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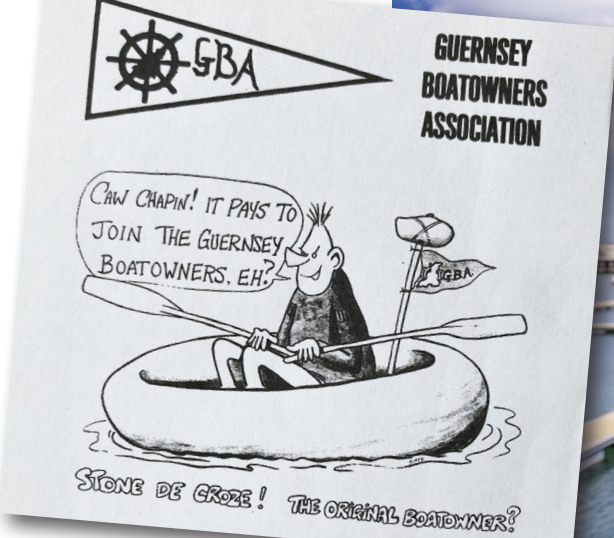
GBA celebrates centenary

The Guernsey Boatowners' Association has been active in the island for 100 years. Its president, Nick Guillemette, looks back at its history and explains the many benefits of becoming a member

THE Guernsey Boatowners' Association is celebrating its 100th birthday this year. Over the past century the leisure boat industry has grown enormously and the demand for berthing spaces continues to be in short supply. There have been many advances in technology, not only in boat design but also in navigational aids such as radar, GPS, AIS Aton beacons and Vessel Traffic Service. All of these innovations are available to leisure boaters, including RYA courses on boat maintenance, local pilotage and ocean navigation, designed to provide safety at sea. The GBA was first formed on 24 March 1923 with similar objectives to that of now. The annual subscription was 12.5p in today's money, and the inaugural meeting was held at Mr H C Le Messurier's store on North Pier Steps. The main objective was to form an association 'to foster and watch over the interests of members in connection with boating, especially as regards the carrying out of any agreement entered into by and between the lessee of Herm and this association' and one of the rules was that 'the GBA burgee must be flown by all members visiting Herm'. This was because in the early years the GBA was mainly involved with the agreements for passenger traffic to and from Herm, as well as the maintenance of that island's harbour, ladders and steps. By 1930, the association's membership stood at 65 and had reached 130 by 1940. In 1935 and again in 1937, the States of Guernsey co-opted the GBA to assist in the water carnivals held in celebration of the silver jubilee, and then the coronation of King George VI. The Occupation put paid to any private boating activities and fuel supplies were restricted to licensed fishermen only in 1940. Over the years, the GBA worked together with the GYC and the RCIFYC to press the States for improved facilities. Missing beacons, dangerous ladders, weed-covered piers and the removal of dangerous boulders were some of the issues tackled. When the GBA was revived in 1946, it was concerned with the absence of the Russel beacons on Muse, Amphrey, Moulinet and Epec as well as the disappearance of such marks as the de Saumarez Memorial at Delancey and the Doyle Column at Jerbourg. The little pier at the Halfway had become covered in seaweed and some of the Town ladders were dangerous. Gradually these needs were attended to by the States. In 1947, the association's records mention the absence of beacons at Longue Pierre, Sardrette and Petit Creux and the erection of the monument at Jerbourg. The steps leading to the outer 'cauchee' at La Salerie were replaced that year. In 1948, the Board of Administration offered private boatowners a 'season ticket' to cover landing dues on Herm for 10s. pa year, equivalent to 50p today. Membership had soared to 151 by 1949, by which time meetings were being held in the Chamber of Commerce Room above the Midland Bank in the High Street. Water carnivals became very popular in the 1950s, attracting thousands of islanders and visitors, and an extra-special one was held in 1953 to mark the late Queen Elizabeth II's coronation. In later years the GBA organised the popular illuminated boat

Right: A poster from the Water Show '76, held in conjunction with the RNLI, SJAB and the Fire Service to demonstrate safety at sea.

