

The Royal Sailing Yachts

By Richard Johnstone-Bryden

The Royal Connection

The prospect of racing against members of the Royal Family has helped to increase participation in yachting at several key moments in the sport's development over the past two centuries. The Prince Regent, later King George IV, initiated the Royal Family's links with yachting at Cowes in 1817 by indicating that he wanted to join The Yacht Club, which subsequently evolved into the Royal Yacht Squadron of today. Having become a member of The Yacht Club, His Royal Highness visited Cowes two years later to watch the yacht racing from the Royal Yacht Royal George.

Queen Victoria's eldest son, The Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, strengthened the Royal Family's relationship with yachting through his active participation in the sport. His passion for the sea had been triggered by childhood cruises and watching the inaugural race for the America's Cup off the Isle of Wight on 23 August 1851. In 1863, Prince Edward accepted the Royal Yacht Squadron's invitation to become its Patron in succession to his father, Prince Albert, and purchased the first of his eight racing yachts three years later. The 37 ton cutter Dagmar, named after his sister-in-law, was followed by the 40 ton cutter Alexandra in 1871, the 40 ton cutter Princess in 1872, the 38 ton Zenobia in 1873, the 205 ton schooner Hildegarde in 1876, the 104 ton cutter Formosa in 1880, the 210 ton schooner Aline in 1882, and finally, the most famous of them all Britannia in 1893.

Britannia

The Prince's decision to order Britannia coincided with a slump in the fortunes of the British "big class" which had been supported by just two unevenly matched yachts in 1892. As this disappointing season drew to a close, The Earl of Dunraven initiated a revival by announcing his intention to build Valkyrie II to challenge for the America's Cup in the autumn of 1893. This was swiftly followed by confirmation that The Prince of Wales would commission a yacht of similar performance to provide Valkyrie II with credible opposition in home waters before her transatlantic crossing in quest of the Cup. The revival gained further momentum when it emerged that Mr A D Clarke had placed an order with the Southampton based Fay & Co for Satanita, and Peter Donaldson had instructed the Clyde based J & A Inglis to build Calluna. These developments were crowned by the American yachtsman Phelps Carroll, who revealed that his new yacht Navanhoe would cross the Atlantic to compete in Cowes Week, thus setting the scene for a memorable season that was bound to reinvigorate the sport of yachting as a whole.

Like The Earl of Dunraven, The Prince of Wales turned to the leading naval architect of the Victorian era, George Lennox Watson, to draft Britannia's lines. His Royal

Highness summoned the Scottish designer to his Sandringham estate to discuss the details at length. The subsequent drawings were approved by The Prince in the New Year, thus enabling work to commence on the royal cutter at David and William Henderson's yard in Partick, Glasgow on the banks of the River Clyde. For the craftsmen assigned to Britannia, it became a labour of love as she took shape alongside Valkyrie II. Her composite construction consisted of steel frames covered by pitch-pine and American-elm planking with cedar-wood topsides.

On 20 April 1893 Britannia was launched by Mrs Henderson. Once her 3 ton Oregon mast had been stepped and rigged Britannia was finally ready to make her racing debut. Although Britannia is now regarded as one of the most beautiful yachts of all time, contemporary opinion was not so kind. The Field's Yachting Editor Dixon Kemp wrote, "*The feature in the new cutters which made the most impression was undoubtedly the 'finish-off' forward. The general impression appeared to be that it was 'gratuitously ugly'. And yet the form of the stem or cutwater is a matter of taste... and the uneducated eye of the rising generation, untrammelled by comparisons, will grow to love the Viking stem just as past generations did the swan stem.*" The controversial shape of the bow was a direct consequence of Watson's desire to challenge the generally accepted convention that racing yachts should plough through the waves rather than skim over them. To achieve his objective, Watson adopted a shallow U-shaped pram form which provided enough buoyancy up forward to enable Britannia to skim over the waves, thereby marking a radical departure from the pronounced V-shaped wedge sectioned bow of the older yachts.

As completed, the 121ft Britannia was powered by a gaff rig that could boast a maximum sail area of 10,327sqft and propel her to speeds of at least 12 knots. The base length of her sail plan from the tip of her bow sprit to the outboard end of the boom was 172ft, while its height was 142ft above the deck. In contrast to the subsequent generation of stripped out racing yachts, Britannia could comfortably accommodate her owner and crew. The interior layout included four sleeping-cabins, a spacious saloon, galley, pantry, a bathroom complete with full size bath, and a 20ft long forecabin for the majority of her crew with 13 folding cots and space for 4 hammocks. The fittings were of polished yellow pine and mahogany throughout with tapestries and cretonnes above the polished wood dado.

