

The Port of Plymouth Sailing Association

A Guide to its History and Working

Peter Harvey

The PPSA has had reason on many occasions to appreciate Scott Bader's declared commitment 'to provide charitable and community support', surely something unique in the charter of a commercial organisation.

For several years the Company has sponsored the Port of Plymouth Regattas and additionally it has become deeply involved in the safety provisions so essential in running any event. George Skinner, Area Manager, and his team are a familiar sight in their launch "Scott Bader" at many open events in the Sound and further afield, particularly when the going gets rough.

Now their sponsorship of this History of the Association will serve as a permanent reminder of the close ties which have formed between Scott Bader and the Port of Plymouth Sailing Association.

Peter Compton
President
Port of Plymouth Sailing Association

INTRODUCTION

During the time that I have been Secretary of the Port of Plymouth Sailing Association, I and others of a similar vintage have repeatedly been made aware of how History repeats itself.

We frequently hear suggestions made as though they represent entirely new thinking on a particular subject, when all too often they are merely a repetition of something already tried and long since discarded.

In the early seventies, for instance, there was a great wailing and gnashing of teeth at club bars over the decline in enthusiasm for dinghy racing, with open meetings being held to discuss what was thought to be essentially a contemporary phenomenon. Yet the 1906 November edition of *Yachting World*, in reporting on the AGM of the West of England Yacht and Boat Sailing Conference held at Saltash Sailing Club, contained this statement: 'The Secretary presented his annual report which regretted the steady decline of yachting, especially small boat racing, in the West'; and in the following pages there will be found other examples.

In compiling these notes, I have had access to all the past minutes of PPSA meetings, as well as my own family sailing scrapbook going back to Edwardian times. The one gap in my sources was in connection with the post-war era of the Blue Book Committee, of whose workings no minutes appear to have survived. Fortunately, Leslie Haines has been an assiduous collector of Blue Books themselves and I am indebted to him for giving me the opportunity to delve into this fascinating part of Plymouth's sailing heritage.

In the belief that others, understandably, will have neither the time nor the inclination to wander through the maze of minutes and press cuttings, the notes are arranged under topics in the hope that they may be of some use to Clubs and their PPSA Representatives as a short cut to past thinking on a particular subject under current discussion.

If this hope is not realised, at least my efforts should prove worthwhile in ensuring that successive Secretaries of the PPSA are better briefed for the job than I was.

Peter Harvey

THE PORT OF PLYMOUTH SAILING ASSOCIATION

POST WAR REVIVAL

The formation of the Port of Plymouth Sailing Association came about directly as a result of the profound changes in the yachting scene which followed the end of hostilities in 1945/46. In prewar days there had been no need for such an organisation, but the immediate post-war era was to see a phenomenal growth in sailing which would make heavy demands on the waters of the Sound and its adjacent rivers.

The 1946 Annual Regatta Programme of the Royal Western Yacht Club of England shows the following participating classes:

Handicap for Yachts 10 Tons and Over	5 Entries
Handicap for Yachts under 10 Tons T.M.	3 Entries
Dragons	3 Entries
Drake O.D.	6 Entries
14 Foot Internationals	2 Entries
Handicap for Boats not exceeding 18 Ft.	9 Entries
Service Boats	21 Entries
R.N.S.A. 14 Foot Dinghies	9 Entries

Apart from the Service Boats and R.N.S.A. 14 Foot Dinghies, Service entries accounted for ten of the yachts and boats in the other races. Not surprisingly so soon after the War, there were few civilian boats ready for racing. Although the Looe 14 Foot Redwings (they had yet to achieve National status) were included in the programme, there were no entries and the Dolphins, which were to lead the revival in dinghy racing, were still gleams in their prospective owners' eyes.

However, the following report appearing in 1947 in the *Evening Herald*, even for the customary exaggerated forecasts, showed the shape of things to come.

The Pageant of the Sound

Yachting has made a remarkable recovery in Plymouth from its war wounds and when the Port of Plymouth Royal Regatta opens the regatta week on August 6th it is anticipated that there will be something like one hundred and fifty yachts and boats competing in the different classes.

The landsman will lament with the yachtsman the passing of those famous sea-going yachts like the Shamrock, the Britannia and the Westward, which are no longer with us.

Their appearance at the Plymouth Regattas before the war presented a spectacle which thousands took the opportunity to see, and famous figures like the late Sir Thomas Lipton were observed in the Port. Shamrock is still a name which commands international respect.

The New Yachtsman

Most of these great craft are now broken up, with Westward only recently having been given a watery grave outside Dartmouth as a memorial to its owner, but just as these graceful heroines have passed, now we come to a new decade which has brought with it an increasing participation by the working man.

Not a little is it due to him that the great revival which will be seen this year in the size of the regatta entries has come to pass.

He was already showing his interest before the war in the 14 ft. Cooper dinghies which were built by Charles Cooper of Essex, and delivered to the door, as it were, for £30. Spasm, Patience, Endeavour, Pimpernel, Puff and Kit made up the class but only two of them survive.

In their place, however, is the American planned 17-footer, which is new to Plymouth and is being developed by several clubs. Somewhere around twenty have been built or are in the course of

building from the permits which were issued before the ban fell early in the year.

The Individual Builder

Individual craftsmen have been building them in the open – one, for instance, which can be seen on West Hoe, was fashioned on an allotment; another was even built in a backyard. In this way the cost may be limited to between £30 and £40. But there are others which are being built professionally and that is a more expensive game but still not beyond the means of those who, having saved keenly during the war, have seriously taken up yachting as their summer recreation.

Dragon, an international class, is another addition since the war which is being steadily developed. If it could be bought new it would cost something approaching four figures, nearly five times the price prewar.

But representatives of this class now in the Port were purchased second-hand. Carmelia and Corvi were built on the Clyde; Rena in Norway; Bess in Sweden.

They will be seen this year. So too will the Drake Class, founded on a local craft built by Hudson of Yelverton. Red Gauntlet, Red Shank, Red Admiral, Red Pepper, Red Slipper, Red Money, Red Wing. So the names ran before the war and so they will compete again, though Red Money grieves the loss of its former owner, Captain Money, who was killed during the war.

War Service and Loss

It seems quite extraordinary how so many boats survived the war and how many owners who lost their craft have now come back re-fitted to give challenge. Some of the craft were used for war purposes – as impediments to the landing of seaplanes in the Devon river estuaries. Others were blitzed.

But clubs and owners, by dint of their energy and enthusiasm, have emerged from war stronger than they were before and only one of the yacht and sailing clubs of the Port has been overcome through the turmoil of war.

The landsman will see the full panoply of the Port's yachting during the four days of Regatta Week – the Dragons, the Drakes, the Seventeen footers – as all the organisations of the Port send their quota to compete. They will see, too, the Looe contribution of Redwings with their red sails contrasting strongly with the swan like whiteness of the others.

They will note the dinghies, the Service gigs and rowers. The landsman may not appreciate the finer arts of the regal processions as they make their way on the nine miles triangular course or alternatively the figure eight course within the Sound. But no one can resist the picturesque pageantry of the sea which is provided.

THE BLUE BOOK COMMITTEE

In the event, the rosy picture painted in this article proved to be over optimistic and the entries in the Port of Plymouth Royal Regatta were about half the number forecast. Nevertheless, they compare favourably with those for our Regattas in the late eighties and early nineties. Evening and Saturday afternoon racing were also taking place in the Sound.

By 1948 Redwings, Dolphins and Mayflowers were firmly established as the premier one design classes of the Port and it had become obvious that some form of collaboration was necessary if the Sound clubs were to organise their racing without interference. Thus was born the Blue Book, the father of the P.P.S.A.

The Royal Western Yacht Club, the Royal Plymouth Corinthian Yacht Club, the Royal South Western Yacht Club, the Royal Naval Sailing Association and Torpoint Mosquito Sailing Club agreed to form the committee which would correlate Saturday fixtures, to be published annually in the Blue Book, each of the clubs assuming responsibility for its publication in rotation.

The first such fixtures list must strike a chord among those who decry the present PPSA Sailing Programme.

Saturday Fixtures & Regatta Dates for 1948

May	8	Royal Plymouth Corinthian Yacht Club
May	15	Royal Naval Sailing Association
May	22	Royal South Western Yacht Club
May	29	Royal Western Yacht Club of England
June	5	Torpoint Mosquito Sailing Club
June	12	R.P.C.Y.C.
June	19	R.N.S.A.
June	26	R.S.W.Y.C.
July	3	Torpoint M.S.C.
July	10	R.W.Y.C.
July	17	Mayflower Sailing Club Regatta
Aug.	4	Port of Plymouth Royal Regatta)
Aug.	5	R.W.Y.C.) Plymouth Regatta
Aug.	6	R.S.W.Y.C.) Week
Aug.	7	R.P.C.Y.C.
Aug.	14	West Hoe Sailing Club Regatta
Aug.	21	Sutton Harbour Regatta
Aug.	28	R.S.W.Y.C.
Sept.	4	R.W.Y.C.
Sept.	11	Torpoint M.S.C.
Sept.	25	R.N.S.A.

Saturday Blue Book Racing was offered for Dragons, Redwings, Dolphins, Drakes, R.N.S.A. 14 ft Dinghies, Service Cutters, Gigs and Whalers, Handicap Boats not exceeding 18 ft and Handicap Cruisers. Prize money ranged from 5 shillings to £1 depending on entries.

The Blue Book included in its conditions, the following rule:

Class Days and Local Regattas Coinciding

On days on which a Club Day coincides with a local regatta, races may be given by the Club in question should a class not be catered for or should a class not wish to compete at such a regatta. In the latter case the Class in question shall notify the Club.

Clearly, while the five clubs recognised the need for cooperation and the avoidance of conflicting events, they were not prepared to carry this to the point where they might have to surrender autonomy. In fact it was largely this consideration that delayed the formation of an association of clubs for another six or seven years. Even after the P.P.S.A. came into being, there was a threatened secession over this issue and it is equally pertinent today.

In addition to the Saturday Blue Book Racing, the book listed other regular weekly racing for which the five clubs were not directly responsible. Had they been, it is doubtful whether the conflicts apparent in the following list would have been suffered.

Sutton Harbour Yacht Club	Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
West Hoe Sailing Club	Wednesdays, 6.55 p.m.
Devonport Services Sailing Assn.	Wednesdays & Thursdays 1430
	Mondays, Tuesdays & Fridays, 1700
Mayflower Sailing Club	Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Laira Sailing Club	One evening per week depending on tides.
Saltash Sailing Club	Saturdays.

The Sutton Harbour Yacht Club disappears in the 1949 Blue Book, to be replaced by a Sutton Harbour Regatta Secretary, and the Royal Albert Bridge Sailing Club is introduced. Saturday Blue Book Racing attracted average entries of over fifty, while West Hoe Sailing Club received 107 entries in 9 classes for their regatta.

The Blue Book Fixtures and Regattas List was growing. The 1950 book adds Saltash Royal Regatta, Torpoint Town Regatta, Yealm Yacht Club Regatta, Laira Sailing Club Regatta and even Mutton Cove Regatta. And these regattas were well supported, no matter was the inconvenience. There were, for instance, no fewer than 64 entries in Laira Sailing Club's 1950 Regatta in spite of the necessity of unstepping masts to pass under the bridge before and after racing.

By 1952 Mayflower Sailing Club had joined the other five on the Blue Book Committee and one can only speculate on the reason for its exclusion up to then when it was in the forefront of racing in the Sound from the earliest times.

The 1952 Blue Book also took the responsibilities of the Committee a little further as can be seen from the following extracts:

“Blue Book” Meeting Procedure

One of the six Clubs giving Saturday Races for all classes will call a meeting of representatives of all Clubs and Bodies in the Plymouth Area to discuss General Fixtures and Regatta dates for the following year. Each Club will do this in the following order:- M.S.C., R.W.Y.C., R.S.W.Y.C., R.N.S.A., R.P.C.Y.C., T.M.S.C. The Mayflower Sailing Club shall be responsible for 1953 Season.

The meeting should be held about mid-October of the previous year so that Regatta dates can be approved in time for inclusion in the Y.A. Fixture List. No Club or Body which wishes to be represented at the Blue Book Meeting should publish the date of the Regatta until approved by the Meeting.

However, concern over autonomy in these matters persisted and the same year's Blue Book reworded the rule about Club Days and Local Regattas as follows:

Club Days & Local Regattas

Should a Local Body decide to hold a Regatta which has not been entered in the Blue Book and which coincides with a Club Day, the Club should give races for any classes which are not catered for by the Regatta or any class which decides not to compete at such Regatta. In the latter case a representative of the class must notify the Club of their wishes.

In the 1952 Blue Book there were again changes in the 'other clubs' listed. Sutton Harbour Yacht Club and Regatta appeared in place of Sutton Harbour Regatta Secretary, Tamar River Sailing Club of St. Budeaux in place of the Royal Albert Bridge Sailing Club, while Cawsand Bay Sailing Club was added. Saltash Sailing Club, however, was omitted.

The Fixtures List had also grown further to accommodate Mayflower Sailing Club's Saturday Blue Book Racing, Cawsand Bay Regatta, a Whitsun Meeting at Torpoint and the National Firefly Championship run jointly by the participating clubs with boats berthed at Mr. Batten. The City had yet to be persuaded to construct the municipal dinghy park and slipway at Elphinstone.

In 1953 for the first time the name of the Club responsible for the Blue Book appeared on the cover. It was, of course, the Mayflower Sailing Club. And while the section Blue Book Meeting Procedure was omitted. Was this deliberate, and, if so, for what reason? Certainly at this time there was some concern in the 'Royal' Clubs that the body they had created might be in danger of becoming just a little too big for its boots. There was much bar talk about forming an association of clubs with rather more substance than the ad hoc Blue Book Committee, but resistance to the idea persisted in some quarters.

The debate continued for the next two years with the strongest support coming from the Mayflower and West Hoe Sailing Clubs. By this time the dinghy boom was under way and those two clubs were in the forefront of dinghy racing in the Sound. The Royal Plymouth Corinthian Yacht Club did not have a dinghy fleet until its dinghy park was constructed in 1959 and West Hoe Sailing Club, having close sailing links with the Royal South Western Yacht Club, provided the impetus at the western end of the foreshore. As yet the comparatively modest demands of the yacht racing fraternity did not really

require any formal coordinating body.

Plymouth as a championship venue was also growing in importance. The dinghy classes were proliferating and there were not at that time so many places able and willing to accommodate them. In 1955 the Flying Fifteens, Merlin-Rockets, Jollyboats and National 12s were all booked for Plymouth and others were in the pipeline.

In those days championships were organised jointly by the clubs with considerable assistance from the Royal Navy, who supplied committee vessels, marks, mark layers and other facilities. With championship organisation being a collective responsibility, both the Service and Civic Authorities were finding it inconvenient to deal with individual clubs in these matters.

