before, and Capt. Lindsay Smith had donated money to the Club towards some structure on that site. That money appears to have been used for a marquee, occasionally erected on the lower terrace. Mr Broadhead offered a more permanent structure and a rather complicated transaction ensued involving Mr. Broadhead, Cliff House Trust, S.Y.C. Co. Ltd. and the local Planning Office. The result was the Watch House where we see it today (illus. 14) and a start line which is in clear view of spectators on the Club terrace. One result of there being so many bodies involved none of whose representatives had been party to the original contracts, was that some argument arose later as to who actually owned the Watch House and was therefore responsible for its maintenance and rates.

The 'sixties were to be the decade when constantly rising costs began to affect both Cliff House Trust and S.Y.C. adversely. Club officials realized the need to encourage full use of the premises throughout the year but the Club Nights and the Saturday Ladies' Nights had only limited success. Television was a competitive attraction and so the Club rented a set. Parking outside the Club had just been restricted, and it was noted that 'the absence of parking facilities in front of Club premises has had an adverse effect during the past summer and has been a great inconvenience to members'. Membership was possibly boosted a little by the introduction of a new category, joint membership, and funds were certainly improved by the renting of 'an Amusement Machine' popularly known as a One-armed Bandit. However, successful Regattas and Open Events were not enough to sustain the Club, and some members, including the Commodore, Major Tyler, realized the need for a broader, active local membership to

secure the future. As members also of the S.S.C., both he and his daughter were aware that it too had financial problems. The solution seemed obvious to some - the amalgamation of the Yacht and Sailing Clubs. After all, the dinghy sailors of both Clubs were racing together and the races each Saturday were organized by a Watch House group representative of both Clubs.

It was easier said than done. There was opposition by the 'old guard' in both camps. Some of the elderly S.Y.C. members, interested only in their Club's social aspect, did not want their quiet disturbed, and others may have had yachtsmen's prejudice against an influx of dinghy sailors. Those S.S.C. members who wished only to race dinghies feared higher subscriptions to cover S.Y.C. facilities, including the cards, billiards, table tennis and periodicals which they did not want. Social gulfs that were non-existent to some seemed unbridgeable to others who did not wish to make the attempt - and they were on both sides. The author well remembers in the late 1950s watching Olympic Class Finns sailing at Lymington and her husband being asked by a pleasant elderly man in reefer jacket and yachting cap whether he sailed 'one of these six-penny tip-ups?'. We felt our dinghy rated about 'tuppence' on that scale An unimportant anecdote, but it does illustrate contemporary attitudes, as does the fact that Eastbourne was not the only town at this time which had two sailing clubs, the Eastbourne Sailing Club and the Eastbourne Artisans' Sailing Club.

The amalgamation was first discussed in 1961 and finally achieved in 1964. It proved beneficial to both parties. The S.S.C. had often held its Committee meetings in *The Union* inn (now *The Fortescue*) and post-war had had the use as floating Headquarters of an ex-Admiralty vessel named *Ilton Castle* after their pre-war HQ, which was an old paddle steamer and which became a total loss after it was commandeered by the Services. Upkeep of the second *Ilton Castle* had proved a drain on the Sailing Club's limited resources. Now all former S.S.C. members had the use of the premises in Cliff House, although there is evidence that integration took some time to achieve. Dinghy sailors were unlikely to use the Club House straight off the water, for there were very limited changing facilities at first, including just one shower, while the expected dress for male members included always jacket and tie. The Sailing Club's assets were handed over to the Yacht Club, and in return it was agreed that former S.S.C. members should not pay entry fees or their first year's subscriptions. Any remaining money was to go towards furthering sailing. S.Y.C. membership jumped from 292 to 433, one of the members gained being W. 'Gunner Bill' Yeoman, a Flag Officer of the S.S.C. Mr. Yeoman was grandfather of today's Lifeboat Coxswain, Frank Smith, and is remembered gratefully by Shirley Tyler in particular for his keen support of racing. In the Watch House he always took charge of the guns.

