

The Victory Class 1985 – 2004

Onwards to the New Millennium

Many present class members have joined since the Golden Jubilee was celebrated in 1984 and it is considered appropriate that after a further twenty years the history of the Class, so ably written by the late David Childs, should be updated.

I assisted David with the production of 'Z'Moya to Zinnia' and it therefore gives me great pleasure to be involved again in this more recent history covering the period from 1985 to the present day. Much has occurred during this time, not only to the boats and the way they are now sailed but also to the environment in which we now sail.

IAN MEAD

Golden Jubilee Celebrations

Before embarking on the updating mention must be made of the Golden Jubilee celebrations. The principle event was the Golden Jubilee Dinner held at the Mountbatten Centre at Alexandra Park, Portsmouth on 23rd March 1984, fifty years to the month from the date the class was formed. It was attended by approximately 125 members and guests. The toast to the Victory Class was proposed by John Glanville, a local solicitor and the owner of Z16 Mistress from 1947-1949. The class captain, Ian Mead responded. The toast to the Guests was proposed by the Vice Captain, Robert Parkin and Bob Fisher, the well known yachtsman and yachting journalist responded. In addition to the speakers the Guest List included the Queens Harbour Master, Commander Peter Bell RN. and the Chairman of the Solent Classes Racing Association, another well known Solent yachtsman, Johnathon Janson. The menu was attractively illustrated by class member Bill Bishop, the much respected marine artist and former owner of Z19 Wild Rose.

The racing that year was well supported and the average turnout for the 58 races sailed exceeded 18 boats. Thirty-two boats raced in the Golden Jubilee Race. Matches were sailed against Oxford and Cambridge Sailing Society and against Oxford University. Eight local clubs took part in an inter-club race sailed in class boats. One condition for the race was that class members were not eligible to take part. The race was won by Eastney Cruising Association.

To mark the anniversary the class was honoured by being awarded the Delta Trophy to be competed for during Cowes Week, In those days this trophy was given to a different class each year by the sponsors of that name to be competed for in the races from Monday to Friday. It was won by Z16 Mistress sailed by Robin and Rupert Richardson.

In all it was an excellent season.

Diamond Jubilee Celebrations

Ten years later, in 1994, the class celebrated its Diamond Jubilee. The event was marked in several memorable ways, firstly with a dinner held in the Lord Mayor's Banqueting Suite in Portsmouth Guildhall at which the Lord Mayor was a welcome guest.

Secondly a cocktail party was held on board HMS Victory with the kind permission of the Captain who was the guest of the class. The weather was kind and on a summers evening the historic setting was nigh on perfect.

The third event of note was a barbeque held on the beach in Osborne Bay which again required special consent. This was held on a Sunday in September following a passage race to Cowes the previous day after which a supper was enjoyed at the Royal London Yacht Club. A special celebration race attracted a turnout of twenty-eight boats.

The Class To-day

Since 1984 there have been many changes, most of which have been to the benefit of the class, the boats and those who sail them.

The class has remained one of the largest one-design fleets in the eastern Solent and by racing three times a week between mid-April and mid-September and continuing on Saturdays until the end of October, it offers keen competition for a large number of sailors. This has been the pattern since the mid 1960 with a few changes made from time to time, and is still successful in attracting good turnouts. However there is growing concern about the decline in turnouts on Saturday afternoons.

It is a matter of justifiable pride that a fleet of boats formed in 1934 and originally designed at the beginning of the last century continues to be so successful. This is a distinction shared with older sisters of the class, the Sunbeams from Itchen or and the X-One Design Class which is based at Parkstone, Lymington, Hamble, Yarmouth and Itchenor. All three classes came from the drawing board of the late Alfred Westmacott and if one of to-day's designers has even one class sailing in one hundred years time they will surely be hailed as a forward looking genius of his time.

Not only do the Victories, the Sunbeams and X-One Designs provide very good competitive racing; they are now regarded as classic boats, particularly in these days of utilitarian plastic.

That the class has remained so successful is surely a tribute to those who have steered its progress throughout an enviable passage of history which now covers seventy years. Particular mention should be made of Brian Bunyard who was Honorary Treasurer for twenty-seven years until he retired in 2004.

Changes of Ownership

A look back to 'Z'Moya to Zinnia' reveals the whereabouts or last known whereabouts of most of the boats built. Since 1984 there has been large number of changes in ownership and of the 41 boats listed as active in the fleet in 1984 four have been broken up, two have been sunk and not recovered and two have been sold out of the area. Several boats, including four owned by Royal Naval establishments, have been laid up for many years and will necessitate extensive restoration and repair if they are to sail again.

Of the remaining boats, thirteen are in new ownership and thirteen remain in the same or the same family ownership. Three new boats all built by John Perry have been added to the fleet and a further three have returned to the fleet from out of the area although one of these has again departed.

The history of each boat, as far as it is known, is given at the end of this book.

Club Ownership

The Electricity Sailing Club and DRA (Portsdown) Sailing Club (formerly ASWE Sailing Club) have given great support to the class since 1950 and were at the forefront of the racing until about twenty years ago. Yola Veck and Don Metcalf of the Electricity Sailing Club sailed both the club boats, Z37 Beacon and Z47 Beam to considerable success before they bought their own boat Z68 Zarena in 1972.

In about 1969 the Generating Station in Portsmouth was closed down and the staff moved to Bristol. This left the club in a difficult position but encouraged by senior officer E.P.C. Watson (Watty), owner of X127 White Hare, Guildford employees became interested. They took over the running of the club and Watty became their first commodore. In spite of the long distance involved a few keen club members travelled from the Guildford area to support racing, even turning out sometimes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings Don continued to be heavily involved in the organisation

In 2000 the club decided that it was no longer viable to keep two boats and as a result Beam was sold to one of their members, Alan Price, who now keeps the boat on the Cardiganshire coast in Wales. In 2002 it was decided to wind up the club and Z37 Beacon was sold to another club member Clive Elgie. He lives in Surrey but intends to race with the class on Saturdays when he can make it Clive is married to the daughter of the late Alan Underwood in whose memory the Underwood Trophy was presented to the class by club members.

On the winding up the club held a credit balance of some £3,000 which was, very generously, donated equally between the Victory Class and the R.N.L.I. In addition to Don and Yola, the names of some of their longstanding members among them, Peter Lee, Allan Price, Don Elliot, Peter Friggi, Bob Mackenzie, John Murrey, Peter Willerby and Alf Tracey will long be remembered by class members with affection.

DRA Sailing Club is still in existence and owns Z46 Nina but regrettably she seldom races and the club has faded from class participation in the last twenty years. She has, however, competed in Portsmouth Sailing Club's Winter Series.

