

History of East Dorset Sailing Club 1875 - 2010



Acknowledgements

Two previous histories of East Dorset Sailing Club (EDSC) have been written. The first by Harold C W Geach & Leslie G L Lees with a forward by Guy M Emerson that covered the first 100years from 1875 - 1975. The second by Harry Noakes covering the period 1975 - 2005.

This history combines the work undertaken by these authors and adds a little more.

I am also indebted to Malcolm Bowditch for his assistance with the photographs.

Jim Hoare

Published in ******

In the Beginning- The First Hundred Years

The earliest 'Club' records were produced once a year only and sometimes consisted of no more than six lines, including 'those present', so the early history of the Club has been deduced from cryptic references, old letters, and entries in the accounts. The first recorded minutes of a meeting are dated 18th December 1896, and refer to 'The Proceedings of the Pier Committee'.

Those present were:- Mr. F. J. B. Beckford (Chairman), Mr.H. Forde, Colonel Everett, Mr. J. H. Slade, Mr. G. Peck, and Major Webb.

This was obviously not the first meeting, because Mr. Beckford resigned his position of Secretary, which he held in addition to being Chairman, and, after expressing their thanks to him, the members elected Major Webb to fill this post.

The first minute book appears to have been lost and it would appear that the organisation must have been run on a 'very loose basis', but the 'members' were trying to put themselves in a position from which they might expand the 'Club'.

At the 1896 meeting it was resolved, 'to payoff a debt of two pounds eight shillings and seven pence(£2.43) by having a whip around of five shillings and six pence (28p) each from the nine remaining original shareholders and then to establish an annual subscription of one guinea, payable in advance from all subscribers for the privilege of using the pier, as well as seeking a loan in debentures of £1 each'. If sufficient money was raised it was proposed to extend the pier, which can have been little more than a landing stage, to the north side of Whitley Lake. A notice

board, bearing the words 'Private Property' was to be erected at once.

Silence then ensues for a year, they met again in 1897 to propose that the original nine be formed into a management committee, and the debenture holders to be paid $2^{1/2}\%$ interest. That is all. No reference to the success or failure of their scheme, but fortunately we are able to learn about it from the accounts.

£66.5.6 (£66.27) was raised and evidently their former resolutions were put into effect. £41 was paid to Mr. Guy for the first extension of the Pier, a new hackboat purchased for £7, a pair of rowlocks for two shillings (10p), and two notice boards for eleven and a penny (55p), which left them still in funds.

This 1898 meeting was a little longer, and they decide to employ a Pierman at fifteen shillings (75p) a week, (a reasonable salary in those days!). The accounts show that he was provided with a jersey at eleven shillings and sixpence (58p), plus one shilling and eight pence (8p) for inscription, together with a cap at half a crown (12.5p). There was a balance of £3.1.4 (£3.07) in the credit account, and before going home, they resolved to 'make representation to Bournemouth Steamboat Company as to the inconvenient and dangerous speed at which their steamers proceed up and down the harbour'. (Nothing changes!)

By 1897 the 'members' considered the Club had been established, and this is possibly why there is that mysterious difference in dates which appears in Lloyd's Register of Yachts, one giving the year of foundation as 1897, and the other, which is probably correct, and has been generally accepted, as 1875. Mr. Beckford must have

felt that 1897 was the year that really counted, when the first entry in Lloyd's was made in 1922.

Other members must have often heard him speak of the days, back in 1875 when they first planned to build a pier to which they could moor their boats, and among these were Colonel Sherston and his wife. Colonel Sherston was Secretary at that time and he and his wife must have discussed the matter frequently and done a lot of research for, when she became Commodore in 1933 - her husband had died in 1931 - one of the first things she did was to register the Club with Lloyd's as 'Founded in 1875'.

The Pier and Slipway

One is able to glean some idea of the difficulties which beset the members in those early years from the few letters which survive.

The earliest is dated 13th April 1892, and comes from the agent for Lord Wimborne's estate.

He addresses himself to Mr. Beckford.

Dear Sir,

I observe, that a pier for boats has recently been built opposite 'Flag Farm Estate Parkstone, and upon making enquiry received your name and address as one of the parties who had been concerned in it.

As the Pier has been built upon Lord Wimborne's land and without his sanction, I must ask you to remove it within one week from this date or pay an acknowledgement of £1 a year.

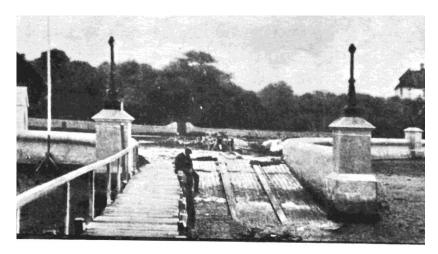
Yours faithfully,

C. Paterson

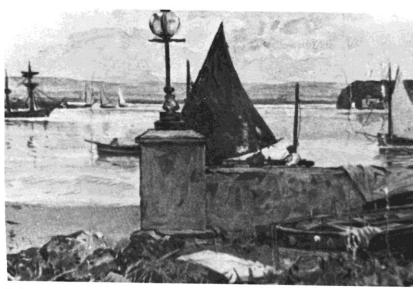
The reply, scrawled somewhat illegibly on the back of this communication, and a second letter from the agent, reveal Mr. Beckford, as a man not to be trifled with. He offers his Lordship half a crown only, and has it accepted. It appears that he must also have made a request to the Trustees of the Quays of Poole to deepen the channel from the pier to Whitley Lake, and received a reply telling him that it was not their custom to allow dredgers to be used for private purposes. He found it entirely unacceptable. 'My proposal would be an improvement to the harbour and of benefit to the Borough'. Apparently he got his way without acrimony, for in 1895 comes a promise from the Borough Surveyor to draw up plans for a pier twenty feet longer than that originally envisaged, together with a new slipway.

Matters did not go smoothly, however, in the matter of Lord Wimborne's 'half crown'. Someone had evidently told the pier committee that the particular piece of foreshore did not belong to his Lordship, and the rent was withheld to the agent's considerable wrath. "Pay up or we shall demolish the pier" he writes; and then, changing his attack a week later, "Pay up within a week or the rent will be made £5".

No reply has been recorded and no mention made in minutes and other correspondence, nor was any payment recorded from 1896 until 1901. There is reference to an agreement having been signed in 1899, but even that took



Slipway. Around 1896.



Unknown Artist's Impression.

two years to bear its meagre fruit. Presumably Mr. Beckford and his colleagues brushed such matters aside, and got on with sailing or fitting out their boats.

