



## SPARKMAN & STEPHENS ASSOCIATION

**NEWSLETTER** March 1998

### *Our new insignia*

Following a spirited discussion at the Annual General Meeting in February, the Association's logo and house flag have been redesigned. The new logo appears above and will be used from now on for our official letterhead and Newsletters. New house flags are being ordered and will be available shortly. They are rectangular with the S&S logo in gold on a dark blue background. The change follows representations from a number of European members who remarked on the unfortunate resemblance of the old logo to that of an unwelcome war-time organisation. Items of clothing bearing the new insignia will be made available in due course.

### *Our new Hon. Secretary*

After widespread scratching of heads and shuffling of feet at the AGM, Mark Weaver volunteered to take over from Clive Egginton as Hon. Secretary and was rapidly elected with unanimous expressions of delight and good wishes. There will be a swift handover period, with Clive retaining the position of Hon. Treasurer for the coming year to help the transition. Mark has sailed since he was a boy and joined the proud ranks of S&S owners when he bought *Aceca* (originally named *Assegai II*) complete with over 50kg of sea anemones and assorted marine life attached to her hull!).

### *The International Classic Yacht Association*

It was agreed at the AGM that the S&S Association should affiliate to the ICYA for the coming year. The ICYA was set up to promote classic yacht racing, initially by co-ordinating the major regattas for larger vintage yachts in the Mediterranean. They are a well-funded organisation with 500 members and are planning to promote major events, including a race for 50 footers in 1999 and a millennium regatta for classic yachts of all sizes in Cowes in 2000. They aim to formulate a world-wide rule for rating classic boats. Copies of their newsletter will be made available to our Association for distribution to members. Members of the Committee are due to meet with the officers of the ICYA in March to discuss how the two Associations can develop to mutual benefit.

### *Olin Stephens' 90th birthday: 13th April 1998.*

A number of ways of marking this prestigious occasion were discussed and it is hoped that the Association will be represented at a dinner being organised by Sparkman and Stephens Inc. at the New York Yacht Club in April or May. To mark the occasion in a broader manner, it was agreed at the AGM to print a special greetings card

commemorating the event and incorporating the Association's new logo. The card would be available for all members of the Association to send their greetings to Olin and would also be suitable for subsequent use as a general greetings card.

### ***Regional Activity and Resources***

A suggestion was made at the AGM that regional activities could be promoted more effectively by Regional Secretaries if they were given some control over a portion of the subscriptions of the members in their area. The meeting unanimously agreed that where a country or region has a regional secretary in post and has 10 or more subscribing members, the Regional Secretary should collect the subscriptions and retain 40% of the total for local activities, tendering the remaining 60% to the Association.

### ***Regional News***

**Italy** The tenth "Raduno Vele d'Epoca" is to be held in Imperia from 9 to 13 September. Dott. Luigi Lang, the General Secretary of the AIVE, is anticipating about 100 prestigious vintage yachts (wooden or steel, launched before 1974) participating in the event, including a sizeable fleet of S&S yachts. Regular S&S attendees at the Raduno include: *Mait II, Corsaro, Stella Polare, Capricio, Levantades, Nyala and Vim*. S&S designs are being made particularly welcome this year and the AIVE have high hopes of Olin Stephens attending. Francesco Traveniti, our Hon. Regional Secretary, is proposing to offer a trophy for the best S&S yacht in the event and a presentation plate to Olin Stephens, thanking him for his participation and contribution to yacht design. Contributions of S&S material for an exhibition are being collected by Patrick Matthiesen, who would welcome offers of photographs, half-models and other suitable exhibits. Details of the event can be obtained from the AIVE, c/o Yacht Club Italiano, Porticciolo Duca degli Abruzzi, I-16128 Genova, tel. +39 10 24612206. **US - East Coast** As reported in our October 1997 Newsletter, a special S&S class was created in last season's Eggemoggin Reach Regatta and 8 yachts competed for a trophy presented by Andy Nixon (Windalier). The prize will again be on offer this year - contact Andy for the dates. **US - West Coast** The Master Mariners' Association, based in San Francisco, will be holding its Annual Regatta on 23 May this year and invites participation of S&S yachts that fit their criteria for classic sailing vessels. **Germany** Albrecht Peter and Erika Feldmann are putting Sasha in for major repair and restoration work, working to the original designs and are thus postponing their projected trans-Atlantic trip to New York and US East Coast cruising grounds. **South West England** The region's local part of the S&S Global Regatta this year will be centred on the Plymouth Classic Boat Rally, 1st and 2nd August. Chris Bedford would like to hear from any members likely to participate so that adjacent moorings can be booked. For details and entries contact Dianne Webster (tel. 01752 406711; fax 01752 880724). Other West Country events of interest are: Brixham Heritage Festival - 25-30 May (contact Tony Knights, tel 0111803 852484); Salcombe Festival - 5-7 June (Tony Watson, 01548 843580); Penzance Golowan Festival - 18-28 June (Geoff Nicholson, 01736 332617); Fowey Classics - 6-7 August (Mrs T Fitzgerald 01726 832401); and the Falmouth Classics 8-9 August (Answerphone 01326 373613). **Southern England** This year's event for the S&S Global Regatta will be held under the umbrella of the Portsmouth International Festival of the Sea on August 28-31. The Festival will follow the success lines of