Victory Class Limited

When Z'Moya to Zinnia was published Victory Class Limited had only just been born, and born of necessity, the necessity was to become a body capable of obtaining a mortgage to fund the purchase of the ground lease of the yard and sheds in Bath Square, Old Portsmouth from Portsmouth City Council. It also obviated the need for trustees. The necessity was repeated in 1996 when it became necessary to purchase the lease of additional storage premises, this time in Rodney Road, Milton.

The change to becoming a company limited by guarantee has had no significant effect on the management of the class although the treasurer now has to submit reviewed accounts annually to Companies House and must conform to the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The class captain is now the chairman of the class and the former committee members are now directors. The class captain serves for two years and any amendment to class rules must be notified to Companies House.

Storage Premises

The Victory Yard in Bath Square is still a very valuable facility with space for eight boats to be laid up undercover and eleven in the open. It also provides space for the storage of dinghies and outboard engines during the summer. With covered storage space in Old Portsmouth at a premium the class is fortunate to have this facility within a short distance of a good slipway and it has undoubtedly contributed to its success.

Until 1996 the class was able to rent storage space in the old power station buildings in Warblington Street but this was always only a temporary arrangement. It enabled seven boats to be stored undercover in modern premises with a concrete floor and all main services connected.

When in 1996 the Central Electricity Generating Board finally disposed of these remaining premises surrounding the old power station it created for the class something of a headache and Jeremy Lear embarked upon a search of the city to find alternative premises. Those of you who know the city will appreciate that suitable storage premises anywhere near Old Portsmouth just do not exist and with time running out the position was becoming very serious. It was therefore fortunate when the lease of a suitable property came up for sale in Rodney Road, Milton.

The property comprises a single storey industrial unit built of concrete blockwork with a corrugated asbestos roof. The 125 years lease with an unexpired term of 118 years was purchased by the class at a figure of £40,000. The ground rent is £290 per annum.

Internally there is a mezzanine floor which has been let for storage purposes to defray the cost to the class. There is storage space for seven Victories and a cloakroom/kitchen. The floor is concrete and all main services are laid on.

The only problem is the distance from the Camber but after a few years experience it has been shown that with the use of a low loader the boats can be transported between Milton and Old Portsmouth with minimal difficulty and in a reasonable time. Difficulties have been encountered notably when the low loader hired on one occasion proved to be unsuitable.

Having paid off a sizable part of the mortgage on the Bath Square property the class was able to obtain a further mortgage on the Rodney Road premises. With interest rates low at the present time, the income from the two properties continues to fund the loans and is augmented by the additional use of the mezzanine floor. However it is of slight concern that Rodney Road is not as fully occupied as it could be.

The Bath Square sheds are more than one hundred years old but unlike Rodney Road require ongoing expenditure, not only to carry out necessary repairs, but also to improve the facility. When one looks back to the time immediately before the purchase of the lease one can see the great improvements which have already been made including the new perimeter wall which has replaced an old and rusting corrugated iron fence, a new pair of gates, cladding to the gable end, guttering and the re-wiring of the electrical system.

At the time of writing there is a number of improvements to be made which include completing the concrete apron to the entrance to the two sheds. The demolition of Boom Tower, which formerly adjoined the sheds on the south side, originally caused the south east wall to be exposed. As work progressed on the building of the new replacement house some further damage has been inflicted and negotiations are in hand with the contractors to make good both the roof covering and the wall.

Launching Trolleys

Most boats are laid up with the keel resting on wooden blocks and supported by hi-lows constructed of wood or Lattice steel. Those laid up in Bath Square are transported to and from the slipway on class trolleys onto which they are loaded manually by lifting one end of the boat and sliding the trolley under. An efficient gang of a minimum of five reasonable strong chaps can do the job although the addition of one or two helpers eases the burden and perhaps prevent strained backs.

The class originally owned two trolleys which were formerly gun carriages of solid construction and fitted with large wheels which had solid composite tyres. They were somewhat heavy to move. Nowadays the trolleys are still made of wood but with pneumatic tyres and being of lighter construction are much easier to handle. The class owns three of these plus a steel framed one and many owners have their own. Those owners normally leave the boat on the trolley instead of off loading onto blocks and high- lows for laying up purposes.

After loading the boat onto the trolley it is then manhandled out into Bath Square, down Bathing Lane and across Broad Street to the slipway. Sometimes a vehicle is used for towing purposes.

At the top of the slipway a rope is attached to the trolley, threaded through a pulley block attached to a ring set into the concrete and led to a steel bollard. This is used to take the strain as the trolley and boat are lowered down to the water.

It is most important to secure the boat to the trolley until just before she reaches the water failure to do this has led to a number of boats sliding off thereby necessitating a labour intensive operation to re-load it onto the trolley it also does the boat no good.

Laying up is a reverse procedure although difficulty is sometimes encountered when floating the boat onto the trolley to achieve the correct position necessary for the right fore and aft balance. A vehicle is essential to haul the trolley up the slipway

A number of owners elect to have their boats lifted out by crane and Ken Brown is always prepared to carry out this work. He also makes a power wash available to clean the weed off Ian and Tim Anderson, the owners of Z10 Kingfisher, have recently joined Ken Brown in the business.

Rosina

In 1986 the RNC & RAYC was interested in acquiring a motor boat suitable for use as a race committee boat. The club approached the class to explore the possibility of a joint purchase. The class had less need for a committee boat but did require a more general purpose craft for transporting crews across the harbour, so reducing the necessity of using dinghies, and also for towing purposes. It was agreed to look jointly for a suitable boat.

When a 24' GRP motor boat; Rosina, came up for sale shortly afterwards, representatives from the club and the class went to inspect her at a property in Gosport Road, Fareham. She had a small cabin a reasonably sized cockpit and was powered by a 40 horse power diesel inboard engine. Skippy Hopkins, a marine surveyor was commissioned to carry out a survey. His report proved satisfactory and the purchase of Rosina was completed. The cost of was borne equally by the class and club.

Modifications were necessary for her use as a committee boat including stepping a second mast with a line rigged between the two masts to support four flag halliards, fitting electronics including an echo sounder, and an anchor winch. The latter was much appreciated by the crew.

She has been a very useful asset to the class in spite of the annual cost. Her use as a cross harbour ferry for crews, her increasing use as a race committee boat and as a towing boat on occasion have proved invaluable. There is no doubt that she is not very uncomfortable as a committee boat in a seaway on a rough day but she has never been found wanting although one or two of her crew have fed the fishes!

One of the greatest expenses she incurs is the cost of the berth in the Camber. This is situated in the south-east corner alongside a pontoon but at low water springs it is not possible to leave the berth. This entails moving her in advance but is more of a problem after the race if she cannot regain her berth.

Maintenance, including fitting out has always been carried out by class members, but as is always the case, it is a small body or very often, the same members who find themselves volunteering.