No wonder there was such a great deal of argument and controversy over this period for, in 1895, Poole Corporation built the sea wall around the harbour side incorporating a slipway right at the end of the Club's controversial pier. This slipway was built with public funds and therefore intended for public use, so quite clearly the Corporation did not agree with Lord Wimborne's claim to this piece of foreshore either.

His Lordship's agent must have been hopping mad by now, having two parties to fight but, as we shall see, he triumphed in the end and the Club benefited considerably from the slipway so gratuitously provided. (It is the one we still use.) However, for some time it was a source of considerable trouble and annoyance.

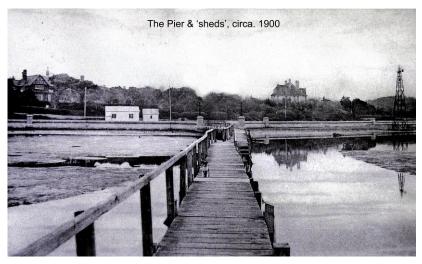
Meanwhile, permission had been obtained from the Board of Trade to extend the pier in tidal waters, and this was done for a length of 283 feet to reach the north side of Whitley Lake. Also a small shelter was built for the pierman. This is the first reference to any building, but in 1902 it was resolved to appoint a committee for the design of a cycle-shed, 16 ft. x 10 ft., the estimate for its erection was £15, and the results of their labour still exist in a rough sketch, that bear some resemblance to the corrugated iron building which was used as the club house for many years, until it was replaced in 1969.

Although no mention of such a thing is made in the records, we can hazard from the contents of one letter that there was a degree of conflict between subscribing members and the general public over use of the slipway. The letter is

from the Town Clerk, dated April 1904, and refers to permission to build a fence.

'The Council will give such permission,' he writes 'subject to the payment of one shilling per annum, and an undertaking being given to remove the fence at any time when called upon.'

Whether or not the committee agreed we have no knowledge, for they maintain their usual silence on such matters, but they certainly built their fence for in the following year they were told to remove it as complaints had been received saying that a slipway, built by the corporation, could not be used by the public.



Adoption of EDSC

At the Annual General Meeting for 1904, which must have been extremely short, they merely passed a resolution naming themselves "**The East Dorset Sailing Club**", and agreeing to adopt a flag designed by Mr. Shaw Yates. From that day until 1912 we hear no more, either of the fence or

the public, when suddenly there appears a lengthy letter written by a solicitor for the Club, and addressed to Lord Wimborne.

It refers to the considerable trouble there has been of late with people breaking down the gates to get to the slipway, and relates how the Club issued a summons against two men whom the magistrates, three being members of Poole Council, refused to convict. Now the Club wishes to know what steps Lord Wimborne would adopt to protect the rights, and give peaceful possession, to his tenants.

We never hear the outcome, but in a short questionnaire his Lordship's solicitor asks about the nature of the principal offender. 'Is this gentleman a man of means or a man of straw?'

However, whichever way it went, we know that pier, capstan, slipway and fence remained the property of that small, but determined band of men who were now established as the 'East Dorset'.

The number of members remained small and EDSC was unable to apply for registration with Lloyd's because of there being too few. By 1914 there were nineteen members paying a full subscription of two guineas and seven with a pier membership of half that sum. The First World War years then intervened and all the records ceased.

Post First World War

Club records were resumed in 1919, and once again we find

the name, F. J. B. Beckford, heading the list of those present. Surely, if anyone can claim to be the 'founding father' of the Club, it was this gentleman. He must have been an original shareholder in 1875 and he served the Club for forty seven

years or more. His name still figures in the minutes for 1922, when there is a gap in the records of two years, and then his name is no longer seen. On occasions he served as secretary in addition to being chairman.

The Minutes resumed in 1925 and Mr. H. J. Sykes was Commodore, so we can only assume that our Founder had come to the end of his long term of office.

Mr. Sykes also served for a long period and did not resign his office until 1932, being followed by Mr. Reginald Young who unfortunately died during his first year as Commodore.

The first Lady Commodore was elected in 1933. Mrs. E. Sherston accepted the office knowing that she had what appeared to be a sinking ship under her feet, and she took urgent measures to save it. The Club faced low membership and expenses which it could not meet. The Club had incurred an overdraft at the bank and was faced with the grim prospect of trying to get another.

Mrs. Sherston called a special meeting, and must have told members that they should make up their minds whether the Club was to continue in being, for the minutes record that there was not only an unanimous decision that the Club should carry on, but also that all present would assist with a donation of three pounds and ten shillings (£3.50) each, sufficient to cover the deficit, and in 1934 the Club recorded a small credit.

Mrs. Sherston regretably died in 1935, shortly after resigning as Commodore.



Gale damaged pier, 25 October 1937

Obtaining the Freehold

In 1935 Mr.Sykes once again became Commodore, and in 1937 an event of great importance in the Club's history occurred. The Club was able to sign an agreement with Viscount Wimborne for the purchase of their site on payment of thirty three pounds four shillings and sixpence (£33.23) It had taken sixty-two years finally to achieve freehold possession of the site. The money was again raised by donation, and even after having to repair eighty-five yards of storm damage to the pier, the Club had a deficit of fifteen shillings (75p) only. All seemed to augur well for the future when war intervened again.

Post World War 2

In 1945, the flag is again hoisted!

The pier had had to be totally dismantled, and the first task of the Commodore, Mr. Percy Woodcock, was to convene a special committee to assess the cost of replacement, and put the necessary claim to the War Office. A sum of £1,274 7s 8d was agreed, and in 1947 the pier was rebuilt. Its opening marked the beginning of a period in which the Club no longer had urgently to seek new members, nor struggle for its rights of tenure.

By 1948 the membership had been doubled, and the Club's title to property at Whitley Pier entered at His Majesty's Land Registry.

The Club premises were repaired and improved. The old building had served the members well, and expenditure continued to be devoted to the assistance of those who wished to sail rather than enjoy social amenities. With tar and patches, and coats of paint it lasted another twenty years until there came a time when the Commodore, Capt. George Stead, together with his committee decided that they had listened to it groaning in the winter gales for long enough.

The New Club House

A brick built Clubhouse was decided upon, which would, although modern in design, blend in with the landscape. This was a single storey building with an open 'top deck' approached by an outside stairway, which was considered ideal for picnics, sunbathing and watching the everchanging yachting scene. There was no bar but the 'large' clubroom in which meetings and parties were held, also had facilities for making refreshments.