From 1965 the Club's subscriptions were set at £5 5s. for joint membership, and £4 4s. for a man, and £2 2s. for a woman. Those who lived over three miles away counted as country members and paid half rates. Possibly the curious half price for women was related to the low rate of £1 5s. still paid by former members of the Ladies' Club. There was as yet no family membership but two other reduced rates' categories did exist, Junior membership for those between 18 and 24 years and Cadet for those under 18 years. With a first year's profit of some £2400 and assets of £8430, the Club's officials could breathe a little easier. However there was a need now to match the facilities to the increased membership, and so expenditure on internal alterations proved essential. Also, the more people used the premises, the more frequently refurbishment had to be carried out.

Post Amalgamation

From the time of amalgamation, the sailing section more than paid its way. Open meetings such as Hornet weekends or the Gull National Championship of 1967 helped, and the Regatta was an essential annual contributor. Over 300 entrants was the norm for the S.Y.C. Regattas for almost a decade. In 1966 some 306 boats from 100 different Clubs entered for 55 races requiring 1600 entries on the record sheets. The competitors enjoyed (hopefully) a very windy week during which bar takings quadrupled. The Points series usually ran from April to October with a special Whit Monday race for an R.N.L.I. pennant, and a break for the Regattas. The winter series of 1967 produced an average turnout of twelve boats. The Club's classes were now the Salcombe Restricted Yawl, the National Solo, the National Hornet and the Mirror for helms under 16 years. The Hornet was a Jack Holt 1951 design sponsored by *Yachting World* (illus. 14). Of light construction, it planed easily, carried main, jib and spinnaker, and initially had a sliding



14. Hornet Class off the Yacht Club, 1960s. New Watch House on left of lower terrace and former one at the right (courtesy Miss Tyler).

seat, a distinctive feature which was quite popular with girl crews. It used to be said in Salcombe in the 1960s that you could tell a Hornet couple walking down Fore St. by the bruises down the back of the girl's legs. The sliding seat was later replaced by a trapeze. The Club adopted the Hornet as a Class in 1967 when the now less popular National 12 dropped back into the Handicap. In that year the Club bought three Mirror dinghy kits for the Cadets, to whom Miss Tyler was already giving sailing instruction based on Small's Cove. Backed by the *Daily Mirror*, this design was aimed at the impecunious DIY enthusiast. It was light, short enough to be carried on a car roof rack, and could be used for sailing, rowing or with an outboard. Adults could sail it provided they were not too long-legged. The Club boats were completed in time for an April

1968 launch, and proved well balanced and responsive so that other youngsters acquired Mirrors. Their red sails have frequently been seen battling happily around a course in conditions which have led to capsizes among larger but more tender craft.

The encouragement of sailing among the Cadets has remained an important part of the S.Y.C.'s *raison d'etre* for a generation now. First with Shirley Tyler and later helped by a succession of organizers such as Jimmie Dormer, Mervyn Honey, Martin Payne, Jon Alsop, Clive Thompson and Rob Burn (all assisted by innumerable parents), groups of Cadets have learned boat handling, sailing, racing and safety techniques. Like other Classes, they had their own Class Captain in the 'seventies and 'eighties and the keenness of the Cadets and their willingness to help with Club events often reflected the enthusiasm of the current Captain. When repairs to the billiard table were deemed too expensive, the billiard room became a Games Room open to Cadets as well as adults, so that young members had somewhere on Club premises in which to meet. After the Mirrors, Optimists were bought for use by the youngest Cadets, and then in 1978 W. Tatnell supplied a new Yawl Y101 named *Win* in memory of his wife and the Cadet class has had the use of this boat ever since for training and for racing, provided that an adult Yacht Club member has always been on board. For several seasons it was common to see *Win* racing with Captain Blazeby, the then Harbour Master, in charge of a Cadet crew. When Mr. Tatnell died, this generous patron left a significant sum in support of his gift, and on this the Cadet Class Fund has been based since 1987.