Racing a yacht like Britannia was a major undertaking. In her early years, Britannia sailed between regattas under trysail canvas. In the 1895 season, it was estimated that she sailed 6500 miles, of which, 4500 miles consisted of passages between events. The main season would consist of approximately 40 races held between the end of May and late August. The action would begin on the Thames estuary before the fleet moved on to Harwich, Dover, the Welsh Coast, the Firth of Clyde, Belfast, Falmouth and up the English Channel to the Solent for Cowes Week. For the final round of regattas, the fleet would proceed from Cowes to Bournemouth, Weymouth Bay, Plymouth Sound, Torbay and Dartmouth. An average yacht-race for the big class was 40 miles and took about 5 hours to complete. The crew would begin their preparations about 0600. As the time for departure approached, it would take 30 men at least an hour to set up her gaff rig. Discipline was always strict onboard Britannia. While racing no one could speak except to give, repeat or pass on an order. Unless they were adjusting a halyard or sheet every member of crew had to lie prone on the weather deck and keep their heads below the rail.

To achieve Britannia's full potential on the regatta circuit, The Prince of Wales appointed William Jameson as her sailing-master and the professional yachtsmen John Carter as her first Captain. Together, they became a formidable double act. John Carter would be at Britannia's tiller while William Jameson would dictate the strategy. Under the appreciative gaze of The Prince of Wales, they began their partnership on the River Thames with victory in Britannia's first race on 25 May 1893. By the end of her initial season of competition, Britannia had achieved considerable success by winning 24 of the 43 races she entered.

Britannia's second season began early with a passage across the Bay of Biscay, round the Rock of Gibraltar and into the Mediterranean to enter the increasingly popular series of races that were held along the French Riviera. In contrast to his attendance of UK events, The Prince of Wales did not rely on the support of the Royal Yacht Osborne during Britannia's tour of the Cote D'Azur. Instead, he lived onboard Britannia while competing in the regattas hosted by Cannes, Monaco, Mentone and Nice. On conclusion of the final event in Nice, His Royal Highness would depart, and Britannia's racing sails would be stowed for the homeward passage under trysail in time for the start of the British season.

Britannia's success quickly captured the public's imagination and turned her into the "leading lady" of the "big class." As a locally designed and built yacht, she attracted some of the biggest crowds whenever she raced on the Clyde. In July 1894, her duel with the American yacht Vigilant, which had defeated Valkyrie II in the previous year's America's Cup, attracted considerable interest. Crowds lined the banks of the Clyde from Kilmarnock to Dunoon and from Gourock to the Cloch Lighthouse, while a fleet of passenger boats with their bunting, brass bands and yet more spectators shadowed the competing yachts.

Sadly, the regatta circuit took on a more sinister tone when the German Emperor Wilhelm II decided to use it as a method of generating interest among his people in maritime affairs so that he could gradually build their enthusiasm for his costly expansion of the Navy. In August 1895, he commissioned George Watson to design Meteor II along the same lines as Britannia, albeit on a larger scale. Meteor II's success, coupled with the Kaiser's antagonistic attitude towards his Uncle, tested The Prince of Wales' patience to its limits, as he once explained to Baron Von Eckhardstein, "*the regatta [Coves] used to be a pleasant relaxation for me; since the Kaiser takes command it is a vexation.*" Ironically, Britannia concluded her first racing career by winning the German Emperor's Shield outright in her final race at the 1897 Cowes Week. Shortly afterwards, Britannia was towed up the Medina River and put up for sale having won 122 of the 219 races that she had entered since her debut in 1893.

According to a popular myth, Ernest Hooley agreed to buy Britannia until he realised she did not have a funnel! However, the records maintained by the firm G.L. Watson and Co show a different story in which Britannia was sold to John Lawson Johnston of Kingswood on 16 December 1897. Within 5 months she had been bought by Martin Rucker who in turn sold her to Daniel Cooper on 20 July 1898. Despite the frequent change of owners, none of them used Britannia, so she remained in Cowes until The Prince of Wales repurchased her in May 1899 to act as a trial horse against

Sir Thomas Lipton's challenger for the America's Cup Shamrock I. Her brief return to racing proved to be unsuccessful and she was sold to Sir Richard Williams-Bulkeley in October 1900. In contrast to the previous private owners, Sir Richard actually used Britannia as a cruising yacht and reduced the size of her rig accordingly. As he prepared to attend Cowes Week for the first time with Britannia, Sir Richard was asked by her former owner, who had by then succeeded his mother Queen Victoria on the Throne as King Edward VII, if he could charter her for Cowes Week. Within a year, His Majesty had purchased Britannia for the third time and he continued to use her as a cruising yacht until his death in 1910 when she was inherited by his son King George V.