Separate toilet and changing accommodation was provided for men and women. A 'gear' storage area, adequate for 80 sailing members, that incorporated a separate motor and petrol storage bay, was also provided.

The architect was an EDSC member, Mr. Don Hills, who, from his position within the Poole Corporation Planning Department, was able to deal with the passage of the plans through the necessary formalities with the minimum of trouble. He was first asked in August 1968 to submit a plan and, by October, when he was co-opted on to the Committee, he was able to produce a plan 'Approved in Principle'.

This plan was subsequently modified until satisfactory, tenders went out, and builders H. R. Briggs of Bournemouth were given the contract. It says much for them that demolition of the old building began on 1st March, 1969, and the new building was finished on 31st May as promised.

Commodore Capt. George Stead, who had already served the Club in this capacity since 1962, plunged into the mass of work necessary to get the project under way. The new Clubhouse was speedily completed and formally opened by Mrs. M. C. Stead at 19.00 hrs. on 21st June 1969, by unveiling a plaque set into the outside wall near the main door. (This plaque was designed and executed in ceramic tiles by Mr. Bernard Charles.)

As well as doing all the planning and organizing 'George' frequently lent a hand with the work himself. In fact, he and another member, Mr. Hedley Hill - who was an electrical contractor - did the whole of the electrical installation at no labour cost to the Club.

The building of the new Clubhouse was financed from members own resources - a tradition of EDSC members. As the records show, no outside financial help has ever been sought, which, in view of the small membership, particularly in the early years, is something to be proud of. In order to increase the income for this formidable task the 'Full' membership was increased from 60 to 70 and subsequently to 80, and all members were asked for an interest-free loan of £50 (minimum) repayable over four years.

The response was unanimous, many members loaning much more than the minimum and quite a number made free gifts of money towards the project.

A party was arranged to give the new building a good sendoff: the Mayor of Poole, Alderman A. Lloyd Allen, J.P. arrived by sea and was 'piped aboard' by an escort of Sea Scouts and welcomed by the firing of the starting cannon.

Capt. Stead will be particularly remembered for his 'Trojan' efforts in all the multiple tasks associated with the completion of EDSC's new home. In addition he will be



remembered for his long and devoted service to the Club and for the many tasks that he undertook and completed for the benefit of all members.

All of the loans were repaid on time and the Club emerged from a period of austerity and was able to contemplate such finishing touches as were deemed necessary.

The first of these was a special acoustic ceiling for the clubroom. This was fitted in November 1973 and transformed the room dramatically, 'you can now hear yourself speak during parties and other gatherings'.

The concreting of the remaining area of the dinghy and car park was completed in the Spring of 1974.

A great improvement to the 'Top Deck' (roof) resulted from the generous gift to the Club of three memorial teak garden seats by certain members during the 1974 season.



Competitive Sailing

From the foundation of the Club, sailing activities have always been on a 'do your own thing' basis and still are to a very large extent, but the first spark of competitive activity can be traced to a letter received from Colonel Bersey, then Commodore of the Royal Motor Yacht Club (RMYC), who had written to the other three clubs in the harbour, namely the East Dorset Sailing Club, Parkstone Yacht Club and the Hamworthy and Bournemouth Sailing Club (later to become Poole Yacht Club), inviting them to send representatives in the Autumn of 1947, to a meeting at the R.M.Y.C.

At this meeting it was decided that a six day Regatta should be held. The event would be sponsored by the four Clubs and supported by the Corporations of Poole and Bournemouth and by the Harbour Commissioners. The first Regatta was held from 28th June to 3rd July 1948, under the name of 'The Poole and Bournemouth Yachting Week' and was so successful that it became an Annual event, gradually changing its sponsorship and character and is now known simply as 'Poole Week' and is very ably staged and managed by Parkstone Yacht Club.

Our representatives at this first meeting were Mr. Percy Woodcock, (Commodore), Mr. Guy Emerson (Secretary) and Mr. J. G. Robinson. It was decided that each day's racing should be run under the Burgee of the Club allocated for that day. EDSC's 'day' that year was 29th June.

Mr. Hibbs of Hamworthy and Bournemouth Sailing Club suggested a levy of sixpence per head (2.5p) (from all Club members) towards preliminary expenses which was felt by the Clubs' representatives to be a fair proposal.

Then someone proposed that there should be a minimum levy of £25 per club and that if any club was not prepared to donate such a sum they should not be represented at this meeting.

The Commodore, Mr. Percy Woodcock, on reporting to the full committee explained that 'the club's representatives had no objection to a demand for a donation of £25 from each club but they did resent the implication that if they would, or could not raise this sum they were not worthy of inclusion in the scheme'.

It is forever a credit to EDSC that they did in fact subscribe 25 guineas to the funds for that year. As this represented over £1 per head (EDSC had 22 members) and not the sixpence per head as originally suggested, it was a very creditable effort.

For good measure EDSC also provided a Silver Challenge Cup inscribed 'Poole and Bournemouth Regatta'. This cup was returned to EDSC eventually and is now one of the trophies competed for in Club Cruiser Races.

The Club's 'day' for the first Regatta was celebrated in fine style with a garden party from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Shore Lodge at the invitation of Colonel H. J. Finer and his wife. Invitations included the committee members of the other three clubs and their ladies and the Mayors of Poole and Bournemouth (and presumably their ladies), the weather was kind and a good time was had by all.

The Regatta for 1949 was fixed for 4th-9th July, the Club's 'day' being 5th July, and Colonel Finer, now Rear Commodore, laid on another garden party. It is interesting to note that, although it had been voted at the A.G.M. in January that 25 guineas should be sent to the Regatta Fund, only £15 was in fact subscribed in May of that year.

For 1950 ten guineas was sent and the garden party at Shore Lodge was the largest so far - 200 guests were recorded as having attended.

This turned out to be the last of the garden parties because Colonel Finer and his family left Shore Lodge and went to live in South Africa.

In the minutes of a meeting on 16th March 1951, it was agreed that Mr. J. G. Robinson be elected Sailing Secretary of the Club and attend the Committee of the Poole and Bournemouth Yachting Week as such. This was the first time EDSC had appointed a Sailing Secretary.

Meanwhile, in the words of Commodore Percy Woodcock, *'Time has brought some changes'*. The Christchurch Sailing Club, though not situated in Poole Harbour, had given material support from the first and was invited to nominate representatives to the Committee of the Poole and

Bournemouth Yachting Week. The Poole Harbour Yacht Club was founded in 1949 and in the following year joined with her neighbours in carrying on the good work.