The R.N.C. & R.A.Y.C. used her successfully as a committee boat for their Spring and Autumn Series and other races until 1999 when they opted to use Jim Hughes's motor yacht Condor.

Condor offered more deck space and comfort which was particularly appreciated when the race committee was at sea for a large part of the day.

In 2001 the club decided that its declining use of Rosina no longer warranted its half share of the expenses and offered to surrender its interest in the boat. The class accepted although the burden of carrying all the expenses was expected to be a serious drain on funds. PSC was then approached to see if it would be interested in sharing the boat but declined and the class became sole owners.

During 2002 concern was arising about the state of the engine which had been renewed in 1989 but had had no major overhaul since. The technical sub-committee was asked to investigate the best way forward. After lengthy discussions with a number of engineering firms it was agreed that the engine and the electric wiring should be upgraded. It was also decided that to comply with regulations applying to safety boats certain items of equipment must be carried. These included a fire extinguisher, life jackets, flares and first aid kit which added another £1,500 to the bill. In the event the work was not carried until August 2003 and she is now back in service.

Trans Harbour

The class endeavours to run a ferry service across the harbour using Rosina for crews on race days. This works well but is heavily dependent upon the goodwill of members able and willing to act as driver'. Income is generated by charging a 'donation, currently £1, for the return trip. Because, occasionally the driver is absent, or the boat cannot get off the berth or there is a mechanical or electrical failure the service cannot always be guaranteed a large number of crews choose to use their dinghies for the trip.

This is a pity because the income is necessary to defray costs, although against this, it would not be viable to transport all crews when there is a large turnout, because of the time restriction.

In 2003 Queens Harbour Master introduced a requirement to all craft, including dinghies, crossing the harbour to inform Semaphore Tower of the intention by radio or telephone. In 2004 communication will be restricted to radio.

Moorings

The class acquired the rights to administer the mooring area off the Gosport shore to the south of the Gosport ferry pontoon in front of the flats. Twenty moorings have been laid and are let and maintained by the class. In 2001 the class had applied to Queens Harbour Master to extend the area when the licence for the adjoining one became available but P.S.C. was able to secure it ahead of the class.

The class has 18 moorings for Victories and two more which are let to class members with cruisers. Regrettably a further one which was let during the summer of 2002 became the target of some of Gosport's less desirable youths who targeted a catermaran near the wavebreak walkway with their fishing lines and caused considerable damage. This berth is thus rendered useless to the class

Until 1991 the RNC & RAYC had a trot of moorings in Haslar Creek. These were laid between piles and accommodated two boats on each to total thirty moorings of which some twenty were short moorings predominantly occupied by Victories. The piles replaced the original mooring buoys but had a history of accidents caused by the heavy rings to sometimes snag on the bend at the bottom of the vertical bar up which they were meant to rise and caused several boats, all Victories, to sink. Numerous methods were tried to prevent this occurring, including the fitting of lighter rings and snag prevention lines.

In 1991 John Dean and Richard Reddyhoff obtained a licence and planning consent to develop a marina on the mudflats on the north side of Haslar Creek. The area stretched from a point about sixty yards south of Gosport ferry pontoon to Haslar Bridge and offshore to the edge of the deep water channel. It entailed dredging a large area of mud and constructing some five miles of pontoons

To enable them to extend the original number of berths in the marina they came to an agreement with the club to acquire the club's moorings in return for a 25 years lease on a similar number of marina berths.

The berths for the Victory boats were constructed with aluminium arms supported by an expanded polystyrene pad at the outer end which also acts as a fender. Three berths were made slightly wider to accommodate 21' boats having a slightly wider beam than a Victory.

Initially apprehension was felt by some class members about sailing in and out of the berths but to nullify this the marina company offered to make a BIB available to tow boats in and out on race days if required. It soon became obvious that the boat owners were able to make their own way in and out without assistance with very few embarrassments. These have only occurred when boats have misjudged their approach, dropped their sails too early and lost way.

The security of a safe berth alongside is particularly appreciated by owners of boats with a leaking problem and although one or two have foundered the marina staff are usually able to give the class warning of the impending peril.

John Dean and Richard Reddyhoff have proved to be excellent marina operators as far as the Victory Class is concerned and the class is grateful to them and their staff

In 2002 R.N.C. & RAYC suggested that a ballot be initiated for the allocation of berths but reacted with sympathy to the disquiet of some long term berth holders, several of whom had had a berth for unbroken periods well in excess of twenty years. As a result an agreement was reached whereby R.N.C. & R.A.Y.C continued to apportion the berthing fees and the class accepted the responsibility for collecting the individual fees from members and paying to the club the total amount on 1st January each year.

New Boats and Old boats

In 1984 Z69 Zinnia had just been built and since then Z70 Unity was built for the Spraggs family in 1986, Z71 Christina for Nick Chandler in 1989 and Z72 Zingara for Andrew Storey in 1990. These 'new' boats were built by John Perry in Southsea but he has now moved his operation to White Hart Road in Old Portsmouth where he continues to carry out repair work in premises close to the Camber.

John Perry started his boat building as an apprentice to Harry Feltham, where he worked on building Victory Class boats, before setting up on his own. He has used his considerable skills to build boats of distinction and exercised his knowledge of modern materials and techniques to ensure that, properly looked after they will be around for many years. John is one of the few boat builders skilled in working with wood, still remaining in the area and the class is fortunate to have his expertise for repairs and advice. The four boats he built in the 1980s and early 1990s are testimony to his skill.

He has been responsible for quite a few changes in the specification and design detail, many of which have been adopted by owners of the older boats to improve their condition. The main departure from the original specification is the use of iroko for the planking and spruce for the mast and boom. Stainless steel fittings are to be found on most boats and a number have an improved

mast step which is a great weakness in the older boats. It is a great pity that John is gradually reducing the amount of repair work and fitting out he undertakes.

Whilst most owners look after their boats to the best of their ability bearing in mind pressures on time in the world to-day concern must be felt about the long term future of some of the older boats. There is no doubt that there are some weaknesses in the design but given that the boats were probably not constructed with longevity in view nor to be sailed as hard as they now are, it is amazing that they have lasted into the twenty first century. Some are now seventy years old and it is therefore not altogether surprising that some boats have been allowed to fade away but some others have suffered a more dramatic demise.

Mention must here be made of Brian Bunyard who trained as a shipwright many years ago in the Dockyard. Although he never put his skills to use as a day job he has continued to work on wooden boats purely for his love of being involved with them. Over the years he has helped several members by carrying out repairs on their boats and undertook a major restoration of Z43 Eagle which he then sailed for some eighteen years.

Two years ago he carried out major repairs on Z38 Minx but is now involved in his greatest challenge yet. Z49 Shearwater has leaked since the Mead family bought her in 1950 and by 2001 these had developed to such a state that could be able to sail in smooth water. Winds of force 3 were her limit. Brian started on what he thought would be a major repair job in October 2002 but now more than eighteen months later it has become something approaching a total rebuild. New floors, a new stem and mast step, a new chock, several new sections of planks and many repairs to other cracked planks and the wooden keel make up just some of the work. It is all carried out to a high standard.