Although the new King did not fit out Britannia that summer, he appointed Sir Philip Hunloke as her Sailing Master and he oversaw the preparations for the 1911 season. To improve her suitability for family cruising, Britannia was fitted with a deck-house, higher bulwarks and a steering-wheel which was subsequently fitted onboard her namesake HM Yacht Britannia. For two seasons, Britannia continued to be used as a family cruising yacht. The young Princes Edward, later King Edward VIII, and Albert George, later King George VI, would often join their parents onboard Britannia for cruises along the Channel coast.

However, King George V succumbed to the temptation to bring Britannia out in the 1913 season as a handicap racer. Once more, the royal cutter wore her original owner's distinctive racing flag which consisted of the Prince of Wales' feathers on a horizontal red and blue background. Describing the positive effect Britannia had on King George V, Sir Philip Hunloke later wrote, "*The King was like a schoolboy home for the holidays. He loved the old yacht; he enjoyed winning, but he was a splendid loser. He never grumbled, and many a time in the course of a race, when we were hard pressed, I have had good advice from The King which I was glad to take.*" Sailing onboard Britannia provided The King with the chance to escape the burden of his office and the formalities of the court for a few precious hours. The King would take the view that he was merely a member of the crew, as Sir Philip Hunloke, subsequently recalled, "*King George V never would be just an onlooker. If there was an emergency, or a heavy bit of hauling to do, he felt that he had to join in. Of course he knew exactly what to do.*" In contrast, his wife, Queen Mary, was a poor sailor who disliked yachting and would only join the King for a sail on a calm day. One August Her Majesty recorded in her diary, "*Britannia has just passed us by, and I saw the King looking very wet and uncomfortable in oilskins. What a way to enjoy oneself.*"

Britannia's return to the regatta circuit was cut short on the eve of Cowes Week by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. As she returned to Cowes to be laid up for the duration, Britannia passed the old warships of the Reserve Fleet that were being mobilised for war. The sport of yachting was slow to recover in the wake of the First World War. As the disappointing 1919 season drew to a close, a delegation of yachtsmen sought an audience with King to persuade him to bring out his beloved Britannia and stimulate the revival of the regatta circuit. Even though she was the King's personal property, and funded by his private income, the timing of Britannia's recommissioning had to be handled with care to avoid it becoming a political issue. Having carefully considered the situation, His Majesty decided that it could help to resuscitate the "big class" thereby providing a much needed boost to the nation's yachting industry as a whole. As Sir Philip Hunloke prepared the royal cutter for the

1920 season, several owners confirmed their intention to recommission their yachts while Mr R. H. Lee placed an order worth £24,000 for the construction of Terpsichore to specifically race against Britannia.

The King enjoyed the 27 year old Britannia's return to racing. As he summed up the 1920 Cowes Week in his diary, The King wrote, "*Never saw the old ship sail better. Everything went right.*" Britannia's form encouraged the King to commission the first of her post war modernisations by inviting Alfred Mylne to design an enlarged rig with a similar sail area to her original sail plan of 1893. The work was carried out over the winter of 1920/21. The rejuvenated yacht proved to be a match for the latest craft in a good breeze and occasionally left them behind in light airs. She underwent further extensive refits throughout the 1920s to ensure she could continue to compete on a credible basis.

Britannia's most dramatic change in appearance was prompted by the Yacht Racing Association's adoption of the American Universal Rule as the governing standard for first class yachting in British waters from the 1931 season onwards. This led to the emergence of a pseudo J Class in British waters which consisted of new purpose built yachts racing alongside adapted older craft. To conform with these requirements, Britannia's sail area had to be reduced by 20% thereby resulting in the replacement of her gaff rig with a modern Bermudan rig. To implement the changes, The King turned to the era's leading yacht designer Charles Nicholson. The package of work carried out at his Gosport yard over the winter of 1930/31 included the fitting of a shorter bowsprit, a 175ft hollow silver spruce mast, and a shorter boom. Despite the age gap between Britannia and her younger competitors, the royal cutter went on to win 13 flags from 20 starts in the 1931 season.

However, Britannia's luck finally turned as the nation prepared to celebrate King George V's Silver Jubilee in 1935 and she was prepared for what turned out to be her final season of competition. For the first time in Britannia's long career she failed to win a single prize. Despite Britannia's lack of success, The King still enjoyed sailing her and even declined the generous offer of a replacement yacht. His only concern that season related to the absence of any prize money for his crew, so at the end of the year he compensated them by topping up their wages from his own pocket. Reflecting on Britannia's eclipse, Sir Philip Hunloke later recalled, "*I am sure that the reason why Britannia was outclassed in the end was that the J Class cutters Velsheda and Endeavour, had centre-boards. The effect of the centre-boards was most noticeable. Britannia was at last outsailed to windward – just where she used to be at her best.*" The death of her second royal owner on 20 January 1936 heralded the beginning of the end for Britannia.