Unfortunately, the interest of Bournemouth Corporation wilted and died in 1953 and the words 'and Bournemouth' were dropped from the title which became 'Poole Yachting Week'.

The starting line for racing at first was off Bournemouth Pier, but was unpopular with the competitors, as they had a long way to sail before racing began, and in 1951, it was arranged that both starting and finishing lines should be in the Swash channel just outside the harbour entrance.

By 1957 interest in the newly styled 'Poole Yachting Week' had waned to the extent that our contribution to the funds was £1 and the Secretary, Mr. Alfred Burt, was instructed to write to Commander Oakley and point out to him that, as the Poole Yachting Week in its original conception had ceased to operate, the Club would like to have its Challenge Cup returned.

Poole Corporation withdrew their support in 1956 and Parkstone Yacht Club took over the sole responsibility for organising the event, now called 'Poole Week'.

The election of Mr. J. G. Robinson as Sailing Secretary, lit the 'spark' for holding our own competitive sailing events which was further fanned by an offer from Major Douglas Milne to provide a Challenge Cup for, 'a centreboard dinghy race around Bulpit Beacon'.

The offer was well received and the Sailing Secretary, 'Robbie' as he had become affectionately known, was asked to 'look into it'. This he did with great enthusiasm. He organized races for dinghies and power boats and for good

measure produced and gave to the Club another Challenge Cup for the Power Boat race. The date was fixed for 26th August 1951, and the event proved to be a great success.

That was the beginning of the annual EDSC Regatette. 'Robbie' served the Club as Commodore from 1956 to 1959 and continued to work up and run the Regatette with undiminished enthusiasm during his term of office. After his term as Commodore, 'Robbie' was elected President of the Club and he also continued to act as Sailing Secretary.

It will be a long time before his record of service in joint offices is excelled, first as Rear Commodore/Sailing Secretary (there was no Vice Commodore in those days), then as Commodore/Sailing Secretary and subsequently as President/Sailing Secretary. He continued in office until the 1967 season, when he became ill and died shortly thereafter. Sixteen years in dual office, not to mention some years previously as a committee member is an impressive achievement.

Mr. Bernard Charles then took over as acting Sailing Secretary. He continued to organize the Regattette, adding new ideas of his own, and he laid on other sailing events. He will be remembered for the way in which he encouraged the youngsters to learn to sail. When Ken Latham produced the 'Poole Sprat', he organized a 'Sprat Week', that preceded the Regattette, when he and other enthusiasts trained youngsters in sailing techniques and how to sail around a course. For two seasons he organised a Junior Dinghy race in which the entrants were mostly in 'Sprats'.



A shoal of 'Sprats'



By this time the numbers of moored craft in EDSC waters had increased considerably. No one had bothered to regulate the positioning of these moorings, until Bernard took on the massive task of reorganizing and positioning them in some sort of pattern. He also managed to move out some of the 'non-members' from EDSC waters in the process.

He was also responsible for laying on the Club's first ever Cruiser Race. This was the famous occasion when the Race Officer and his wife, having started the race from EDSC clubhouse 'Top Deck', were in the Haven Hotel enjoying their lunch (at EDSC expense), when, to their horror, they saw the leading boat charging back into the harbour a good hour or more before expected. Luckily he beat them to the line!

Lesley Lees took over from Bernard Charles in May 1970. The EDSC sailing cruiser fleet had grown considerably by then and the Club decided to make the Club Cruiser Race an annual event. Mr. Tipple, then Commodore of Parkstone Yacht Club, and a very experienced race officer, very kindly agreed to assist and train some of EDSC's members in race procedures, thereby enabling the Club to organise and stage its own races. Over a course in Poole Bay the cruiser race proved to be an increasingly popular event.

In 1970, a member very generously gave EDSC an antique candelabra for a sailing trophy, which heralded the start of another annual cruiser race over a tougher course in Poole Bay but, this time open to all the Clubs in Poole Harbour, for sailing cruisers up to 24 feet L.O.A. (Poole Yacht Racing Association Class 3).

Known as 'The Candelabra Trophy Race' it was staged for the Club by Lilliput Sailing Club for the first time in July 1970. Since then EDSC have staged it and it has become a very popular fixture. In July 1973 twenty five Class 3 Cruisers competed from five clubs.

In 1973 Ken Okey started organising week-end cruises for a small group of Club boats. Initially visits to Lulworth and the Isle of Wight were made, and as the number and size of cruisers increased so did the number of cruises and the distances travelled.

In the Club's centenary year in 1975, Lesley Lees wrote, 'we may at last be growing out of our nickname of the 'Potterers', but - we must never lose sight of the intentions of our founders which was to enable members just to enjoy messing about in hoats'.

There are two members from this period who deserve special recognition, firstly Mr. Guy Emerson, who joined the Club in 1936 and was Secretary and Treasurer from 1945 until 1956. He was meticulous in his work, writing very full (and legible) minutes which have been invaluable in the writing of this history. Secondly, Miss Annette Bailey, who joined the Club in 1948, became Secretary (and Treasurer) in 1959 and continued in post as Club Secretary until 1974. In all the hand-written minute books she would sign herself 'Hon. Mug', a reflection many subsequent secretaries would take to heart. Annette was invaluable to the Club as year after year she supported the Commodores and helped to encourage both young and old to keep on sailing. Everyone in the local yachting circle, in fact in the whole local community, knew 'Annette' and of her association with the East Dorset Sailing Club. Sadly Annette past away in 2009.

Social Events

It is interesting to follow the gradual change in the venue for committee meetings and social gatherings during the first hundred years.

The number of members remained small from foundation until 1946 and the Clubhouse accommodation was either non-existent or inadequate, so all meetings were held in the homes of either the Commodores or Committee members.

Ordinary committee meetings from 1946 until 1969 were held in the 'corrugated iron' Clubhouse. A.G.Ms. and all social functions were held in hotels.

Cocktail functions and dinners were held at Branksome Towers Hotel, Branksome Court Hotel, Harbour Heights Hotel and Sandbanks Hotel to name but a few.

The days when the Club charged the members 12/6 (62.5p) for a really good dinner at a luxury hotel and out of that were able to pay for the guests have alas, long since past.

Post 1969, with very few exceptions, EDSC used the new Clubhouse for all the necessary meetings and functions.

This first hundred years is well summed up by a quote by Leslie Lees, 'One thing only can we be sure of. The wind will always be free! We are a sailing club and, as long as we can get a boat afloat, put some sails on it, we are assured of being able to continue, as our founders did before the advent of the internal (infernal?) combustion engine to mess about in boats'.