Importantly the work has highlighted some weaknesses in the original design such as the tenon mast step cut into the forefoot and lack of stiffness in the after section of the cockpit. His advice is keenly sought by members.

A Look At The Fleet Today

Since 'Z'Moyato Zinnia' was first published there has been a considerable number of changes to the ownership of boats and of those then listed only ten boats, now active in the fleet, remain in the same or same family or syndicate ownership.

Thirteen boats have been sold within the fleet and also remain active.

- Three new boats have been added to the fleet, about which more appears later, and the following five have been returned to the fleet.
- Z17 Steadfast was brought back from Shoreham-on-Sea by Barry Middleditch and Peter Coit who had her renovated by Rob Kerby:
- Z18 Fenella was purchased by Andrew Story and D. Hewett who brought her back into the class. When Andrew had Z72 Zingara built he sold her to a consortium which has had a number of members of whom Peter Madden is the anchor man. Not literally of course.
- Z21 Z'Moya was purchased by Carl Sparrow and brought back from Birdham and restored to the class. After a few years laid up ashore she was purchased by the class and then passed to the Meridian Trust on the condition they renovated her to the class specification. In 2003 she was purchased by Graham Allen.

- Z22 Judita was purchased from Cornwall by Ian McNeil He was joined in a partnership led by Yvonne Copeland, with Jan Wyllie and Nigel Grundy She raced for several seasons but has since been sold again and in 2001 was on the River Seine in northern France.
- Z31 Zig-Zag (formerly Rosalind) was brought back from Plymouth by Simon Evans and Simon Galley who had her restored to comply with the class specification. After several changes in ownership she remains a regular competitor.
- Reversing this trend is Z47 Beam which was bought from Electricity Sailing Club by Alan Price, a former club member, who is now sailing her on the Cardiganshire coast of Wales.
- Several boats have been laid up ashore for a number of years and will necessitate plenty of tender loving care if they are to become serious contenders in the fleet. Four others have been broken up.

Lost Boats

Two boats have been lost racing at Cowes. Z41 Puffin was sunk in a collision with a Class 2 boat in a fresh breeze in 1997. She was hit amidships and did not stand a chance of surviving but fortunately her crew were all picked up very quickly without suffering any ill effects. Puffin had raced at Cowes every year since she was built in 1946 and was owned, of course, by Ken Childs until his death. His partner in the boat and great friend Humphrey Graham had continued his ownership and it was a sad day when she went down. Humphrey commissioned a search of the area but in the strong tidal stream and deep water just to the north of North Ryde Middle buoy it proved fruitless.

Two years later, again on the Wednesday of Cowes Week, Z15 Dunlin and Z10 Kingfisher sank, both casualties were the result of bad weather when the wind was gusting upwards of thirty knots. Dunlin went down after she gybed and the boom caught in the slack backstay which had not had been tensioned following a recent rounding of the leeward mark, This caused her to broach and with the mainsheet pinned in she quickly filled and foundered; so quickly in fact that she was gone in a matter of seconds. The owner, Dawson Penn together with his son Gareth and Hugh Pringle, the owner of Z58 Zephyr who was crewing, were all rescued by a RIB the crew of which was out filming for one of the television companies. The cameras were not actually in action at the time. A GPS was immediately employed to mark the position but such is the strength of the tide coupled with the rocky bottom hereabouts that it was not surprising that no trace of her was found.

Z10 Kingfisher sank following an unintentional gybe sailing downwind with spinnaker set. She also rolled and filled with water so quickly that the crew of Ian Andrew, Tim Anderson, the owner, and a friend had only about ten seconds before she sank, The incident occurred on Ryde Middle Bank and she settled with the top of her mast showing. Soon afterwards a competitor in another class sailed into the spar and demolished it. This story had a happier ending when in the following week the boat was raised from the seabed, loaded onto a barge and towed back to Portsmouth. The damage was not serious and she was sailing again with a new mast at the beginning of the following season

These two sinkings caused the class to debate the fitting of buoyancy bags to the boats. Other dayboat classes, including the XOD have already carried out tests to deduce the amount of buoyancy required to keep a damaged boat afloat with three crew, where to position it and what fixings to use. Not properly secured, the buoyancy is liable to lift the deck off. This matter has not yet been taken any further

Two other boats, which have been lost, were broken up. Z30 Zena was laid up in Old Portsmouth for some ten years and when she was returned to the water never stood much chance of remaining afloat. She was bought by John and Martin Hunter who had some repair work carried out at Meridian Boatyard but after she was re-lunched, sank on several occasions. She was taken to a boat builder in Sussex the following winter of 2001/2002 who reported that she was beyond economic repair and as a result she was broken up.

Z43 Eagle, which was extensively renovated by Brian Bunyard in 1968 who then sailed her for sixteen years until 1984. She developed a leaking problem in 2000 and was then reported to be economically unfit for repair although further examination may well have revealed this to be exaggerated. In the event she was sadly broken up.

Z32 Marguerita was sold to a new owner but was later reported with a broken mast and lying in poor condition on the beach at Portchester where she gradually broke up.

In 1999 Z11 Bien Aimee was purchased by class member, Jim Hughes, with the intention of carrying out a complete restoration but unfortunately her condition was such that very little of the hull was sound enough to retain. She was also broken up.

Of the boats laid up ashore Z9 Dolphin, Z16 Mistress, Z35 Surprise, Z36 Owl and Z42 Falcon show no sign of being returned to racing condition which augurs ill for their future.

It is particularly sad that Surprise is unlikely to sail again. Her early history; in the years immediately before the last war, makes a fascinating storey which is touched upon in the first part of this book but is fully documented in the book 'Looking Astern' written by his father, Percy himself a well known pre-war sailor.

Z8 Igam-Ogam has not raced since 1995 and has had a succession of owners including Meridian Trust which is reported to be putting her into commission prior to a sale.

Racing Marks

In the 1950s and indeed in the early 1960s there was a distinct lack of racing marks off Southsea and the only ones laid were, one off Haslar wall close to Fort Monckton and named Monckton Patch and another to the south-west of Spit Fort called Swashway. Otherwise courses were set using the navigational marks and the buoy which marked the eastern end of the measured mile in Stokes Bay. Five courses were published in the 'Green Book', which was the handbook of the Portsmouth Harbour Racing and Sailing Association but these seldom varied from year to year. The direction of the start could be reversed which provided the only variation.

It may seem strange now but in the late 1940s and early 1950s some evening races were started from Portsmouth Sailing Club's boomyard right in the harbour entrance in spite of the Royal Navy having more ships in those days.