The Solos were probably most popular in the early 'sixties, but held their place well. The Yawls were increasing significantly. Sixty-one had been built by the end of 1967, as builders Stone and Winter were joined by Edgar Cove (Yawls 41, 44, 48, 56, 57), Salcombe Yacht and Marine Co. (Yawls 42 and 43), and Powercraft (Yawls 45, 46, 49 and 58). It was the advent in 1967 of Y61 *Taylor Maid*, built by Peter Taylor in Salcombe, which created something of a furore because she was a light, successful boat with certain new features. The result was the formation of the Salcombe Yawl Association with the principal object of agreeing and enforcing buiding regulations nationally for this restricted Class. Thirteen more boats followed quickly in 1968 and 1969, though not all, of course, stayed in Salcombe. The Salcombe Restricted Yawl could be said to have come of age, but it had certainly changed, and no longer would the specification begin with the declaration that 'The Salcombe Yawl is to be regarded primarily as a pleasure boat and its racing function is to be regarded as being secondary'.

The work done by the Sailing Committee had increased greatly. Points series, the Regatta, National and Open Meetings, team racing against Dartmouth Royal Naval College and other Clubs, had all to be organized and manned. Class Captains were co-opted onto the Sailing Committee and winter evening lectures arranged by the Sailing Committee began to feature regularly in the Club's social activities. The House Committee was more concerned with events such as 'the usual Christmas Dinner' held at the Marine Hotel in 1968. Catering facilities in the Club itself were still very limited.

An analysis of membership at this time by Capt. John Waterhouse divided the Club into five groups, described as: -

- a) The hard core of local sailing members and their 'country member' counterparts who join them in the Summer season from all over the Kingdom.
- b) The owners of the larger Yachts who enjoy the reciprocal hospitality of the Clubs along the Coast on account of the hospitality offered by

our Club to Yachtsmen visiting Salcombe.

c)The older members who have retired from active yachting or boat sailing but who still use the Club as a social meeting place.

d)The Bridge players.

e)The young.

The five categories Capt. Waterhouse identified have remained the basic groups of members for the past thirty years, and the balancing of the needs of these groups is still essential to the welfare of the Club. At the time he was considering the Club's future, the most significant increase in membership was among the Junior and Cadet members. Unfortunately their subscription and bar contributions were relatively small, at a time of economic uncertainty. So came the first of a series of attempts at economies, including closing the Club for a day and a half in the winter, coupled with rises in subscriptions.

Two cheering events ushered in the 1970s. The first was the inauguration of Merlin Week in 1970, after the Merlin-Rockets had asked to be allowed to drop out of the Regatta and have a full Open Week of racing to themselves. This suited the Sailing



15. Merlins racing (courtesy T. Newberry)

Committee very well as it reduced pressure on the Regatta. The 1946 Jack Holt designed Merlin had merged in 1951 with the year-old Rocket, and Merlin-Rockets had visited Salcombe in increasing numbers for some years, sometimes sharing starts with the Hornets. At first the Merlins shared their week with Fireballs, but entries rose so rapidly that from 1974 the two had separate weeks. Soon Merlin entries had to be limited and the ideal maximum was set at 80, which could be handled as two fleets of 40 starters. A Harbour sub-committee inspection on four occasions in the 1977 season led to the conclusion that dinghy racing did not cause any undue congestion in the harbour or on the beaches. Careful collaboration between the Club and the Harbour Master, Captain Hodges, as with his predecessor, Capt. Blazeby, has enabled the Club to continue holding such summer events. Merlin Week in 1995 will be the 35th consecutive year in which S.Y.C. has played host to the Merlin Class to our, and we hope their, pleasure. Because the estuary provides sandy beaches with good views of the racing, many Merlin owners have turned the week into a family holiday. Entrants have honorary Club

Membership, special catering and entertainment is laid on for them and their families, and any overcrowding inside the Club has always been accepted as evidence of the Week's success. The Merlin and Regatta weeks are the highlights of the Sailing Committee's year. Audrey Petit, who was Sailing Secretary from 1972 to 1990, is known nation-wide to Merlin sailors, and did much by her enthusiasm and organization to turn the event into the popular fixture it has become.

