

# UK BALLAD ASSOCIATION

Newsletter 2024



*Poppin racing on Friday nights in Plymouth.*

## Chair's introduction

By Catherine Noakes

This year has been a strange one in several ways. We have not really had a good summer with no long-settled period for cruising. Then, perhaps with the warm but wet weather, gardens have needed more attention as has the bottom of Shara! The photographs show the wonderful growth that developed despite the two coats of antifouling, which does not appear to be working well at all. Peter mainly, and myself when able to, dry her out at the town key in Saltash and scrub her off routinely but, I have to admit that this task has been a little delayed on occasion due to the tide times being inconvenient and us having other family commitments.

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Then another change was the date of our annual championship. At last year's AGM, the decision was taken to move the championship away from the May bank holiday weekend and school's half term with the main reasons being costs and availability of accommodation along with family commitments. We were looking at a weekend at the beginning of June and at clubs to the west of Cornwall, i.e., Penzance, Falmouth or St. Mawes. After much searching and discussion, the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club with Neil Andrew as Race Officer and with our championship being sailed on the back of the Sigma 33 national championships was chosen. I use the word chosen lightly as negotiations with other clubs and venues had come to nought, so we were very lucky to have such a competent and amenable Race Officer keen to work with the Ballads again and another yacht organisation willing to have us racing alongside them. More of this later in the newsletter.

On a personal level, we have been overjoyed to have a new family crewmember join us in the guise of our grandson Alfie, who enjoys coming sailing with us. This takes us back as all three of our daughters grew up sailing on Shara and all continue to sail. Then, more recently, we have been joined by one of SSC previous cadets, who crewed for us many years ago, but who had come back as an adult with children of his own. He had been visiting Saltash to see his family and to sell his yacht and brought his two sons (his daughter was too young) to race with us on a couple of Thursday nights. They also joined us for the Cargreen regatta which was great fun.

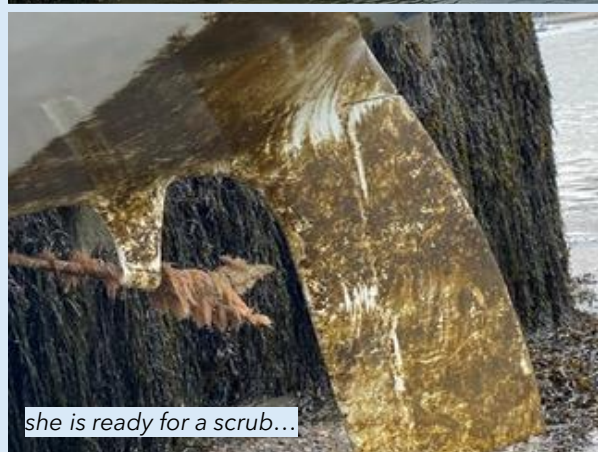
Now most boats are out of the water and winter maintenance needs to be considered. The AGM has taken place again (at SSC where the welcome and food are very good) with some Ballad owners attending online by Zoom. The minutes of this meeting along with this newsletter and other information will be winging its way to you all shortly.

In the meantime, I hope to see you all back on the water in the spring and hope that we all have an enjoyable 2025 sailing season.

Happy Christmas!

*Shara of York leaning against the town key in*

*Saltash...*



*she is ready for a scrub...*

*and all clean again!*





# Ballad Nationals 2024

By Peter Noakes



*Gathering with the Sigmas for the championships' briefing from Race Officer Neil Young.*

Having decided at our previous AGM to hold the Ballad Championship in 2024 on a weekend other than the spring bank holiday in May because obtaining accommodation was more difficult and expensive to find over the holiday weekend, we found that all the weekends in June in Falmouth were already taken up by other sailing events. The committee had also looked at the possibility of Penzance, but this proved difficult as well. We discovered that the Sigmas were holding their championship in Falmouth over the June weekend we wanted and being hosted by the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club (RCYC) and, being boats of a similar speed and having discussed previously about racing off the same line, we approached the RCYC to see if they would host us as well. We were very fortunate that Neil Andrew, who has been our Race Officer previously in Falmouth, was officiating at the Sigma championships and was quite happy for us to join them. We also approached the Sigma association who likewise were happy for us to "piggy-back" off their championship. Neil managed the starting sequences for both fleets so that we never clashed on the start and finish line and rarely met on the race course.