Although King Edward VIII had joined his parents for family cruises onboard Britannia before WWI, he never inherited his father's passion for sailing. On one of the few occasions he joined Britannia for a race, he resorted to practicing golf shots, from a coconut mat placed on Britannia's counter, to relieve his boredom when she was becalmed. None of King George V's other sons wanted to take on Britannia, so in May 1936, it was announced that in accordance with the late King's wishes she would be stripped of all her equipment and scuttled. As the latest J Class yacht Endeavour II made her racing debut on 24 June 1936, Britannia's gear was sold by auction to raise £1050 for the King George's Fund for Sailors.

With a bunch of wild flowers draped over her stem, Britannia was launched for the last time by Marvin's yard in Cowes on 8 July 1936. For two days, the empty hulk laid at her buoy in Cowes Roads until she was collected just after midnight by the destroyers HMS Amazon and HMS Winchester. They took her out of a deserted, moonlit, Solent and round to the south of the Isle of Wight where charges were detonated in her bilges before she slowly slipped below the waters of the English Channel.

On 11 December 1936, King Edward VIII abdicated and was succeeded on the Throne by his brother The Duke of York as King George VI. Although the new King and his wife, Queen Elizabeth, enjoyed sailing, His Majesty disliked the atmosphere of Cowes Week, so it wasn't until after WWII that Royal Patronage of yachting was re-established by his son-in-law Prince Philip.

Bluebottle

The Royal Family's return to yachting reflected the mood of those early post war years. Since Britannia's demise the magnificent J Class yachts, which had dominated the pre war yachting scene, had disappeared. Instead, the post war yachting scene was centred around smaller more modest yachts raced principally by unpaid amateur yachtsmen. His Royal Highness' interest in small boat sailing was quickly picked up by a member of the Cowes based Island Sailing Club (ISC). He approached the Club's Commodore with the proposal that the ISC should present a 29ft International Dragon class yacht as a wedding present to the Royal couple. Agreeing to this idea the Commodore, Jimmy Damant, wrote to Their Royal Highnesses on 2 April 1948 formally making the offer which was quickly accepted. Jimmy Damant wanted to ensure that the Dragon would be a present from the entire membership of the ISC rather than a wealthy minority so he asked the members to contribute £1 each which was equivalent to their annual subscription. Despite limiting the size of donations to £5 per member the target was met within a week!

Building a new wooden boat at this time had become a challenging task that required a little ingenuity and a persuasive manner. The Admiralty had imposed severe restrictions on the use of timber for the construction of wooden pleasure craft because it was in such short supply. These constraints were only relaxed for a very small number of special cases, so it came as a relief when the ISC discovered that Camper & Nicholson were about to start work on a new Dragon. She had been commissioned to participate in the Olympic trials due to be held that July, but the owner was no longer able to race her, so he agreed to sell her to the ISC and the keel was laid on 12 May 1948.

Perhaps the biggest initial problem for the Royal couple was to strike a balance between the yachting world's perceptions of Royal yachting, created by King George V's Britannia, and the more modest style of the Dragon class. The Royal couple's choice of name for their Dragon provided an early example of this dilemma. In view of her smaller size Prince Philip wanted a name that clearly differentiated her from her famous predecessor. Through a careful association of Dragon - Dragonfly - Blue (her colour) - Bluefly, His Royal Highness arrived at the name Bluebottle. This choice attracted a certain amount of criticism along the lines that it was flippant and an insult

to the donors. Fortunately, Bluebottle's colour scheme proved to be less controversial. Initially, it was decided to adopt the "Royal Blue" previously used for Britannia but Charles Nicholson thought that the blue was too dark for a small hull and instead recommended a slightly lighter shade of blue. The Royal couple agreed to this suggestion and her final colour scheme comprised red below the waterline, a dark blue hull and a red cove line. These colours were complimented by the suit of Royal Blue sails and the Daffodil Yellow spinnaker (the second suit were plain white). Interestingly, the "Bluebottle blue" was used for the hull of HM Yacht Britannia while Bluebottle's red cove line was subsequently changed to match Britannia's gold line.

It was clear that the Royal couple's various commitments would only allow them to attend a few regattas each season. Prince Philip was still a serving Naval Officer and in fact he was posted to Malta in 1949. However, the presence of the Royal Dragon at a regatta without her owners could still help to generate interest in individual events and the sport of yachting as a whole. Therefore, the Admiralty agreed to appoint a Naval Officer to act as the Sailing Master and race Bluebottle on the Royal couple's behalf. Lt Cdr Michael Crichton was appointed as the first Sailing Master in May 1948. In the early years the role of Sailing Master was a part time task but as Bluebottle's programme became more adventurous the job changed into a full time appointment during the summer months. The seven Sailing Masters were supported by Clive Smith who joined Bluebottle in 1948 as the paid hand. In addition to sailing onboard, whenever the local class rules permitted the presence of a professional sailor, Clive Smith was responsible for her routine maintenance.