Meanwhile the Blue Book for 1955 was published by the Royal South Western Yacht Club for what was to be the last time. It recorded the secession of Torpoint Mosquito Sailing Club from the Blue Book Committee while the Yealm Yacht Club appeared in the list of other clubs for the first time.

Eventually, doubtless prompted by thoughts of the impending championships, it was generally conceded that a body with some authority was necessary to avoid an anarchical situation developing in the Sound and the Royal Western Yacht Club took the initiative in setting in motion the events which would lead to its formation. The minutes of a meeting of West Hoe Sailing Club on 5th January 1955 record the receipt of a letter from the Royal Western convening a meeting of all clubs with a view to forming a Plymouth Joint Sailing Association. The meeting was to be chaired by Dr. Neil Beaton of the Royal South Western Yacht Club, a well respected local yachtsman with a foot in both the yacht and dinghy camps.

THE FORMATION OF THE P.P.S.A.

The minutes of that meeting do not appear to have survived, but it was agreed that the ad hoc Blue Book Committee should hand over its assumed powers and responsibilities to a constitutionally formed association of all Plymouth clubs wishing to become affiliated and the Port of Plymouth Sailing Association was born in time to organise the 1955 dinghy championships. Dr. Neil Beaton was elected as the first President and Harold Hicks of the Mayflower Sailing Club as Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. Cdr. Robin Gardiner was elected Vice President, but there were at that time no other officers.

At a meeting of the P.P.S.A. on 3rd April 1956 the draft rules of the Association, previously circulated, were adopted.

Attendance at that meeting contrasts with the number at today's meetings. Apart from the President and Honorary Secretary, there were only seven representing R.W.Y.C., R.N.S.A., R.P.C.Y.C., M.S.C., T.M.S.C., L.S.C and Y.Y.C.

It was announced that the Blue Book, for such it was to continue to be called, would be published by the P.P.S.A. and, containing much more information, would probably be considered value for money even at the maximum price of sixpence.

A request for the return of guarantee loans was refused at that stage on the grounds that the forthcoming Redwing Championship might stretch the Association's finances.

The P.P.S.A. publication of 1956 was indeed a far more ambitious affair than the former Blue Book and emerged as the Port of Plymouth Sailing Association Year Book. It listed the affiliated clubs as:

Royal Western Yacht Club of England
Royal South Western Yacht Club
Royal Plymouth Corinthian Yacht Club
Royal Naval Sailing Association
Mayflower Sailing Club
Torpoint Mosquito Sailing Club
West Hoe Sailing Club
Cawsand Bay Sailing Club

Tamar River Sailing Club
Yealm Yacht Club
Saltash Sailing Club
R.A.F. Sailing Club, Mount Batten
Royal Artillery Yacht Club

The Open Regatta Committees were also listed as follows:

Port of Plymouth Regatta Committee
Sutton Harbour Regatta Committee
Cawsand Bay Regatta Committee
Torpoint Town Regatta Committee
Saltash and Tamar River Committee

Strangely, the constitution of the newly formed Association does not appear in the minutes book, but the rules were printed in the 1956 Year Book and, there apparently being no other record, no apology is made for reproducing them here. Those familiar with subsequent developments will not miss the hidden banana skins.

Port of Plymouth Sailing Association

General Rules

Objects

- 1 To place the sport of sailing in a position commensurate with the population and sea traditions of Plymouth.
- 2 To co-ordinate fixtures as between Member Clubs and Open Regatta Committees, and to compile a consolidated Fixture List annually.
- 3 To initiate, promote and organise Local, National and International events.
- 4 To serve and protect the interests of the yachting fraternity and to improve the facilities available.
- 5 To publish annually, early in April, the Association's Year Book.
- 6 To be responsible for any handicapping required.
- 7 To arbitrate between Member Clubs.
- 8 To co-ordinate social functions between Member Clubs to prevent overlapping.
- 9 To keep the sport of sailing before the public by suitable publicity.

2 Membership of the Association is open to all Yacht and Sailing Clubs within the Plymouth area, the Affiliation Fee being ten shillings per year, payable on January 1. The affiliation of any future Members shall be approved by an Annual General Meeting.

3 Representation. The Governing Committee of the Association, on whom the entire voting power rests, is composed of the Officers of the Association and delegates appointed by Member Clubs. At Committee Meetings, and the Annual General Meeting, each Member Club shall be represented by one Delegate. Each Member Club shall inform the Hon. Secretary at least seven days before the A.G.M. of the name of its Representative for the ensuing year. Should an appointed Representative be unable to attend a meeting, a substitute appointed by the Club concerned may attend in his place. At the Annual Fixtures Meeting, when the following season's fixtures are decided, each Member Club and each Open Regatta Committee shall send two delegates.

4 Officers. The Officers of the Association shall consist of a President, Vice-President and an Honorary Secretary/Treasurer, and shall be elected at the A.G.M. each year. They shall retire annually, but the Secretary/Treasurer will be eligible for re-election. The President for the ensuing year shall be nominated by one of the five Clubs sponsoring Saturday racing.

Each club will do this in rotation in the following order:-

R.W.Y.C. of E., R.S.W.Y.C., R.N.S.A., R.P.C.Y.C., M.S.C. The Vice-President shall be nominated by the Club next in sequence. For the 1956 season the President and Vice-President have been nominated by the R.N.S.A. and the R.P.C.Y.C. respectively.

5 Management.

The affairs of the Association shall be managed by the Committee, consisting of:-

- a. The Officers ex-officio.
- b. One Representative from each Member Club.
- c. Such persons as the Committee may co-opt from time to time. A co-opted person shall be entitled to attend and speak at Meetings, but not to vote.

6 Duties of the Committee.

- a. The Committee shall manage the affairs of the Association according to the Rules, and shall take such steps as they may consider desirable for the promotion of the sport of sailing.
- b. The Committee shall apply the funds of the Association to such purposes as they shall deem expedient in the interests of the Association.
- c. The Committee shall cause proper books of account to be kept of all income and expenditure, and of all dealings with the assets of the Association, and shall present to the A.G.M. a duly audited Balance Sheet.

7 Proceedings of the Committee.

- a. The Committee may meet for the despatch of business, adjourn or otherwise regulate their Meetings as they fit, but they shall meet at least three times in every year.
- b. Any two Members of the Committee may convene a Meeting of the Committee, by notice in writing to the Secretary of the Association, stating as far as practicable the business to be transacted.
- c. Five Members personally present shall form a quorum.
- d. At all Meetings each Delegate shall have one vote. Questions arising shall be decided by a majority of votes and, in the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the Meeting shall have a casting vote.
- e. An Annual General Meeting shall be called in October each year, at which the Balance Sheet shall be presented for the Financial Year ending September 30th and the Officers for the ensuing year elected.
- f. An Annual Fixture Meeting shall be called each year shortly after the A.G.M., at which the Saturday events and dates of Regattas, Championships, etc. shall be decided. At this Meeting each Member Club and each Open Regatta Committee may send two Representatives, each Representative having one vote. This Meeting shall be held about the beginning of November, so that Regatta dates can be approved in time for inclusion in the R.Y.A. Fixture List.
- g. The Committee may, if it thinks fit, appoint one or more Sub-Committees to deal with particular matters.
- h. The Committee shall cause proper Minutes to be kept of all proceedings of the Committee, and of any Sub-Committees.

8 Sailing Regulations. All races shall be sailed under the rules of the I.Y.R.U. and R.Y.A., with such variations as are contained in the Sailing Instructions of Member Clubs and Open Regatta Committees concerned.

9 General. Every Member Club and Open Regatta Committee shall undertake loyally to carry out and give effect to any decision that the Association may make on any matters on which it may adjudicate, and to support the Association in its efforts to carry out its objectives.

Time was to show how unwise it had been to draw up a constitution having so many restrictive clauses for an Association which would still be evolving many years hence and which would embrace so many clubs with differing aims and ideas. And the attempt to keep the Presidency within the inner circle of Sound Clubs was clearly untenable. In practice there were subsequent amendments to the rules, some made constitutionally, others simply by default with the passage of time.

Eventually it was found necessary to produce new rulers and a simpler constitution was passed at the 1967 A.G.M., simplified even further in 1984.

P.P.S.A. Rules as ratified at the 1984 A.G.M.

Title shall be the Port of Plymouth Sailing Association

Aims

To co-ordinate fixtures and social events of affiliated clubs and to promote their interests in racing and cruising.

Membership

Yacht and sailing clubs of Plymouth and district. Ex officio members shall be the Assistant Queen's Harbour Master (Plymouth), a City Council Representative and such other co-opted persons as shall be determined from time to time.

Officers

President, Vice-President, Immediate Past President, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Assistant Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Regatta Secretary and Hon. Handicapper. To be elected by voting members at the Annual General Meeting. All officers shall be elected annually. The Hon. Secretary, Hon. Assistant Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Regatta Secretary and Hon. Handicapper shall be eligible for re-election. Nominations in writing to be made to the Hon. Secretary not later than 14 days before the A.G.M.

Voting Paper

Each club shall be entitled to send two delegates to meetings and they shall be named to serve for twelve months; only one of the two to vote. The President shall have a casting vote. Voting shall be decided by a simple majority on a show of hands.

Meetings

Monthly, with R.W.Y.C., R.P.C.Y.C. and M.S.C. as host clubs in rotation (subsequently amended to 'at affiliated club premises, the host being decided at the previous meeting'). Four voting members shall constitute a quorum. The Annual General Meeting shall take place in January and the Annual Fixtures Meeting in October.

Committees

The Association shall have power to form ad hoc committees to deal with special matters as they arise.

Finance

An annual affiliation fee shall be paid by each member club, based on the club's total membership at its last Annual General Meeting. The rates shall be:-

Membership up to 150	£5
Membership over 150, up to 300	£10
Membership over 300	£15

These rates may be altered at any A.G.M., one month's prior notice being given to member clubs.

Any disbursements will be made at the discretion of the Officers of the Association. Any monies for the Association coming into the hands of any member shall be paid to the Honorary Treasurer as soon as possible; this Officer only will be responsible for the payment of any accounts.

Amendments to these Rules

An alteration or addition to these rules carried at any monthly or Special General Meeting shall remain in force until the next Annual General Meeting, when it shall be confirmed or not by voting as specified above.

AMALGAMATION WITH THE PORT OF PLYMOUTH REGATTA COMMITTEE

The history of the Port of Plymouth Regatta Committee would make a story in itself. Suffice it to say that the Port of Plymouth Royal Regatta as such as discontinued at some time between the two world wars, but apparently not before spawning the Port of Plymouth Regatta Committee, a self-perpetuating body existing for the sole purpose of ensuring that the Regatta did not disappear entirely.

An interesting relic from the past glories remains in the Prince of Wales Trophy, on indefinite loan to the P.P.S.A. by the Royal Western Yacht Club and competed for annually in the Port of Plymouth Regatta. This impressive cup bears the inscription "Presented by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales to the Port of Plymouth Royal Regatta. August 23rd 1865." It is understood that this cup was lost for some time, but reappeared at a sale considerably later and was bought by a member of the Royal Western who passed it on to the Club.

In post war years the Port of Plymouth Regatta Committee financed its annual Regatta by soliciting donations from local businesses. The inducement for this public spiritedness was an invitation to tea on Regatta Day, ostensibly to view the racing from the Royal Plymouth Corinthian Yacht Club's terrace, but more realistically as a social occasion for the ladies, who were entertained to tea and music from a string orchestra.

At a PPSA meeting on 31 October 1956, the Secretary was instructed to write to the Port of Plymouth Regatta Committee opening up negotiations for a merger. The following May he was instructed to make a formal approach as to conditions for amalgamation and financial assistance, which, judging from the subsequent wording of the agreement, must have set alarm bells ringing in the Committee. Nevertheless, negotiations must have proceeded rapidly for agreement was reached in principle two months later and the merger was formalised on 29th October 1957 when it was proposed:

"That the Port of Plymouth Sailing Association and the Port of Plymouth Regatta Committee amalgamate on the following terms:-

1. That the name of the joint Association shall be the Port of Plymouth Sailing Association, but that the identity of the Port of Plymouth Regatta shall be preserved in all respects as a separate entity.
2. That there shall be a General Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, Regatta Secretary and a Treasurer.
3. That the present assets of the Port of Plymouth Regatta Committee be transferred to the Port of Plymouth Sailing Association and a Declaration of Trust prepared to contain the following provisions:-
 - (a) That the Fund be called the Port of Plymouth Regatta Fund.
 - (b) That there be three Trustees of the Fund, namely: C.D. Roberts, F.R. Dunstan and A.H. Rendle. Such Trustees to have power to appoint fresh Trustees in the event of death or retirement.
 - (c) That the Trustees shall have absolute discretion to apply the Port of Plymouth Regatta Fund to any purpose they think fit in connection with the sport of sailing and in particular always to ensure that the Port of Plymouth Regatta takes place annually.
 - (d) Should the assets of the Port of Plymouth Sailing Association at any time become available for distribution, then the Trust Fund is to be disposed of or otherwise dealt with in such manner as the Trustees for the time being shall think fit.

It was made clear that the intention of the proposal was that the identity of the Regatta Day should be preserved, but that the assets of the Regatta Committee should be available for any common purpose of benefit to sailing, but should not be made available to any individual club or clubs.

Again, as with the 1956 Constitution of the P.P.S.A., the success of this attempted legislation was more apparent in its drafting than in its application.

One would have thought that the Regatta Committee as such would have ceased to exist from that time, yet it was still operating as late as 1976, organising its own Regatta Day, soliciting donations to its Regatta Fund and appointing new Trustees at will. Apart from having secured a seat on the P.P.S.A. Committee, to all intents and purposes the status quo remained unaltered. There remained lingering doubts about financial considerations and the body, although officially dead, refused to lie down. And its obduracy was fairly easily cloaked in the machiavellian wording of the amalgamation agreement.

Eventually in 1976 it was accepted that this situation could not continue. The Port of Plymouth Regatta Committee agreed that this title would not be used in future, that the Regatta Day would be organised within the P.P.S.A. and that a joint account would be presented at A.G.Ms as had been agreed as far back as 1960. In return, the Association's rules were amended to permit as a right the attendance of a Trustee at P.P.S.A. meetings.

It was not until 1991, however, that the Committee's assets, such as they were, were transferred to the P.P.S.A. and the Port of Plymouth Regatta Committee was finally laid to rest, 34 years after its official secession to the Association.

THE PPSA YEAR BOOK AND HAND BOOK

As we have seen, the Blue Book developed into the more ambitious PPSA Year Book, which, like the original Constitution, was to prove in time to be unmanageable and would regress into its more modest form as the PPSA Handbook.

The 1961 Year Book added the Royal Marines Sailing Club and Devonport Services Sailing Association to the list of clubs and the following year the Lancashire Regiment Sailing Club and (oddly, since it appears to have contravened Rule 2 of the PPSA Constitution) the Port of Plymouth Canoeing Association.