The second cheering and constructive step was the agreement arrived at with Cliff House Trust in 1972. S.Y.C. had already taken responsibility for the Watch House and now, in exchange for giving up the lease to its flat in Cliff House, the Club acquired what was termed the 'freehold lease' of the ground adjoining Bakerswell on which the Watch House and dinghy park stood, and to the adjoining foreshore; an acquisition dear to the hearts of many of the Flag Officers, including J.J. 'Pete' Petit. By a Covenant entered into with Cliff House Trust, at the end of twenty years, during which time the Club would pay rent, the freehold would become the Club's, without any restrictions. This agreement means that today the Club has the freehold of a section, albeit small, of waterside land and foreshore. At last it owns the base where tenders can land, races are organized, and a few dinghies can be parked. The long-term problems of dinghy and car parking remain, of course, and the latter has produced the S.Y.C. Law of Inverse Distance: the further away from the Club that you have to park your car, the closer the space vacated by the car that pulls away as you walk up to the entrance.

The year 1976 produced a third event of significance for S.Y.C.'s future when a group of enthusiastic yachtsmen, among whom W. Fletcher was prominent, set up a pilot group to investigate the possibility of creating some organization for cruiser owners within the Club.



16. Alec Stone in Solo 1212, *Whitehall*, in which he won the Solo World Championship in 1971. Solo 847, *Uncle Sam* (R. Petit) is also shown.

The Cruiser Section

Clearly the advent of new materials and new techniques of construction had affected cruisers as well as dinghies. Unfortunately no Club Registers of Yachts survive, although they are occasionally mentioned in other documents, and so we have only scraps of information concerning yachts and yachtsmen in the Club before the creation of their Cruiser Section. We know there was some port to port racing, for in 1960 the Club gave three cups for a Westward Bound Race which finished at Salcombe. In 1966 the Club joined the West Channel Cruising Association which was formed to co-ordinate sailing activities along the coast and to try to establish some uniformity in racing rules and safety regulations. The Club representative's considered opinion in 1973 was that few Salcombe boats would be able to take part in Offshore Cruiser racing because safety requirements were many and expensive. However the Club was obviously involved as starter or host for West Channel Offshore races in 1974 when there was a Salcombe to Brixham race in July and another in September from Salcombe to Plymouth. Perhaps the general increase in cruiser availability and ownership was reflected in the initiative taken by Wilfrid Fletcher's pilot group.



17. S.Y.C. Cruiser Rally, St. Peter Port, Guernsey, June 1990. Party on board *Gemma*.
Other cruisers: *Marsella*, *Pinjarra*, *Trumpeter*, *Truantina*, and in the distance
Arun Swan (courtesy B. Coates)

The General Committee welcomed the setting up of this investigation into the feasibility of establishing a Cruiser Class because 'it is a side of the Club which has long been dormant'. Initially the group listed some twenty-six S.Y.C. local members with suitable boats, ranging from a 17ft. Silhouette to a 34ft. catamaran, and including two motor cruisers. A survey of craft on permanent moorings in the harbour encouraged a belief that an organized cruiser group would draw some new members into the Club - a belief that was to be fulfilled. The group's report stated that 'By far the most significant development is the increase in moderate sized cruiser sailing boats which appears

to reflect the growing tendency for dinghy sailors to move on into small cruising boats'. The S.Y.C. Cruiser Class came into being in 1977 and has been active ever since. The then Vice Commodore expressed the hope that the Cruiser Class would 'keep to the technical rather than the social side, and at the same time embrace all members in their activities'. However, just as some other Club Classes held their own Class Dinner, so the Cruisers' Supper became an annual event. Moreover, in their enthusiasm, the first Cruiser Class officials rapidly organized a calendar of events which included Tuesday evening lectures once a month in the winter, running parallel to the established Club Friday evenings. The man who wants to hear about search and rescue operations or the latest electronic navigational aids has different interests from the man who is interested in team racing tactics, or the newest Olympic dinghy class, although both would have enjoyed the illustrated talk given by Waldo Dowson in October 1978 on his voyages in *Hannah Penn* built for him by Camper and Nicholson in 1972, and in