When Bluebottle was completed at the end of June 1948 she followed the general appearance of the pre war Dragons complete with a small two berth cabin and a short cockpit. However, there were a few finishing touches to recognise her Royal status. These included The Duke of Edinburgh badge fitted either side of the bow, and the tiller made in Chatham Dockyard by James Rutt, who carved Their Royal Highnesses' cypher into each side and a small heraldic Edinburgh Castle on the end. Camper & Nicholsons also built a 10ft rowing dinghy, to accompany Bluebottle, which was painted in the same colour scheme. It was decided, in view of Their Royal Highnesses' busy programmes, to dispense with a formal handing over ceremony and so Bluebottle was taken from Gosport on 2 July 1948 by Lt Cdr Crichton to the Hamble for eight days of sail stretching. Bluebottle's racing career got off to a creditable start on 10 July 1948 when she finished third out of ten starters at the hands of Lt Cdr Crichton. Despite the absence of her Royal owners Bluebottle flew the Royal couple's racing flag which, for the first season, consisted of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip's cypher in gold on a dark blue background. Prince Philip decided to replace this design during the winter of 1948 / 49 because he thought the detail was too complicated to see at a distance. Therefore, he opted for a dark green flag with a black heraldic Edinburgh Castle within a white circle.

During her 14 seasons of competition Bluebottle became perhaps the most travelled UK built Dragon with visits to Canada, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Monaco, Italy, Portugal, and France. The highlight of her career came in 1956 when she won the Bronze Medal at the Melbourne Olympic Games at the hands of her Sailing Master Lt Cdr Graham Mann. Bluebottle was also raced extensively in home waters around the UK. It was these home regattas that provided Prince Philip with a few opportunities to

race Bluebottle himself in-between his Naval, and later Royal, commitments. For Prince Philip's early visits to Cowes Week he chartered a small motor yacht for accommodation and one day the Cowes based boatbuilder and designer Uffa Fox went onboard and offered his help and advice to His Royal Highness. This marked the beginning of a long friendship and Uffa would often join Prince Philip when he sailed Bluebottle. Describing Uffa Fox, Prince Philip recalled, "*Uffa was a genius with a sailing boat and his advice on tactics and knowledge of the tidal conditions in the Solent was invaluable. He was usually very keen to take as much advantage as possible by going in-shore to avoid an adverse tide. This put us on the rocks at Egypt Point more than once!*"

Not surprisingly, Prince Philip's presence at an event generated a great deal of interest. To avoid press boats becoming a nuisance to both Prince Philip and the other competitors His Royal Highness would usually pose for photos with Bluebottle before the start of a race. In return the photographers were expected to keep out of everyone's way the moment the starting gun had been fired. By and large the arrangement worked although there were a few occasions when a photographer got in the way while trying to get more action shots. Although The Queen never raced Bluebottle she did sail onboard once in August 1949. The Royal couple had been due to attend Cowes Week but the weather was so bad on the day of their arrival in Hampshire that Bluebottle was sent across the Solent to meet them in the Beaulieu River. In view of the weather they stayed onboard their treasurer, General Browning's yacht for the day and sailed Bluebottle in the Beaulieu River under trysail only.

Like any racing yacht, old age eventually caught up with Bluebottle. By 1961 she was no longer as competitive as the latest Dragons to be built so The Queen and Prince Philip decided the time had come to retire Bluebottle rather than watch her slip gracefully down the result sheets. Bluebottle's achievements in her final series of races on the Medway in September and October 1961 provided the perfect conclusion to her racing career with two first prizes. Although Bluebottle had lost her competitive edge she still had plenty of life left in her. The Royal couple thought that Bluebottle could be a useful addition to the fleet of 120 small boats used by Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) at Dartmouth to train the Navy's young officers. BRNC expressed strong interest in the offer not least because the College already operated the 26ft Salcombe A Class keel boat Wiluna, which had been donated to BRNC in May 1956, and it was thought that Bluebottle would compliment her within their fleet. In February 1962 she was sent to Dartmouth on long term loan with the restriction that she would never race again. It was also understood that when she became too expensive to maintain she would be scuttled. In practice many of the officers under training were deterred from sailing Bluebottle in the fear of blighting their Naval careers before they had begun by damaging the Royal Dragon! Thus, Bluebottle was mainly used by members of BRNC's staff for the next three decades.