Bristol '96 and already has 300 confirmed entries, including 25 Tall Ships and over 30 naval ships ranging from HMS Victory to modern destroyers. The whole of the Naval Dockyard will be given over to the Festival. S&S owners interested in attending should register soon, mentioning their Association membership to ensure nearby moorings and easy exit for the racing. (For registration forms phone 01705 725000; fax 727560). **Western Australia** The S&S 34 Association of Western Australia report the end of another active season among their 50 or so yachts belonging to their members. The Association is now in its 20th year and organizes cruises, racing and social events. On April 5th they will be offering 12 to 14 S&S 34s for the annual Commodores' Race in which commodores of the numerous clubs around the Perth area race each other with scratch crews. Dick Newnham, their President and our Regional Secretary for WA, contributes a thought provoking article later in this Newsletter.

### ***Exchanges***

Many of you will know of friends who have exchanged houses so that they can enjoy a different part of the world for a holiday. You may even have done it yourself. But what about exchanging your yacht? The joys of cruising in another part of the world without having to flog for 10 days against gale force headwinds to get there - a no astronomic charter fee to pay for the privilege. Of course, if the two boats were of substantially different sizes some money might have to change hands. And it would be worth checking your insurance policy to confirm that it covers 'any person with the owner's consent'. But you and your exchangee could end up having a holiday on another splendid S&S boat in a corner of the world you might otherwise never get to. The Editor would like to hear from anyone who has had experience, or reliable reports of others' experiences, of boat exchanges that might be shared in a future Newsletter. And boat/home exchanges might also be of interest. But you don't need to wait to hear of others' experiences if you think it's an interesting idea. Just settle on your target area and contact the Association's Regional Secretary or individual members.

### ***Brokerage***

**Patrick Matthiesen writes:** The Sparkman and Stephens designed *Firebrand* (see Fig. 1 on page 5) was built by Clare Lallow's yard in Cowes in 1964 for Dennis Miller. Designed specifically for the RORC Rule and to be a member of the British Admiral's Cup team, she was intended as an out and out racing boat. She was built of the finest materials, with a teak main frame and centre line, teak garboards, mahogany planking and teak decks with bronze floors and reinforcements. Her dimensions are LOA 43.2 ft., LWL 30ft., beam 11.25 ft., draft 6.68 ft., on a displacement of ten tons, a 50% ballast ratio with lead keel of five tons and a sail area with 100% fore triangle of 725 sq.ft. At the time of her launch, it was remarked how similar she was to recent Nicholson-designed team yachts in her deep-veed midships sections and fine ends. Her fine pinched-in stern followed classic British designs reaching back to before the war, but these were largely dictated by the RORC Rule and were quite different from the broader, slightly shorter counters prevalent on American yachts and favoured for their increased buoyancy. If one compares *Firebrand* with *Quiver VI*, a contemporary Nicholson design for the Admiral's Cup team, one will see that the Sparkman and Stephens design has longer overhangs, while there is slightly less immersion of the counter. The bow profile, however, is somewhat similar. This was the beginning of

the abandonment of the spoon bow and the adoption of the modern straight raked bow, albeit with a hint of curvature. The sheer line to the bow is marked with high freeboard, allowing for an almost flush decked profile with a small doghouse. The bow is fine, the forefoot quite cut away below the forward water line, but the shape is still classic S & S equilateral triangle, and in this the American boats differed from many of the 50s and 60s British racing boats, such as those designed by Illingworth and Parker and Clark, which always had a pronounced toe to the keel profile.