18. Start of the East Rutts Race 1993. Won by *Leopard* on handicap (courtesy B. Coates).

the two Falmouth Pilots he had sailed before owning her. Yet in effect the cruiser members formed a sectional interest alongside the dinghy interest, rather than just one more class within the Club. One suspects that a feeling that the dinghy interest had been dominant for too long motivated some of the cruiser pilot group, who wanted to establish a balance. The reality of the situation was recognised in 1978 with the appointment of a Rear Commodore (Cruising) and a Rear Commodore (Sailing) to divide responsibility for the cruiser and dinghy sections. The Cruiser section early established the pattern of coastal rallies which still exists. The idea was, and is, to encourage novice owners or newcomers to the Western Channel to branch out from day sailing into cruising in company, and/or racing. The lecture programme was intended to increase their knowledge, and therefore their confidence in their ability to do so. The first rally in 1977 was to Newton Ferrers, with nine boats taking part, most of whose owners were experienced sailors. The boats were *Pandora*, *Blue Albatross*, *Pallas*, *Hannah Penn*, *Moonflower*, *Arun Swan*, *Snow Bird*, *Madena* and *Gemini Girl*. The Harbour Master

16. Alec
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So

took one look at the latter, Derek Yapp's catamaran, and sent her to moor 'well clear of other craft in what turned out to be the draughtiest spot in the estuary'. After enjoying the hospitality of the Yealm Yacht Club, some returned to Salcombe next day while others went on to Plymouth and Cawsands. The next rally was to the Dart and it attracted fifteen cruisers with forty members. The next year saw nine boats and twenty-four members cruising in company as far as the Helford River, and the coast from the Dart to the Helford has been the area for annual rallies ever since, with the occasional foray to Brixham.

Many owners, of course, continued their practice of sailing alone, but some would report a plan to go foreign or to the Channel Islands and indicate that others were welcome to join them. The photograph of the party on board *Jemma* taken at St. Peter



19. Winner, East Rutts Race 1993 -
Leopard (courtesy B. Coates)

Port in 1990 (illus.17) shows how enjoyable these jaunts can be.

A prize was instituted in 1978 for the best kept and most interesting log submitted annually, and entries do give a glimpse of voyages undertaken by S.Y.C. members. In 1988 *Pinjarra* (D.J. Burton) crossed to St. Peter Port then on to Treguier and down the French Atlantic Coast to La Rochelle, a round voyage of 1133 nautical miles, calling at 33 ports between 4 June and 16 August. R.M. Rushworth thoroughly enjoyed his sailing in 1989, although his account was not intended as an entry for the log competition since it covered his season's sailing, not just one voyage. In his yacht *Rorqual*, he attended both the Brixham and the Dartmouth Club rallies, took a twenty-eight day cruise of 605 nautical miles to the French Atlantic coast via Newton Ferrers on the way out and Kingsand and Dartmouth on his way home. *Rorqual's* next trip of 230 miles was 'to Port Kernoch eastwards this time' and included St. Malo, St. Helier and St. Peter Port. In April he delivered a 32ft. yacht from Toulon to Marmaris in Turkey, calling at

Porquerolles, Ischia, Capri, Messina and Rhodes among other places. 'Three full gales. Two canals, Lefkos and Corinth. A supporting crew of three including a teetotal Irishman, a tower of strength in the occasionally strenuous conditions. Finally a short meeting with a Turkish gunboat in prohibited waters - Enough said'. He rounded off the year crewing a short delivery from Dartmouth to the Hamble on L.M.27 *Broadsword*, which must have seemed fairly tame by comparison. The account ends: 'Total year's cruising: 71 days on board. 2484 nautical miles. 178 Night hours. A good year'. It gives at least an indication of the relish with which some S.Y.C. members have put to sea.

Racing attracted less support at first, although a team did compete in the Torbay Admiral's Cup as early as 1978, and the next year *Snowbird of Hamble* skippered by Norman Neal and crewed by Roger Evans took part in the AZAB (Azores and Back) race under the auspices of the R.O.R.C. Sufficient support eventually led to acceptance of the Sailing Committee's offer to schedule races 'outside' for the cruisers, and a full programme has developed (illus. 18 and 19). The 1994 race card included a Spring series of fourteen races and an Autumn one of eleven, with courses including one to Plymouth via the Eddystone, two to the Skerries, two to Burgh Island and one East Rutts race. In addition there was a race for Lady Helms and one for helms under 21 years. Numbers fluctuate, as they do for all Classes, but the Cruiser section is one of the successes of the past two decades. It has helped to fulfill the aims of the Club's founders and created some balance between those first two groups, the dinghy sailors and the yachtsmen, identified by Capt. Waterhouse. In 1978 the section offered to give Cadets a taste of cruiser sailing and twenty of them enjoyed the experience one day in July, as others have done in succeeding years. Cruisers have also supported a variety of local events, from Waterside Regatta Services to escorting the R.N.L.I.'s *Baltic Exchange II* into Harbour when she arrived as a new lifeboat for the Salcombe station.