Leading up to the event, the next problematic situation arose as we liaised with RCYC about the après sail events with both fleets wanting different arrangements for their participants. This was exacerbated by the RCYC undergoing a change in catering provider just days before the championship. However, with some late discussions and learning that the Sigmas were eating out both of our nights, we managed to organise the meals and prizegiving dinner that our crews wanted including inviting the Commodore and his wife, and Neil as Race Officer as guests.

With a reasonable wind on the first day, Neil and the committee decided to run three races as very light winds were forecast for the Sunday. All three races were started halfway between Pendennis head and the Manacle Rock Buoy in Falmouth Bay and the fleet beat up to the Windward Mark which was approximately a mile towards Maenporth and the Helford, leaving it to Port and heading off to the Wing Mark in the direction of the Manacle Rock Buoy and then back to the start line Turning Mark to head off completing triangle and sausage rounds just like Ballads prefer! It has not been reported that any Ballad was involved with a Sigma on any of those three races which was quite an achievement for the Race Officer.

*Shara of York's crew getting ready to go racing.*



*Taking a breather between races.*



*Youngest crew member asleep waiting for wind.*





As Sunday dawned it appeared that the Race Officer and committee had been quite correct as initially there was no wind. But with much patience on behalf of both the Race Officer and the Ballad fleet we eventually managed to get a race in during the early afternoon in the harbour starting at Trefusis point and heading for the Windward Mark laid near the Governor Buoy halfway towards Black Rock in the harbour entrance. It was an incoming tide, so one needed to tuck in underneath the cliffs on the Pendennis side of the harbour to avoid the tide, all be it only perhaps 1 knot. However, with very little wind, boat speed was only 2 or 3 knots. Again, it was a port-hand course, so we sailed to the Wing Mark further out into the middle of the harbour and then back into the Turning Mark at the start line to continue with a sausage or triangle. Once again, we were fortunate to have a Race Officer of Neil's ability and also his understanding that the fleet wanted to race even in such a light wind. That evening the Royal Cornwall hosted an excellent prizegiving dinner which was very convivial and enjoyed by all.

Overall, it was a very enjoyable championship.



# Ballad Nationals onboard Duchess

By Elizabeth Atwood

*Preparing for the first race, everyone at their stations!*



*Wait, did we remember to offload all the bottles of wine?*



The Duchess crew converged on Falmouth Friday 21<sup>st</sup> of June, some having made the two-day trip with the boat from Plymouth and others having "swum" their cars through torrential rain. A warm welcome and hearty meal at the Royal Cornwall YC helped shake off all the travel damp and salt, preparing us for some bracing races over the days to come. Half the crew stayed onshore in a rented house, the other on the ship. After a breakfast discussing the finer points of how to broil black pudding to perfection, the crew was ready for action.

As we motored out, wondering when the wind was going to join us, we remembered that the Ballad flags needed to get the dust shaken off as well.



*Setting the battle flags for the 2024 races.*





*Sailing straight into the Sigma fleet, was this not supposed to happen?*

After an interesting start, the Ballad fleet moved its way along the course. The wind held steady but certainly it required very careful moving about the boat - a day which inspires the term "white-knuckled turtle racing". The concurrent Sigma race provided some spectacular views of a hoard of spinnakers bearing downwind, with everyone making space and finding elegant solutions to get around each other.

We had a total of four races, all of which required careful course planning, perfect sail setting, exact seal sausage placement of crew and steady nerves necessary for white-knuckled turtle racing. Among all that excitement was time for a short Cornwall excursion to St. Mawes for swimming and ice cream.



*Various degrees of white-knuckled turtle racing.*



*Crew member Rob is smiling for a good reason (and not only due to his stylish new Musto sunhat).*



The common dolphins seemed just as curious about us, we could see them going under the boat and looking up at us leaning over the railings.

After getting all racing that was to be had out of the little wind, the boats set off for their separate ports. Duchess had a long sail ahead, with help from both wind and motor, being accompanied by Summertime and Poppin. In between lounging around in the sun letting "Otto" do his job, there was quite a bit of wildlife to watch.

After about 8 hours, we pulled around Rame Head and made ourselves a cup of tea. Things stayed interesting till the end though, with some tricky shipping traffic manoeuvring needed to get us home safe.



Coming home to port, a well-deserved cup of tea all round.



The challenge of getting squeezed between an incoming military ship and an outgoing freighter, masterfully handled by our stand-in captain Jonathan.