By the late 1990s the use of Bluebottle was declining while her maintenance costs continued to rise so the Commodore of BRNC initiated a review of Bluebottle's future in January 1998. This review concluded that the time had come for Bluebottle to be placed with a suitable maritime museum for long term preservation. Prince Philip was a Trustee of the National Maritime Museum (NMM) at Greenwich so they were approached to see if they would like to take her on. Because the NMM could only display Bluebottle out of the water they suggested that it would be better for her

long term future if she was put on show at the National Maritime Museum Cornwall (NMMC) on one of their exhibition berths. However, the museum was not due to be opened until 2002 and BRNC were keen to part with Bluebottle to avoid incurring further maintenance costs. Therefore, it was decided to move Bluebottle to Falmouth that summer and place her in storage until the museum could take her. This provided an ideal opportunity for Bluebottle to make a coastal voyage under sail. Appropriately enough, as another term of Naval Officers passed out of BRNC, on 28 July 1998 Bluebottle slipped out of Dartmouth for her new home with Sir Robin Knox-Johnston at the helm. He was joined for the voyage by the Museum's future Director Peter Cowling and the Chairman of the Trustees Terry Vernon.

Following her arrival in Falmouth Bluebottle was stored in the Pendennis shipyard until August 2001 when she was moved to the Fowey yard of Maurice Hunkin. In a strange twist of fate it was fifty years since Maurice's father Charlie Hunkin had undertaken Bluebottle's first major refit during the winter of 1951 / 52. As part of this earlier work Charlie Hunkin replaced her canvas decks and modified the doghouse. Half a century later Bluebottle was still essentially in good condition but she needed a package of work including the replacement of several frames and the oak stern deadwood before she could be exhibited to the public. The refit was completed at the end of April 2002 just one week before The Queen and Prince Philip's visit to NMMC at the start of The Queen's Golden Jubilee Tour of the UK. It was the first time that Prince Philip had seen Bluebottle for a few years and he was pleased to see her looking in very good condition. At the time of writing, Bluebottle is still exhibited at the Museum and can occasionally be seen sailing during the Summer months.

Coweslip

Although Bluebottle became the main focal point for the Royal Family's return to yachting after WWII, she was not the only craft to be raced by Prince Philip at that time. The Flying Fifteen Coweslip was presented by the people of Cowes as a wedding present to Princess Elizabeth and The Duke of Edinburgh. Uffa Fox came up with the idea for the 20ft keelboat in 1947 while relaxing in the bath one evening at his home in Cowes. Before he lost his train of thought, Uffa reached for the pencil in his dressing gown and sketched out the hull and keel on a nearby magazine. When he finished his bath, Uffa drafted the lines, sail plan and keel in more detail on his drawing board. Even though the Flying Fifteen's birth was relatively swift, he had been thinking about designing such a boat for some time. Several friends had suggested the merits of a boat measuring at least 18ft that would not capsize, yet possessed the exhilarating planing performance of his earlier International Fourteen sailing dinghy. The Flying Fifteen successfully met this brief and nearly 4000 examples have been completed since 1947.

Not surprisingly, Coweslip became one of the best known members of the class. When Prince Philip was posted to the Mediterranean Fleet in 1949, he took Coweslip to Malta where he spent many happy hours sailing around the local creeks. In home waters, His Royal Highness recorded his first Cowes Week victory at her helm during the 1951 event. She was kept and maintained on Uffa Fox's quay which enabled Prince Philip to join her from the Royal Yacht during Cowes Week without having to run the gauntlet of crowds ashore. Like Bluebottle, Coweslip appeared at several regattas without her royal owner. Uffa Fox usually sailed Coweslip on Prince Philip's

behalf and loaded her upside-down on to the top of his car for the journey between events. On arrival, the keel and rudder would be retrieved from the boot, prior to being bolted in position, followed by the stepping of the mast. Thus, she probably clocked up more miles on the road than she did on her own bottom.

Following her withdrawal from racing, Coweslip was acquired by Cowes Library on long term loan and put on public display in July 1976. She remained in the library until 2004, when a lack of space led to her transfer to the nearby Classic Boat Museum in Newport where she can now be seen.

Bloodhound

When the time came to replace Bluebottle, Prince Philip decided to opt for a yacht that could be used for both racing, and cruising. Initially, His Royal Highness considered chartering a cruiser-racer for the 1962 season, but this idea was soon dropped in favour of buying a second-hand ocean racing yacht. To implement this decision, Bluebottle's final Sailing Master, Lt Cdr Michael Jones, later Captain M A Jones MVO RN, was summoned to Buckingham Palace at the end of the 1961 season and instructed by Prince Philip's Treasurer, Rear Admiral Bonham Carter, to begin the search for Bluebottle's replacement. To fulfil the cruising requirements, it was decided that the future yacht should have at least two single cabins for members of the Royal Family and a shower compartment. Realistically, this meant that Lt Cdr Jones was looking for a yacht of at least 50ft and soon his investigations revealed two likely candidates, namely the 70ft yawl Latifa, and the 63ft yawl Bloodhound. Both yachts were built in 1936, Latifa by William Fife & Son, and Bloodhound by Camper & Nicholsons. At first glance Latifa seemed an attractive option because she had good accommodation and required only minor alterations for her to meet the requirements. However, her higher purchase price and greater running costs led to The Queen and Prince Philip choosing Bloodhound. The sale was completed in January 1962 and, a month later, Lt Cdr Jones was despatched to Plymouth to oversee Bloodhound's launching at Mashford's yard where she had been laid up for sometime.

