

## **ISLE OF MAN YACHT CLUB 1910-2010**

The club was founded on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1910 at a meeting of a group of enthusiastic gentlemen in the Station Hotel, Port St Mary. Meetings and social events were held in various local hostelrys. The first yacht race was held 11<sup>th</sup> June 1911 – from Castletown to Port St Mary and back. Ladies were permitted to become members in 1912. By December 1913 the club was affiliated to the YRA (now RYA).

1914 to 1918 club affairs were put on hold. In the aftermath of WW1 the club re-formed in late 1919, centred on the Fort Anne Hotel in Douglas. However, there was little enthusiasm at this depressing time and the club went into hibernation in 1927.

It wasn't until 28<sup>th</sup> October 1946, in the wake yet another World War that four members of the old club convened the next meeting at the Bay View Hotel, Port St Mary. There had been another sailing club – the Port St Mary YC in the interim, which was absorbed into the new IOMYC – most of the new committee had been members of both clubs anyway.

In 1947, with a over 100 members, the club now wanted its own premises and a lease was obtained on part of the Compton Buildings (now demolished) at the top of PSM inner harbour.

The 1950s quest to purchase a suitable HQ ended when The Anchorage, a substantial but

dilapidated five-storey property on the High Street, was secured in 1958. A huge amount of work was put in and the new clubhouse (and bar) officially opened on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1959. Membership increased to 300 by 1960, the club's Jubilee year when a lease also was taken on Gawne's Yard in Lime Street for winter boat storage. This yard was bought outright in 1969.

The endless spending to keep The Anchorage in reasonable order eventually persuaded most members that a new clubhouse, built on the recently acquired boat-yard site was a better option. Building began in 1974 and the new club HQ was opened on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1975. In 1978 membership peaked at 650. The premises were extended during the winter of 1980/81 to the present footprint and several internal modifications have been made since. In recent times the club has had an average of just under 500 members.

Early sailing records are patchy. Yachts were in two classes: 21'-24' and 18'-21'. Many members were residents of the Wirral and Merseyside. Fifty members' yachts were listed 1910 to 1914 but only 7 appeared to have raced.

Between WW1 and WW2 racing seemed to revolve around the 28' class and the 18' class. After 1946, the old "up to 18 foot" class evolved into the "Ace Class" –

ie: the wooden National 18' designed by Uffa Fox in 1938. Fourteen of these were raced regularly from 1950 and the 28' class vanished by 1952. The Aces dominated club racing but a handicap class for the many smaller dinghy types developed in the 1960s.

Races had always been started from the end of the inner harbour but the demand for proper courses with windward starts led to the club buying a suitable launch in 1967, now affectionately known as the "Yellow Peril". Support for other dinghy classes has varied over the years and since 1982 handicap racing has prevailed with no separate one-design fleet.

Single-handers and asymmetrics now outnumber traditional dinghies and the quality of club racing is relatively high. Members travel to UK, European and World championships every year and acquit themselves well.

Since the 1960s, cruiser racing has had phases of very high support, with a peak through the 1980-90s. Proper offshore races were a regular feature at that time sailing to Portpatrick, Howth, Carlingford, Strangford, Skerries and the like. At the moment, club racing is limited to fun events for cruising yachts and gentle cruising is more the order of the day.

Through the 1950s to 1980s the club regularly hosted finishes and starts for visiting offshore races to and from UK and Irish ports.

The National 18' Class championship was first hosted here in 1969 and again in 1976, 1981, 1990, 1994, 1998 2002, 2006. We are delighted to

be once again hosting the 2010 event in our centenary year.

Other events hosted over the years include Folk-boat Rallies, Ruffian 23 and E-Boat championships and probably the largest single sailing event organised was the Tall Ships Race in 1979, coinciding with the Manx Millennium.

Now, the club hosts an annual Round-the-IOM race at the end of May and regular fleet visits by the Westerly Owners Association have developed recently.

A striking feature in the last few years is the development in motor-boating and RIBs. The club now arranges regular local and off-island cruises-in-company for power craft.

The club became a recognised RYA Training centre soon after its move to the present site and runs a wide range of courses for all ages and abilities. The training section is very active year round but especially for the dinghy training, April to July and absorbs a phenomenal amount of voluntary effort from members and parents.

The club has generally prospered since 1946 through the careful management by hundreds of officers and directors. There were inevitable differences in opinion from time to time but common sense usually prevails and club activities have adapted to changes in society and within the sport.

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Commodore 2010