...And so, to-date

If the Cruiser Section has taken care of the interests of the yachtsmen, Capt. Waterhouse's group (b), his other four groups have been well catered for too. The Bridge players have the use of the Quiet Room on two afternoons and one evening a week: the young still fall into two categories with reduced subscriptions, Intermediate for 16 to 21 year olds, and Cadet for under 16 years. The latter enjoyed the use of a Lark for several seasons, donated by Mr. and Mrs. Jago, and in 1978 began to switch from Mirrors to the single-handed Topper. Several Club Toppers have been bought, and 1994 saw an average turnout of six for racing on Saturday afternoons. The Waterhouse social group of members who no longer sail enjoys the improved bar and the catering facilities, along with all other members. Support for the winter social programme inevitably fluctuates, but the Burns Night celebration is always a sell-out, and has been for many years. The remaining Waterhouse category, the dinghy sailors, has seen changes,



20. Mirror Launching Party, Bakerswell, April 7th 1968

although the Solo Class has survived a challenge from Lasers and the loss of helms to the Yawl Class. At one time the Hornets flourished and travelled, the complete Salcombe Hornet fleet attending the National Championship in 1970. Later, in 1977, David Tabb and Mark Lewis came second in that annual event. Four Hornets went to the World Championship in Thorpe Bay the following year, and in 1979 John Donovan took his boat to Holland for the World Championship. However, within the next decade the Hornet lost support here for a variety of reasons, and the Class ended, leaving only the Solos and the Yawls. In fact the peak for dinghy numbers throughout the country had probably passed by about 1980 and that has been reflected in the lower Regatta entries. However, Salcombe's popularity as the venue for visiting Classes' National and regional events has continued, an example being the Wayfarer National Championship of 1991 to which the Club played host. In recent times the Yawl, like the Hornet, has travelled. Y70 and Y82 were trailed to North Berwick in 1977 to take part in the Round Table National Regatta, John Donovan's Y82 coming second and

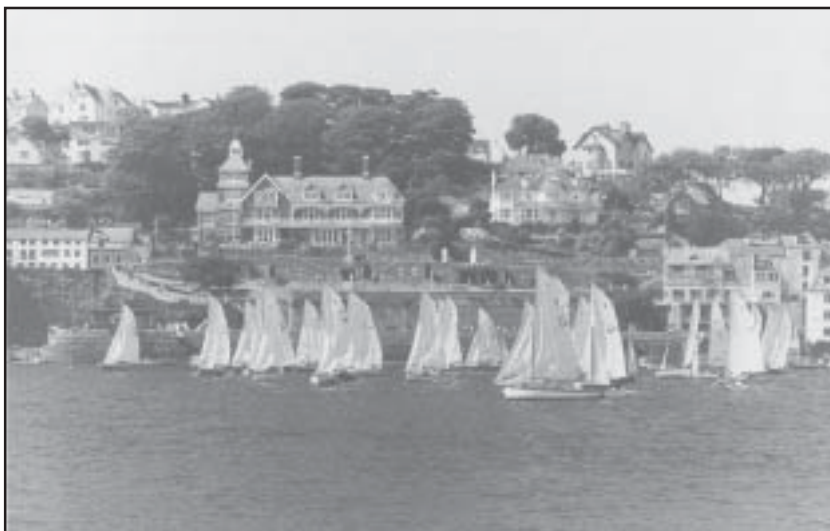
Tim Noyce's Y70 fifth. They also took the Team Award and the Travellers' Trophy, and were quite prepared to repeat the venture. A group of Yawls attended the Open meeting at the Bala Sailing Club for three years running, Y134 *Dipper* (Mervyn Honey) winning in 1988 and 1989, and Y82 in 1990. Alec and Kathy Stone took Y114 *Swallow* to a traditional wooden boat regatta in Holland in 1989 and won in a Force 8 gale. These and other successful forays, in particular Martin Payne's second place in the World Solo Championship of 1980, have helped to make the S.Y.C. known in the British dinghy world not just as a host club but for its competitors. Alec Stone is not only well-known as a boat-builder but also as a highly successful dinghy sailor, the most distinguished the Club has had. He made his mark in the National 12s, particularly during Burton Week, and by the time he became an Honorary Life member of S.Y.C. in 1972, he had not only been Wayfarer National Champion, but eight times the Solo National Champion and Solo World Champion in 1971 (illus. 16). The citation stated that he had brought 'himself and by association the Club, to the forefront of British dinghy racing'.