Before Prince Philip's racing burgee could be hoisted in Bloodhound she required a major refit to modify the interior, replace the engine and alter the rig. Despite the need for this work, The Queen and Prince Philip had bought a fine yacht, as Captain John Illingworth, who was appointed as the Naval Architect for the refit, explained in a letter to Admiral Bonham-Carter, "*Bloodhound's sea-going qualities were exceptional. Under all conditions of wind and weather she is safe and easy to handle, and going to windward fast she punishes herself and crew less than any boat I know.*" Once Bloodhound had been launched she was sailed to Gosport to be refitted by her original builders, who of course had also built Bluebottle 14 years earlier. Charles Blake, who was a director of Camper & Nicholsons, personally supervised the work. He knew Bloodhound very well, having crewed in her many times, including the 1939 Fastnet Race which she won. He had also been onboard when she got into difficulties off Selsey Bill on 29 July 1956, when she lost her sails in a severe storm and started drifting towards Owers Shoal. The crew managed to drop her anchor before they were rescued by the Selsey Lifeboat. Luckily, the anchor held and Bloodhound managed to ride out the dreadful weather.

Whilst Bloodhound's sea keeping qualities were not in doubt, she suffered from a number of characteristics common among pre-war yachts. Her relatively heavy wooden mast and narrow beam caused her to sail at a fair angle of heel, while she was quite dark down below. It was these aspects that Captain Illingworth set out to improve. The wooden main mast was replaced with an alloy mast weighing 25% less, while the main sail was slightly reduced and provision was made for a mizzen stay sail. The sailing changes were completed by simplifying the winch and sheeting arrangements. These modifications to her rig had the dual benefits of making her easier to sail by a small crew, and improving her rating for racing purposes. The existing dog house was superseded by a bigger structure to provide deck-level navigation facilities, and a bunk for the navigator that could be used as a settee in harbour. Bloodhound's petrol engine was replaced by a 35HP Perkins diesel which also provided power for the 24HP electrical windlass. Down below, the original double berth cabin was turned into two single berth cabins and the comfort of the four berth saloon was improved by losing some of the storage space, such as the transatlantic store cupboard. Bloodhound's ventilation and lighting was improved by the replacement of her skylights with modern perspex-topped skylights. The galley and crew's quarters were separated from the saloon by a door and bulkhead.

However, as with Bluebottle, Prince Philip's various official commitments still restricted the amount of time that he and his children could actually spend onboard her. Rather than allow Bloodhound to spend most of the year tied up in Portsmouth, Prince Philip decided that she should be lent to Yacht Clubs to allow their members to sample offshore yacht racing. The Admiralty agreed to continue with the practice of appointing a Naval Officer as the Sailing Master but, being a larger yacht, it was decided that the Sailing Master should be supported by Chief Petty Officer Francis Drake and Abel Seaman John Capel to form the core crew. Thanks to the improvements introduced during the refit, these three men were able to sail Bloodhound themselves and in rough weather she would sail quite happily on just her jib and mizzen sail, reaching speeds of up to 6 knots to windward.

Prince Philip sailed Bloodhound for the first time during her sailing trials in June. Explaining what she was like to sail Prince Philip said, "*Bloodhound was easy to handle and she responded very positively to her tiller. She was certainly much easier to steer in all conditions, with her rudder attached to her keel, than the modern round-bilged yachts with skeg rudders. Needless to say, she required quite a strong breeze to give her a chance of overcoming her handicap against smaller boats.*" A month later His Royal Highness raced Bloodhound during Cowes Week. One of those who joined the crew for that Cowes Week was Commander Fergie-Woods, who was serving in Britannia at the time as the Royal Cypher Officer, as he recalls, "*I enjoyed sharing the main sheet with Uffa Fox. He had a wealth of sailing experience, of course, plus a sense of humour and a little mischief. We were close on the wind when he said to Prince Philip, 'you know, Sir, I find I can get closest to the wind if I lash my boom right down.'* Perhaps Prince Philip was only half listening, but Uffa found a line and tackle and he and I soon had the boom secured in no uncertain manner to a deck fitting. Uffa was pleased with the result but we were then upon the windward mark and Prince Philip was ordering 'Ready about.' The main was in no way ready to go about and I well remember Prince Philip's immediate interest in what Uffa and I had been up to, to say the least." At the end of Cowes Week, Bloodhound headed back to Gosport to load stores for Prince Philip's cruise in Scottish waters before