parades in the harbour. Members shared in the glories of the Queen's visit in 1957, when local boats escorted the royal yacht Britannia from St Martin's Point to St Peter Port. In the late 50s, members started complaining about the lack of mooring space in St Peter Port and St Sampson's due to demand. This situation has continued over the proceeding decades and has resulted in the construction of the Victoria Marina in 1973, the Albert Marina in 1978, the QE2 Marina in 1987, the St Sampson's Marina in 2005 and now the proposed Pool Marina project to create more berths. All were designed to meet the increasing demands of the leisure boat market in Guernsey. A beacon was finally placed on Oyster Rock in 1965, following many meetings with harbour officials, pilots, and the States Supervisor. The GBA celebrated its golden anniversary in 1973. An article by Victor Coysh in the Guernsey Evening Press described it as 'an association which, for half a century, has thrived and played an important part in the maritime life of Guernsey'. In 1975, the Guernsey Boatowners' Association merged with the Small Boat Owners' Association, which cared for boats moored in the bays around Guernsey. The GBA, in conjunction with the RNLI, SJAB and the Fire Service, put on a Water Show in 1976 to demonstrate safety at sea. In 1979, following the Orion oil rig disaster, the GBA organised an auction of all the bits and pieces salvaged from a lifeboat that was washed overboard from the rig with the funds raised being donated to the RNLI. Third-party insurance cover for leisure boats was introduced in 1981 and concerns were raised for a safe landing place for yachts moored in Havelet Bay. Rowing ashore was dangerous in certain conditions, and the increase in the number of rowing boats, dinghy sailors and powerboaters using the main harbour entrance all required a safer launching spot. Designs were revealed for a new slipway in Havelet Bay, using Castle Cornet western reef for support. This slipway was eventually built based on an alternative design and attached to the outside of the Castle Emplacement wall. It has required repeated major maintenance ever since and has recently reopened in time for the 2023 Island Games. The first GBA Boat Show was held in 1991 at the Carlton Hotel. This was such a huge success that it led to many more shows organised jointly with the Marine Traders Association. In 1993, the GBA marked its 70th anniversary by publishing a special handbook for members. Reserved paid parking for GBA members around the marinas was introduced, following negotiation with the (then) Board of Administration. Any surplus funds went to the GBA Benevolent Fund. The GBA became a limited company by guarantee in 2005. The new company was registered at the Greffe under the name of the Guernsey Boatowners' Association LBG. During the following years the GBA continued to provide its members with advice and courses on fire prevention, first aid, engine maintenance, local pilotage trips, fishing techniques and various film shows. Demand for more moorings continued to increase as the local leisure boat industry developed.



This Stone de Croze cartoon appeared in booklet published to celebrate the GBA's 70th anniversary in 1993.



Nick Guillemette, president of the GBA. (Picture by Sophie Rabey, 32385205)

More recently, the Covid pandemic resulted in all boating activities being severely restricted for two years. There were no visiting yachts and no usage of local boats, all of which had a dramatic and damaging effect on the local marine industry. Nothing like this had been seen since the German Occupation 80 years ago. In 2021, the GBA and the Guernsey Marine Traders expressed their support for Deputy Barry Paint's suggested plans for extending St Peter Port harbour to accommodate larger inter-island ferries and other commercial vessels, thereby relieving the current congestion in the harbour and expanding the use of the Pool area for more local moorings and improved facilities for visiting yachts. The Pool Project has since been thoroughly assessed by Guernsey Harbours and plans drawn up showing a protective wall across the harbour to allow for 200-plus new local moorings and 150-plus berths for visiting yachts. The beauty of this potential income-generating scheme is that it provides 24/7 access with no tidal restrictions, space for larger leisure boats with deep draughts, and extended usage of the Victoria Marina during winter months only for foreign vessels wishing to remain outside of EU waters and VAT-free tariffs. Unfortunately, the Pool marina is unlikely to happen anytime soon because of lack of finance and little political support due to other States priorities. The difference between this development and other States projects is that this is an investment for the future



The association regularly holds car boot sales at Beaucette Marina, with proceeds going to the RNLI.

economy of the island. Looking back over the past 100 years, none of our existing marinas or even the 1850s construction of St Peter Port harbour evolved without considerable debate. In fact it took nearly 25 years for the States to agree on that project. But our forefathers and politicians did succeed in achieving the development of our current facilities so now it's up to all of us to encourage our future statesmen to do likewise. The GBA is celebrating its 100th birthday this year and we will be producing a new association burgee to mark this extra special occasion and hosting an end-of-season party at the Peninsula Hotel on 20 October for its members. Meanwhile some things haven't changed. There's still a waiting list for moorings (currently 200-plus), access for loading and unloading passengers and equipment, plus parking and security for boatowners around the marinas is a concern for the future. The setting up of the new Development Agency and any plans for the seafront will no doubt come up for discussion. Remember, approximately 25% of the annual harbour income is generated by leisure boatowners so we do have a strong influence and collectively we can make a difference. One thing is for sure – the GBA continues to maintain the original aims of 1923 in 'fostering the interests of its members' and to act as a pressure group on the States of Guernsey to provide the necessary facilities to meet the demands of the leisure boating industry. So, come and join us to give us your support. It's in all our interests. ♦ Visit www.guernseyboatowners.com for more information.



The 1995 Guernsey Boat Show, held at Beau Sejour.

WHY SHOULD I BECOME A MEMBER OF THE GBA AND HOW MUCH WILL IT COST ME?

THE GBA offers great benefits to members. It is the voice of Bailiwick marine users and encourages, promotes and protects the interests of the Bailiwick of Guernsey's leisure boatowners by:

- Providing members with information, advice, and assistance on matters connected with boating.
- Monitoring changes in local laws and regulations affecting leisure boat owners and informing members of any relevant changes.
- Representing the interests of members at any meetings called to discuss these proposed changes.
- Arranging lectures, discussions, navigational trips and other meetings that may be of interest to members.
- Negotiating members' discounts, benefits and privileges with selected chandlers and other businesses related to the marine industry.
- Providing support to local organisations involved in search and rescue services for the boating fraternity such as the RNLI and CI Air Search.