By this time, too, set courses were printed in the Year Book for RWYC, RPCYC, RNSA, TMSC, MSC, WHSC, RSWYC and even Laira S.C. These courses did not exactly stretch the Race Officers. RWYC, RNSA and RSWYC for example had the options of either a quadrilateral or figure of eight course using Asia, New Grounds, Duke Rock and Mallard Buoys as turning marks.

Rather ambitiously, considering the fickleness of owners, the Year Book also contained lists of all the boats in the various classes racing in the Port. A glance at these indicates the phenomenal growth already taking place by 1962.

Albacores	32
Cadets	20
Dolphins	17
Fireflies	30
Enterprises	25
GP 14s	23
Flying 15s	10
Gulls	9
Drakes	6
Hornets	17
Jollyboats	4
Mayflowers	28
Redwings	23
Shearwaters	7
RNSA 14s	31
Service Boats (Cutters, Whalers, Gigs)	32

In addition to the dinghies, 60 yachts and 14 Silhouettes were listed.

When one considers what else was included in the Year Book – tide tables, tidal stream charts, details of all the clubs' sailing activities (including trophies offered), class racing, RORC Special Regulations, PPSA Universal Sailing Instructions for Saturday racing and an individual write-up on one of the affiliated clubs – it can be realised that the fledgling Association was overstretching itself. The willing horses were already becoming exhausted and not surprisingly problems were surfacing by the end of 1962.

Difficulties were being experienced in obtaining the information necessary for the annual updating of the Year Book and it was becoming too expensive. Twelve months later it was proposed to discontinue the Book, subsequently amended to 'cease printing in its present form and prune drastically.'

A publisher was found who was willing to supply a book of sorts free of charge in return for all advertising rights and the new version came out in time for the 1964 season. Once again the title was changed this time to The PPSA Handbook.

The new book contained a list of clubs, tidal stream charts, dinghy classes raced regularly in Plymouth (though not lists of boats), regular weekly racing offered, a write-up on cruising facilities in the Port and another on the City, written by the Entertainments and Publicity Manager, Frank Bottom.

The Handbook continued for many years in the same convenient format, involving the Association merely in updating the information on racing. The fixtures lists were produced separately.

By 1974, however, it was decided to replace the whole publication yet again. The City Entertainments and Publicity Manager was in the process of producing his own booklet, "Sailing in Plymouth", and he asked whether he could include the details at that time published in the Blue Book (the Association was still reluctant to discard the term). The same year the PPSA was asked to produce a comprehensive programme of Plymouth based yacht fixtures, separate from dinghies. The emphasis was already shifting in favour of the yachts.

The following year it was insisted that the yacht fixtures list should be printed on a different colour, although by 1976 minds changed again and a return to a joint fixtures list was made.

The City's booklet, really a joint effort with the PPSA, appeared in 1975 and immediately drew a cry of anguish from the infant Plym 70 Club because they did not appear on the map of clubs.

1976 saw the final demise of the Blue Book in its many guises. It had been born in a spirit of collaboration after the War, but by 1965 PPSA organisation of championships had virtually ceased and Blue Book dinghy racing on Saturdays collapsed ten years later.

Although the *raison d'être* for the Blue Book had disappeared, even today it is looked back upon affectionately by the dinghy sailors of those three decades.

BLUE BOOK RACING IN THE SOUND

The mere mention of Blue Book Racing conjures up memories of the heyday of Saturday dinghy racing in the Sound before young crews switched their allegiance to the IOR hot rod yachts.

Saturday afternoons were a celebration of all that was good in club racing. A spirit of camaraderie permeated the whole dinghy scene and extended from the civilian clubs to the Service establishments with their RNSA dinghies, whalers, cutters and gigs, and even Longroom's Chief Yeoman tossing the bunting on the terrace of the host club.

In the days before the five day week became the norm, those fortunate enough to be free on Saturday mornings would, on alternate weeks when low water occurred at midday, undertake the launching of all the boats and put them on moorings off the Corinthian and West Hoe Pier. And by the ladies. Support for other clubs' Saturday Regattas was a *sine qua non*, even if, as already mentioned, going upriver to Laira Sailing Club did entail lowering masts in order to negotiate the Bridge before and after racing.

However, one can only regret the failure of the PPSA to give a firm lead in the matter of dinghy classes which came and went with monotonous regularity. Those were the days of proliferating classes and clubs tended to bend to the winds of change. Perhaps it would have been attempting the impossible in the face of the innate individualism of the members, but, had agreement been reached on restricting the racing offered to a few classes of acceptable type, the quality of racing could only have been enhanced. The opportunity was missed and, by the time realisation dawned as to what was happening and the inevitable consequence, it was too late to reverse the trend. Dolphins gave way to Redwings, Redwings to Jollyboats, Jollyboats to Albacores, GP14s to Enterprises, Enterprises to Scorpions, and so on. And whenever a suitable championship loomed on the horizon, dinghies of that class would begin to appear in the local boat parks, only to disappear after the championship had passed.

The Saturday programme of racing in the Sound for which the Blue Book Committee had originally been formed continued into the mid sentence, although signs of disenchantment began to appear well before that.

Various measures were introduced in an endeavour to inject more enthusiasm into the Saturday programme. From 1965 the Royal Plymouth Corinthian Yacht Club offered the prestigious Minima Cup to a different class each season for overall points in Blue Book racing, a distinction eagerly sought by the classes. And in 1969 the Royal Western Yacht Club said they were anxious to encourage yachts to race in the Sound on Saturdays and they put up a trophy.

Safety, too, was placed very much in the forefront of the PPSA agenda, with much talk though little immediate action about buying or chartering a safety boat and introducing VHF communications. Three years were to elapse before a chartered launch was made available to host clubs and, unbelievably, it took eight years to arrive at a decision to purchase two Pye handheld VHF sets. Universal safety regulations were also adopted.

The occasional contretemps between racing yachtsmen and 'large vessels' which occur today were not unknown in the days of Blue Book racing. In 1963 QHM's reminder to the Association that large vessels have right of way north of the Breakwater resulted in the following rather strange entry in the minutes: "We therefore ask members to keep well clear of ships under way (you may paddle clear of danger without prejudice). Future complaints may result in disqualification." History does not relate whether this ruling was ever challenged by way of protest or appeal. Nor will it escape the notice of the reader that the wording of the minute would appear to confer on members of the PPSA 'Committee' a privilege denied to others. It is surprising that an Association which has been so resistant to any suggestion of interference in clubs' race management should blithely overrule IYRU rules.

Eventually, in 1972, it was generally accepted that a complete rethink of Blue Book racing was indicated. It was decided to hold an open meeting where all interested parties could exchange ideas and endeavour to find a solution to the problem of dwindling numbers.

Those attending the meeting (a mere 60, of whom at least 20 were not actively engaged in racing) were not to know that the malady was terminal and that within three years PPSA organised racing would be dead. However, lest it might be thought that insufficient was done to prolong life, it is worth summarising in some detail the proceedings at that meeting.

The President, no doubt anticipating the inevitable assertions that race management might be partially to blame, stressed at the outset that the Association had no jurisdiction over the handling of racing by the host clubs.

The proliferation of classes, already alluded to, was the subject of lively discussion, with arguments in favour of draconian measures to limit them, but, as might have been expected, when it was suggested that the matter be put to the vote, entrenched attitudes prevailed and the minutes record 'No decision on the limitation of classes was reached.'

Instead, the meeting explored the question of minimum numbers of starters, but again voting was inconclusive, representatives of small classes naturally not wanting to be left out of the Saturday programme on this score.

In the discussion which followed, several alternatives to the traditional Saturday Blue Book racing were suggested – open meetings at less frequent intervals, a drastic curtailment of weekly evening racing by combining clubs' programmes, or even the novel idea of the host club foregoing its evening racing when it was its turn to organise Saturday Blue Book racing. But it was recognised that the PPSA could do nothing to interfere in clubs' programmes and, when a vote was taken on reducing Saturday racing; it was again inconclusive.

One speaker went so far as to suggest a reduction in the number of clubs in the Port.

Clutching at straws, others suggested Olympic type courses, 'picnic type' races to attractive spots like Cawsand and, more vaguely, greater encouragement to newcomers to enter the sport.

In reply to a complaint about the number of marks being used, one representative said that at his previous club on the Medway it had been found perfectly satisfactory to number marks and provide clear instructions embracing 40 to 50 courses. This statement was received in stunned silence.

When a lady asked for a monthly circular to be published, the President anticipated the Secretary's imminent resignation and pointed to the comprehensive fixtures list for the whole season.

A proposal from RPCYC that the season should be organised on a points basis with overall prizes in place of the weekly cash prizes then offered was readily accepted.

Several speakers voiced what must have been in most people's minds while they listened to arguments aimed at explaining why enthusiasm had declined. After all, at one time Blue Book racing had been the highlight of the week. Sadly, for one reason or another, apathy had crept in.

After two hours, agreement was reached on the following points:

1. Saturday racing would continue.
2. Two points series would be run.
3. A fee would be paid to class captains at the beginning of the season, transferred to the PPSA and thereafter used to reimburse host clubs and provide prizes.
4. Class captains would make entries for their members.
5. Casual entries would be made direct with the host club.

The hope, forlorn it was to turn out, was that the classes might succeed in fostering morale where the clubs had failed.

When the new system commenced in 1973, the clubs went flat out to try to make it a success.

WHSC, RPCYC, MSA and RWYC all agreed to hold their safety boats in readiness at the host club's disposal, and others would provide back up in the light of the Friday evening weather forecast. A/QHM agreed to supply a boat if one red flag was flying and even Drake's Island offered to help in the event of a real emergency.

Classes were allocated to RWYC, RPCYC and MSC for the purpose of maintaining and displaying points charts. Universal Sailing Instructions were issued and attempts made to resolve the matter of VHF communications, although the first sets did not materialise until the following year.

Alas, all efforts were in vain and at the end of the season a decision was taken to apply the 'Rule of 4'. Any class which had not averaged at least 4 starters in its best 10 races (there were 19 Saturdays) would not be offered a separate start in 1974. On this rule the Fireballs and Ospreys were relegated to the handicap race. And the rule would also apply in 1974, so that a further reduction in starts was almost inevitable in 1975.

1974 saw no improvement. In desperation the PPSA sent out a questionnaire in a final attempt to ascertain the cause of the decline. Again the response was disappointing.

At the end of the season the PPSA considered whether the Saturday programme should be dropped and only on a casting vote from the Chair was it agreed to have another try in 1975, although for the first time there would be no Blue Book racing when there was an open meeting.

This led to the Mayflower Sailing Club declaring that it would hold racing on all Saturdays when there was no PPSA racing. The Secretary took exception to this 'unilateral' decision and asserted that it was contrary to 'our agreed policy'. MSC gave an assurance, however, that their courses would be laid in liaison with the Race Officers of any programmed events so as not to interfere.

By the end of 1975 it was clear that several clubs were prepared to switch off the life support machine. RPCYC withdrew their Minima Cup and WHSC flatly opted out. RNSA were not keen to continue and RWYC conceded that it would be better for clubs to hold their own racing.

Finally it was decided that RPCYC and MSC should divide the 18 free Saturdays between them, although, when the 1976 fixtures list was finalised, RPCYC's other commitments meant that the Saturday programme would be sailed mainly under the burgee of MSC.

And so Blue Book racing came to an end. Like the Blue Book Committee and the Blue Book itself, it had outlived its purpose. The whole sailing scene had changed. New clubs had been formed, so the sailing fraternity had become more fragmented and consequently more insular; more clubs were offering mid-week racing, which doubtless imposed strains on domestic considerations; and the dinghy boom was giving way to the yacht boom with the increase in affluence and the development of factory production in GRP.

While those who were part of the Blue Book scene may look back on it with nostalgia, its demise was inevitable in the face of all these changes.

CHAMPIONSHIPS

We have seen that one of the factors leading to the formation of the PPSA was the increasing number of classes wishing to hold their national championships at Plymouth.

A glance at the General Rules of the Association printed in the 1956 Year Book reveals no mention of the Association having exclusive authority in the organisation of these events, but the minutes of a meeting held on 30 October 1958 indicate the direction in which things were moving. It was agreed that the World Hornet and Flying Fifteen National Championships should be run on the following basis:

1. That the ultimate responsibility for all events and social activities should rest with the Association.
2. That the preliminary work and organisation of the Hornet Championship should be carried out by the Royal Plymouth Corinthian Yacht Club.
3. That the preliminary work and organisation of the Flying Fifteen Championship should be carried out by the Torpoint Mosquito Sailing Club in conjunction with the Royal South Western Yacht Club.
4. That a representative of the Association should be present at all Committee Meetings.
5. That the Association should approve the social programme with particular reference to the Reception given by the City.
6. That all dealings with the City should be conducted by and through the Association Officers.
7. That all correspondence relating to the Championships should be on Association headed paper.
8. That in order to save expense, the Association should arrange joint printing facilities for both Championships.
9. That the responsible clubs keep a separate account of all income and expenditure regarding the Championships. The Association would guarantee the Club from loss, but the Club was to pass over any profit to the Association.
10. That sailing instructions should be printed by the Association.

The QHW stated that if both the Championships were to be run during the one week, it would be practicable for the RNSA to render their usual assistance and to provide the Committee Boat and lay the marks.

Since no amendment of the Constitution was made in this connection, it may be concluded that the resolutions were intended to apply only to these two championships, yet, in subsequent Year Books, we find this foreword:

The Port of Plymouth Sailing Association co-ordinates the fixtures and regatta dates of affiliated clubs. It is the organising authority for championship meetings held at Plymouth and allocates relevant duties to clubs and individuals. Classes wishing to hold their championships in the Sound should write in the first instance to the Hon. General Secretary.

This obviously introduced conditions for the acceptance and organisation of championships which were not enshrined in the Constitution and, although many came to accept them as binding upon the clubs, there were some who considered them to be unconstitutional and so the seeds of future disaffection were sown.

While it was inevitable that ultimate control of championships would devolve to the clubs, it is to the PPSA that much of the credit must go for promoting Plymouth as one of the top championship venues in the Country.

The PPSA forged close links with the Civic Authority which at that time shared the same aspirations. Pressure was brought to bear to have dinghy parking and launching improved and the facilities at Elphinstone materialised in time for the main championship boom of the sixties.

Appreciating the need for inexpensive accommodation for the young crews, the Association arranged through the local Hoteliers Association B & B accommodation for a standard charge of 10 shillings a night. On occasion even church halls were hired where students from universities could camp on the floor.

Press coverage, both local and national, was won on a scale which is not seen today and by 1968 PPSA Representatives were manning the Plymouth Stand at the Boat Show in Earls Court and an annual contribution of £10 was made to the cost of mounting the exhibition of Plymouth's attractions as a venue for championships.