# Good things come to those who wait!

By Jonathan Haigh



*Duchess resting near St. Mawes after successful racing.*

I have been sailing on Duchess at the Nationals since 2007, I think, so that is about 15 or 16 events. During that time, my increasingly unreliable memory believes that we have pretty consistently been in the top three or four for most of the races - or at least that is how I like to remember it! And, on occasions, we have even managed to lead the fleet for at least some of the time. A couple of races stick out: Dartmouth in a heavy blow, when we unfortunately completely wrapped the spinnaker around the forestay and had to retire; and one year at Fowey when we were in the lead at the wing mark, but then fell into a wind hole that was avoided by Shara and normal service was resumed.

There have been many race winners over that time, if only a few champions, but until this year, Duchess has not been one of them. That is until Race 2 on the Saturday of the 2024 National Championship, when we finally did it. Of course, Shara were stung into action and duly won the remaining two races, but at least we have added a win into the memory banks and I think this one will probably persist.



*"This story might even be true."*



*Summertime offering Shara of York a tow, a ballad in need is a friend indeed.*

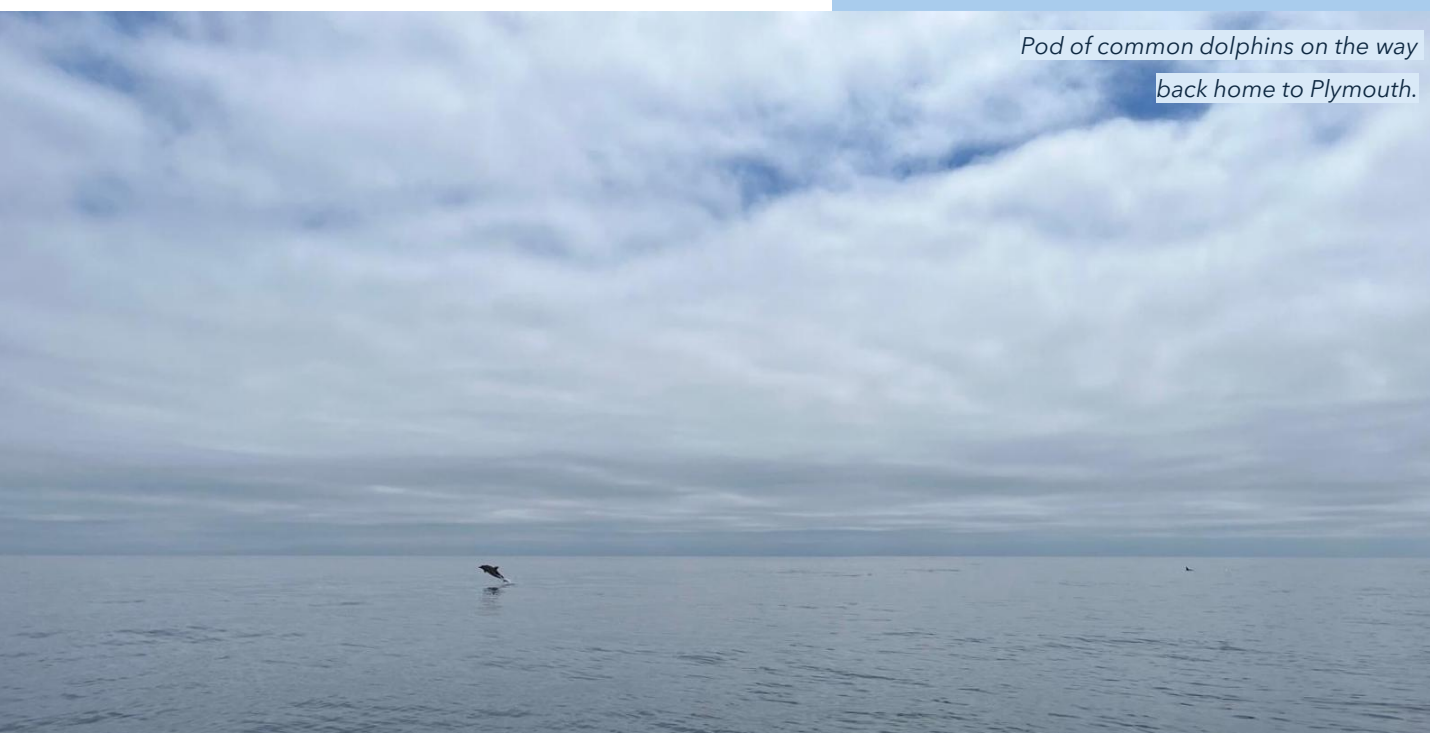


*Weather forecast in Fowey, the day before the championships.*

Otherwise, the National Championships were the usual lovely combination of competition on the water and camaraderie (and catering) on shore. Oh, and an added bonus while sailing back was the sighting of more than one pod of dolphins, which came up and played around the boat for a while and then slipped away into the Channel.