The 1957 'Green Book' lists only five courses outside the harbour but by 1966 Queens Harbour Master had laid a series of coloured racing marks on Hamilton bank some roughly in the positions of the class's present racing marks. In those days many of the evening races were sailed in the harbour but again they were over set courses starting from TS. Foudroyant which was moored at the entrance to Haslar Creek before she moved up harbour close to the entrance to Weevil Creek. Kings Stairs in the Dockyard and Whale Island offered alternative staging lines and were frequently used.

In the late 1970s the marks were designated Alfa, Beta, Delta, Echo and Gamma. The class continued to use these marks until 1991 when Queens Harbour Master contacted the class to advise

that the Ministry of Defence was no longer willing to stand the cost. He offered the class four options:-

1. To continue to use the buoys as at present but at a cost of not less than £7,000 per annum.
2. To purchase the buoys, including the sinker and chain, at a cost of £240 each and then be responsible for the cost of laying and recovering
3. To rent the buoys at a cost of £270, including the sinker and chain and then be responsible for the laying and recovery and also the cost of maintenance, or
4. To buy inflatable marks and lay them before each race and recover them on completion.

The class decided on option 2 and entered into a contract with Cowes Harbour Commissioners for the laying, recovering and maintenance, including the repainting, of the buoys. The Commissioners were already responsible for all the other racing marks in the Solent, which are owned by S.C.R.A and this fitted in well as an extension to that contract.

The cost to the class in 1992 was £1,500 and the annual charge from the Harbour Commissioners was initially £2910 plus any costs for renewals. This has now risen to approximately £4,000.

Through the trojan efforts of Jeremy Lear the class set about finding sponsors for the marks and has been well supported by the following firms without whose help the class would not be able to provide such good racing as we now enjoy A deep debt of gratitude is owed to the following firms:

- Brooks and Gatehouse
- Camper and Nicholson
- Crest Nicholson
- Gleeds
- Marlow Ropes
- Morse
- McMurdo Pains Wessex
- Pimsic
- Royal Clarence Yard
- R. N.C. and R.A.YC.
- Sunsail International
- Vail Williams

The Brooks and Gatehouse, mark now Marlow Ropes, off Gilkicker Point was hit by a boat some years ago and sank. It was later washed up on the beach at Stokes Bay, but the cost of a new buoy which had to be laid, plus the cost of a scan search was fortunately recovered from the class insurers.

Many of the racing marks in other parts of the Solent are now required to be illuminated and it is likely that a similar requirement will be imposed on the class in the foreseeable future The likely cost of this will be in excess of £500 per buoy

The buoys are laid in as good a position as possible having regard to the needs of other shipping interests although there is a wide gap between Gleeds and Marlow Ropes. The class did approach Queens Harbour Master some years ago to enquire whether it would be possible to lay an additional one to close this gap but were refused unless one of the existing buoys was given up. The new position would have been very close to the outer end of the swashway and thus in a vulnerable position, especially unlit, for the Wightlink ferries and unlikely to have been sanctioned.

The positioning of Pains Wessex McMurdo has created problems when used as the last mark of a course which is shortened and finishing at the Haslar line. The course, as written, leaves the outer distance mark to port but the IYRU. Rules stipulate that when finishing boats, must pass through the finishing from the direction of the last mark. The difficulty is that Pains Wessex McMurdo lies in such a position that it is not possible to ascertain which is the correct side when sailing towards the line with the last mark lying directly over the stern.

This has resulted in several protests and although there is an R.Y.A. Appeal case on the subject which ruled that where that occurred boats were allowed to finish in both directions. However that case involved a committee boat finish and not a fixed line such as the class has at Haslar signal station. The 2004 Standard Sailing Instructions include a rule governing this situation.

The Environment

Since 1984 the whole scene in which the class sails has change beyond recognition. In 1984, if you stood where 'Mary Mouse' is now moored at the entrance to Haslar Creek, you would have been on the edge of a large mudbank on the foreshore at Gosport. Submarines would occupy the berths alongside the former H.M.S. Dolphin, there would be no Haslar Marina and the berths at the Joint Services Sailing Club at the former H.M.S. Hornet would be much less extensive.

Gunwharf Quays would look very different from H.M.S. Vernon, the former Royal Navy establishment with a motley collection of buildings and a pier where cross harbour Royal Naval ferries called. Instead there is now an impressive shopping centre flanked by an array of flats which sell for prices of half a million pounds or more and a small marina where only elite and interesting vessels are invited to berth. Dominating the locality the harbour and much of the Portsmouth area is the Millennium Tower which stands some 557 feet high and is due to be completed in 2004. It is visible from all parts of the eastern Solent.

The Camber has changed radically with a development of houses built on the south-west and south-east sides and a small marina providing berths for yachts belonging to some of the residents. One of the properties demolished to make room for the residential development was W.G. Lucas's sail loft and yacht chandlery which served the class well and is sorely missed. The car ferry terminal has moved from the slipway in East Street to its new position on the north side of the entrance to the Camber adjacent to Gunwharf Quays. Much of the 'island' site originally occupied as a coaling depot with overhead gantries to fuel ships and later by large storage sheds has been tidied up. One shed remains and is predominantly occupied by Ken Brown Boats whilst the cleared area is now fenced off and used for boat storage

The Isle of Wight ferries have grown enormously in size and become Lego look alikes The Water Bus pontoon was renewed in 2001 and extended with a steel structured framework alongside to enable boats drying out to secure their lines

The Gosport Ferry terminal has also grown enormously in size and been greatly improved for waiting passengers, particularly in inclement weather conditions.

H M S Warrior the first iron clad ship built for the Royal Navy, was returned to Portsmouth in June 1987 following a splendid restoration at Hartlepool and is now moored outside the Dockyard off the Hard. She is an impressive sight.

Returning to the Gosport side of the harbour Camper and Nicholson's marina has been extended and improved with a block of luxury flats forming a backdrop. Gosport Borough Council has built the Millennium Walk which extends from H M S Alliance at the south end to Priddy s Hard at the north end and means that one can now walk along the harbour side, with only a few diversions away from the waters edge for some two miles.

Another attractive development is at present being undertaken by Berkley Homes at Priddys Hard which includes a marina capable of berthing yachts taking part in Round the World races and other prestigious events. The former Ministry of Defence buildings many of which were built in the nineteenth century are, a dominant feature which are being converted to form the basis of another attractive harbourside development.

At the top of the harbour Port Solent has been developed by reclaiming a large area of the mudflats which formerly extended southwards from Paulsgrove. This marina was opened by Princess Anne in 1988 and provides berths for about 600 yachts. The shoreside development comprising upmarket houses and flats, of which approximately 400 have their own berth adjoining, retail outlets, cinema, a club and pub. It is ideally situated with easy access to the motorway but is some five miles from the harbour entrance.