The Start of the Second Hundred Years

In his foreword to the first club history (1875-1975), Guy Emerson anticipated that the work of future historians should be 'child's play' compared with the research required for the first edition. This might be so if all that was required was a chronological diary of events. The names of the officers, committees, subscriptions and ordinary business are on record and readily available, however, in the second history written by Harry Noakes, he tried to record the life and spirit of the club since 1975 when the first historical edition, written by Harold Geach and Leslie Lees finished.

Reading the AGM minutes for February 1974, there were three sailing events - the Candelabra Race, a Cruiser Race and the Regatette. The only social function mentioned was the members' sherry party. The Regatette was a family fun day, with games and competitions around the slipway and pier, all involved getting wet and messy. Blindfold dinghy rowing races, competitive crab fishing, eating doughnuts on strings, treasure hunts and all the usual shore-side antics combined to create a memorable day. It survived for many years but was gradually superseded by a similar event at Studland, catering for a growing number who loved to party but also wanted to do some sailing as well. Some of the youngsters who enjoyed those days are now full boat owning members of the club.

The members' sherry party was usually held in the autumn, at a cost of 50p each, the bar was in the little alcove under the stairs.

Each club in Poole Harbour also hosted, and still does, an annual Flag Officers' Reception, to which all the local Commodores, the Mayor and local dignitaries are invited. At East Dorset all these people were gathered in the downstairs room. It gave a new meaning to the term 'close company'.

In the late seventies club activity was growing quickly, putting pressure on the one room, that had seemed so commodious after the restrictive and cold original hut. Winter committee meetings were conducted in warm clothing with newspapers placed on the plastic chairs to stop the nether regions from freezing. In severe weather waves crashed against the window and water spurted in. Things were improved when Commodore David Moore

(1977-80) arranged the installation of a modern double-glazed window.

Fireworks at the Club!

In 1976 Ivor Healey and Harry Noakes had the idea of bringing their family fireworks to the club. The idea grew and the event got bigger in later years, with a bonfire on the beach and sparklers for the children. Food was laid on, including soup, brewed in a 'Burco' boiler, and hot potatoes with various fillings. The weather was not always kind and sometimes a tarpaulin was lashed to the wall of the club to create a lean-to to provide shelter for the catering. As far as can be remembered it was never cancelled, even though sometimes the wind was so strong it blew out the gas blow lamp used to light the fireworks. For some years there were well over 100 people present. On one occasion the bonfire was a bit big and the Fire Brigade turned up. Instead of putting the fire out they joined in and tucked in to hot dogs. Eventually the fireworks became prohibitively expensive and this combined with concerns about health and safety caused the decline of the event, which ended in the 90's, although a party with sparklers for the children survived for a while.

The Continuing Saga of the Pier and Slipway

Repairs to the pier are a constant theme in the records. These days we could not find room for all the tenders without it. The relatively recent addition of a 'hammerhead', built by Dixie Deans, has increased its usefulness allowing yachts to moor along side to replenish their stocks. Although not used now, there is still in

existence a little poker-work box in which the keys to the pier were kept.

It is worth recalling that the pier was originally built to reach a channel known as Whitley Lake and it was known as the Whitley pier. Whitley Lake ran from near Bullpit following the shore and petered out near the Blue Lagoon. At low water there was 3 to 4 ft of water in it. Even in the early eighties several of the withies marking the channel were still there and often there was enough water to get away in a dinghy while the rest of the area was drying out. It was also very soft mud, not hard sand as it is now.

There had always been concern about what it would cost to repair the pier if it should suffer severe damage. It had been hit and repaired several times, with most of the costs being recovered from the offending boat owners. It was feared that the premiums for such an old structure would be prohibitive. In 1978, Commodore David Moore, after much research, found an insurer and cover was taken for £2,000. This was fortunate for in 1987 came the hurricane; 6 EDSC boats came adrift, 4 being written off, and the pier was badly damaged.

Perhaps not so obvious as the pier, the slipway is also a vital facility. Schemes put forward to date for improving it have all been impracticable or too expensive. Hence, it still silts up to the point were launching small craft becomes a problem. For many years it was cleared with shovels, a backbreaking task, until William Bird brought in his mechanical digger, which did an amazing job in a much shorter time.

Friday Night Sailing Series

The Friday evening series of races started in 1980. Ron Cowdell ran a series of talks and demonstrations for those new to racing and unused to close quarter manoeuvring. These talks got the basics in place and got across the message that the racing rules have to be observed! For those used to gentle sailing it was a steep learning curve and it is a credit to the organizers that the series grew and flourished. Racing was controlled from the roof of the clubhouse and many visual and sound signals were tried. Eventually a modified 12 bore gun was bought, but sometimes with an onshore wind even that was not heard. With the wind falling light finishes were sometimes very late. On one occasion the race officer was in a dinghy moored to the buoy at the finish line calling out in the gloom 'what boat are you?' A measure of the increase of sailing activity is shown by the list of events for 1980. They included the Friday series, Round the Island Race, IOW cruise, Lymington Rally, Candelabra Race, Beaulieu Rally, Swanage Bay Race Cruiser Race, Regatette, and Christchurch weekend Rally.

The Commodore at that time was Ken Okey. After many years as a member he was elected to the committee in 1971 and at various times held every office in the club. He was Commodore from 1980 - 83 and then President. Ken is the epitome of the long-serving club member who worked hard for the club both in and out of office, and we must not forget Beryl, his wife who acted as Club secretary from 1975 - 84.

Tony Wood became Commodore in 1986-89 and was a particular driving force on the racing scene. He did a great deal of work on handicaps, organized courses and course

generally chivvied everyone sheets and along. Handicapping for non rated yachts has always been a challenging task. Many clubs used the RYA Portsmouth Yardstick (PYS) for handicapping yachts and dinghies, but with the passage of time more and more boats came onto the scene that did not have an 'official' PYS rating. Club handicappers had to determine a rating on 'an ad hoc basis' and also apply the infamous 'handicapper's allowance', which was not a common standard and therefore caused many interesting discussions! It also meant that inter club racing was difficult. EDSC used the PYS for many years, but in the 1980's Ken Okey used a measurement system, calculated by hand, that was based on equations from Poole Yacht Club. In the early 1990's Lilliput Sailing Club (LSC) took over the EDSC handicapping as they had a computer spreadsheet to undertake the complex calculations. In January 1995 a meeting was organised by L.S.C. at which representatives from all of the Clubs in Poole Harbour and Christchurch Sailing Club attended. It was agreed that a common system for calculating handicaps should be used by all the clubs and that a committee should be formed from representatives of the Clubs and a standard computer program should be developed to run on Microsoft Excel. This was the start of the Poole Harbour Handicappping System (PHHS). In 1997 PYRA also decided to adopt this system.

