

SAUNTERER

“History of a Fast Cruiser....”

September 2014

Introduction

Saunterer is a classic yacht built by Charles Sibbick in 1900, is based in the United Kingdom, and still in full commission today. Currently undergoing further restoration in Dartmouth, Devon under the direction of Guy Cottam, she will back in the water in 2014. Saunterer is operated and managed by the Saunterer Trust.

She was commissioned by Mr John Simpson on 20 October 1899 for “handing over on or before 31st day of March 1900”. She is 47ft 5 inches long overall, 38ft 2 inches at the waterline and weighs 16 tonnes.



Saunterer was described in ‘The Yachtsman’, an important periodical of the day, on 27 September 1900 as follows:

“Among the other competitors in the Solent small cruiser class is *Saunterer*, which, built this year as a fast cruiser, may be taken to represent Mr. Sibbick’s latest idea of a heavy displacement boat. We were interested to find that *Saunterer* does not differ much from the Sibbick 36-footer racing craft of this year in shape. She appears to be quite as flat on the floor, but is, of course, immensely strong, and heavily ballasted”.

In 2013 Saunterer is one of very few Sibbick yachts still in full commission, and is in original condition following sympathetic maintenance and restoration throughout her long history. She has her original frames, hull and deck timbers from 1900 and her spars from the 1930s, and in 2010 had her original main hatch and companionway design reinstated. Saunterer is one of the oldest yachts sailing and racing on the South Coast of England.

1900 to the First World War

Saunterer was built by yacht designers and builders, Messrs C Sibbick & Co., of the Albert Yard, Cowes, Isle of Wight, England. She was described as a “wooden yawl” with sails supplied by Ratsey & Lapthorne of Cowes. She was launched on 27 March 1900, and on 4 May 1900 she was unconditionally certified to Lloyds Classification 18 A1. John Simpson of Ty'r-afon, Hampton Wick London SW owned Saunterer from 1900 until about 1908 and during his ownership registered a racing flag for her.



Saunterer was then sold to Captain L.E.G Oates of Gestingthorpe Hall, Castle Hedingham, Essex, whose various adventures on board he recalled during his ill-fated trip to Antarctica in 1911-1912. After his death on 16 March 1912 she was passed to his brother B.W.G Oates of Messing, Essex who owned her until 1918. It was during Captain Oates's time that Saunterer was withdrawn from the Lloyd's Register of Yachts in January 1911.

First World War to the Second World War

During WW1 Lloyd's did not publish a register of yachts so the exact date of sale by the Oates family is not known. In the Register of 1919 her next owner was noted as Thomas Belt of Bigg Market, Newcastle-on-Tyne who was the proprietor of a rope and canvas business in Bigg Market. He had many mishaps and went aground on a number of occasions (including on the Kelpie rocks below, with the Dunbar lifeboat waiting).



He sailed her extensively until the Second World War when, once again, the Lloyd's Register was not published. During this period her home port was Blyth in Northumberland.

1940s to 1960 – the Kayll Family

Saunterer next appears in the 1946 supplement to the 1939 register (having been sold in March 1944) where she is recorded as being owned by Major J. Pelham Kayll of 2, The Elms, Sunderland (a member of Sunderland Yacht Club and Royal Northumberland Yacht Club), his son Squadron Leader Joseph R. Kayll, D.S.O., O.B.E., D.F.C. of Sunnyside, Waldrige Lane, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham (a Battle of Britain pilot) and David P. Kayll of Bovington Camp, Wareham, Dorset. At some point during the Second World War she was fitted with a Coventry Victor two cylinder petrol motor. As well as being in military service, the Kayll Family were timber merchants.

1960 to 2009 – the Sutherland Family

In 1960 Saunterer was sold to Alexander Sutherland, 34 St. George's Crescent, Monkseaton, Whitley Bay. He brought her back into Lloyd's Register in November 1971 to Class 100 A1 – at that time the oldest vessel to have this classification. She was sailed extensively by the Sutherland family (including cruising to the Baltic and the Kiel Canal) and also used as a charter vessel based in Scotland for a number of years. When Alexander Sutherland died the yacht was passed to Mrs E.B. Sutherland, 13 Eastfield Avenue, Monkseaton. However, this led to her being laid up, an incomplete survey and repairs required in November 1978. Her Lloyd's classification was once again withdrawn in April 1980 and she has not been classified since.

Throughout the period from WW2 Lloyd's Register listed her home port as Cowes, but it is thought that she seldom visited the South Coast during that period. In 1973 Lloyd's register shows her having sail number 407, which she retains to this day. In the early 2000's she was launched again.

2009 to the present day – Restoration

After many years of reduced inactivity, in 2009 Saunterer was acquired by Guy Cottam and Chloe Savage who moved her to the River Dart in Devon, and who between 2009 and 2012 carried out a very extensive and sympathetic restoration which brought her up to a very high standard while maintaining her authenticity as a unique classic yacht from the beginning of the 20th century. She was cruised and raced successfully from 2010 on the English South Coast, including visiting the Solent in June 2011.



2013 to the Present Day

Now in 2014 Saunterer has been acquired by Iain Rawlinson who lives near the Beaulieu River in Hampshire, and Saunterer is operated and managed by The Saunterer Trust, which has been established to preserve and develop the heritage of this unique vessel, and to build up the existing archive of her history from records and personal recollections of those who have connections with her, or who have known her or sailed in her during her long life.

Restoration

Saunterer has now gone through the next phase of her ongoing restoration – including renewal of her chainplates for the first time since 1900 and some updating of her mast fittings and rig. The original gunter rig has been reinstated on her mizzen mast. She was relaunched in July 2014 and sailed up to the Solent in August 2014.

The ongoing work programme is being carried out by Guy Savage at the Old Mill Boatyard on the Dart in Devon, and is focused on preserving Saunterer's authenticity while also maintaining her high standard of overall condition for cruising and racing, and supporting her affiliated associations.

The Saunterer Trust

Associations

Under the auspices of the Saunterer Trust, the owners of Saunterer will continue to supporting her ongoing association with yacht clubs, charities and organisations focused on historic and heritage vessels. The associations connected with Saunterer are:

- National Historic Ships
- Clyde Cruising Club
- Royal Cruising Club
- Royal Northumberland Yacht Club
- Help for Heroes
- Beaulieu River Sailing Club

Archive

The Saunterer archive is now under active development by the Saunterer Trust. This will be available in due course for private view by appointment. The Saunterer Trust would be grateful to receive any information regarding the history of Saunterer, in whatever format, so that this remarkable story may be maintained and developed, including any comments on the historic information set out in this website.

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