So, I'm pretty sure that most, if not all, of us will be back again next year and, hopefully, we won't have to wait quite as long for our next race win

*Pod of common dolphins on the way back home to Plymouth.*





# The protest

By Janie Smallridge

*Falmouth North Quay was home to the ballads during the championships.*



Those of you who have been involved with Ballads for many years will know that the National Championships are always a very dignified event and a protest is unheard of. However, 2024 was the exception, and thereby hangs a tale!

I think it was the first race, and we were all busy avoiding Sigma 33s and threading our way through their fleet. To make things easier for everyone there was a modern racecourse with a port and starboard leeward mark, near the Committee boat, with an option which mark was rounded. All too modern for some of us! As normal, Shara of York was in the lead, pursued by Duchess. Not unnaturally Duchess followed Shara of York around the starboard leeward mark. Tacking back upwind, we hear after some considerable time, Shebeen and another boat, querying which leeward mark needed to be rounded. I cannot remember the non-committal reply from the Race Officer, but crew are sent below to look at the complicated race instructions and return to say that we should have gone around the Port buoy. Quick about turn, rewind ourselves around the Starboard buoy (unnecessary) and rejoin the fleet who are rounding the correct Starboard buoy.

Of course, Shara had further to travel back and so we were all well ahead of her by then. Duchess rounded the mark outside of Summertime, with Shebeen slightly ahead and Windwhistle well ahead. As we are all regrouping, Shara comes on the radio saying they were protesting Duchess for not rounding the correct mark. In spite of saying that there were many witnesses, Peter Noakes was adamant!

Shara then overtook everyone and won the race. This was particularly amazing as Peter had singlehandedly sailed from Plymouth to Falmouth the previous day. Given the forecast, others had arrived the day before, and Duchess had overnighted in Fowey, setting off at 6 am to avoid the storm winds of Friday afternoon. Not only had Peter been on his own, but the engine had packed up halfway, so he had been on his own beating into the very strong winds for a significant portion of the delivery. No doubt absolutely exhausted.

At about 5 pm my phone goes to say that the protest is going ahead and a rib would be dispatched to collect me and any witnesses I could produce and take us to Royal Cornwall Yacht Club. Summertime had already left their boat and were not staying in Falmouth, so lovely Ken Morgan on Shebeen has his boat maintenance cut short and accompanies me to the protest. Fortunately, since I do not enjoy protests, and avoid them like the plague, after listening to Peter and me, the protest committee declared that they had already taken the evidence of the Committee boat timing us around the mark, and that Duchess had rounded correctly. Ken was not needed as a witness.

Ken did come up with the best recommendation, though. What had happened, was that Peter had mistaken Windwhistle (identical blue Ballad) for Duchess, and observed her passing the Port buoy and sailing away from it while beating back to windward. He did not use Ken's identification method of looking for my hat!



Janie in her signature hat.



# Results Ballard National Championships 2024

## RACE RESULTS

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BOAT	HELM	RACE			
		1	2	3	4
Blavinge (340)	Peter Askew	6	(6.0 TLE)	5	(7.0 RET)
Duchess (3322)	Janie Smallridge	(2)	1	2	2
Shara of York (3331)	Peter Noakes	1	(2)	1	1
Shebeen (982)	Ken Morgan	3	4	4	(5)
Summertime (996)	Chris Tyrrell	5	3	(7.0 DNC)	4
Windwhistle (5554)	Martin Jones	4	(5)	3	3

## PRIZE WINNERS

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CATEGORY	TROPHY	BOAT
Overall winner	Jean Ellis Memorial Trophy	Shara of York
2nd overall	Upper Deck Trophy	Duchess
3rd overall	Toms Trophy	Shebeen
Highest Plymouth yacht (outside the first three overall)	City of Plymouth Trophy	Summertime
Highest Fowey yacht (outside the first three overall)	Pam Sheridan Trophy	Not awarded
Overall winner of the Whitesail division	Corinthian Trophy	Windwhistle
Winner of the pursuit race	Old Ferry Inn Trophy	Not awarded
Winner of the Concours d'Elegance	The Julian Foye Trophy	Not awarded
Participating boat that has travelled furthest from her home port	Noakes and Habermehl Voyager Trophy	Blavinge

# Notices



*Duchess on her way home from the Nationals.*

## WINTER DINNER

A winter dinner is planned for the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2025 at the Saltash Sailing Club, with good food and a talk from Peter Askew from Blavinge.

