



PRIPA/Patrick Roach

Classics to Cowes

**What to see and where to see it: JAMES JERMAIN
previews the seventh *Yachting Monthly* Rally**

A fleet of around 120 yachts will be smaller than previous *Yachting Monthly* classic events at Cowes, but the quality of the fleet is as high as ever. And by concentrating all the boats into Cowes Yacht Haven, all the events will be on one site, improving the spectacle for participants and visitors alike.

The *Yachting Monthly* event, this year supported by Red Funnel Ferries, Ratsey & Laphorn and the Isle of Wight County Council, has a unique flavour among the growing calendar of classic rallies in Britain. It is particularly designed for cruising yachts, with an emphasis on family crews. Red Funnel's day of racing on Friday is taken very seriously by some, including the fleet of Twisters, but all are encouraged to take part at their own level, often using some very informal handicap ratings.

The other main events, though, are designed for the very special cruising yachts which make up the vast majority of the fleet. The Chairman of the Isle

of Wight County Council, Morris Barton, will be starting the Rally in style by hosting a civic reception for all the participants. The highlight, though, as always, is, Saturday's Grand Parade of Sail, sponsored by Ratsey & Laphorn. This is followed by a fleet review at anchor in Osborne Bay.

Continuing the tradition begun by Lord Mottistone, former Governor of the Isle of Wight, we are honoured that the present Lord Lieutenant of the Island, Christopher Bland, has agreed to take the salute and review the fleet.

But for many people, the best day will be Thursday, which is family day. After a leisurely morning during which judging for the Best Prepared Yacht competition will take place, and a cruise-in-company to a lunchtime anchorage, the afternoon will be taken up with harbour games for all the family. In the evening there will be a short cruise to Norris Beach for a barbecue supper with musical entertainment. There will be entertainment on other nights in the marina.



Who to look out for

Cowes Yacht Haven will be full of wonderful yachts, large, small, old and comparatively young, including a few representatives of the best of the early GRP designs. We are welcoming back many old friends and some distinguished newcomers. The late entry postbag has produced some delightful additions, not least *Samphire*, one of the oldest and most spectacular of our regular guests, which will be completing a major restoration just 10 days earlier. A 48ft Summers & Payne gaff yawl from 1898, she is now owned by Tony Blair (no relation).

The largest, and probably oldest craft, at 102 years, will be the Thames barge, *Victor*, 85ft of nostalgia which still works for a living, though her cargo is now people, not produce. Matching her for age is the wonderfully restored *Tigris*, also from 1898, which is a 52ft Alastair Mylne design built, amazingly, for a one-design class on the Clyde.

The Twister Class, which has its own event over the period of the rally, will be joining our racing and the Parade, but the biggest group this year will be the Hillyards. Examples of most of his styles and types will be on display, including *Aquila*, believed to be the largest Hillyard and the 9-tonner, *Gander of Headley*. An unusual Maurice Griffiths design will interest followers of his work. She is the counter-sterned *Jorrocks*, a 35ft cutter, built in 1936.

There are many representative yachts from the leading designers of British cruisers, including the Laurent Giles Normandy class *Calluna* and *Shaker*, the yacht Kim Holman designed for himself.

We are delighted to be welcoming Charles Stock to the rally. This will be the first visit for this doyen of East Coast creek sailors. His famous 16ft *Shoal Waters* is on an extended cruise to the South Coast. Another pocket cruiser with a remarkable record is *Tuna*, Paul Hanneman's 23ft sloop. This will be her fifth *Yachting Monthly* Rally.

How to see them

To inspect the yachts at close quarters, you will have to catch them while they are in Cowes Yacht Haven. This may not be easy, since the fleet has a full, daily programme of events. However, they will be gathering on Wednesday afternoon and evening with most entrants arriving by 1800. On Thursday morning, the fleet will be in harbour for the early morning though many will leave around 1030 for a cruise-in-company. They will be back again in the mid-afternoon for family fun and games from about 1530 onwards. In the evening many will be anchored off Norris Beach for a barbecue.

The yachts will be off early on Friday for the racing. The best vantage point for this will be in front of The Castle, headquarters of the Royal Yacht Squadron, where they will start at 1030. They will return to the marina in the late afternoon, which will be a good time to see them at leisure. On Saturday the Parade of Sail will provide a spectacular sight along The Green towards Egypt Point and at The Castle, where a commentary will be broadcast by radio journalist Dennis Skillicorn.

If you can get afloat, a good vantage point will be in Osborne Bay as the yachts come to anchor in formation for the fleet inspection by the Lord Lieutenant. The timing of Saturday's events will be finalised later. The yachts will again be in harbour from late afternoon and throughout the evening. They will begin to disperse from mid-morning on Sunday. ▲

Rally programme

Wednesday, 13 August

1200 onwards Yachts arrive
2000 approx Evening entertainment at Cowes Yacht Haven

Thursday, 14 August

All day Judging for 'Best Presented Yacht' competition
Morning Cruise-in-company to mystery destination
1530 approx Harbour games for the family
1830 onwards Yachts depart for barbecue at Norris Beach

Friday, 15 August

1030 Red Funnel Cowes Town Regatta
1800 Prizegiving
2000 approx Evening entertainment at Cowes Yacht Haven

Saturday, 16 August

1100 approx Grand Parade of Sail (salute by The Lord Lieutenant)
1230 Fleet at anchor in Osborne Bay
1800 Prizegiving at Cowes Yacht Haven
2000 approx Evening entertainment at Cowes Yacht Haven

Sunday, 17 August

Morning Farewell breakfast
Yachts depart on the tide



Classic Yacht Rally memories



Photographs by Patrick Roach