



ON BOARD: Tom Eaves on Evette. Below: Charlotte Blee, Lilly Huntley and Scott Huntley with the organisers of the event and members of the Hurley Owners' Association (HOA)

Homecoming for historic Hurleys

DOZENS of sailing boats built in Plymouth came home at the weekend.

The Hurley was a pioneering glass fibre yacht created by former Devonport Dockyard worker George Hurley. At the weekend the Hurley Owners' Association celebrated half a century since the Hurley 18 and 22 were created. Sutton Harbour Holdings' King Point Marina in Millbay, hosted a gathering of more than 30 Hurleys. On Sunday a blue plaque was unveiled at Richmond Walk in George's honour.



Home again. Hurley yachts arrive in Plymouth

Armada sails into Sound for Hurley half-century

BY KEITH ROSSITER

Dozens of sailing boats built in Plymouth came home at the weekend.

The Hurley was a pioneering glass fibre yacht by former Devonport Dockyard worker George Hurley.

During its heyday his company, Hurley Marine, was one of the UK's largest boat builders.

After the Second World War, George Hurley and his wife Marion started a backyard business in Spencer Avenue, Keyham, in Plymouth, building caravans and trailers.

The company moved into new premises in Richmond Walk, Stonehouse and expanded to boats in 1958.

In the 1960s George became one of the first boat-builders to work in glass fibre. He asked naval architect Ian Anderson to design a yacht. The result was the Hurley, which was initially produced in three models, 18ft, 20 and 22.

By the mid-1970s Hurley

Marine had a purpose-built factory in Valley Road, Plympton employing 170 people and turning out 17 boats a week.

George retired in 1967 due to ill health, and he and Marion sold their interest in the company to fellow directors.

George died in 1989, but Hurley 22s continued to be made by a series of boat-builders up to 1991.

At the weekend the Hurley Owners' Association celebrated half a century since the Hurley 18 and 22 were created. Sutton Harbour Holdings' King Point Marina in Millbay, Plymouth, hosted a gathering of more than 30 Hurleys.

On Sunday a blue plaque was unveiled at Richmond Walk in George's honour, by his widow and daughters.

Marion turns 93 this week. Stephen Dart from the association said: "Some came by sea from as far away as Bude and Portsmouth and some overland by trailering their yachts from over 250 miles away."



Generations of pleasure: Hurley owners including Charlotte Blee, Lilly Huntley and Scott Huntley, above



Solar jobs third

The solar industry is expected to create 3,665 jobs in 2008, according to a new analysis by the Solar Energy Industry Association. The number of jobs is expected to rise to 5,362 in 2009. Some messengers next 11 from in Trade PwC for If the across over th 12,500. Solar expect averag past fl 300MW is hit ment c Acco is a law for th just 1 energ going "feed-system Leo ternal Trade surve dama Britis need action

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FOND MEMORIES: Mrs Hurley unveiled the commemorative plaque

Hurley 50-year reunion a huge success

HAVING recently attended and participated in the 50-year reunion of the manufacturing of the Hurley boats which was a huge success, it was a great honour to be present when Mrs Hurley unveiled the plaque commemorating the start of the business.

It brought back many fond memories to all ex-employees who were not only present at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club for the sail past on the Saturday but for those who attended the unveiling on the Sunday morning.

I know the Hurley members would like to express their gratitude for the coverage The Herald gave this event and I know how much they appreciated Mrs Hurley, who is now in her 93rd year, travelling all the way from America to do this.

I sent the above photograph for any ex-employees or members of the Hurley Club who were unable to attend the unveiling to be able to see this for themselves.

FRANK WITTS
via email

Herald Looking Back

TURNING THE CLOCK BACK ON PLYMOUTH

Tuesday, July 5, 2016



Hurley Marine works do from the mid-Sixties

A boatload of excitement and fear

WITH July now upon us, I've had a timely reminder of the 'Bring Your Hurley Home' event that's taking place later this month, essentially to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Hurley 22 Yacht that local carpenter, commercial vehicle body builder and later yacht builder George Hurley masterminded, with over 1,200 of them being built in the years that followed.