The links with the Royal Navy and the Army were also strong. As already mentioned in the arrangements for the 1959 championships, a MFV manned by Dockyard personnel was provided as Committee Vessel; for one or two prestigious events even HMS "AVELEY". Then the rounding marks. These were white clinker fully decked pram dinghies bearing orange superstructures. Although somewhat clumsy by today's standards, they did possess the advantage of discouraging too close a rounding. The marks were kept at the Camber and, on the morning of a race, they were towed out into the Sound by QHM's launch where, under the supervision of the Race Officer, they were anchored, usually in the form of an equilateral triangle with one mile sides. Once laid, however, the course tended to remain unaltered. Competitors were far less demanding in those far off days, although race management had become a little more sophisticated than pre-war when the Prince of Wales Cup Race was sailed around the navigation buoys with a fixed line off West Hoe.

It was not everyone who welcomed all this activity on their water and by 1958 they had to be silenced by the Association deciding to limit championships to two a year. However, this resolution, like so many others, appears to have been quickly forgotten and three years later five championships were accepted. And in 1966 there were so many applications that six were booked in while four others were rejected.

But all was not well. The skies over the local championship scene were not completely clear and the distant rumblings of the approaching storm could be heard in meeting after meeting.

It can be gathered from the foregoing that the PPSA was increasingly shedding its load while retaining ultimate control of championships. The host clubs were doing more and more and the tail was beginning to wag the dog. In 1960, MSC, one of the two clubs bearing a major part of the burden, objected to the existing system and harked back to the early days of full cooperation and involvement. After the long and detailed discussion (a recurring expression in the minutes of the PPSA), it was agreed that the host club system was the most practicable and that the host clubs' duties should be fully discussed at the AGM.

Apparently the outcome of this long and detailed discussion was merely to change the title of the club taking the most active part in a championship from Host Club to Headquarters Club. That year, too, it was reported that there had been an average loss of £50 per championship and a levy on affiliated clubs, based on membership size, was exacted. It was also hoped to obtain from the City a grant of £25 per championship.

The bureaucratic system was clearly under considerable strain. By 1962 the storm clouds were gathering and a misunderstanding as to the duties and responsibilities of Headquarters Clubs led to another long and full discussion. Reference was made to the original objective of the PPSA being to run championships and again this seems to have gone unchallenged. The minutes record that nothing was resolved, and the status quo remained somewhat uneasily as before for a further two seasons, during which the PPSA hosted national championships for Enterprises, Scorpions, Seaflies, Graduates, Cadets, Swordfishes, Mirrors, 505s and Wayfarers.

But in 1960 the whole matter was brought to a head when WHSC asked bluntly whether championship profits should go to the PPSA, the Headquarters Club or the Class Association. Obviously the PPSA had by then got out of the red. Again the issue was dodged and no decision was reached.

The following month MSC took up the cudgels and again the matter was deferred. Unbelievably, it was put off yet again the next month.

Fuel was added to the fire when it was discovered that the PPSA had double booked the Fireballs and Cadets, an example of administrative inefficiency which its critics were not reluctant to exploit.

When the storm did finally break, it was the RPCYC who triggered it by delivering an ultimatum which struck at the very foundations of the Association. At a meeting on 8 May 1964 the Club's Representatives informed those present that RPCYC considered that any profits from championships should go to the club concerned. MSC's Representative opposed this and supported the view that all profits should go to the PPSA. When a vote was taken, MSC's view prevailed.

There was much talking about this decision over the next eight months, culminating in a Finance Sub-Committee being formed to consider the matter. At the beginning of 1965 they reported as follows: All profits or losses from national or area championships which had been agreed to by the PPSA, after normal championship expenses had been met, would go to the PPSA and all catering or bar profits or losses would go to the club concerned. The recommendation was accepted.

This brought a swift reply from the Corinthian in the form of what amounted to a unilateral declaration of independence in the matter of championship organisation. Their letter stated bluntly that they did not agree with the findings of the Finance Sub-Committee. They considered that they should run their own championships from beginning to end and the PPSA should only be consulted on dates. In future they would decide which championships they would run and would make all arrangements themselves, including financial.

As usual, the minutes record this being discussed at great length, the President's remark that it would be a great pity if the RPCYC were to leave the PPSA underlining the seriousness of the situation. And yet again there is no mention of the feeling in some quarters that the Association had usurped powers which were not envisaged in the Constitution.

So the matter was referred back to the Sub-Committee to seek a way out of the impasse and this time, instead of the interminable discussions, diplomacy took over and all through that summer there were comings and goings as a solution was sought.

Finally what the minutes record as 'an amicable agreement' was reached on September 29th and from that date host clubs organised their own events. They had in effect already been doing so for a considerable time.

The PPSA, however, continued to exercise ultimate control over the acceptance of championships and dates, which is really the only way of avoiding chaos on the water. It also continued to represent the clubs in championship arrangements with the Civic and Service Authorities, they preferring to negotiate with one body rather than with individual clubs. And the City grant, which had now been won, was to remain as PPSA income.

The extent to which PPSA authority in the matter of championship acceptance was recognised is well illustrated by something which happened in 1968. While attending the Boat Show in London, the Commodore of the RPCYC was approached by the International 505 Class Association with a view to his Club running both their 1969 Nationals and the Worlds the following year. He deemed it improper to give an answer there and then, so, on his return to Plymouth, he arranged an emergency meeting of the PPSA to consider the applications. These were approved in principle, but the minutes record that decisions on the hosts and dates were deferred until the next meeting.

The principal exception to the new system of championship organisation was the International Cadet Class which was in Plymouth in 1963, 1964 and 1965. It was intended that this would be run by the PPSA again in 1966, possibly because there was little enthusiasm among clubs for hosting an event promising minimal bar profits, but, after MSC complained that clubs had failed to honour their commitments in the past championships, it was left to MSC to run it alone.

The Cadets do not appear to have been universally popular. In 1966 RPCYC said they were not prepared to entertain them in their Clubhouse again. And when it was learned from a press report that the Class would be returning to Burnham in 1967 and the PPSA had not been informed, this discourtesy was recorded in the minutes. Nevertheless the Cadets asked to come back to Plymouth in 1972, but their application was refused because of the conditions imposed by the Class for the accommodation of some 300 cadets and supporters. All, however, was forgiven and forgotten with the passage of time and the Cadets were welcomed back enthusiastically by the Corinthian in 1989, 1990, 1991 and 1992.

One of the principal attractions of Plymouth as a championship venue had been what Uffa Fox described as 'one of the best areas of sheltered water for racing to be found anywhere' and at first it was taken for granted that courses would always be laid inside the Breakwater. The increasing demands of the dinghy classes, however, made a re-think imperative if Plymouth was to retain its premier position in the face of competition from the many other venues now wooing the championships.

The interference from commercial and naval shipping in the Sound, even before Brittany Ferries became established here, proved unacceptable to the more prestigious championships. The tidal conditions also attracted unfavourable comment. At the start of one of the races in the 1968 420 World Championship the French National Champion was heard to exclaim, "Mon Dieu! La mer monte, mais le courant pousse au large." The start line had, of course, been laid under the cliffs of Staddon Heights.

A condition of the 505 World Championships coming to Plymouth was that courses would be laid outside the Breakwater, at that time quite an innovation and this was tried and tested in the preceding Nationals. Now, of course, it has become the norm, the alternative of racing inside the Sound being offered as a bonus in the event of unfavourable conditions otherwise prompting a cancellation.

Car parking has always been a problem for organisers of large events and for some time the PPSA was able to have competitors' cars and trailers parked inside the Citadel. What a Godsend this was. But the start of the troubles in Northern Ireland put paid to that and the problem remains unsolved and, on the face of it, insoluble.

Relations with the Civic Authority, first through the Entertainments and Publicity Manager, then the Marketing Bureau, have been very good, although over such a long period it was inevitable that there would be the occasional hiccup.

Possibly the most serious of these, and the one which still evokes deep passions, was the decision in 1974 to withdraw the concession of free boat parking during national championships. The amount of money saved by the City was out of all proportion to the damage done to Plymouth's reputation as a championship venue and events already in the pipeline were cancelled following the adverse publicity in the national press.

After many meetings with City Officers and Councillors, the Council rescinded the minute authorising the charge, but in the intervening eight months applications from class associations had dried up. The Entertainments and Publicity Manager, however, undertook the task of writing to the Yachting Press and all the class associations with the result that within three months requests were received from the Moths, Redwings, Solos, Wayfarers, Shearwaters, Tornados, Graduates and 18 foot Skiffs.

The imposition of a £2 parking charge may seem a trivial matter for engendering so much bad feeling, but the class associations were undoubtedly given the impression that the City no longer welcomed them.

Civic receptions have always brought their own peculiar problems. At a meeting in 1969 with Council Representatives, the PPSA delegation was told that the Hospitality Sub-Committee was under the impression that the same faces appeared at all the receptions, to which the President replied that it was not surprising since it was the same people who tended to do all the work in the championships.

At one stage the Council decided that locals should not be invited to championship receptions, but instead they would all be received at a civic reception at the conclusion of Plymouth Regatta Week. But eventually the PPSA decided to opt out of receptions altogether, although it was left to individual clubs feeling a pressing need for such entertainment to apply for it. That situation continued for many years, but gradually the odd application grew into the norm and the same old problems have surfaced again.

The misplaced exuberance of some competitors has, on occasion, also heaped on the shoulders of the PPSA the displeasure of the City Fathers. There was such an instance at an end of championship formal reception and dinner in the Guildhall, when the winner was observed streaking through the ballroom, some of the waitresses complained of unwelcome attentions from diners and a group of competitors was apprehended by the Police carrying the Commodore's Mini from the Car Park towards the pond outside the Council Offices. The Association was informed that this behaviour spelt the end of such events in the Guildhall.

On a more serious note, the policy of the City to divert championships from Elphinstone to Teat's Hill (Queen Anne's Battery) was a running sore in the side of relations between the two bodies.

The full story of PPSA involvement in the development of QAB is dealt with elsewhere in this history. Suffice it to say here that there was considerable resistance, particularly from the two clubs hosting most of the championships.

In 1967 at a meeting with the City Engineer, the President declared, "We run championships as a civic duty with volunteers, not because they are wanted," and followed this up with a request that the PPSA should meet the Town Clerk to discuss the future of championships with particular reference to their location.

An honest attempt was made to live with what eventually was thought to be inevitable. When it was predicted that between 180 and 200 Fireballs would come in 1972, it was agreed that the fleet should be split with 90 berthed at Coxside. The following year, however, the Alcores, after being parked entirely at that as yet undeveloped and unprotected site, announced that they would not return to Plymouth if they had to go there.

Both MSC and RPCYC went on record as saying that they were not prepared to run championships if they were forced to use Teat's Hill.

The march of events was to make this ultimatum irrelevant, but it gradually came to be accepted on both sides that, where the size of a fleet made it necessary, Elphinstone would continue as the main base with any overspill berthed at Teat's Hill.

In the early days it was customary to indicate the windward mark by smoke flares, but this was discontinued following complaints from the rescue services. In the 1970 505 World Championships a huge gas-filled balloon was attached to the weather mark and, while it was excellent visually, overnight parking and security proved too much of a bugbear for general use and, in the end, lead boats were found to be the most convenient solution.

The Gate Start was first used in the Sound for the 1967 National Enterprise Championship in spite of dire warnings from local pundits that it could not possibly work here. It did, and it does whenever classes ask for it.

Host clubs soliciting championships today must be envious of the situation earlier on when it was a buyers' market. In 1967 it was agreed that no championship would be accepted where a class was unable to guarantee a minimum of 50 entries and in 1969 a letter was sent to the Press announcing that Plymouth would entertain no more applications until March 1970, when those for 1973 only would be considered.

But while it may now be a sellers' market so far as dinghy championships are concerned, in latter years there has been a considerable growth in the demand for 'round the cans' yacht events. And in this, of course, the switch of emphasis to the Water Events Base at QAB with its marina facilities has played a large part.

The Hurley 22s and Silhouettes have for many years held their annual championships here, but in recent years Queen Anne's Battery has been able to accommodate those with more exacting requirements. The formula 40 Series of 1986 developed into the annual City of Plymouth Multihull Grand Prix. The Micro-Multihull UK Championship in 1988 paved the way for their European Regatta to come here in 1991. The Ultra 30s (are they yachts or big dinghies?) appear to have accepted Plymouth on their circuit, having raced here in 1990, 1991 and 1992. But the two events which have placed Plymouth on the yacht championship map were undoubtedly the prestigious Sigma 33 and J24 National Championships of 1991.

The Multihulls and Ultras have brought their own peculiar problems in that their potential speed and desire to race close to the shore for spectator value require special dispensation from QHM in the matter of speed restrictions. And the requirements of yachts like the Sigmas to have courses laid some distance offshore can pose problems with the Gunnery Range of HMS CAMBRIDGE.

The national championships of some classes have become firmly entrenched in the PPSA Annual Sailing Programme. They are:

The Silhouette Rally and National Championship	RPCYC
The Hurley 22 National Championship	PYC
The British Students National Dinghy Championship	MSC
The British Students National Board Championship	MSC
The Bosun National Championship	RNSA
The Offshore Power Boat Championships	RPCYC

In addition, the International Cadet Class has come to Plymouth on a three or four year cycle twice as an alternative to Burnham-on-Crouch.

While some might sigh for the days when Plymouth was in the fortunate position of being able to pick and choose among the dinghy classes wanting to hold their national championships in the Sound, realistically it is probably as well that the demand in this respect has declined. A glance at the 1991 programme of events having to be accommodated in addition to the over-crowded club programmes shows how impossible it would be to cope with the situation of the sixties. And meanwhile there has, of course, been a great increase in ferry traffic.

March	British Students Board Sailing Championships
May	City of Plymouth Multihull Grand Prix
June	Shrimper Rally & National Championship Port of Plymouth Dinghy Regatta
July	Sigma 33 National Championship Sea Cadet Corps S.W. Area Championship R.M. Bosun Championships European Micro-Multihull Regatta Bosun National Championship National Schools Sailing Association Regatta Int. Cadet National Championship
August	Silhouette Rally & National Championship
August	H.22 National Championship
September	Plymouth Round Offshore Circuit Championship Port of Plymouth Yacht Regatta
November	British Students National Dinghy Championships

THE PORT OF PLYMOUTH REGATTA

As has been mentioned earlier, there had been a Port of Plymouth Royal Regatta as long ago as the mid Nineteenth Century. This developed into a Plymouth Week (a curious name since it sometimes occupied only three days or so), which had to be coordinated with the other principal regattas around the coast rather than with local fixtures as in post war years. The Thames clubs at that time were responsible for arranging the regatta programme and it is interesting to note that the same problems arose then on a more global scale as they do today locally when regattas conflict.

