

YWURRY

The UK's International 12-foot Dinghy fleet comprised at least 200 boats – but very few have survived. One that has is YWURRY. The first news of this came via the forum on the website of the *Classic and Vintage Racing Dinghy Association* where Chris Barlow wrote:



“Having moved to Pembroke Dock in deepest west Wales I have been volunteering at a local maritime museum and have been set to work restoring an International 12-foot Dinghy. It dates from before the 1928 Olympics, when the international 12 was the single-handed Olympic boat, and has a direct connection with the games of that year. Many years ago it had a deck fitted and the rig was altered. She is now being returned to her original layout. For a boat that is about 100 years old it is still very sound. To see

what it should look like see www.12footdinghy.org. The addition of a deck has not damaged the hull much, though the side benches are lost.”

Built in either 1919 or 1920, YWURRY was one of two Dinghies owned by Harry Gaydon who represented Great Britain in the International 12-



foot Dinghy Class in the 1928 Olympic Games. Harry's grandson, Francis, donated the boat to West Wales Maritime Heritage Museum in 2018.



YWURRY enjoyed a distinguished racing career



Chris describes the boat as it arrived at the museum: *"The boat has a flat foredeck with a pair of rather substantial breakwaters that have a strange lid arrangement bolted to them creating a small low cuddy. The mast position has been moved aft by about a foot and now supports a tall bamboo mast taking a Bermuda rig with a small jib. There are side decks with a thin combing making a restricted cockpit. The original side benches, mast support thwart, and fore-thwart are missing.*

A sail bag contains three very old original cotton lug sails

(one labelled 'small') one is in very good condition and shows little sign of hard use. One of these has the number K8 on it, the others are blank. A modern main and jib are there too but are made from a soft silky terylene material and presumably date from the nineteen fifties rather than the thirties.

I have seen a photo showing it sailing in the mid-thirties with a foredeck but no side decks. Among the sails are some rigging parts, an oarlock, one belaying pin, a strange ladle and a lead weight 'sinker'. I think it likely that the ladle contained tallow and the lead weight was used to test the river and sea beds."



YWURRY following restoration by Chris Barlow



“Although primarily intended as a museum display item, I am restoring the boat to sailing condition”

Considering her age and modifications, YWURRY was in a good condition.

Chris noted, “there appears to have been some distortion on the hull as the main thwart and the top edge of the centreboard case are not quite at right angles to the transom. I realised this as I was trying to establish the mast position and tried to set up the boat using the transom and a spirit level. The centreboard case and thwart don’t want to be horizontal at the same time. The stem has had a repair or was possibly rebuilt at some point. The breast hook and front part of the gunwale are newer timber and the nails and roves have been redone in the front 12” to 18” of the planking. There are signs of damage and repairs to the sheer strake too.”



The restoration gathers pace

YWURRY can boast a distinguished racing career, with both Harry Gaydon and visiting sailors taking her helm on the River Crouch. Her name crops up frequently in both the local and national press.

International 12ft. Dinghy Class

1. K8 (Mr H. Gaydon);
2. K21 (Mr H. Pitcher);
3. K22 (Mr F. Pitcher).

One of the craft capsized in the stiff breeze, but the occupants suffered nothing more than a ducking. Mr Gaydon was again successful, and although closely followed by his brother, Mr H. Pitcher secured second place and won the cup given by Mr S. Herring for the best average of the week, beating Mr Gaydon by one point.

Chelmsford Chronicle
15th September 1922

International 12ft. Dinghy Class

The International 12ft. Dinghy Class started at 2.30 p.m. to sail two rounds of the special short course in the Crouch. Mr. H. Gaydon's *YWURRY* won its ninth race in the class in succession, beating Mr. Horace Pitcher's *Beryl* by nearly two minutes. Mr. Frank Pitcher's *Phyllis* was third, and Mr. S. Courtauld's *N^o. 24* fourth, close behind.

The Times, 6th September 1921





Photograph: Copyright © Chris Barlow

October 2020: Restoration complete. YWURRY has regained her original silhouette, some ninety years since she last displayed her K8 sail number.

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