sailing on to Torbay to embark His Royal Highness. Having started the Tall Ships Race, Prince Philip joined Bloodhound for the voyage north to Campbeltown, where he was joined by The Prince of Wales, Princess Anne and Prince Carl-Gustaf, now The King of Sweden, for an informal cruise. Describing the normal routine for these Scottish cruises Prince Philip said, *“we would anchor in the late afternoon / early evening in some sheltered spot and cook a good supper. We would then get underway after breakfast and sail during the day to some anchorage with just a picnic for a midday meal. We would eventually join up with Britannia and transfer to her for the passage to Scrabster and then on to Aberdeen. Bloodhound would pick up a Yacht Club crew to sail back south.”*

Bloodhound's annual sailing programme was planned around the Royal Family's requirements for her. Once these had been passed on to the Sailing Master he was able to plan the rest of her programme accordingly. For example, if she was going to be used for a cruise along the Scottish West Coast by Prince Philip, Prince Charles and Princess Anne, the Sailing Master would try to find Yacht Clubs that wanted to sail on the voyages north and south. Equally, once in Scottish waters the Sailing Master could make her available for local Yacht Clubs to enter some off-shore races. The only qualification for those wanting to borrow Bloodhound was that the party had to have the necessary experience and ability to undertake what they wanted to do with Bloodhound. Despite this core condition Bloodhound was never lent without the Sailing Master, who was always ultimately in command of Bloodhound whenever she was on loan. The scheme soon caught on and became very popular. In her first full season of Royal ownership Bloodhound was used by members of 32 different Yacht Clubs to sail 6736 nautical miles and spend 109 of her 162 days in commission at sea. Apart from the small number of people who came onboard for a day sail, each visitor spent an average of 4 1/2 days onboard Bloodhound. To make Bloodhound available to as many people as possible each person was charged just £1 per day which contributed towards food and normal running costs, such as fuel, water and harbour dues. This figure was increased to £2 in later years and The Queen and Prince Philip paid the balance of Bloodhound's expenses

Despite Bloodhound's enormous success in introducing large numbers of people to off-shore yachting it was clear by 1969 that the cost of operating her could no longer be justified. Although the charges to those who borrowed Bloodhound could have been increased to the point where they covered all of her expenses it was considered inappropriate for the Royal Family to enter the yacht charter business. This left no alternative but to lay Bloodhound up at the end of the sailing season and put her up for sale. Before that sad day arrived Bloodhound undertook her longest cruise, with a voyage through the Kiel Canal, into the Baltic, and round to Bergen. The trip was arranged because The Queen and Prince Philip were due to visit Norway in HM Yacht Britannia. His Royal Highness thought the use of Bloodhound would enable The Prince of Wales and Princess Anne to see something of the Norwegian Fjords. In the event they had very good weather. At the end of their short cruise Bloodhound sailed home via the Caledonian Canal, down the Irish Sea and on to France, before returning to Portsmouth to complete a voyage of 2,932 miles.

Bloodhound's career as a Royal owned Yacht came to a close on 13 October 1969 when she entered Portsmouth to conclude her 1969 season, in which she had sailed 7130 nautical miles. Thus, in just 8 seasons of Royal ownership, she had sailed 45,393

miles, most of which were completed with members of the various Yacht Clubs who borrowed her, rather than her owners. Not surprisingly, the sale of a Royal owned Yacht generated interest very quickly and by November she had been sold to Bernard Cook. Following the sale of Bloodhound, Prince Philip was able to maintain the Royal Family's connection to the sport of yachting thanks to the generosity of Sir Owen Aisher who kindly lent Prince Philip a succession of yachts to race in Class 1 at Cowes Week, beginning with Yeoman XVI in 1970.

Meanwhile, Bloodhound continued to be sailed along the South Coast until Bernard Cook's death when she was inherited by his son Robert. Following a major refit in 1997, Bloodhound competed in UK and Mediterranean regattas until Richard Carr became her owner in 2002. However, the years were finally catching up with Bloodhound and within 12 months she was bought by the yacht surveyor Tony McGrail who embarked on an extensive 4 year restoration. In a surprising twist of fate, she was purchased in January 2010 by The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust to ensure her long term future. Before heading north to join the former Royal Yacht Britannia on public display in Leith, Bloodhound was repainted in her former Royal livery by Berthon's Lymington shipyard. Although Bloodhound will spend the majority of the year on public display alongside Leith's Ocean Terminal, the Trust believes that she should continue to be seen in her natural environment. Therefore, she will spend each July and August sailing around the West Coast of Scotland or the Solent.