The Western Morning News of 28 March 1907 record such a conflict. The Thames clubs had allotted Plymouth three days in the first week of June. Such a proposal, says the report, could not be entertained and it was suggested that the Royal Western Yacht Club 'as the leading yachting organisation in the West' should formulate a scheme whereby consecutive fixtures might be arranged in the West in the month of August. The Club accordingly put forward tentative proposals which appear to have been misunderstood in some quarters, for the Western Morning News reported on 'the hasty criticisms voiced the previous evening in Torquay Townhall in connection with the Torbay Regatta.!

The report continued 'The gentlemen who so vigorously denounced the action of the Royal Western Yacht Club were not cognisant of outstanding facts. Plymouth has no quarrel with Torquay and an undignified squabble will in no way enhance the success of yachting in Western waters. On all hands there is a desire in Plymouth that the dates of the various regattas in the West shall be settled on an amicable basis.

Eventually the matter was settled amicably, the three days in June allotted by the Thames clubs being changed to four days in August, the Plymouth 'Week' being followed by Dartmouth, then Torbay Regattas. The West Country had thus assumed responsibility for arranging its own programme of regattas and the pattern in Plymouth developed into Monday RPCYC, Tuesday RWYC, Wednesday Port of Plymouth Regatta, Thursday RSWYC. Weekends were left free for the fleet to move from port to port.

No doubt the attempt by the Royal Thames Yacht Club to have Plymouth 'Week' curtailed to two days during the Edwardian era had something to do with the decision of the West Country clubs to run their own affairs. That attempt had only been foiled by the personal intervention of Lord Valletort, Commodore of RPCYC.

Until the early thirties the magnificent J Class dominated Plymouth Week and such was the spectacle that local school children were taken to view the racing from the Hoe. By 1937 the 12 Metre yachts were taking their place and the whole atmosphere of the Regatta, with its fair on the Hoe, its water sports and its gracious social occasions, was soon to disappear with the threat of war.

It is against this historical background that the post war revival of Plymouth Week took place, initially on an ad hoc basis by individual clubs, then co-ordinated by the Blue Book Committee and eventually organised by the Port of Plymouth Sailing Association.

For a while following the cessation of hostilities, the Regatta was run as a local three day meeting with various clubs filling in the two days after the Port of Plymouth Regatta on the Wednesday. This continued after the amalgamation of the P.P.S.A. and the Port of Plymouth Regatta Committee in 1957 until Plymouth Week (now 8 days!) was inaugurated in 1963.

Mention has been made of the agreement under the terms of the 1957 merger whereby the name Port of Plymouth Regatta Committee would be dropped in favour of the combined title Port of Plymouth Sailing Association. Nevertheless, soon after the inauguration of Plymouth Week in 1963, we find the Port of Plymouth Regatta Committee reappearing in programmes and sailing instructions. Successive Trustees of the Regatta Fund turned a Nelsonian eye to the demise of their old Committee and continued to run the Wednesday Regatta as though the amalgamation had never taken place. It was not until 1976 that they finally faced facts and handed over the organisation of their Regatta to the PPSA.

The Week proved to be a great success and, when it preceded a national championship, entries in that class were often increased substantially by competitors wanting to dip their toes in the waters of the Sound before their great event.

In 1965 it was decided to organise the following year's Week on a points basis. The Chamber of Commerce presented the prestigious Sir Francis Drake Statuette for the winner of the largest class and their Industrial Committee followed this with a cup for the best performance by a visitor. Challenge trophies for the various classes were made available on indefinite loan to the PPSA by the host clubs.

The Drake Trophy, often being awarded to a class whose numbers were swollen by championship competitors, naturally travelled widely, even to Switzerland and California. Sadly it was stolen from the 1991 winner's home in Exeter and was never recovered. However, a replica was commissioned in 1992 financed mainly by the insurers.

The 1967 update of the PPSA Constitution saw the elimination of the Office of Regatta Secretary and much of the work leading up to the Week fell into the lap of the General Secretary. This burden was eased by opening the Regatta Headquarters Office in the RPCYC for a week beforehand, manned by the Secretary's Personal Secretary, staff from the City Entertainments Office and a roster of part time helpers. A fine example of co-operation by the City and the PPSA in the common interest. About this time, too, it became customary to end the Week with a Civic Reception and Prizegiving in the Guildhall.

Volunteers from the clubs reciprocated by going to London to help man the Plymouth Stand at the Boat Show, where the Regatta and the attractions of Plymouth were widely publicised.

Plymouth Week soon saw a return to something of the spirit and atmosphere that had permeated the local racing scene in the old Blue Book days. Free teas would be served at the host clubs, a greatly appreciated social occasion buzzing with talk of the afternoon's racing. Novelty events were organised with such spectacles as greasy pole fights and inter-club rowing races in whalers for a prize of a crate of gin. The impetus for these attractions coming mainly from those already past the first flush of youth, they soon disappeared from the programme, sadly never to be repeated.

Evening cruises and discos were tried periodically, but these met with only limited success and the gamble with regatta funds was considered too great a risk. Some form of social gathering in the various clubs on every evening except Sunday were, however, always arranged.

A succession of sponsors contributed generously to the prizes and printing costs and the Week became firmly established as one worth attending.

But just as the success of Plymouth as a championship venue had strained the administrative capability of the PPSA before, so it was to be found by 1971 that weaknesses in organisation were beginning to attract unfavourable criticism. Without the separate Office of Regatta Secretary, the Week had become too big for the General Secretary alone. It became the practice to form ad hoc Regatta Sub-Committees composed of members from all the host clubs and to appoint a Regatta Secretary responsible to the General Secretary, and this continued until the next update of the Constitution in 1984 saw the Office of Regatta Secretary being re-introduced.

The conflict with Cowes Week was something which occupied the PPSA's attention on a number of occasions. The date of the Week had at first been dictated by the Royal Navy leave period, as Service boats took part in considerable numbers. As their presence dwindled, however, it was thought more important to hold the Week early in school holidays. Both considerations were thought more valid than catering for the comparatively few yachts and crews going to Cowes and the PPSA's true order of priorities is perhaps best reflected in a report of another full and lengthy discussion on 22 August 1977 when it was held that free teas were far more important than attempts to fit in with Cowes, Torbay, Salcombe or Falmouth!

At its peak Plymouth Week attracted entries in excess of 150, but, just as with Blue Book Racing, enthusiasm for the Regatta began to dwindle and ways were sought for injecting a greater appeal.

In 1982 the Royal Western Yacht Club instituted weekend racing for yachts over Olympic courses laid outside the Breakwater, but an experiment in finishing races at Torpoint on that Club's day was a failure. At the wash up meeting, in view of declining numbers, it was decided to reduce the qualifying number of entries to constitute a class, to curtail racing for yachts outside the Breakwater to 2 days and to eliminate the final Saturday of the Week.

Two years later an attempt to attract more yachts by introducing team racing met with little success. With lack of sponsorship, a financial loss was sustained and, for the first time, the wisdom of holding a week's regatta was brought into question. Clubs were asked to consider the matter and RWYC agreed to circularise over a hundred owners for their opinions.

The outcome of these deliberations was a reluctance to take what might prove to be an irrevocable step and the 1985 Week would go ahead. Yachts would again have their weekend outside the Breakwater with the added inducement of including it in the PIPS and POPS Series. And it was hoped to introduce something of the atmosphere of Salcombe Week by moving all the novelty events up river to TRSC.

Again there was limited response and an open meeting was arranged for the exchange of ideas. And again a stay of execution on the Week was granted.

The new marina at Queen Anne's Battery offered free berthing for yachts and racing outside the Breakwater was once again organised by RWYC, while an inducement for dinghies took the form of giving over the Wednesday to inter-club team racing in Bosuns made available by the Royal Navy.

Everyone was aware that the writing was on the wall and at the AGM the President, in reviewing the past year, said, "Plymouth Week is still a problem which must be solved if it is to continue." SSC did make the attempt in a written paper suggesting radical changes, but only RNSA and CYC made any response.

September 29th 1986 was decision day. Following the wash up meeting of that year's Regatta Committee, it was agreed to abandon Plymouth Week. Instead the PPSA would run a Port of Plymouth Regatta from Friday to Sunday without host clubs.

There were diverse views on where the Regatta was to be based and in the end a Sub-Committee was formed and told to get on with it as they thought fit. And inevitably they went for a compromise hoping to satisfy everyone.

Catering was to be at Queen Anne's Battery for both yachts and dinghies but additionally the RPCYC and MSC would provide catering in their premises for the dinghies. A buttery and disco was arranged at QAB for the Saturday evening and the prizegiving also there on the Sunday. Free berthing would be provided at QAB, so it was expected that the event would be mainly based there in spite of there being no club. The Regatta Office, however, was to be located at RPCYC from whose line racing would be conducted.

As can be imagined, free berthing in the new marina had a great appeal and there were three times as many yachts as there had been the previous year, but there was no impact on the dinghy entry. Social events were described in the minutes as a disaster.

1988 was the year of the Armada celebrations and it was decided to hold separate yacht and dinghy regattas with their own organising committees, the Yacht Regatta taking place just after the finish of the Armada Cup Race from San Sebastian.

The presence of Spanish and French yachts together with splendid sponsorship made this event an outstanding success and such was the confidence of the Committee that similar regattas were booked for the same dates in 1989, 1990 and 1991.

In 1989 good sponsorship again, the introduction of Olympic courses in the Sound, free berthing for visitors and a discount for others at QAB resulted in another success, although the minutes record 'disco definitely out in future'.

But the trend was not to continue and in 1990, while the Dinghy event received sponsorship, the Yacht Regatta had to stand, or as it turned out, fall on its own feet. There was a marked drop in entries and a loss approaching £1000 was sustained.

In 1991 the PPSA sought to take advantage of a 'captive audience' in the RWYC Autumn Series by holding the Yacht Regatta over a weekend in that Series. But even that attempt failed and few of the yachts entered for the RWYC's Sunday race were prepared to make a weekend of it. Fortunately some sponsorship averted another financial disaster.

Not surprisingly, a suggestion at a PPSA meeting that Plymouth Week should be revived received very little support. In the words of yet another President making his valedictory speech, "The ideal format for Plymouth Week continues to elude us."

DIVISION II HANDICAPPING

It has been said over and over again that it is in no way a part of the PPSA's business to interfere in the race management of affiliated clubs. There are only a few matters in connection with race management where the PPSA, by unanimous agreement, has been given a mandate. The universal code for buoys used as marks, class signals and the administration of the RYA Portsmouth Yardstick Scheme are instances.

But handicapping was not always so. It was, and probably always will be, a prickly subject and the appointment by universal agreement of a Port Handicapper for all the Plymouth clubs took an incredible 70 years to achieve.

As early as 1906 the matter was being debated and, for the benefit of anyone who thinks this is purely a contemporary phenomenon, the following press report of such a debate at the AGM of the West of England Yacht and Boat Sailing Conference held at Saltash Sailing Club on 22nd November 1906 is quoted in full.

"The Hon. Secretary of Exe Yacht Club proposed 'That it is desirable in the interests of the handicap classes that a more uniform system of handicapping be employed, and that this Conference appoint an official Handicapper who will supply handicaps to clubs or regatta committees on application.' It was well known, he said, that handicaps varied tremendously. Some clubs worked their handicaps until it became a fine art with them, but when a boat from another club came along they had no data to base their handicap upon, and the result was it was worked more or less upon tonnage, instead of upon the merits of the boat.

Mr. S.B. Harvey (RPCYC) thought that, as a rule, the handicap results turned out remarkably well. The handicaps made by the RWSYC and the RPCYC, for instance, were without parallel in this respect. He felt that it would be impossible to appoint, with satisfaction to all concerned, an official Handicapper.

Dr. Williams (MYC) asked if the Conference had the right to appoint such an official. He knew the question of handicapping was a very sore point with many who raced. (Hear, hear.)

The Chairman admitted that the point was a very debatable one and, after further discussion, Mr. Pollar (Hon. Sec. Exe Y.C.) replied. He contended that an official Handicapper would have more data to work upon than anyone connected with a club.

The Chairman said the Conference must be very careful not to interfere with the carrying on of the work of the various clubs. (Hear, hear.) He did not think it would tend to add to its popularity if it sought to dictate to clubs in the matter of handicapping. It might be said that the Conference dealt with matters which did not concern it. He did not think they suffered much from the inequality of handicapping.

The motion was put to the meeting and was defeated by a large majority.

Before the formation of the PPSA, clubs continued to make their own handicaps. Even after World War II this was the practice and, when yachts from different clubs, or worse still ports, came together for the Plymouth Regattas, handicaps were often made on the basis of the first day's results. No wonder that the first race had something of the atmosphere of a slow bicycle race!

By the time the PPSA was formed, yachts were either Rated or Unrated. The former went into Division I (IOR), the latter into Division II under handicaps allocated by ad hoc Handicap Sub-Committees of the Association. These relied upon the results published by clubs, backed up by a considerable amount of inspired 'guesstimating'. Computer analysis and national performance tables were unheard of. The attitude was well summed up in an early PPSA minute which stated that in local racing handicapping was mostly for fun and should not be treated too seriously – unless the occasion warranted.

Twenty years ago the RYA introduced the Portsmouth Yardstick Scheme and the clubs quickly embraced this as a way out of their handicapping difficulties. The manner of its administration, however, soon proved to be open to the same complaints and criticisms.

At a meeting on 10 April 1974 the use of PYS for handicapping was discussed and it was pointed out that the application of this resulted in a different yardstick for a boat from different clubs. There had been a request that a Handicap Sub-Committee (for PYS) be set up through the PPSA to issue numbers for Division II boats in the Port.

Such a committee was appointed that summer. It made a determined effort to come to grips with the problem and issued the following statement of intent on 1 November 1974.

“The following points of policy were made:

(a) We are a Committee formed to co-ordinate handicaps for Division II yachts and to adjudicate within the Port.

(b) We state that:
Division I yachts are those which are IOR measured.

All other yachts are in Division II. It is these only with which we are concerned and Division I is outside our terms of reference.

We are in being to ensure that Division II yachts which race in this Port have the correct yardstick. The yardstick will apply to the yacht, not the helmsman.

How we propose to do this:

- (1) Write to Hon. Sailing Secretaries of clubs asking for their Div. II results for 1974 (explaining why we ask).
- (2) Ask Hon. Sailing Secretaries to display a notice in their clubs inviting applications for Div. II yardsticks for yachts wishing to race in 1975 (in a pro forma issued by PPSA).
- (3) We will issue a PPSA Certificate.
- (4) We will compile a list of such 'certificated' yachts.

We should like results at once. Applications by March 1st."

In the light of YR2 (which had not at that time been published by the RYA), these aims now appear naive in the extreme, but in the absence of such an RYA initiative it was probably the best that could be done and the following season PPSA certificates were being used.