**Firebrand** sports one of the contemporary *Constellation* style rudders rather than the classic rounded shape which had always been favoured in the past. The theory was that the wider chord of the rudder blade set deep provided better steering control downwind, and this form of rudder has generally been favoured ever since on full-keel profiles. **Firebrand** retains the classic aft raked counter, and it is interesting to compare this with the smaller, so-called S&S RORC off shore type, measuring just under 40 ft. overall, designed in the same year (see Fig. 2) . Here, the forefoot and keel have been marginally further whittled away, the counter adapts the modern forward raking style to reduce weight aft, but at the same time the underbody to the counter loses the characteristic classic S&S concave curve, which was the hallmark of all S&S vessels to this date. The smaller boat loses in looks as a result. These boats represented a major transition in design shape. Although appearing to differ only slightly from traditional earlier designs, they were increasingly a radical departure. Sparkman and Stephens had made their name first with **Dorade** and then with **Stormy Weather**, the latter being a new breed of ocean racer, inspired by an international metre class hull shape but with the load-carrying capacity, sail-carrying ability and brute strength capable of participating in major ocean races - and winning them. One should never lose sight of the fact that these S&S boats broke the pre-established mould that an ocean racer should either be large or chunky, like a pilot cutter. Bobby Somerset's *Jolie Brise* had until that date epitomised the heavy, seaworthy but slow British type of offshore boat derived from working craft. All S&S boats between 1934 and 1962 tended to be refinements on the original concept - they were all recognisable grandchildren of **Stormy Weather**. However, by 1962 a transition was taking place which was to culminate in the fin keel and skeg rudder designs that began to appear from 1965 onwards and which reached their culmination (and perhaps the happiest compromise between classic form and modern shape) in the **Swan 43** of 1968. The full keel boats designed in the early 60s showed an increasing veed section in the bows and sections forward of the mast with slack bilges and low wetted surface and a very much more U-shaped underbody amidships with a flatter run aft, where the curve of the bilge starts well above the waterline. One such vessel is **Inverness** , designed in 1962/63. She was by no means a light displacement boat weighing in at 34,000 lbs. designed weight. She originally sported a classic rudder shape (see Fig. 3). This was rapidly changed for the 1965 racing season to the new *Constellation* type of rudder, and her lead keel was pared down to a veed shape. One boat, **Palynodie II**, 39 ft. 6 inches, which conformed to the RORC off-shore type and which was built at this time, had drastic surgery carried out, altering her full keel profile to a fin and skeg configuration. This helped her win races in the Mediterranean in light airs. Shortly afterwards **Inverness** had a small bustle added to the *Constellation* rudder to fare in its top surface to just above the water line under the counter. Some people said that this was a rating rule cheater but effectively it seems more probable that this bustle was intended to simulate the newer fin keel and skeg rudder profiles appearing from '65 onwards where the bustle was said to improve the laminar separation of water flow aft and to cheat the flow into thinking that the boat's water line length and hence stern

wave could be further aft than it might have been. On *Inverness* we removed the bustle in 1994 on advice from Sparkman & Stephens. We could not believe that it was doing any good, and in any case, even when hard pressed and sitting down by her stern, *Inverness* draws no stern wave at all - Sparkman & Stephens' lines are so successful and the run aft so flattened that she leaves no wake and pulls no quarter wave even on a broad reach. Competition boats, such as *Firebrand* and *Inverness* with full keel design, were a doomed breed. Their stability and sea-kindly properties were, after 1964, no match in light weather or off the wind for the new keel profiles that were appearing. Although eminently more steerable, one tenth of a knot was all it took to win a race. The newer boats appearing after 1966 were often equipped with a trim tab at the aft end of the short fin keel. This was intended to give 'lift' to windward and was often used to control the vessel downwind. However, most owners found within a couple of years that the rating penalties and the added intricacy were not worth it, and these trim tabs were usually subsequently fixed on the centre line. Although we all pay homage to Olin Stephens as the premier living designer, now in his ninetieth year, one should remember that there were other great designers in America at this time. 1963, the year in which *Inverness* was built and a year before *Firebrand*, Bill Lapworth created the *CAL 40*, known as 'The Downwind Machine' (see Fig. 4). At 39 ft. 6 inches LOA with a waterline length as long as 30 ft. 6 inches, a beam of 11 ft. and a draft of 5 ft. 6 inches, this boat weighed in at only 15,000 pounds which was some 2,240 pounds or 15% lighter than the almost identically sized S&S RORC off-shore type of the period. *CAL 40* was the first of a new breed - the skimming dish which more resembled a flat bottomed dinghy with a streamlined fin keel and a high aspect ratio balanced spade rudder than a traditional yacht. This was the first production 'offshore' yacht to sport a separated rudder profile, though small dinghies and Thames Rater classes had experimented with this hull shape in the late 1890s, both with Herreshoff in the US and in contemporary British designs (the latter *Star* class is just one example). The result was a foregone conclusion. *CAL 40* carried all before her. The design 'went on to become about the most winning ocean-class boat of all times, and with the possible exception of the S&S yawl *Finisterre*, it has been the greatest influence on American yacht design'. From this point onwards, the shape of racing yacht underbodies was to change and to develop into the form that Farr has now made so popular. The full keel profile was only to be resurrected years later for its stability and comfort in cruiser races and long distance trans-oceanic cruising vessels. *Firebrand* is currently offered for sale in Florida. She is reputed to be in apple pie order with no expense spare on her cosmetics and upkeep, and the asking price is approximately £66,000.

