

Cruiser Racing

Until 1939, cruiser racing had been organised on a Club basis, mainly by Parkstone Y.C. with Poole Y.C., but also by Hamworthy and Bournemouth S.C. Most of the races were restricted to Club members but as the majority of cruiser owners belonged to more than one club, that presented little difficulty. In April 1939, Norman Hibbs, the Vice Commodore of H.B.S.C. set up a new cruiser racing organisation with the unwieldy title of 'Poole Harbour (Sailing) Cruiser Racing Association', later to become Poole Yacht Racing Association (or P.Y.R.A. for short). Hibbs wrote to Phillipson to enlist support from P.Y.C. for their summer racing programme. The Committee agreed that the P.H.(S).C.R.A. be informed that P.Y.C. had already arranged cruiser races for the coming season and were providing funds for prizes. "The general arrangements to be as in the past". After the war, cruiser racing was switched from individual clubs to P.Y.R.A. on the same lines that Norman Hibbs had hoped to establish in 1939: he continued to act as Captain of the Association for several years thereafter. I hope he forgave Parkstone for their somewhat stuffy response pre-war.

Having just re-joined Poole YC, I thought it might be of interest to share a few gems inherited from my parents – Alan and Jeanne Drake – and my grandfather Horace Drake, all of whom were members of the 'Ham and Bones' (Hamworthy and Bournemouth SC) and the modern Poole Yacht Club.



One of these is the Poole Pottery plate won by Horace at the Hamworthy and Bournemouth SC Regatta in 1938. My wife Julie and I were watching Antiques Road Show some 12 years ago when the identical plate (but without the H&BSC addition) came up. We were shocked (pleasantly) at the valuation put on it, the valuer checked the names on the back of the plate to confirm the provenance and our plate was immediately taken off the B&Q picture hook in the sitting room and put somewhere a lot safer. The names on the back of the plate tallied with the one on the telly. We had it valued locally by a reputable auction house who, without being led, came up with an almost identical valuation.

The plate is now still on display at home, but in a rather safer manner. The valuation matters not one jot – it is not for sale! Interestingly there is a photo on the wall of the Skylight Lounge at Poole YC from about the same era (pre-war) showing H&BSC Commodore Norman Hibbs presenting another identical plate to the Commodore of YC de Cherbourg, in Cherbourg. Also in the presentation party is Grandpa Drake, at that time Vice Commodore of Parkstone YC