This system was in operation for the next four seasons, not without the inevitable complaints. Opinion, predictably, was fairly evenly divided. Winners tended to think the PYS Scheme fair; losers were loud in drawing attention to its shortcomings. One can only sympathise with the Handicap Sub-Committee who had to operate the system in the face of a dearth of information from the clubs. And when the President offered to run the handicapping single-handed, the minutes of 25 September 1978 record that the offer was accepted with enthusiasm.

At the 1979 AGM Peter Compton (for he was just completing his first stint as President) presented a paper on handicapping and explained his thinking on the matter. Division II should be sub-divided into Class A (modern fin and skeg type) and Class B (traditional long keel type) as far as possible. In Class A the Portsmouth Number would be derived from YR2 and, except for changes in the boat, fixed for the season. Where a boat did not appear in YR2, a number would be derived and amended from the results of the next three races, that number being altered only where experience showed it to be incorrect. In Class B the Portsmouth Number would be reviewed regularly and amended in accordance with the advice in YR2, due regard being paid to yachts not being maintained or sailed in a competitive manner. Sailing committees would be encouraged to advise the Handicapper of any anomalies.

Right away RNSA recorded their objection to anything in the nature of 'golf handicaps', but when put to the vote the Handicapper's proposals were agreed.

However, RNSA, RWYC and YYC all subsequently had second thoughts and thought there was a very real danger of the system already agreed degenerating into a 'golf handicap', and, after further discussion, it was accepted that YR2 must prevail and that all adjustments to handicaps would be made strictly in accordance with the instructions therein.

In spite of this, within four months YYC was expressing concern that Primary Yardsticks were being altered in mid season. They felt so strongly that they threatened to withdraw all their yachts from races where this provision applied. They did not want the PYS system to become a 'golf handicap' (this term kept recurring), and it had been agreed at the AGM that no adjustments would be made to established yardsticks. So a Sub-Committee was set up to consider the matter.

The Sub-Committee ruled that numbers and procedures in YR2 should be adopted and this was readily agreed to, subject to the amendment that Primary Yardsticks should not be re-rated.

The concern about Primary Yardsticks is apparent from the foregoing. The agreement reached appears to preclude any adjustment of these, but YR2, while leaning heavily in that direction, does open the door ever so slightly. It says, 'A club should not hesitate to change a Portsmouth Number if, after racing, the listed Portsmouth Number appears to be inequitable, although Primary Yardsticks should not need to be changed and Secondary Yardsticks should be changed only with considered reluctance. All such changed Portsmouth Numbers rank as Trial or Club Numbers.'

In 1985 John Anstey, Chairman of the RYA Portsmouth Yardstick Advisory Panel, published an article in RYA News, drawing attention to two appeals arising out of failure to comply fully with YR2 and alarm bells were set ringing in the PPSA. It was decided that the risk of requests for redress could be averted by drafting a blanket rule on the administration of the RYA Portsmouth Yardstick Scheme by the PPSA for display on club noticeboards and reference in notices of race and sailing instructions. The rule was slightly altered after John Anstey had studied it and, in accordance with his suggestion, provision was made for ad hoc protest committees to deal with any requests for redress.

The blanket rule which has been used ever since is as follows:

Administration of the RYA Portsmouth Yardstick Scheme

A list of recommended numbers will be issued to clubs offering racing for Division II yachts by the PPSA Hon. Handicapper.

The recommended numbers will be reviewed by the Handicapper in accordance with such information that is supplied to him from the clubs. Any changes made will be notified to the clubs.

Calculation will be by computer programme which will calculate the performed number for each race each yacht finishes. (The preferred number will be the number the yacht would have to perform to finish one third of the way down the fleet on corrected time.) When the average performance of a class differs significantly from its allocated number an adjustment may be made.

Primary Numbers will not normally be changed.

Notwithstanding any of the above, the Handicapper reserves the right to take into account any of the relevant factors brought to his notice that affect the performance of a yacht in the interest of fair racing for all.

It has been said that the essential equipment for a Handicapper (apart from a computer and YR2) are the shoulders of a world heavyweight champion and the hide of a rhinoceros. This is no job for anyone placing too high a premium on personal popularity. Suffice it to say that the first Port Handicapper survived ten years of dedicated service during which the feedback from the RYA was that the PPSA's administration of their Portsmouth Yardstick System had been held up by the Advisory Panel as an example to others.

It is true that, within the Port, there have been the occasional expressions of dissatisfaction with handicaps and suggestions for 'moving the goal posts', but a reminder of the importance of adhering to what has been approved by the RYA Portsmouth Yardstick Advisory Panel has been sufficient to get things back onto an even keel. The very latest of these has merely resulted in recommendations from the Handicapper for discouraging yachts moving from CHS to PYS, without in any way invalidating the agreement reached with the RYA.

THE PPSA RADIO NETWORK

The possibility of having VHF Radio for use in the race management of championships was first mooted in 1966. The matter was discussed at intervals for the next eight years and it was not until 1974 that a modest beginning was made with the purchase of the first two hand sets.

Over the years these were added to, financed partly by grants from the City in connection with championships and partly by hire charges, and now the PPSA has a radio network capable of satisfying most of the needs of clubs running major events. Today it is hard to conceive how championships and regattas with over 200 boats could have been managed without the equipment we now take for granted.

At the present time the PPSA owns the following equipment:

One base station radio capable of both transmitting and receiving on channels 89 and 37. It is also able to receive only on those international channels which may be of interest.

Five hand-held radios capable of transmitting and receiving on channels 89 and 37 only.

One hand-held radio which operates on all international channels as well as 37 and 89.

Some affiliated clubs also have equipment capable of operating as part of the network where the fitting of channel 89 has been authorised by the PPSA. Included in these are the rescue launches of MSC, RWYC, PYC, RPCYC and Scott-Bader, as well as several clubs' own hand-held sets.

It took many years of delicate negotiations with the Licensing Authority by David M. Warren before the PPSA was granted the at present exclusive use of channel 89. This benefits not only the Association, but the many other users of channel 37 in the Port, especially when prolonged transmission is required in connection with the transmission of finishing times at the end of races.

The complicated nature of the network has also required lengthy discussions and negotiations with the Licensing Authority, in this respect by the PPSA Radiocommunications Adviser, Alan Pink, who in addition, as his title suggests, gives professional advice as needed to the affiliated clubs.

A complete guide to the PPSA Radio Network, compiled by Alan Pink, is in the possession of all affiliated clubs.

BERTHING IN CONNECTION WITH OPEN EVENTS

With comparatively few points of public access to the water and a rapidly growing local boat ownership, the provision of berthing for competitors in open events has been an ongoing problem from the earliest days of the PPSA.

At first this was overcome by ad hoc arrangements. The first dinghy championships were accommodated at RAF Mount Batten and for many years the Royal Western Yacht Club in conjunction with the City and the Management of Millbay Docks turned the Inner Basin into a temporary marina for events like OSTAR.

Eventually what was thought to be a permanent solution for dinghy championships was the conversion of the car park at Fishers Nose into the dual purpose Elphinstone Boat and Car Park. This was completed in time for the 1959 National Firefly Championship which attracted 232 entrants and the excellent slipway became renowned for the launching facilities it offered for large numbers of boats at all stages of the tide.

Millbay Docks, in spite of its rather drab surroundings, was in many respects ideally suited to the requirements of RWYC's great races. It was reasonably close to the Club, the main hotels of those days and the City Centre. But the Docks Board had other plans for the Inner Basin and in 1976 the RWYC urged the PPSA Clubs to present a united front on the question of both yacht and dinghy berthing and write to the South West Sports Council expressing their fears for the future of major events in Plymouth.

The growth of Plymouth as a ferry port is now a matter of history and clearly we were fighting a losing battle in the matter of Millbay, apart from underlining to the City and other bodies the importance to Plymouth of ensuring continued provision for accommodating these prestigious events. And that, ultimately, was to take the form of the development at Teat's Hill (Queen Anne's Battery) and to precipitate the move of the RWYC from West Hoe to QAB. But not before a number of false starts.

The story of QAB starts in 1967, when the City Engineer informed the PPSA that the Corporation had begun to develop Teat's Hill and would expect it used increasingly for championships. This was tantamount to hoisting a storm warning signal and from that time the future of the new development inevitably became linked to that of the established facility at Elphinstone and, later, with the RWYC's arrangements at Millbay Docks.

Teat's Hill was not viewed with much enthusiasm by RPCYC and MSC, who ran most of the dinghy championships, nor by RWYC, mainly on the grounds of remoteness from the Clubs. This fact was eventually to lead to RPCYC and MSC stating that they would not run championships if they had to use QAB and, as already mentioned, to RWYC's decision to move from West Hoe.

The initial plan for the Teat's Hill site was a vast dinghy part (the dinghy book was then still on and the yacht boom was yet to come) catering for the needs of local owners and to provide dual purpose facilities for schools and championships. A new building on the south side was envisaged, with a resident boatswain and a fleet of boats available to all schools in the same way as the municipal playing fields. During the summer holidays the Centre would attract championships, so it would be in use throughout the year.

It was a good scheme, for it was intended to incorporate all the amenities required by a host club for running a championship entirely on its own away from its own premises, and the opportunities for schools to foster competitive racing would have raised standards as had been done at Southampton. The scheme did not get as far as the selection of suitable boats before the inevitable financial squeeze occurred and it was put under wraps ostensibly pro tem, but in fact only to be completely forgotten as it gathered dust on the municipal shelves.

Nevertheless over the next few years a war of attrition was waged between the City and the PPSA. The City brought pressure to bear on the PPSA to accept Teat's Hill as the championship dinghy park but, in spite of the occasional provision of temporary toilets, a night watchman and even police surveillance, the PPSA considered the somewhat primitive conditions unacceptable for hosting major championships and a minute records "The Corporation should be ginged up to make Teat's Hill usable for championships."

By 1971 a wind of change was obviously blowing through the Civic Centre as far as Teat's Hill was concerned. The minutes of the Annual Fixtures Meeting that year record, "The order of the meeting was interrupted at this point to introduce Ald. Ivor Thompson, who was to tell us about (i) the immediate proposals for QAB and (ii) the possibility of using Plymouth as an RYA Olympic Training Centre. He revealed that the RYA National Coach had approached Plymouth in confidence, as well as other towns, so that the PPSA could not be informed. A Government grant of £38,000 was to be used to improve dinghy parking and launching facilities.

The minutes wisely recorded that Ald. Thompson, when pressed, assured the meeting that for the foreseeable future Elphinstone would continue to be used for championships.

In 1972 the citing of this verbal agreement enabled the PPSA to resist another attempt to divert championships away from Elphinstone, but that argument did not hold good the following year and the 1973 Albacore Championship was berthed entirely at Teat's Hill.

Apart from the problems inherent in having Club and competitors separated by a stretch of water, the main criticism arose out of the lack of security and Plymouth as a championship venue came under heavy fire in the yachting press.

Subsequently, by tacit consent, it became the practice to accommodate merely the overspill from large events at QAB (and so it continues to this day), although the PPSA always acknowledged the potential of QAB if only its recommendations were implemented.

So the Schools/Championship Centre scheme ended up in limbo, the more ambitious idea of an Olympic Training Centre sank without trace and other plans for the site were to suffer similar fates. One which has prompted the PPSA to avoid 'faits accomplis' came to light in 1980.

That year there was an on site meeting of Representatives from the RYA and the Sports Council. When the City Representative was asked about this, the PPSA was informed that the City knew nothing about the meeting and was not involved in the project which was then being discussed. Nevertheless a further meeting took place in the Civic Centre on 9 December 1980. The PPSA had been promised an invitation to attend, but this did not materialise. It was reported that plans were then 'in a fairly advanced stage' and the Secretary was instructed to write drawing attention to the PPSA's exclusion from these meetings. As a result PPSA was invited to a meeting the following June.

That meeting was, however, postponed and the Secretary was instructed to write to the City seeking an urgent meeting with them, the Sports Council, the RYA and A/QHM.

As a result of this approach, the City Engineer rang the Secretary assuring him that nothing would be finalised before the PPSA had an opportunity to examine the plans. The PPSA's rights would be protected and it was not the intention to pass over ultimate control of the site to any body. The PPSA would not have to apply to the Sea Angling Association (for it was they who were to have run the Centre) for permission to use the dinghy park and the City Engineer was well aware of host clubs' dependence on bar receipts during championships.

In view of these assurances, it was agreed to waive the request for the interim meeting.

By September, planning permission for this scheme had been granted and by the time a PPSA Representative attended a meeting he found that plans had been firmly laid and that there was nothing at QAB for us. The Secretary reported to the AGM that the assurances given by the former City Engineer almost a year previously had been completely ignored. The lesson was learnt the hard way.

As mentioned above, however, this scheme was also to be abandoned, although planning permission had been received and an estimated time of completion had been given as March 1983. In fact it was dead and buried by 1982 and it was then reported to the PPSA that there were no firm plans in existence for a third scheme. As the Secretary and others had only recently been shown a leaked plan of the proposed marina at QAB, this understandably evoked recollections of the unhappy experience over the previous scheme, and early contact was made with the RYA.

The RYA expressed interest in the possibility of their administering the proposed Water Events Centre through the PPSA and later, when they decided against this, it was hoped that the PPSA with the RYA could be involved in an advisory capacity. Accordingly, the RYA South Western Regional Association requested a meeting with the City and the PPSA.

That meeting was also attended by Representatives of the National Federation of Sea Anglers, who obviously thought they were still to be involved in whatever was being planned. The City Representative refuted the suggestions that the original agreement still held good and the PPSA was asked bluntly whether they could compete with the NFSA's previous proposals. Of course this was out of the question, but it was established that an entirely different management structure was now envisaged for the Water Events Centre with its Marina.

In 1984 the City informed the PPSA that championships would be permitted to use Elphinstone as a concession as the necessary amenities were not yet available at QAB, but obviously the intention was that in future they would be based there. The requirements of host clubs for these amenities had been submitted to the City in accordance with their request the previous year. Nine years later they had not been provided and championships were still being based at Elphinstone, with only any overspill at QAB.

This third scheme for QAB was destined to succeed where the others had failed, but in the process it did, of course, necessitate a Parliamentary Bill.

When the PPSA received from the RYA the draft proposals for the Bill, a programme of intense negotiations with the City was set in motion. These were conducted through the RYA's Barrister-at-Law, Edmund Whelan, and culminated in an undertaking by the Council of the City of Plymouth giving all the guarantees sought by the PPSA. Following this, the RYA, PPSA and Cattewater Harbour Commissioners withdrew all their objections and the Royal Assent was given in July 1985.

Past experience suggests that agreements entered into by the PPSA are inevitably overlooked by its officers and representatives with the passage of time (indeed this has already happened in the case of this undertaking) and a photocopy of the Undertaking is appended for the benefit of posterity.