Plenty of activities means a need for plenty of support. Club membership dropped a few years ago when a combination of rising costs and inflation at a time of recession led to a steep rise in subscriptions, but it stands now at some 900 individuals. For these a full cruising, racing and social programme is planned for the Centenary Year. There will be dinghy racing from 18 March to 1 January (weather permitting, of course), three Yawl Open weekends, a joint Solo-National 12-Topper Open Meeting, two days of team races, as well as an RS 400 Open Meeting, Merlin Rocket Week and the Regatta. A cruise in company is planned for June to Morbihan via Trebeurden Marina, Camaret and Benodet, as well as rallies and racing. This year a Centenary Ball in Regatta Week will join the Commissioning Party and the Laying-up Supper as highlights of the social programme.

Club officers today have obviously far more to organize than their predecessors had a hundred years ago. Moreover, since the Second World War many new bodies have appeared with an interest in the estuary, with all of whom the Club has had to negotiate and co-operate at some time. These range from the Island Cruising Club to non-sailing organizations such as the Salcombe Estuary Association, the National Trust and the Nature Conservancy Council, which was responsible for the estuary being declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1987. One recent achievement of the S.Y.C. Co. Ltd. for which all are grateful is the agreement arrived at with Cliff House Trust after long negotiations. In return for accepting a new financial arrangement acceptable to the Trustees, the Club has received an extension of its lease for 99 years from 1993. Thus it enters its second century with security of tenure, which would surely please its original benefactor, Andrew McIlwraith.

What of the future? People and their boats will change, as will patterns of behaviour. After all, no Edwardian member would have understood the 1978 notice from the House Committee stating, 'Would members please note that skateboards are to be left outside the Club and they are not to be used on the premises or in the grounds'. However, he would have had to admit that today the Club does more to foster sailing in the vicinity of Salcombe than it did in the early years. The Salcombe Restricted Yawl looks set to survive into the twenty-first century (illus. 21) with four yards accepted as builders by its Association and about 160 sail numbers having been allocated by now, it has become identified with Salcombe and with the S.Y.C., despite owners being scattered across the country. As the Centenary Year opens, Salcombe Yacht Club has a Commodore,

Gerry Turner, who is a Lt. Commander R.N. (retd.), a Vice Commodore, Stan Turns, who is Assistant Harbour Master and was Second Coxswain of the Salcombe Lifeboat, a Sailing Secretary, Jane Starey, who is the third generation of the Stone family to feature in this history, and an Administrator, Philip Perraton, who is a Commander R.N. (retd.). Between them they represent so many strands in Salcombe's traditions and the Club's story. May that augur well for the future.



21. Modern Yawls racing

SALCOMBE YACHT CLUB

Commodores

- 1895 A.A. Froude
- 1898 Cdr. C.W. Herbert
- 1904 R. Heriot
- 1909 Capt. S. Hamilton
- 1911 Dr. W. Cock
- 1920 Col. R. Glover D.S.O.
- 1946 L.A. Clayton
- 1950 Cdr. A.C. Roberts
- 1959 F.S.A. Atkinson
- 1960 Capt. G.E. Cove C.B.E.
- 1964 Major R.C. Tyler
- 1970 J.J. Petit
- 1971 G.P. Britton
- 1974 J.J. Petit
- 1977 T.G. Nelson
- 1980 E. Dunhill
- 1982 J.J. Dormer
- 1984 J.J. Petit
- 1987 A.J.F. Doulton C.B.E.
- 1990 T.A. Newberry T.D.
- 1993 Lt. Cdr. G.T. Turner



21. Andrew McIlwraith, to whose gift the Club owes its present premises