If in 1984 you had been given a glimpse of some of the ships which are now a common sight in the harbour you would probably have blinked twice. The sight of three large cross channel ferries passing off Kings Stairs has in the past few years been witnessed on many occasions although with the new even larger ferries introduced in 2002 it is no longer sanctioned by Queens Harbour Master. The P & O cross-channel fast ferry which also carries cars, provide the facility of day trips to Cherbourg with a two and three and a quarter hour crossing time would have been unheard of. In 2004 P & O opened a second fast ferry service running to Caen.

There can be no doubt that, compared with any other period in the history of the class, the change in the harbour scene since 1984 has been the one most altered. Now as the class enters its seventieth year there is news of further impending changes and one could have a serious effect on the part of the Solent where the class races. The government is poised to order two new giant aircraft carriers which are likely to be three times as large as the present ones.

Plans are afoot to investigate the possibility of dredging a new channel to provide better access to the harbour for these new vessels. This will lead from the vicinity of Outer Spit buoy as directly as possible to the harbour entrance, thereby slicing across Spit Sand. It does not take long to realise that this will have a greatly adverse effect on our racing area and that at least two of our racing marks, as presently sited, are likely to disappear.

Although these plans are some years ahead the class must not shut its eyes to this potential problem.

Starting Line

As a background to the removal of the Victory Class starting line from the R.N.C and R.A.Y.C. signal station in front of the War Memorial to Haslar Wall, which was alluded to in 'Z'Moya to Zinnia', it must be mentioned that discussions with Portsmouth City Council had ensued over several years.

In the late 1970s the R.N.C. & R.A.Y.C. was finding the annual cost of maintaining the club's signal station on Clarence Parade, Southsea becoming an increasingly uneconomic financial drain. Added to this, pressure was being brought by Queens Harbourmaster, Portsmouth to move the start line because of the increased commercial traffic in and out of the harbour.

The club therefore approached Portsmouth City Council seeking an alternative starting line on the assumption that the Council would wish to see the retention of such a facility in Portsmouth. The club was supported by the Port Admiral, Portsmouth, P.S.C., the R.N.S.A. the Army Sailing Association and, of course, the Victory Class, As the years have progressed one can be forgiven for questioning the level of support given for sailing by the City Council.

The only area which looked to be a viable alternative was in the area of Southsea Castle although being a carefully guarded historic site would seriously restrict any development. Several sites on the ramparts were looked at and were the subject of detailed examination including the use of the upper balcony of Southsea Lighthouse.

In the early 1980s Queens Harbour Master required the class to abandon its starting line from the R.N.C & RAYC signal station opposite the War Memorial on Clarence Parade because of the

increased cross channel ferry traffic in and out of the harbour. Several possible locations on the sea front to the south-east of the Signal Station had already been investigated including the one on Southsea Castle from where one race was started as an experiment. Although the depth of water off Southsea Castle was adequate for the Class it was nowhere deep enough for larger yachts which at that time were requiring a starting line. It would also have meant frequent crossings of the main channel. The Royal Ocean Racing Club, which frequently started their week-end races in conjunction with the RAYC from their signal station, then moved its starting line to Fort Gilkicker.

Realising the difficulties being experienced, Queens Harbourmaster made available a former gun emplacement on Haslar wall for use as a signal station for the class to start races. It was first used for the last four races in 1984 and has proved to be a great improvement. It is less obstructed, provides an initial windward leg along the wall in the prevailing south-westerly wind and is closer to the harbour entrance giving latecomers a much better chance of making the start.

Starting from either PSC's or RNC & RAYC's signal station in a south-westerly wind provided a close reach to No 5 Bar Buoy where the boats turned a right angle to cross the fairway. Skippers were then often faced with a decision as to whether to chance sailing across the bows of an incoming or outgoing ship and many a race was affected by this lottery. A further throw of the dice in the shape of an Isle of Wight paddle steamer leaving Clarence Pier stern first straight into the oncoming Victory Class fleet also added some fluctuations in fortune.

The Haslar signal station came under the jurisdiction of HMS. Dolphin until the submarine base was closed down a few years ago and, on occasions, when there was a security alert; the class was refused access to the base and alternative arrangements for starting had to be made. This resulted in the introduction of gate boat starts which have proved quite successful and are now also used if the appointed race officer does not turn up.

Courses

Since 1995 race officers have had more freedom in course selection. A list of almost one hundred is now published at the start of the season of which half are suitable for evening races. As a result it is a rare occurrence for a race to lack a good windward leg unless the wind is between south and south-west in direction when a heavy bias cannot be avoided.

Racing Generally

The number of boats turning out for races has declined since the hayday of the mid 1980s. The sharpest decline has been the lack of support for Saturday racing when it is remembered that as late as 1990 twenty-eight boats turned out on 1st September, twenty-six on two other occasions and more than twenty on four more. In 1994 twenty-eight boats raced in the Diamond Jubilee race.

The class has done its best to encourage crews to turnout but it is difficult to pinpoint the actual reason. There is no doubt that pressure on time is one factor, particularly where those with young families are concerned. The class tried two morning races on Saturdays in 2002 but perhaps due to lack of publicity it was not a success.

The evening races are more popular but whilst twenty years ago it was not uncommon to see more than twenty boats on the starting line, now it is more likely to be twelve or fifteen, even on a good evening.

The number of regattas open to the class has also fallen away and since 2002, other than Cowes Week, no regattas have been included in the fixture list. The R.N.C. & R.A.Y.C. and P.S.C. have both decided not to run one and the class does not now attend at Seaview for the East Wight Regatta.

The new sails, which were introduced in 1999, have had a beneficial effect in levelling out the competition on the water. In nearly every race there is now a tight finish and a greater spread of 'guns' throughout the fleet.

The turnouts for Cowes Week have shown a steady decline since the heady days of the ninety eighties when in 1985 there were 35 entries and a total of 188 Starters for the 6 races. The Saturday race that year was cancelled because of a lack of wind.

In 2001 Skandia Life, the sponsors of Cowes Week, awarded a prize of £2,000 to the boat with the best results in each of the Black and White Groups. The prize for the White Group, in which the Victory Class competes, and includes among others all the dayboat classes, was won by Z69 Zinnia. Jeremy Lear generously donated his prize money, partly to the John Merricks Trust and partly to the Victory Class. As a result the class was able to construct the trophy cupboard which now houses the class trophies in P.S.C.

In 1987 a Sunday morning series was tried but not repeated although eight boats started one race and three out of the other six races saw six boats on the starting line.

1993 saw the introduction of the Top Helm Trophy consisting of a series of match races, each boat racing against another, over a short windward leeward course and contested between the top six boats at the end of the season. Match racing in this form was much enjoyed by the crews taking part. It was dropped from the fixture list after a few years.