But what of the reality of QAB as a Marine Events Base? The amenities for hosting major events are still non-existent and it is doubtful whether the dinghy park for 1500 boats originally planned would now be compatible with the Marina's operational requirements. Apart from parking space, launching on a regular basis for this size of dinghy fleets would surely be unacceptable.

Queen Anne's Battery functions well as a base for yacht events, especially now that the Royal Western Yacht Club is established alongside the Marina, but the vision of a multi-purpose Marine Events Base has never been fully realised and the geographical and economic have so far proved insurmountable.

As a guide to what the PPSA considered were the requirements for a 'centre of excellence' for hosting prestigious events, the suggestions offered to the City in 1983, and already referred to, are given below.

Queen Anne's Battery, Coxside, Plymouth Requirements for Dinghy and Trailer/Sailer Events

Approximate Frequency of Events

Plymouth Week – traditionally the first week of August. Few visitors at present come in yachts and dinghies number about 50.

Silhouette Rally & National Championship – held annually during the third week in August. Launching of trailer/sailers and recovery via slipway at QAB, boats remaining on marina berths or moorings during the week. Visitors have numbered 50+ in the past, but a more realistic contemporary figure would be 20 to 30 boats.

International Championships – the last major world championships here were the 505s in 1970 and the 420s in 1968. These attracted teams from 20+ nations.

National Championships average 5 to 6 a year, mainly in July and August, but going on to November. The greatest number ever was 232 Fireflies in 1959 and one or two classes can still attract perhaps 170+, but it is true that numbers have declined and on average fleets must now number only about 50 boats.

Area Championships and open meetings for dinghies average 6 per annum with fleets up to about 40 boats.

Board open meetings are increasing both in frequency and numbers. They now average 3 or 4 a year with numbers in excess of 200 on occasion. (Note: Weymouth recently hosted a meeting for 400+ boards.)

It is visualised that, with the provisions planned for QAB, trailer/sailer meetings up to mini ton size could be attracted here in much the same way as the Silhouettes have for the past 21 years.

Additionally, there is the question of schools sailing, which, if moved to QAB as planned over 17 years ago, would provide a demand on a regular basis throughout the year.

Facilities Required

Parking for 200+ boats, cars and road trailers.

Slipway(s) capable of launching up to 200 boats into sheltered water within a time space of 45 minutes.

Fresh water hosing so positioned that boats can be rapidly washed down without undue inconvenience to the recovery of large numbers coming up the slip(s).

Hay bags for resting boats on during inspections.

Weighing gantry and scales – maximum beam 9 feet.

Covered space or room at least 36 feet by 22 feet for sail measurement.

Space for spar measurement – not necessarily under cover.

Beach Master's Hut adjacent to slipway(s). Floor area at least 150 sq. ft. Flagstaff and halliards. Glass covered notice boards outside. Large notice boards inside. Telephone link to main building. Board for safety tallies. Safe for competitors' valuables. Public address system.

Rooms for protest hearings (at least two being heard simultaneously). During the 420 Worlds, three rooms were found to be essential, hearings being slowed down by the need in some cases to conduct the proceedings in three languages.

Administration room, with facilities for storing race impedimenta, trophies, etc. 'Phone and access to public address system essential.

Press office. 'Phone essential.

Space for briefing up to 400 competitors at a time.

Berthing during meetings for safety boats (recommended number 1 to 15 competitors).

Changing rooms and showers capable of coping with large numbers as above.

Catering capability for rapid refreshment of above numbers on occasions when morning and afternoon racing is on.

Communications are of vital importance. It must be possible to communicate with host club, Longroom (A/QHM) and essential services such as ambulance without using a payphone open to competitors.

NOTE: At present only RPCYC and MSC are likely to require these facilities. RNSA, who host area and national championships for Bosuns, use the Camber or Mt. Batten. Plym Yacht Club, Torpoint Mosquito Sailing Club and Tamar River Sailing Club all use facilities available near their premises.

NOTE: These requirements are based on those necessary for such events as World Championships. They may, therefore, be taken as maximum requirements and would not all be required for the average type of dinghy event coming to Plymouth. It would, nevertheless, be prudent to plan for the more prestigious championships and also for the trailer'sailer events which, hopefully, the proposed centre will attract. The requirements for yacht events have been given to you by RWYC.

Apart from the City's undertaking negotiated by the RYA, there remained the interests of various clubs' members who were to be displaced from their yacht moorings to make way for the new marina. For a long time they had enjoyed cheap moorings and free access to the slips at Teat's Hill.

The City provided as a one off exercise the trots now a familiar sight off Commercial Wharf. The Mayflower Boat Owners Association was formed to administer the moorings and those who had been displaced were the first to be accommodated. In the circumstances, it was a fair and sensible solution to what could have been a major stumbling block in the way of the Parliamentary Bill.

Although then the yacht berthing problem has been resolved by the facilities now established at QAB that of the dinghies is still in something of a state of limbo. The City has made it abundantly plain that Elphinstone as a championship dinghy part cannot be assumed to continue indefinitely and no satisfactory alternative exists at present.

RACE MANAGEMENT

Race management is, of course, a matter entirely for the clubs and the PPSA has always been careful to avoid the slightest suggestion of interference. It will act only when it receives a unanimous mandate to do so, and such authority has been given for the following:

1. Mandatory Rule for Sailing Instructions. It has been argued that a rule in the following form must be included in all SIs. "Where yachts are racing within the boundaries of a port they shall comply with such regulations as may be in force within that port. In particular, regulations regarding interference with the safe navigation of large vessels must be strictly observed. Any breach of such regulations may result in the yacht concerned being disqualified from the race in which she was sailing at the time or, in serious cases, such other races as the Sailing Committee of the Club may decide."

(Since the regulations for Plymouth are contained in Schedule 2 Rule 4 of the Dockyard Port of Plymouth Order 1984, these regulations need to be posted on club notice boards.)

2. Universal Code of Buoys used as Racing Marks. All clubs adhere to this series of letters for identifying marks of the course:

A	Mayflower Mobile	B	R.A.F.
C	Asia	D	North Drake's Island
E	Melampus	F	Queen's Ground
G	New Grounds	H	Duke Rock
I	Ash	J	'F' Buoy
K	Dunstone	L	South Mallard
M	North West Drake's Island	N	East Vanguard
O	North West Winter	P	South Winter
Q	East Bridges	R	Knap
S	East Tinker	T	Draystone
U	'C' Buoy	V	West Mallard
W	Armada West	X	North East Winter
Y	Deadman Bay	Z	R.M. Buoy

3. Class Warning Signals were standardised as recently as 1991:

IOR/IMS	Numeral 1	PYS (Class A)	Numeral 2
PYS (Class B)	Numeral 7	PYS (Class C)	Numeral 9
CHS (Class A)	Numeral 3	CHS (Class B)	Numeral 6
CHS (Class C)	Numeral 8	Level Rating	Numeral 5
J24 One Design	Flag J	Sigma 33 OOD	Flag E
Multihull	Numeral 4		

4. Division II Handicapping under the RYA Portsmouth Yardstick Scheme has already been dealt with in some detail.

5. PPSA Radio Network, too, has been dealt with above.

Apart from these special areas of race management, where absolute uniformity has been deemed necessary, the PPSA adopts something of a paternalistic attitude in its endeavours to ensure that racing is carried on with safety and consideration for others in mind. It reminds clubs of the need to liaise with Longroom and HMS Cambridge as necessary. It issues similar reminders in the case of events requiring Local Notices to Mariners (e.g. those involving fast multihulls, or children, or large numbers) and it does its best to ensure that, when more than one event is taking place at the same time, Race Officers are aware of the need for inter-club liaison.

There are also the rare occasions when the PPSA is asked to provide a Race Officer and Line Team, or an impartial Protest Committee. There is, however, one area of race management in which the PPSA could be said to have a share – that of PIPS and POPS.

In these series, while the conduct of the actual racing is the sole responsibility of the clubs, the PPSA makes the rules governing the series and decides the racing programme, acting through appointed PIPS and POPS Secretaries.

POPS (Plymouth Offshore Points Series)

Originally this Series was run on an ad hoc basis by clubs offering suitable races, each club in turn being responsible for organising the season's programme, and it was not until 1976 that the PPSA became involved. A minute dated 15 November that year indicates the intention.

"The Secretary reported that, following the recent meeting of yacht owners, Commander Lloyd Foster had written to him with a request that this series should come under the wing of the PPSA for administrative purposes.

Commander Foster gave a resume of the organisation of the series which had, up to now, been undertaken by participating clubs on a rota basis.

The clubs received the entrance fees and provided prizes for their own races. Both varied according to the event.

He suggested that the PPSA should arrange for the display of results at a central point, appointing a secretary to maintain the points charts, and that the Association should arrange a suitable prize-giving at the end of the season, for which it would provide the overall prizes. Mr. Ripley also thought that some support in the matter of overall prizes should come from the PPSA.

The general feeling was that the Association should accept these suggestions, but there was a little concern over the possible cost. One suggestion was that there should be a standard entry fee to include a sum payable to the Association; another that the organising clubs should subscribe towards overall prizes. It was accepted that a suitable function for the prize-giving need not involve a large outlay.

Commander Lloyd Foster, having agreed to act as Secretary, was asked to look into the matter of overall prizes and report back to the next meeting."

In the event, for the 1977 competition the five host clubs contributed £7.50 each to cover prizes and RPCYC offered their Devonport Cup as a challenge trophy. The first prize-giving was held at RWYC with supper being provided at £2 a head and the occasion was open to all local yachtsmen. It is interesting to note that, in addition to the POPS prizes, those for RWYC's passage and Channel races, and RPCYC's Morlaix Race and Pre-Season Series were presented at this function.

By the end of the 1977 season there was a feeling that Division II should have a separate series and this was to result in the introduction of PIPS the following year.

The 1978 prize-giving was held jointly for PIPS and POPS at RPCYC (£1 per head buffet) and was preceded by a skippers meeting.

In 1979, however, the PIPS/POPS prize-giving was discontinued, POPS prizes being presented at RWYC's annual dinner and prize-giving, and that practice has continued ever since. With its partial dependence on the Jim Burton Memorial Fund and latterly its two challenge trophies being provided by RWYC, it is perhaps understandable that the annual POPS prize-giving should have become RWYC orientated.

After the death of Jim Burton, who had been so prominent in the early days of POPS, RWYC asked RPCYC whether they would be agreeable to the Jim Burton Memorial Trophy being substituted for their Devonport Cup as the Challenge Trophy and that Club readily agreed. Subsequently, however, when CHS joined IOR in POPS, RWYC asked RPCYC if they would be prepared to restore their Devonport Cup as the Challenge Trophy for the new class. Again RPCYC agreed, but it appears that this never happened, for the minutes record that the Devonport Cup had 'gone walkabout'. It was found later that it had been re-allocated to Division II in Plymouth Week, but, by a remarkable coincidence, a RWYC Devonport Cup has been in the POPS programme ever since and that Club's records show its having been first awarded in 1985.

Apart from the problem of funding, now overcome by a registration fee of £7.50, a variable levy on host clubs and a contribution from the Jim Burton Memorial Fund, the principal concern of the organisers of POPS has always been how to justify the inclusion of patently non-offshore races while still attracting sufficient entries to make it all worthwhile. It must be admitted that in the latter respect they have not been very successful, although the Series does enjoy considerable local prestige.

A skippers meeting in 1980 resulted in RWYC proposing a weighting of points for cross-Channel races and an obligatory minimum of 3 cross-Channel/Wolf Rock Races to be sailed. But this does not appear to have had the desired effect for by 1982 the POPS Secretary was appealing to clubs to let him know what their members really wanted.

Things went along more or less as they had been before until 1985, when the Sunday of Plymouth Week was included in the programme, somewhat against the advice of the purists who clearly regarded this as a disgraceful dilution of 'offshore'. At the same time the question of separate points prizes for Division II yachts which competed in the longer events alongside IOR yachts was discussed. The complication of the new CHS, however, was thought to pose problems and some clubs had already taken a decision not to offer racing for this Class.

That year, too, the question of weighting points for the longer races surfaced again when SSC made a formal proposal, but no decision was taken and, at the skippers meeting at the end of the season, the feeling was again expressed that POPS should mean what it said and be confined to offshore races with 5 out of 7 to count. Yet when the 1986 programme appeared, the San Sebastian Race had been dropped and in its place was the RWYC's Falmouth Race.

At the 1986 skippers meeting, the poor turnout of the season was discussed. It was decided to give POPS a shot in the arm by introducing team racing and adding CHS, still viewed with some suspicion in the more conservative quarters. This inevitably had repercussions for funding, and finances were a little over-stretched in 1987 and 1988. The cost of crews prizes was discussed at some length and it was agreed that the registration fee should go up to £7, the clubs' contributions remain the same and any shortfall made up by the PPSA. As stated above, three years later the personal cost to competitors has increased by only 50p.

With the demise of IOR, POPS is now for CHS only. Where entries justify a split, this is made at 949 and above, and 948 and below. The Division with most entries receives the Jim Burton Memorial Trophy and the smaller Division the RWYC Devonport Cup. And team racing has sunk without trace.

But what of the frequently expressed concern that POPS should be essentially an offshore series? Well, the 1992 programme of 7 races includes 4 coastal races and the rules state that two long races and three coastal races count for points. A typical British compromise?

PIPS (Plymouth Inshore Points Series)

The Inshore Points Series came about in response to the demands of an increasing body of skippers who were not interested in the cross-Channel and longer passage races. These were mainly owners of smaller or slower boats – quarter and mini tonners, Hurley 22s, Sonatas and the like racing under the RYA Portsmouth Yardstick Scheme in Division II. Most passage races did include Division II, but it was mainly the larger unrated yachts which competed.

The first races in the new Series were sailed in 1978, when Leyland Wallpapers and Paints presented the very attractive Spinnaker Trophy and, until they were taken over by another firm, they gave limited sponsorship for prizes each year.

As with POPS, the optimum format for the Series has proved elusive, and the response to the various organisers' attempts to make it more attractive has more often than not been disappointing.

The first organiser embarked on a publicity campaign in the Press, on Radio and Television, but, after two seasons, he had to report that out of 131 boats registered as holding PPSA PYS certificates only 5 had qualified for PIPS and the average turnout had been 9 per race. He suggested a weekend series run from a committee boat in Cawsand Bay and his Club, YYC, undertook responsibility, although they envisaged that the annual event would be run by other clubs on a rota basis.

This attempt met with moderate success and, although at the end of the season there was an inclination to return to the previous format, after hearing the views expressed at the skippers meeting, it was decided to try another weekend series in 1981, this time to be organised by PYC.

That year there was some pressure from those IOR skippers more interested in 'round the cans' racing than the programme offered in POPS. Opinion in the PPSA was divided on this issue, some feeling that it would lift the standard of competition, others that it would deter the less experienced. It was decided that, while the inclusion of IOR boats should be discouraged, it was up to the host club to accept or refuse such entries.