Tony Tatham has been the EDSC Handicapper since the early 1990's and was actively involve in the introduction of the PHHS. Tony was Commodore from 1993-96.

In 1987 Philip Okey was on the committee and took up the task of increasing dinghy racing and small boat events. The first dinghy rally was held that year and a dinghy class was added to the Friday series in 1988. Phil continued his efforts to increase the competitive sailing in the Club during

his time as Commodore (1999-2002) and now a 'fleet' of multi class dinghies turn out regularly on Friday evenings. Phil is the son of Ken Okey and they are the only father and son to become commodores of EDSC.

Cross Channel Cruises

The first record of an organized cross-channel trip to Cherbourg appears in 1986, when 4 boats took part. The Club had finally left the image of the 'potterers' far behind. From then on foreign cruises in company became popular. On one occasion there were 12 boats at St. Malo.

In addition to the cross channel ventures in the mid 80's, there were two 'one-off' events worth recording. In 1985 there was a waterborne treasure hunt, which involved sailing around Brownsea Island collecting navigation and observation clues on the way, with extra points for picking up under sail a drifting box with further clues. In 1989 there was the Studland Sprint. A fair number of boats were anchored off the beach at Studland and, at a signal, crews rowed ashore in their tenders and then raced up the hill to the Bankes' Arms where Mrs. Grange Bennet, widow of a former Commodore, presented a tankard to the first to arrive and handed over a club burgee. Mrs. Grange Bennett also provided a supply of beer and ploughman's lunch to all taking part.

Expansion of Club Facilities

In the early eighties pressure on space in the clubhouse increased as social activity grew. In 1983 it was agreed that the Club simply had to provide more space for the annual Flag Officers' Reception. A marquee was hired and rigged to

extend from the wall of the clubhouse out into the car-park. The main reception was in this marquee, with the clubroom as an overflow. Decorated with flags and flower arrangements, it looked very good indeed. In some places one can still see where the fittings were screwed to the wall and the anchor points in the car park. In order that the whole club could benefit from the exercise the marquee was kept for two days and a members' cheese and wine party was held - starting a fixture that continued for many years. Sometimes it was given a theme and on one notable occasion members came dressed up as pirates! There is a note that in 1989, 85 members drank 21, 1.5 litre bottles of wine and 6 litres of orange juice.

'Summer' Car Park

The land where the summer car park is situated used to be a rough beach, mainly used by fishermen, and sometimes tenders were left there. In the mid 1970's the Council placed rock and wire gabions on the seaward side and in filled the area and it became a useful piece of land. Car parking had always been a problem and the idea of using this new area was very attractive. During the early 1980's there was a lot of correspondence regarding ownership of this area of land. If it could be shown that it was part of Lord Wimborne's Estate, then the club could conceivably have a right to it. However, no owner could be found and EDSC could not demonstrate sole usage, so as may be expected, the Council prevailed. After lengthy negotiations, during which Iim Hoare did a lot of work liasing with the Council to get the best terms and conditions, the Club secured the first three year licence in 1986 to use this area as a fenced off car park during the period 1st May - 30th September. This addition area provided a much needed car parking space, thereby freeing up the Club forecourt for the

increasing number of sailing dinghies. A car park levy was introduced to meet the annual fee paid to the Poole Borough Council. The County Council also agreed that the Club could have the strip of land between the front fence and the pavement on Sandbanks Road. This allowed the fence to be moved, and although still narrow, it provided access to the summer car park, and some extra dinghy space.

Wind surfing activities boomed during the early 1990s, and various proposals were put forward to cater for the shore needs of the surfers. There was a fright for the club when the Poole Local Plan, published in 1995, proposed that 'land to the west of the EDSC (where we now have our car park) is suitable for the provision of changing rooms, toilets, showers and an information point for the wind surfers'. The club lobbied hard to raise objections both from within the club and local residents, and the proposal was dropped and the facilities were provided elsewhere.

After entering into several short terms licences with PBC, the Club secured a twenty five year licence with PBC in 1999.

Club Improvements and Extension

On the wall in the kitchenette of the Brownsea room is a plaque recording the Howard Bequest. Ray Howard, who died in 1989, served on the committee as Treasurer and Rear Commodore. In about 1975 his employment took him to Brighton and, from then on, he travelled to Poole every weekend to sail his boat 'Yoo Hoo' to a local anchorage and stay afloat until returning to Brighton on Sunday evening. The bequest was used to refurbish the rather primitive kitchen in the downstairs room. The plaque records his

family's act of generosity. Other donations of note include the large club flag given by Derek Burrell Davis, the flagpole by Dot Koster in memory of her husband Ray, a past vicecommodore, and the fine set of weather instruments from Ken Sims.

The most significant event of the late 1980s was of course the development of the clubhouse. In the minutes of 1983 is the first mention of extending the building, but it was 1988 before there was any action. The roof at that time had some teak seats for those wishing to bask in the sun, but it was also a repository for rubber dinghies, sail boards, dinghy masts and other sailing gear and general junk. The idea was an ongoing topic with opinions varying from outright 'no' to 'why are we waiting?' It was also evident that if the extension was not done then considerable work was required to maintain the integrity of the existing building. No real progress could be made without planning approval. Detailed plans were drawn up by Don Hills, the architect for the original building, and the application was lodged in October 1988. This short statement belies the great amount of work required to get to this stage. There is a very thick file on the project and Jim Hoare, who acted as agent for the Club, worked tirelessly, battling with the bureaucratic nightmare of the planning regulations. Once the application was made public there was the expected uproar from the antis and the 'Nimbys'. In effect the opposition came from a small group of locals, general opinion was either neutral or favourable. The Council moved slowly and, in spite of Jim's prodding, no decision had been given by the time of the AGM of February 1989. However, there was optimism as to the outcome and at the AGM a presentation was put to the members. We can do no better than to quote a precis of the presentation as set down in the minutes of that AGM.