On Sunday, July 24 a special plaque marking the location that George Hurley's fledgling business first took flight back in the 1950s.

The first boat, a Silhouette, was built in the late Fifties and opened George's mind to the possibility of creating small scale craft with compact accommodation.

In the early Sixties that George, with the help of a young naval architect, Ian Anderson, started producing vessels to his own specification.

Before long George was mass producing his Hurleys - initially with Felicities and Sihouettes, along with Alacritys and Signets, the later (at the new Valley Road Factory) 18s, 20s and 22s and the rest of the Hurley line.

Furthermore, ever a man to take control of a situation, he also set up his own sail loft, supplying sails and cushions.

And then, to improve the delivery process, he came up with his own variation on the multiple car transporter, initially devising a

CHRIS ROBINSON



system whereby he could deliver two in one journey with the company Land Rover and then adapting a Bedford lorry which was configured to take two dinghies with two more on tow behind.

The Hurleys proved a great success and the Royal Naval ordered around 30 Hurley 22s and used them for training in the 1970s to 1980s.

Among those who were part of the Hurley experience was Stephen Dart, one of the organisers of Bring Your Hurley Home, heard this story from the now Lt Cdr Jake Dray:

'I was once a Junior Seaman Operator in the late Eighties (86-87) where I had my first ever experience of yachting on a Hurley during basic training.

I remember having an intro to the yacht and a couple of sailing lessons, which I think today would be called woefully inadequate to prepare the extremely novice crew for the weekend away.

'My introduction started in January 1987 and weather conditions were typical for the time of year - grey and blustery. Nothing like my favourite childhood book Swallows and Amazons.



A fully-laden Bedford lorry - not sure it would pass modern regulations!

'I remember the Hurley had been well used, small on the inside and when we closed her down for the night we generated an awful lot of condensation.

'My role was as the sailing lead with, under power, cooing and general mate spread between the remainder of the crew.

'I remember sailing south past western Breakwater, into squally winds from the south and swell running towards the Breakwater.

'Once in the open ocean we turned and headed towards the eastern entrance, however our sail-

ing experience did not match the weather conditions and we ended up heading straight for the Breakwater.

'Frantic attempts to bring the Hurley about were unsuccessful; I have vivid memories of our instructor in a Dory 10 yards away shouting at us to come about, which was not really helping!

'We did achieve it in the end and arrived safely in Turnchapel for our overnight stop before heading back to Jupiter Point.

'The whole experience was an emotional rollercoaster of excite-

ment, trepidation and fear, which I suppose is what the adventurers' spirit and naval life is all about.

'None of this would have been possible without our sure-footed Hurley, whose seaworthiness would have kept an awful lot of clumsy, inexperienced sailors safe during her time at Jupiter Point.

As well as hoping to see a host of Hurleys later this month, Stephen is also keen to explore some folklore - such as that the Royal Navy's Hurley 22s were all named after senior officers' girlfriends!

Fitting Hurley founder is to be honoured

WHEN I received a telephone call from my dear friend Irene, also an ex-Hurley work colleague, about the feature in Looking Back by Chris Robinson ("Homecoming as Hurley heads home to Plymouth", May 17) I was ecstatic.

How wonderful Mr Hurley is to be honoured by a plaque. His aim was to build and produce sailing cabin cruisers affordable to many.

It was a great success and a very exciting time.

I was proud to be a small part of it.

I was 16 in 1959 when I joined AG Hurley Ltd working in the office, leaving to have my first baby in 1967.

I have many happy memories.

I returned in 1972/3.

I look forward to seeing Mrs Hurley, Margaret and Linda, former workers, the Hurley Boats and, of course, the owners on Saturday, July 23.

BETH DANIELS

via email