1982 saw a compromise in the format with a weekend meeting plus one race from the programme of four clubs offering Division II racing. Again PYC were the organisers and, since the minutes record the President's congratulations to the Club on a well organised series, this seems to have been reasonably successful notwithstanding a decision by PYC to send out a questionnaire to ascertain exactly what skippers wanted.

In the event, this was never done, and it fell next to RPCYC to take on PIPS, which they ran in 1983 purely as a weekend meeting.

In 1984, again as a result of suggestions made at the annual skippers meeting, a return to a weekend plus five other races was the programme arranged by RPCYC. That year, too, saw problems arising out of CHS. Some clubs were as yet undecided whether to include racing under the new handicap. Fears were being expressed concerning the inevitable splitting of the non-IOR fleet and the minutes record a strongly held conviction that one system, either PYS or CHS, would founder.

In 1985 a return was made to a season's series with the inclusion of Series I of Plymouth Week, but again there was only limited response and, at the end of the season, a sub-committee was set up to review PIPS. They made the following recommendations, which were accepted:

1. PIPS races: Falmouth (RWYC), Long Distance (PYC), Yealm (RNSA), Torbay (RPCYC), Fowey (RWYC), Salcombe (RNSA) & Return Race (RPCYC), Plymouth Week Series I, one race from each of Saltash, TRSC, PYC, YYC and CYC Regattas, one 30 Mile Race (TMSC). 8 races to count in accordance with YR1/85 Appendix E 4.4.
2. Participation in POPS will automatically disqualify from PIPS.
3. IOR yachts may compete under PYS numbers allocated by PPSA.
4. There will be separate races for CHS as in POPS, but the Spinnaker Trophy will be for Div. II PYS yachts.
5. The Place Points System (YR1/85 Appendix E 5.3) will be operated.
6. A declared entry will be operated (Appendix E 6.2).
7. Competitors will have to register for the Series before racing for the first time. Registration Fee £1.
8. Prizes will be presented at the winners/ annual prizegivings.

PIPS carried on for a further five seasons with little change in the format, although the inclusion of Series I of Plymouth Week disappeared with the Week itself after 1987, but in 1990 the new PIPS Secretary reported that the Series that season had been virtually a non-event. There had been 5 boats registered in PYS and only 3 in CHS. He made a number of recommendations and backed his faith in their outcome by donating the handsome Peter Compton Trophy for CHS.

Again, as had so often been the case, opinion at the annual skippers meeting did an about turn and urged that registration should be dropped and this received strong support from SSC.

One of the PIPS Secretary's proposals did, however, receive a somewhat less than enthusiastic response from the PPSA. The spread of handicaps had always, of course, posed a considerable problem in organising fair competition within the framework of relatively short races, and the recommendation was that PIPS should exclude all boats with a PYS greater than 110. When it was pointed out that the original intention of PIPS was to introduce to racing just such competitors as these, the proposal was withdrawn.

To overcome the problems of the wide spread of handicaps, it was agreed that clubs undertaking to run a PIPS race must, whenever contemplating a split in the fleet, provide for a common course and start. They must also provide for points to be awarded on the basis of positions at the end of the previous round where the course is shortened.

As mentioned above, registration was to be dropped, and funding for the Series would be through a club levy of £10 per class per race.

Following the introduction of these measures, the PIPS Secretary was able to report a great improvement at the end of the 1991 season.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PPSA

As we have seen, the Blue Book Committee spawned the PPSA and, the parent body having been essentially concerned with the co-ordination of fixtures, it was only natural for the infant Association to inherit similar attitudes.

For a long time the PPSA was preoccupied, to the exclusion of almost everything else, with the arrangement of the season's sailing programme, championships and the annual Regatta. And in the early days that preoccupation did not even extend to yachts, whose requirements were considered to be merely peripheral. The PPSA was definitely dinghy orientated in this thinking. But gradually the Association's wider role evolved. In addition to co-coordinating the entire dinghy and yacht racing of the Port, increasingly it has come to function as a forum for dealing with all matters of common concern.

This change has been reflected in both the composition of the PPSA and its representation on other influential bodies. The early meetings were attended by between 10 and 15 representatives. Today the Secretary is mailing 50 copies of the minutes of the monthly meetings.

Under the rules of the Association, each of the 19 affiliated clubs and associations is entitled to send two Representatives to meetings, but this number is augmented by the Officers, Officials and co-opted Representatives, some of whom of course also serve in the capacity of Club Representative. The complete list of possible attendees is as follows:

President	Royal Western Yacht Club
Vice President	Royal Plymouth Corinthian Y.C.
Immediate Past President	Royal Naval Sailing Association
Hon. General Secretary	Cargreen Yacht Club
Hon. Treasurer	Plym Yacht Club
Hon. Regatta Secretary	Yealm Yacht Club
Hon. Handicapper	Cawsand Bay Sailing Club
Hon. PIPS Secretary	Hoe Point Sailing Club
Hon. POPS Secretary	Mayflower Sailing Club
Radiocommunications Adviser	Polytechnic S.W. Sailing Club
Press Relations Officer	Quay Sailing Club
RYA Representative	Tamar River Sailing Club
CHC/MLC Representative	Weir Quay Sailing Club
Recreation Study Representative	Wembury Sailing Club
MLC Moorings Representative	West Hoe Sailing Club
QAB Representative	Devon Schools Sailing Association
PASC Representative	Saltash Sailing Club
City of Plymouth Representative	Torpoint Mosquito Sailing Club
A/QHM	Cattewater Cruising Club

The co-option of A/QHM was, of course, essential from the very beginning of the PPSA. Without this close link with QHM/CP it would be impossible for the PPSA to function. Strangely, however, it was not until 1971 that the City was invited to send a Representative and, from that time until his retirement, the City Entertainments and Publicity Manager, Frank Bottom, was a familiar face at meetings. Subsequently the City was represented by the Director of Marketing, his Deputy, Janet Poynter and latterly by the City Boat Master.

Why it was not thought necessary to co-opt a City Representative earlier when championship considerations were very much to the forefront is indeed strange, for it is only by the co-operation of QHM (ultimate authority over use of waters), City (use of municipal shoreside facilities) and PPSA (allocation of dates) that major events can be run.

The influence of the PPSA has been extended by its representation on other bodies – the RYA South Western Regional Association, the Port of Plymouth Marine Liaison Committee and its Moorings Sub-Committee, the Plymouth Area Recreation Study Update and the Plymouth Advisory Sports Council.

Representation on the RYA South Western Regional Association Committee has something of the aura of the 1957 PPSA/Port of Plymouth Regatta Committee merger about it.

The original constitution of that Association made no provision for separate Plymouth representation, but in 1974 it was conceded that the Port was an area which should have its own Representative.

Two years later, however, the goal posts were moved again and our Representative reported the Regional Association maintaining that we were not entitled to such a concession. This set feathers flying and the Secretary entered into lengthy correspondence with the Association's Chairman, who eventually agreed that the PPSA was correct in its interpretation of the constitution, although he personally disagreed with the principle and would place the matter on the agenda for their next AGM.

The 1977 AGM of the Regional Association did in fact amend the constitution once again to remove PPSA's exclusive rights. Nevertheless a year later correspondence received by our 'Representative' (incorrectly named as a Mr. Tabb!) showed him as 'Representative for PPSA and Plym Clubs'. Curiouser and curiouser, to paraphrase Alice.

A laissez faire attitude has been maintained ever since. In 1978 the Secretary was instructed to write to the RYA listing the clubs the PPSA wished its Representative to represent. The minutes of 19 December 1983 record Sam Rogers as being nominated as PPSA Representative and those of 5 March 1984 show him as confirming to the meeting that he had been re-elected to represent PPSA.

Every year since Sam has been re-elected in his somewhat ambiguous position. The RYA constitution shows him as an Area Representative (and indeed he functions as such), while correspondence and minutes refer to the PPSA Representative. At times one is left pondering the question 'Does he represent the PPSA on the RYA, or the RYA on the PPSA? If the latter, it is worth pointing out that he has never been formally co-opted to the PPSA! The question is, however, merely academic. The system works well and face is saved on both sides.

Representation on the Port of Plymouth Marine Liaison Committee (including its Moorings Sub-Committee), the Plymouth Advisory Sports Council and the Recreation Study Update keeps affiliated clubs aware of what is being discussed and decided in other bodies having some influence over our sport. And so, too, does the co-option of Representatives of Cattewater Harbour Commissioners and Queen Anne's Battery.

It is a far cry today from the time when the Secretary could attend to the Association's affairs assisted only by a Minutes Secretary. The mere burden of attending all the various meetings would be beyond anything an honorary officer could be expected to bear and so delegation has become the order as shown in the list of attendees above.

It was not always that all clubs were affiliated to the PPSA. In 1971 a meeting was informed that the River Clubs (TMSC, TRSC, SSC and WQSC) wished to form their own association with affiliation to the PPSA. This was agreed and the Tamar Sailing Association was permitted two Representatives. Four years later, however, TMSC seceded from that Association and re-joined PPSA under its own burgee.

By 1977 no one seemed to be quite certain of the situation and TSA was requested to update PPSA, who were informed that CYC, QSC and TRSC were affiliated to TSA, TMSC were affiliated to PPSA and SSC were affiliated to neither. This was found to be very inconvenient for A/QHM and, following his discussions with the River Clubs, TSA ceased to exist in 1982 and they all became affiliated to PPSA, with the exception of QSC, who joined the following year.

With the subsequent inclusion of the Devon Schools Sailing Association, the Polytechnic South West Sailing Club and latterly the Cattewater Cruising Club, the list is complete and all 19 clubs and associations in the Port are now under one umbrella.

A natural concomitant of this all-embracing membership has been that the original exclusivity of the waterfront clubs has been lost. The meetings of the Association, originally held only in the RWYC, RPCYC and MSC, now rotate among all the clubs and, while the first constitution provided for the Presidency to remain permanently in the gift of the old Blue Book Clubs, now it is open to all.

One sometimes hears references to the PPSA as though it were a separate body divorced from the clubs. Perhaps a more appropriate name would have been 'The Combined Clubs of Plymouth' for it is, of course, an amalgam of clubs. We never speak of decisions being taken by the PPSA Committee, but only by a PPSA Meeting. An important distinction in which is enshrined the concept that, when the PPSA acts, it is the clubs who pull the strings. The PPSA provides a forum for the debate of anything of common interest and for the co-ordination of fixtures, but, in the absence of a mandate, it avoids like the plague any suggestion of interference in the affairs of the affiliated clubs.

It has been given such permanent mandates in relatively few matters. Division II PYS Handicapping, Universal Codes for Marks and Class Signals and the mandatory rule regarding the observance of Port Regulations spring to mind. But there are also occasions when the clubs feel that a combined voice of protest or submission is likely to be most effective and the PPSA, given a universal mandate, then acts in the common cause.

Examples of such matters include the following:

- Rating of Moorings
- Registration and Licensing of Pleasure Craft
- Management of Waterborne Recreation
- Development of Teat's Hill
- Torpoint Ballast Pound
- Proposed Development at Weir Quay
- Waterfront Strategy
- Civil Water Management

And conversely, there are also matters where the City insists on dealing with the PPSA rather than a multiplicity of clubs, such as the provision of berthing space and civic hospitality for major events.

There have been those who would have had it otherwise and would have preferred the PPSA to adopt a more draconian attitude, especially in the matter of the co-ordination of fixtures, but therein lie the seeds of disintegration. As long ago as July 1966 the minutes wisely record that the PPSA would not side with one club against another as far as support for regattas was concerned. The PPSA must never seek to rule by dictat in such matters, but to operate by consensus. To do otherwise would be, as History has shown, to invite secession.

The procedure for agreeing fixtures, which currently involve as many as 250 entries in the annual PPSA Sailing Programme, has evolved from the original Annual Fixtures Meeting. At those meetings, Club Representatives were handed sheets of paper bearing only the dates from April to September. As the Secretary called out the dates, Clubs made their bids and conflicts were, as far as possible, resolved there and then. Of course, championship dates would normally have been agreed well in advance as applications were received and clubs generally kept to their traditional dates for other principal events. The whole business, apart from perhaps a few loose ends, would be completed at that single meeting. There were several reasons why this was possible – fewer clubs in the programme, fewer open events (apart from championships) and far fewer clubs running yacht races, both around the cans and offshore.

Today it would be impossible to arrange the Programme in that manner and a series of meetings has become necessary.

The procedure commences with a yacht skippers meeting, introduced in 1976 when RWYC's offer to do all the secretarial work each year was accepted. The theory is that yacht secretaries are then briefed in current thought among yacht skippers in preparation for the Yacht Secretaries Meeting early in September at which a draft fixtures list for yacht events is provisionally agreed.

Shortly after this meeting there is a Dinghy Secretaries Meeting, following which it is possible for the General Secretary to compile a combined draft programme to present to the September monthly meeting. Attention is drawn to outstanding clashes and, if these cannot be overcome there and then, the clubs concerned are asked to seek a compromise before the Annual Fixtures Meeting in October.

At that meeting, the final draft programme is issued, any remaining clashes resolved or agreed to stand and Representatives asked to notify the Secretary of any errors or omissions within a set time, after which the programme is 'set in concrete'.

The printed programme is normally issued at the AGM in January for sale in clubs, although the draft is, of course, available in clubs for reference purposes from the time of the Annual Fixtures Meeting.

The system is not perfect, but it is flexible. With so many clubs and so many events, not to mention the inevitable late acceptances, perfection is not possible and the occasional clashes must be accepted as minor irritations rather than cause for outcry.

Since the revised constitution in 1984, the PPSA has worked with a minimum of rules and remained responsive to the changing needs of the sailing fraternity. In doing so, it has always been mindful of the initial fears of those clubs way back in 1953 who thought that the old Blue Book Committee might be in danger of becoming just a little too big for its boots.

At the time of compiling these notes, Civil Water Management for Plymouth was looming large on the horizon. After two years of preliminary work within the Marine Liaison Committee, the Consultants, Posford Duvivier Environment, have been appointed and their report is eagerly awaited. Although we are told that this is to establish first whether CWM is in fact needed, and, if so, to make recommendations for its implementation, all the indications are that the first part of their brief is unaccomplished, necessitated largely by QHM's intention to contract the boundaries of the Dockyard Port in 1994.

The introduction of CWM cannot be compared with the attempt in 1981 to establish civil management of waterborne recreation, nor that in 1985 to register and license pleasure craft. The circumstances from 1994 will be entirely different and CWM will be a different ball game.

Having enjoyed such good working relations with successive Queen's Harbour Masters throughout its existence, it is only natural for the PPSA to view the future with some trepidation. Prospects of radical change usually engender, if not alarm, at least unease, especially when the uncertainty of its precise nature leads to wild speculation. But whatever form of management is introduced, it must surely work with the PPSA if harmony is to be maintained on the water. Anything else is inconceivable.