The Commodore reported that the Finance & General Purpose Sub-Committee had looked at various proposals for club development and had decided that the extension and improvement of the clubhouse was the one that would benefit most members. He then asked the Vice-Commodore, H.C (Jim). Hoare to present the case. The Vice-Commodore drew the attention of the meeting to the plans and photographs that were displayed in the hall and took the opportunity to thank Don Hills for all his help in drawing up the plans. With the aid of transparencies and the overhead projector he explained to the meeting that the proposals consisted of providing a large lounge area on the 1st floor of the clubhouse and modifying the ground floor to include a shower and cloakroom facilities. The extension would involve raising the present external wall with matching brickwork, a large picture window to seaward and a two-pitch roof similar to that recently used at Redcliffe Sailing Club. Planning would be considered on February 23rd. If approved we would have to meet the Building Regulations, engage a builder and make a start in the autumn. The roof should then be on by Christmas and it would be hoped that the lounge would be ready for the next AGM. He then listed a number of benefits to members, including a comfortable lounge area for meetings and social gatherings, a wet area downstairs for dinghy sailors and a catering area separate from the lounge. He also felt that the improved facilities would attract new members and be a good investment. With the help of Ken Okey he had been to three builders for estimates and Peter Chapman had obtained a quotation for windows. He felt that it would be necessary to engage a professional builder for the brickwork, roof and windows and that the wiring and plumbing downstairs could be done on a DIY basis.

It was possible that we may have to provide a fire escape which would have to be an integral part of the building. If this was the case, then the estimated cost would be in the region of £28,000. He then discussed ways of raising the money and suggested that the meeting should consider the proposals today, take a vote to see how the members felt and, if in favour, the committee should proceed with a questionnaire to all members.

The Commodore then thanked the Vice-Commodore for his presentation and invited comments and questions from the meeting. The main objections were:-

The Club is satisfactory as it is

We do not require these changes

We will lose the benefit of the roof space

Too many social events will change the attitude of the Club The changes will attract rich members who will join just for the social events.

The Commodore stated that there was no intention to increase the membership above 100 and that the proposal would not attract social members. Some members were concerned that the present members were being asked to pay for these improvements and new members would get the benefits for nothing. The Commodore explained that we were all benefiting from the earlier members who paid for the present clubhouse. He also stated that it was proposed to increase the joining fees very substantially. After further discussion it was proposed by Arthur Parrott that, subject to receiving the necessary planning permission, the members approve the project in principle and the Committee proceed with their detailed analysis. This was seconded by Ron Warburton and carried by 33 votes to 11.

In March 1989 came the news of planning refusal. Jim Hoare got to work again, researching and polishing arguments for our appeal case. If anything, it was more difficult than the original application and very time-

consuming. It was all made worth-while when in December 1989 our appeal was allowed and permission granted. It was now necessary for the members to decide whether to go ahead with the project.

It was not until May 1991 that an E.G.M. was held to decide the matter of the clubhouse extension. To ensure that the proposal was not voted through by a minority of members, the first motion was that for the proposal to succeed 75% of votes cast should be in favour, and this was agreed. On the second motion, to proceed with the project, the vote was 57 for, 23 against, and the motion was lost. The shock of losing the motion, after all the effort, was hard to bear. Unless one studies the thick file of paperwork generated by the efforts of all concerned, one cannot appreciate how much work and time was involved in getting to this point. It was too much for the obvious majority present who wanted to go ahead and the required number signed a requisition for a further E.G.M. The meeting was held, and the proposal succeeded by a 10-1 majority.

At this time the building industry was in the doldrums and it was therefore a good time to get competitive tenders for work such as brick-laying, though it would be essential for as much as possible to be done by members. There was also the matter of raising the funds. Fortunately our treasurer, Alistair Matthews, a professional accountant, was on hand to make sense of the finances and to produce excellent accounts during this critical period. Eventually a scheme was agreed where each member contributed £250, either as one payment , or it could be by instalments for up to five years. Contributions in excess of £250 were welcomed and several members did so. There were also cash donations including £1,000 from John Trapnell. Members were also asked to make loans to the club to cover the shortfall

caused by instalment payments. It was very heartening that the offer of loans was heavily over-subscribed.

A key factor in getting the finances agreed by the members was the detailed accuracy of building costs provided by Jim Johnson, a club member and chartered surveyor. Jim tackled the bureaucracy of building regulations and acted Clerk of Works and Site Manager during building upwards, it was construction. Before necessary to remove the coping stones from the parapet and to remove existing roof covering. This was largely done by volunteer members. The brickwork was contracted out and thereafter the building work was mostly done by various members. Throughout design, planning and execution it was to be the essence of the project that it should be of a high standard, energy efficient and low maintenance. Nearly twenty years on it is apparent that this has been achieved

With the upstairs completed, refurbishment continued with the provision of the ladies facilities and the gents showers. Once again we were fortunate enough to have 'in house' expertise in the person of Derek Collins, whose building firm carried out the work, much to the club's advantage. Derek went on to be Commodore in 1996-1999.

The bulk of the redevelopment was carried out whilst Harry Noakes was commodore who put great energy into initiating the project and driving it forward. There is no written record of the many members who assisted the project by giving freely of their time and expertise, equipment etc; Their assistance is recorded with gratitude. It is to the credit of all those involved that the project was completed on time, on budget and without recourse to outside financial assistance.



Votes for Ladies

In November 1990, the then Commodore, Harry Noakes, raised the question of votes for women. It was evident that the club depended increasingly upon a fair number of ladies, wives of full members, who as pier members had no say in the running of the club. They could of course become full members in their own right, but this would be expensive and could also put pressure on the allocation of

facilities. He proposed to create a class of joint membership where both parties could have a vote at a modified subscription.

A meeting was held to put the idea forward and formally to amend the rules. Judging by the minutes of this meeting the proposal was adopted in very short order, and tea and biscuits served. (the minute fails to mention who did the serving!)

The Social Scene

With the Brownsea Room complete there was a marked increase in social activities, particularly during the winter. Many of the now regular events became established, pub games, quiz night (with piping hot fish and chips from the mobile chippie) cream teas arranged by Lynn Haskett, and other one-off gatherings such as an evening tying knots, history of Poole with slide show, and pre-season gettogethers to plan summer cruises. Cruising in company has become one of the strengths of the club. Groups of club boats have visited just about all of the ports and anchorages in the Solent and the West Country, and a large number of those in Normandy and North Brittany coasts. Many newcomers to cruising have cut their teeth by being one of a group and having family boats together is a great advantage for the children. This was particularly evident in 1990 when John and Heather Knott and their five children joined and became very involved in family cruising. Whether at home or abroad 'Mr Toad' was seldom without an escort of other boats laden with children. John also organised a Boxing Day car treasure hunt; great fun which ended back at the club house with hot toddy and mince pies. This event ran for several years.