In 1995 a Youth Series was inaugurated to encourage students from Portsmouth University and schools to take the helm in a four race series on Wednesday evenings. This met with considerable success initially but disappointingly fell away and was not repeated after 1999.

In 2003 a multi-race series was held on four consecutive Saturdays in September which consisted of four races held back to back with a gap of ten minutes between the finish of the last boat in a race and the warning signal for the next. These were started from Jim Hughes's Condor acting as committee boat with Bill Oakley acting as race officer. Windward/leeward courses were set. The weather was good with no strong winds, thus providing ideal conditions for this type of racing. It proved to be a popular series for those who turned out but regrettably numbers were disappointing.

New Sails

It became apparent in 1997 that boats were sailing with sails which varied in design although they did conform with the specification. The main trouble was that the specification was not tight enough. Whilst it has always been accepted that there are some variations in the hull measurements and shape, having been built these have had to be accepted, otherwise the boat must be dc-classed. Sails, however, being of a less permanent nature, but just as important, were not considered in the same light. A group of members became unhappy at the departure from the one-design concept particularly as it was seen to be as still developing and causing unrest. A proposal was put to the Annual General Meeting in March 1997 and as a result the specification was tightened up and a sub-committee was formed in an attempt to produce class sails which conform.

This led to the appointment of Hoods at Lymington who received an initial order of 19 suits of identical sails at a cost of £850 per suit. To prevent any alterations being made all repairs have to be carried out by Hoods. Should this mean that a boat is without a sail whilst repairs are being carried out the class holds a spare suit which can be borrowed. Hood's repair service is efficient and they run a delivery van between Gosport and Lymington on most days. The appointment of Hoods was much regretted by many members because it ended a long association with WG Lucas and Son which had lasted since 1934. Lucas's had always served the class well and being on the spot in Old Portsmouth were able to carry out repairs in quick time.

Class rules stipulate that sails can only be replaced every third year and in 2002 most boat owners who had had new sails in 1999 re-ordered. There has been some criticism about the quality of the new sails.

Links with Portsmouth Sailing Club

There has always been a close link between the class and PSC, although it has waxed and waned over the years. A few years ago the club, in an effort to encourage more class members to join they became less encouraging towards allowing class members, who were not club members to drink there after racing as a matter of course. They pointed out that apart from anything else their licence could be in jeopardy As a result many class members took to drinking in the local pubs which did not help club bar takings and caused an unnecessary fragmentation of the class members after racing.

After one season this unsatisfactory situation was rectified by an arrangement whereby the class paid PSC £750 in return for which class members were able to use the club after racing. The 'donation' is reviewed from time to time and is currently £1,050.

It must be added that many class members have continued their individual membership.

Links with Portsmouth University

Portsmouth University and in its previous guise of Portsmouth Polytechnic, has become one of the strongest Universities in the sailing world in the last ten or fifteen years. It has won the British Universities Yachting Championship on several occasions leading to it representing the British Universities in the World Championships in which it once had the distinction of being runner up.

Several members of the University team have raced in the Victory Class over the past few years, several with considerable success. Several ex-Polytechnic members, the fore runner of the University are settled in this area and have become Victory class boat owners, one, Geoff Dixon having served as class captain. The present racing secretary John Tremlett also sailed with great distinction for the University

Publicity and Communications

For many years prior to 1996 the racing secretary produced a weekly circular giving the results of the previous weeks races, details of the next week's races and all other information relevant to class such as future social events. It was sent by post weekly to arrive on Monday or Tuesday. This was a great benefit to members but of course did take up time. However it ensured that members were kept fully informed of all Class activities but by 1996 the burden on the racing secretary resulted in the circular being produced fortnightly With the advent of computers, the internet and E-mail the circulars were abandoned in 1998 and most information is now distributed in this way. This obviously speeds up the process but does depend upon members remembering to access the web site.

Much of the class information is now distributed by this means but only on an ad-hoc basis. Because not all members have access to the internet or because members are not accustomed to looking at the class web site on a regular basis there has sometimes been a paucity of information about day to day news of the class and forthcoming events which may have led to some apathy In 2004 it is proposed to circulate a Class Newsletter three times during the season and use the Class notice boards in PSC and at Haslar marina to improve communication.

In 1991 and 1992 a Year Book was produced which gave a wealth of Information to members about the class but due to pressures on personnel it did not appear in 1993. In 1999 De Freeman produced a Victory Class Handbook which provided members with the class rules, the specification and other information about the class. This was produced in a ring binder format so that it could be updated as and when changes are made. Updating has sadly been lacking.

Following on from this Yola Veck accepted the task of producing a Year Book in 2003 which includes most, if not all, the information members require. Regrettably the seasons fixture list was not available prior to publication.

The SCRA produces the Solent Book annually and this includes much of the class information amongst its 'global' information on the Solent yachting scene.

The social sub committee has continued to circularise members with details of forthcoming events by post.

Regrettably the Portsmouth News has taken less interest in sailing since Brian Snook retired and coverage of the sport and the class in particular has therefore become much reduced.

Meridian Television filmed the class racing during Cowes Week in 1999 and this was featured in one of their sailing programmes during the following autumn. The company then generously made additional footage, not used in the programme, available to the class. Keith Bostock used his expertise to edit this and put together an extended film lasting for some 40 minutes, copies of which were sold to members.

A video film of the class racing has also been used for instructional purposes by Jim Saltonstall, who is an RYA coach, and this was also made available to members.

Recently an old film made in the 1950s by Dick Tremlett, who is John Tremlett's grandfather came to light. This featured Class members fitting out their boats, launching, racing and lifting out at the end of the season. It shows 'dirty corner' in the Camber, the old power station and H.M.S. Vernon in their original glory and revealed that many of the methods employed by the class then are still in use today Regrettably not many of the members featured are still alive. Video copies of the film were made available for members to buy

Members will be well aware that Brian Snook was the Sailing Correspondent at the Portsmouth News and helped with the production of 'Z'Moya to Zinnia' but when he retired no replacement was appointed. This has led to a serious and disappointing decline in the coverage of sailing in the local newspaper.

Social Events

The class has been fortunate to be served by a succession of enthusiastic social secretaries who have been backed up by equally enthusiastic committee members. Each year a programme of social functions has been organised which are not only enjoyable but have contributed handsomely to class funds.

The principal event has been the annual Prize Giving Dinner held at such venues as the Guildhall, the Hospitality Inn Hotel and the Royal Sailors Rest Home. Cocktail parties at such interesting venues as the D-Day Museum, Royal Marines Museum, the Mary Rose Museum, Southsea Castle. and the Square Tower have always been popular and well supported, whilst other smaller functions such as quiz nights and wine tasting provide opportunities for members to keep in touch. In 1989 it is recorded that 197 members and guests attended the Prize Giving.

A Ball has been held in February for the last two years at the Royal Naval Club and Royal Albert Yacht Club. This is a black tie function and has also proved popular.