### ***Further Brokerage***

*Samudra* was built to S&S designs in 1973 by W A Souter of Cowes with cold moulded mahogany hull and decks, the latter with a teak overlay. Originally intended as an IOR Racer, rating somewhat below a quarter tonner, she had some early racing successes, including the Ramsgate Gold Cup. LOA 25', LWL 21', beam 9', draught 4'10". With new rigging in 1993 and lots of other gear regularly updated, she has been well maintained throughout the current knowledgeable owner's keeping and is much admired. Described as a joy to windward, and wonderfully dry because of the fine entry and pronounced tumblehome, she has good directional stability downwind and gives one a great feeling of security at sea. Lying ashore in Portsmouth, *Samudra* is for sale for £15,000 with a complete inventory. Clive Egginton has further details.

## ***Expo '98 Round the World Rally***

***Fazer Blue Magic*** and ***Beija Flor***, both **Swan 65s**, reached Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, in late February in the closing stages of the Expo 98 Round the World Rally. Salvador was the finish of the combined American and European Racing Division, which has raced together since Salinas, Ecuador. ***Fazer Blue Magic*** was the overall winner by a handsome margin, clocking up 9 first places during the 17 individual legs of the Rally. The Rally now becomes the Finnair Atlantic Challenge, comprising 5 legs between Brazil and the ultimate destination - Expo '98 in Lisbon. World Cruising report on their website (<http://www.worldcruising.com/expo98>) the two Swan 65s were neck and neck for much of the first leg from Salvador to Tobago and fought closely for line honours. ***Fazer Blue Magic*** was again the victor. The fleet now has nearly a month to cruise in the Caribbean before assembling in Antigua for the start of the next racing leg on 11 April.

## ***Mast Overboard!***

Without the assistance of other crew, my wife Barbara and I race our S&S 34 ***Sulphur*** in the Division 1 races run by our club, the Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club on the Swan River each Saturday. During such a race in December 1996 we were beating in 25 to 28 knots of wind and uncomfortable wave when suddenly the cap and lower port shrouds all snapped in the same instant and the mast came down, rather tidily, with the starboard shrouds lying neatly along the deck and the sails setting nearly in the water alongside. You may well ask how an **S&S 34** mast can come down rather tidily with all sails set. It is simple: yachts sailing on the Swan River with masts taller than 25 feet have deck-stepped masts, enabling them to lower their mast to pass under the bridges between the Swan River and the ocean. When ***Sulphur***'s mast came down it simply broke the tabernacle pin open. The mast on ***Seafight***, sailed by David Dicks on his single-handed circumnavigation last year, is set up in the same way. We set our anchor and began the long job (2 hours) of recovering the jib and mainsail undamaged and the boom unscathed. The club rescue launch arrived and stood by while we finished tying up so that they could pull the mast, by this time stuck firmly in the mud, away from the side of the hull. Towing the mast along the bottom of the river to a quieter stretch of water, they radioed the club for assistance and within half an hour nine volunteers arrived in the club work boat, lifted the mast from the bottom of the river and delivered it to the club jetty. We were very sobered by this experience and I believe Barbara was extremely lucky not to be seriously injured or killed by the boom when it crashed on to the leeward winch where she normally sits on a beat, keeping a look out. If we had been sailing with a full crew of five, someone would certainly have been injured. The clear message and warning from the local rigging experts is the need to replace all stainless steel wire rigging every 8 to 10 years. Ours was 13 years old. Apparently stainless steel wire rigging corrodes from the centre outwards and the corrosion cannot be detected. Dick Newnham Postscript from the Editor. I have just replaced the stainless steel wire rigging on ***Clairella*** on the advice of a local rigger, although there were no obvious defects other than flattening of the strands on the forestay, caused by our continued use of hanks. Ours was probably more than 13 years old. It would be useful to know the scientific basis for the assertion that stainless steel wire corrodes from the centre outwards. Can anyone help?

***And finally ...***

Good sailing in the forthcoming season and keep those Newsletter items coming ...  
Ed.

***Your Officers and Committee***

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