## BALLAD NATIONALS 2025

Save the date! The next Ballad National Championships will be held at Fowey June 6-9<sup>th</sup>, 2025, with support from the Port Of Fowey Race Organising Committee (POFROC).

## UK BALLAD ASSOCIATION

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### CHAIR

Catherine Noakes (Shara of York)

### SECRETARY/TREASURER

Janie Smallridge (Duchess)

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ken Morgan (Shebeen)

Gemma Kulk

### NEWSLETTER

Gemma Kulk

### WEBMASTERS

Sarah Cole and Peter Smallridge

### WEBSITE

[www.ukballadassociation.org](http://www.ukballadassociation.org)



## Annex A

# National Ballad Association minutes of the 31<sup>st</sup> AGM held at Saltash Sailing Club on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

By Janie Smallridge

Present: representatives of the following boats: Summertime, Shara of York, Shebeen, Poppin, Windwhistle and Rob Casey and Gemma Kulk and Tim Burne (President); Duchess and Spica via Zoom.

- 1) Apologies: Imagine, Shanty, Madrigal of Saltash, Balu, Vivacious, Blavinge, Variety and Chris and Katie Jackson, Mick Pindar
- 2) Minutes of the 30<sup>th</sup> AGM were agreed.
- 3) Matters Arising: None
- 4) Report by Secretary and Treasurer: Janie had asked for articles for the newsletter, but other than two lovely offerings from Duchess crew, nothing had been forthcoming. The lack of a newsletter had resulted in not many subscriptions being paid. The accounts will be done, but a new knee has meant that she has been capable of very little, and needs to catch up. It also meant that she was only present via Zoom! The Association are looking for a different bank account as the current one will start to charge fees from January.
- 5) Report by Webmaster: None, but adverts and notices have been kept up-to-date, with many lovely photos from the Championships.
- 6) Report by Newsletter Editor: Having not had a newsletter for the 2024 season ( few if any items to include) and with Tim Clarke wishing to stand down, Gemma Kulk (Duchess crew) has offered to take over as newsletter editor - please send articles on cruising, keeping Ballads seaworthy, etc. to either [Janie](#) as secretary or [Gemma](#).
- 7) Chairman's report: Catherine reported on a very successful Championships in Falmouth, with the six competing yachts enjoying mixed weather and Royal Cornwall Yacht Club hosting four excellent races. Unfortunately, the pursuit race had to be cancelled due to distinct lack of wind.

Catherine had to sadly notify the meeting that Martin Mears, who regularly crewed on Windwhistle with Martin Jones, died earlier this autumn. He will be sadly missed by Windwhistle's crew and other Ballad owners, some of whom knew him well.

- 8) Election of Officers for 2025: Ken Morgan agreed to remain on the Committee, but after many years Chris Tyrrell resigned. He was thanked by all at the AGM for his long service. Gemma Kulk has offered to stand as a member. Catherine was willing to continue as Chairman and Janie as Secretary/Treasurer.
- 9) Subscription Rates: It was agreed to keep the subs at £10.
- 10) 2025 Championships: Port Of Fowey Race Organising Committee (POFROC) have agreed to host the 2025 Championships from June 6<sup>th</sup> to June 9<sup>th</sup>, and arrangements need to be confirmed. Action: Janie
- 11) 2026 Championships: It was agreed to ask Yealm Yacht Club to host the 2026 Championships from 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> June, and failing this, to consider Dartmouth. Action: Janie

- 12) AOB: It was agreed that sales of Ballad clothing would only be considered if some of the newer owners were interested in attending the Championships, since current crews all had sufficient supplies.

J24s will be holding their World Championship in Plymouth from 6-14th September being run by Plym Yacht Club and Saltash Sailing Club. They are looking for spectator boats and have asked whether owners of beautiful, stable Ballads would be willing to take spectators out to view the racing (2 races per day) which could be on one or more days.

- 13) Date of future AGM. To be notified.