During Cowes Week two social functions are normally held. A Dinner has been held at venues ranging from Bembridge Sailing Club to the Royal Solent Yacht Club at Yarmouth and the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club and the New Holmwood Hotel, both in Cowes, and a Drinks Party held at such venues as the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, the Island Sailing Club and the Sir Max Aitken Museum at the Prospect in Cowes. The class is offered temporary membership of the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club for the Week and many members take advantage of this.

The class has also enjoyed a number of week-end 'social' passage races to Cowes, Yarmouth, Bembridge and twice to Beaulieu to join in with the Classic Boat Rally.

Regrettably these have become less popular in line with the decline in Saturday racing. As many as 22 boats raced to Yarmouth in 1985 but after that numbers declined to five or six and in 1995 the race was deleted from the fixture list, This was in spite of 28 members signifying in a questionnaire in the winter of 1993 that they were interested. At a meeting in December 2003 a number of members signified renewed interest in restoring the race and it is hoped that this interest will be translated into a good turnout in 2004.

The races to Cowes, Yarmouth and Bembridge have always been followed by a dinner at the Royal London Yacht Club, the Royal Solent Yacht Club and Bembridge Sailing Club respectively in each port. These have been very successful but not successful enough, it seems, to galvanise support.

The races to Beaulieu were more successful where the social activities were less formal with a barbeque which perhaps appealed to members with young families who were able to participate. Shoreside accommodation was less available nearby and most crews camped or slept aboard. Some were reported to have slept beneath the stars! The yachting magazine, 'Classic Boat', which sponsored the Rally, paid the berthing fees on behalf of the class.

In 2001 the class participated in the East Wight Regatta organised by Bembridge Sailing Club and Seaview Yacht Club. The racing was bedevilled by lack of wind on the Saturday afternoon when only one short race was sailed and by the onset of thick fog on the Sunday morning when the marks and committee boat off Seaview were only found with great difficulty: One Victory boat became so disorientated that she finished up in Bembridge Harbour. A Dinner was held in Bembridge Sailing Club to celebrate the event and was well attended.

In 1998 the class mounted a sail past as part of the Festival of the Sea staged in the Dockyard. In 2001 Nigel Sefton-Smith took Z1 Wozzle to the Festival where she joined the throng of classic yachts on display

In 1994, on the Sunday after the passage race to Cowes the class held a barbeque on the private beach of Osborne House. Special permission had to be obtained for this privilege. Several members who had not been able to race on the Saturday went over in RIB's and members of Portsmouth were invited to join in their cruisers. High water was early in the afternoon and several boats which had anchored too close to the shore, and the crews of which, having enjoyed too long a lunch, found the water rapidly becoming too shallow for comfort. Luckily all were able to get away but some only with the aid of a pluck from a powerful RIB!

Class Regalia

As a means of raising funds for the class various items of clothing ranging from sweat shirts, polo shirts and ties, all suitably designed, and bearing the class logo are offered for sale by the social

committee. These are redesigned from time to time, particularly to mark a milestone in the class history or perhaps just to improve member's sartorial elegance.

Looking Ahead

In company with other classes of wooden boats around the coast, the Class is alive to the need for carrying out proper maintenance and, where necessary, repairs to strengthen ailing structural parts of the boats. The modern techniques and materials introduced by John Perry into the construction of the newer boats have been copied into some of the fleet and have done much to prolong their life.

There remains a good spirit of rivalry between boats on the water to ensure the keenest competition but never does this spoil excellent relationships ashore.

In Memoriam

During the past twenty years the class has lost a number of senior members who gave much of their time to ensure that the class has continued to be successful and among them we should remember with gratitude the following:

David Childs

Due to his heavy commitments in business and public office David never held a position in the class other than as racing secretary for five years. The class was the loser because he was a staunch member who raced Z59 Zulu for thirty years and behind the scenes contributed much to the class. He was elected an Honorary Life Member.

Ken Childs

Ken was a great stalwart of the class from the day he and Kay had Z41 Puffin built by Hampers in 1946. He was Vice Captain from 1952 until 1976 when he became a very popular Captain for two years. He not only thoroughly enjoyed his sailing but also the social side ashore and was regarded as the social side ashore and was regarded as the father figure of the class. He was elected an Honorary Life Member.

Kevin Cush

Kevin was the owner of Z6 Kestrel from 1984 until his death in 2001 and was a popular and keen supporter of the class. He served on the committee and was one of the principal instigators of the move to standardise sails.

Nike Day

Mike was a very successful helmsman and crew for A.S.W.E. Sailing Club, sailing in Z46 Nina and Z50 Zest. He was also a crew in Ron Patterson's offshore Class 1 boat Phantom which won many R.O.R.C, races and represented Great Britain in the Admirals Cup. When he finished racing he selflessly acted as permanent race officer on Saturdays for several years He was elected an Honorary Life Member.

Humphrey Graham

Humphrey was yard manager for several years and was always on hand to give help to anyone needing assistance particularly when boats were launching or lifting out. His help was always cheerfully given. He undertook all sorts of jobs including the upkeep of the launching trollies, providing strops for mast stowage in the sheds and generally doing all the unnoticed jobs which keep the facility going. He joined Ken Childs as joint owner of Z41 Puffin in 1989.

Percy Jackson

Percy was another stalwart member and was class Treasurer between 1955 and 1975. He joined the class prior to 1939 and crewed for Horace Stride for several years in Z30 Zest before buying her on Horace's death and racing until 1960. He then bought a cruiser which he sailed for many years.

Leonard Kirkpatrick

Kirk joined the class as one of a group of four Naval Constructors in Portsmouth Dockyard. They had in the recent past been sailing Victories in Gibraltar and purchased Z63 Ripple which they raced successfully. Kirk was class secretary from 1974 until 1982.

Michael Mead

Michael successfully raced the Mead family boat Shearwater Z49 from 1950 until he transferred to cruiser racing in 1973 in order to accommodate his growing family. He had several successful seasons in his Sigma 33, Woozle Hunter Too. He was class secretary from 1961-1972.

Don Metcalf

Don was racing secretary from 1980 until 1999 and did a great deal to enhance racing. He jointly owned Z68 Zarena with Yola Veck and they formed a successful team which won many races, particularly when the conditions were light. He was elected an Honorary Member. He led the Electricity Sailing Club for many years.

Bob Smith

Bob joined the class in 1949 when he purchased Z19 Wild Rose. He was a very successful helmsman and in his ownership Wild Rose won 127 races and was placed in more than three hundred in nearly six hundred starts. He was vice captain 1950-1951.

Howard White

Howard led the class from 1949 until 1976. As captain he was never one to avoid taking unpopular decisions and kept a firm hand on the class tiller. He owned Z32 Marguerita from 1948 until 1991.