The Friday evening races, as well as increasing sailing activity, provided occasions for social gatherings when all can join in after-race suppers and members can visit the club and be sure of finding company. The catering for these suppers is done by a handful of volunteer members, and here we must mention Mavis Styche who has been everpresent when needed. Mavis has also organised many of the annual dinner - dances.

Socialising and sailing come together at a raft-up, usually held in South Deep, they are ever popular, but there have been some notable ones. In about 1990 there were upwards of 12 boats, all swinging to the anchor of the centre boat 'Rosalind'. The weather was fine and there was a great deal of to-ing and fro-ing with food and drink. When the tide turned the whole raft swung as a block, much to the consternation of passing traffic, particularly the large tripper boats. All went home very happy and left 'Rosalind' to get her anchor up from deep in the mud. Occasionally a raft-up will be host to a swarm of dinghies, the cruisers playing mother ship to the crews. This event continues to be popular with members.

Latterly cruiser participation in racing has declined but the number of cruises have increased. More dinghy members have joined the Club and there are many more youngsters taking part in the Friday evening racing and these members will hopefully be the core of the club in the future. There has been, for a long time, a regular turn-out of 5 or 6 dinghies on race days, with a greater number used for recreation and training youngsters. Commodore Tina Neely (2005-08) with help from her husband Paul, and Alison and Simon Wheeler, organised the first Junior Sailing Day,

giving young crews some basic training and guidance. Once again Mavis organised the catering. This was the start of the 'Pirates', which has proved to be very popular with the youngsters. The purpose of *PIRATES* is to create a child friendly setting where the children of EDSC can have fun on the water and develop the skills of sailing. The children can earn *badges* which recognise their achievements. In recognition of her continuing encouragement of young dinghy sailors , Alison Wheeler was awarded the Sailing Secretary's cup in 2005.

Moorings

These days the average club boat is larger, better equipped and frequently of deeper draught than earlier. Negotiating with the harbour authorities has secured a steady increase in the number of moorings available to the club. Mooring maintenance has always been a bugbear. It is nothing short of incredible that people will go into hock to buy a boat and then skimp on the few pounds needed to keep it safe. The harbour mooring officers have long been berating the club for poor maintenance and haphazard distribution of the inshore moorings, and sailing secretaries have tried various schemes to encourage safe practice. Dave Wright, during his time as Commodore (2002-05), put a great deal of effort into upgrading the moorings and bringing all Club moorings under the control of the Club. The individual deepwater moorings were all put on a trot. The moorings on the edge of the North Channel(NC) were also put on a trot and three inshore shallow water trots were also laid. The Club now has 24 deepwater moorings in two trots, a trot of 18 on the edge of the NC, 18 shallow moorings in three trots of 6 and 5 individual shallow cat. moorings. A

total of 65. At long last we have the Harbour Master on our side!

Annual Dinners

The first record of a club 'dinner' in the 'second hundred years' appears in December 1982. Organized by Ray German, (Commodore 1983-86) who did much of the groundwork in the growing social life, it was attended by 42 members at the Sea Witch in Canford Cliffs. It was a friendly and lively affair, the highlight (or not, depending upon where one was sitting) was when a waiter dropped a huge platter of roast duck - hot and swimming in fat and gravy, onto the lap of a male guest! The first dinner - dance was at the Durley Hall Hotel in 1984, and a tradition was started when a few Lilliput Sailing Club members joined us for the occasion. Skittles evenings were arranged at various local pub venues and occasional suppers at local pubs. In 1983 a laying up supper was held by EDSC at Lilliput Sailing Club and this marked the beginning of close co-operation between the two clubs. It is worth noting that Ray also became Commodore of Lilliput Sailing from******* to ***

In 1986, the dinner-dance was moved to the Allendale Centre in Wimborne, which proved to be a popular venue and was retained for several years. The increase in sailing events had resulted in more cups and trophies to be awarded. Previously awards were presented in the open by the clubhouse, but the new venue provided an opportunity for a more elaborate presentation, which took place after the meal and before the dance. The dinner dance and presentation evening continues to be a popular annual event.

In Conclusion

In recent years improvements to the clubhouse have continued, and the cost of necessary work to maintain the fabric of the building is a recurring theme in the records. Fortunately it is reassuring to see that members rally round to do what they can, but increasing legislation and health and safety considerations mean that more professional help is required. It is not as simple as it used to be to run a small sailing club like EDSC. We are indeed fortunate to have Mark Jamieson, our current commodore, Mike Bryant, Club Secretary and Paul Barnett, Club Treasurer, supported by an able committee to guide us through the demanding legislation. EDSC now has its own (www.eastdorsetsailingclub.co.uk), and a webcam covering the foreshore, pier and mooring areas.

Harry Noakes, wrote the following, 'Born in the 19th century and now thriving in the 21st century the club is still in many respects the same as it always has been. Members from 135 years ago would find that same enthusiasm for sailing. EDSC does not have elaborate premises, a bar or large catering facilities, but these are not what makes a club. A club is its people and as long as we have people who sail together, party together, and work together to maintain and enhance the facilities, then we shall thrive'.



Appendix 1

List of Commodores.

1875 - 1925 F J Beckford 1989-93 H W Noakes

1925-32 H J Sykes 1993-96 A R C Tatham

1932-33 R Young 1996-99 D F Collins

1933-35 Mrs. E Sherston

1999-2002 P M Okey

1935-38 H J Sykes

2002-05 D W Wright

1938-47 Sir W G Vernon-Smith

2005-08 Mrs. T J Neely

1947-56 J G Robinson

2008 - M J Jamieson

1959-62 A F Burt

1962-71 Capt. G G Stead

1971-73 J N Grange-Bennett

1973-77 L G L Lees

1977-80 D G Moore

1980-83 K H Okey

1983-86 W R German

1986-1989 A C H Wood

Appendix 1 Club Presidents

To show appreciation for a major contribution to the life of the club, the members may elect someone as President. In recent years they have been:

Capt. G G Stead,

K H Okey,

W R German,

H W Noakes,

ARC Tatham,

D F Collins

H C (Jim) Hoare.

The term of office for President is not regulated and has tended to follow on from being Commodore.

Appendix 2 Life Members

In 2000, life membership was created as permanent recognition to those who have rendered exceptional service to the club. The present life members are:-

D F Collins

D Wright

W R German

K Sims

HW Noakes

K H Okey,

A R C Tatham

HC Hoare,

A C Wood,

P M Okey,

Mrs. T J Nealey.

Notes