Discounts for members

The GBA has arranged discounts for members on presentation of a current signed membership card with the following marine traders:

Boatworks, Interseals, Channel Insurance Brokers, Lucas House, Herm Seaway, Marine & General, Oracle Insurance, G4S Secure Solutions, MVH Upholstery, Aquacovers, Carrus Batteries, Gsy/Motor Spares, DLC Marine, Islands Insurance, Beaucette Marina

The amount of discount or special deal will vary according to the type of item being purchased and the Marine Traders you are dealing with.

Parking permits

A limited number of six-month and 12-month parking permits enabling members to park their vehicles near to their mooring in St Peter Port or St Sampson's harbour are available

exclusively to GBA members. Applications can be made to the secretary or at the annual general meeting.

- QE2 South for QE2 Marina moorings E-M.
- Round Top (alongside the Careening Hard) for Pool or Careen moorings.
- Wave Wall for Albert Marina moorings.
- Salerie Car Park for QE2 North moorings A-D
- St Sampson's Harbour – South Side on the Crocq.

Mooring buoys

The GBA has laid mooring buoys for the use of members in five locations:

Have Gosselin, Sark – 1 buoy.
Greve de la Ville, Sark – 1 buoy
Havelet Bay – 2 buoys
QE2 outer entrance – 2 buoys
Fermain Bay – 1 buoy

All buoys are maintained annually by the GBA and are suitable for more than one boat to moor up to. (Subject to weather conditions)

Members who use the buoys do so at their own risk. When using the buoys, a requirement and part of the GBA rules stipulates that the GBA burgee must be flown while moored.

The GBA Benevolent Fund – est. 1995

Historically if an accident (no matter how serious) occurred to a GBA member while taking part in a boating activity in the Bailiwick, the association would assist that member, or their dependants. With the advent of more people having private medical cover and/or insurance cover, the fund has now evolved into a conduit for the collection of donations if a serious incident were to occur either in or adjacent to the Bailiwick waters. The aims of the Benevolent Fund are:

- When financial hardship occurs as a result of a boating accident, the Benevolent Fund may be able to help financially should there be no/insufficient life cover and/or medical cover. (The GBA acknowledges that financial hardship does not always occur immediately after a traumatic event.)
- The fund can also under some circumstances help ex-members of the GBA, subject to the discretion of the trustees receiving the money and distributing it for the benefit of the casualties and/or their dependants. For more details, visit www.guernseyboatowners.com

How do I become a member of the GBA?

The membership fee is only £25 per annum. Applications can be made by email to gsy.boatowners.assoc@cwgsy.net or by calling 01481 724595 or 07781 115025. You can also download the membership form from the GBA website: www.guernseyboatowners.com

LYDIA'S 100TH BIRTHDAY COINCIDES WITH GBA ANNIVERSARY



This delightful classic wooden boat, beautifully varnished throughout, was commissioned in 1923 by a certain Mr Lihou, who happens to have been a founding member of the GBA. His name features in the original GBA formation minutes. The vessel was described in the newspaper at the time as follows: 'The Lydia, as she is named, is owned by Mr J H Lihou, and is a fine example of the boat-builder's art. With an overall length of 23ft and 6ft 6ins beam, she has raised topsides forward enclosing a small but convenient cabin, and is built on shapely lines with "bright" varnished planking which gives her a very smart appearance. She is propelled by an Ailsa-Craig 10-12hp motor, which drives her at 9 knots, and is altogether a very taking and speedy little craft. She was built in Poole by Mr Shuttler, whose workmanship is excellent.'

Ian Larby, the GBA secretary for many years, said the claimed 9 knots must have been achieved with a following tide. 'She was however for many years the fastest boat in Guernsey and won many trophies in local regattas. Mr Lihou is understood to have re-engined her at least once with a much larger Ailsa-Craig in his endeavours to achieve the extra quarter of a knot. Incidentally the cast-iron silencer from the original Ailsa-Craig is still installed and, when removed in 1999, required only a light de-scaling of rust before re-painting.'

Lydia was purchased by Ian's father, Ernest Larby, in 1954. A Morris Navigator Mk II, serial no 2N235, supplied by Ruette Braye Motors in Guernsey, was installed soon after. Subsequently a factory reconditioned Morris Commercial engine, again supplied by Ruette Braye Motors, converted to Navigator standard using components from the original engine, was installed. This was later converted to fresh-water cooling using a Bowman heat exchanger.

'The maximum speed with this engine was about 7.5 knots, which is probably as much as she ever achieved with the final Ailsa-Craig,' said Ian. In 2007 the Morris Navigator was replaced by a Yanmar YM21 diesel.

Lydia remained in the Larby family until 2015, when an Englishman living in Angers on the Loire River bought and restored her to her original state. The transom has been replaced with a lovely piece of Oregon pine. The main mast is still the original with a new boom that was actually made from wood salvaged from another elderly boat and he has added a new mizzen mast. The layers of varnish have also been redone, as can be seen from the photograph above, recently sent to Ian by the current owner, Mr N Wood.

This charming boat lives on in splendour in safe hands. Just like the GBA.