WALDRINGFIELD SQUIB FLEET 1970 – 2020

IN THE BEGINNING . . .

On 30 May 1970 the first Meeting of the WSC Squib fleet was held. From the Minutes "The meeting was opened by the Commodore Mr John Young, who indicated that the Club was prepared to adopt the Squib as a separate Club Class and suggested the election of a Captain and a Secretary. Proposed by Mike Spear and seconded by Terry Vernon that Dr Palmer be elected Captain - carried unanimously. Proposed by Chris Thompson and seconded by John Gilmour that Anthony Mason be elected Secretary – carried unanimously."

The meeting went on to setting the pattern of our sailing for the next 50+ years. It decided the number of races (decided to have as many as the Dragon class), whether or not to race on Wednesday and Friday evenings (not in 1970), courses, a Cup, setting up a mooring trot, cruises, interclub racing and to adopt the Owner's Association rules (noting these stated no burnishing or polishing of antifouling). The meeting closed with "thanks to Terry and Stella Vernon for the use of their house (and their drinks)".

The WSC Club Yearbook for 1970 gives

37. *Kerfuffle* Mr Gilmour
72 *Guy Fawkes* M. Spear and T. Vernon
90. *Paramour* A. Mason
91. *Discord* Mr Thompson
93. *Sannu* Dr Palmer

Some boats came complete from the Oliver Lee yard but number 90 was a kit of mouldings with an unattached keel as bought by Anthony and Ann Mason. Their garden at Shottisham had a convenient tree from which to hoist the mouldings in the air whilst a trench was dug to accommodate the keel. The mouldings were lowered onto the keel and a Squib was born!

One of the first Waldringfield Squibs was owned by JOHN AND GILLIAN SHAMBROOK:

"We purchased our Squib 72 *Guy Fawkes* from joint owners Mike Spear and Terry Vernon and entered her regularly in the Club Saturday races.

We had one unique and remarkable incident while racing at Waldringfield in strong winds with three on board and spinnaker up, a squall hit us and we gybed violently, nose-dived and capsized, all in front of the clubhouse! Probably a "one off" for a Squib, being a keel boat! It was immediately noticeable that several competitors retired and in fact all racing was cancelled for the day. We learnt afterwards that Jem Goddard told Sally not to look behind but just get the spinnaker down quick! Bernard Sutcliffe came to the rescue in his *Plastic Chicken* and thanks to the Squib in-built buoyancy tanks, he was able to tow us ashore and bail her out. The only damage was a written off echo sounder and three very wet crew. Jem and Sally Goddard kindly offered drying out facilities, which was very much appreciated.

Over the years we entered two National Squib Championships, Lowestoft and Haven Ports. Our eldest daughter, Sarah after one year crewing in Cadets took over from her mother, Gillian, and my brother, Ken, as crew which she really enjoyed and when she was about 16, she won the Squib Ladies Cup in Deben Week.

We also used the Squib to day cruise locally. One year we took the boat round to Aldeburgh with brother Ken and family plus our caravans and had an unforgettable trip up the River Alde to Iken following the withy sticks. We had 4 adults, 5 children and 2 dogs on board.

In 1983 we sadly sold the Squib to a member of Oulton Broad Yacht Club and bought a Seamaster 925 Yacht*, Barcarolle*. Two years ago we were cruising on the River Crouch and we saw a fleet of Squibs racing and one of them was 72. It was such a lovely surprise."

Another early Squib was number 91 *Discord* and PAT BAKER tells her story, right to the present day:

"1969 was a momentous year. - the first moon landing, Chris and I got married, and my father, Chris Thompson bought a brand new Squib. He chose the name *Discord*, not, as one might think, a description of the potential atmosphere on board whilst racing. He felt this was a fitting alternative to another early boat in the Squib fleet at Waldringfield called *Harmony*.

Having raced an Enterprise for many years, he looked forward to the opportunity of racing a one-design keel boat. My mother certainly appreciated the change. She probably thought it would be drier and less energetic than the Enterprise. She did, however, say the spinnaker deprived her of the quiet rest she had usually enjoyed during the downwind leg of a race in the Enterprise.

My father was delighted with *Discord*. He regarded the Squib as a very good looking, civilised boat that was not only fun to race but good for a pleasant informal sail. I well remember how incensed he was when, during Deben Week in that first year he was told to "get that Tupperware thing out of my way" by a Dragon sailor.

He continued to enjoy racing and sailing *Discord* for about 20 years when not cruising the Dutch canals in his 90ft converted Dutch barge.

When, in 1988, Chris and I reluctantly sold our yacht, *Whisperer*, my father very kindly offered us the use of the Squib. We were never quite sure who, precisely, owned the boat. We paid for the upkeep, but when asked, my father always said he owned a Squib.

Chris and I raced *Discord* with varying degrees of success until a few years ago. A particularly memorable occasion was getting my 90 year old father on board to enjoy a sail at the Squibs 40th anniversary celebration event. In spite of his severe macular degeneration in both eyes, he helmed *Discord* as far as Ramsholt. He insisted he knew where the moored boats were and he 'could feel the wind on the back of his neck'. This probably wasn't the most relaxing sail for Chris, but my father's delight with 'sailing properly again' was well worth the effort.

Having been laid up in a shed for a couple of years, *Discord* saw the light of day and felt the water on her keel again last year when our son, Jonathan and his friend Dave Pinner sailed her in some open meetings. She probably had the most eventful experience of her life when they sank her during a very windy race at Burnham on Crouch in the Gold Cup. A fiftieth birthday dunking perhaps!

I realise whilst writing this that history repeats itself. We own Squib 91 but the next generation is getting the pleasure of sailing her. I would like to think that our grandchildren will be the 4th generation of the family to take care of her."

PETER THUBRON joined the fleet a little later:

"I bought my new light blue Squib No 329 with a four-wheel road trailer and depth sounder for just under £1000 in October 1972. I called her *Debit* as I was an accountant sailing on the Deben. Tim, our son, was three months old when we took delivery from Oliver Lee, the builder in Burnham on Crouch, Essex. My crew was often Henry Connell when not sailing with Dr Patrick Metcalfe who also had a Squib.

My fondest memories are of Deben Week when we sailed at Waldringfield, one day at Woodbridge and two days at Felixstowe Ferry where we normally sailed at sea which was always an exciting test of our navigation and seamanship. I remember dragging over the bar with our spinnaker up - amazingly no damage to our keel. I was once given a mooring at the Ferry which was several hundred yards from the hard and in those days our row locks were plastic and my crew who was a tough rugby player, struggled so hard against the ebb that the rowlocks broke. One highlight of our year was to race against Burnham Sailing Club, one year there and the next at Waldringfield. One year at Burnham we were loaned Squibs and one of our helms who normally sailed mid fleet happened to be loaned number 16 which was the National Champion's boat and he sailed past the champion as if he, the champion, had never sailed before. (who says the early boats with smaller keels weren't faster). At one of our meetings against Burnham held at WSC Henry Baker sailed my Squib and afterwards, much to my chagrin, said ' that was the fastest Squib I have ever sailed' whereas I thought it rather slow.

I took *Debit* to Brixham for the 1974 National Championship with crew and alternate helm David Earl which we thoroughly enjoyed. On the way home we drove so fast that our small trailer wheels, not intended for speed, blew up one by one, overheating.

For several years I was Hon Treasurer of the National Squib Class Owners Association and often went to committee meetings in London and the Irish often flew across for these meetings. One meeting I recall the Chairman, who shall remain nameless, arrived late, completely blotto, and the ensuing meeting was chaotic. GREAT DAYS."

PETE GREATREX interviewed early Squibber MIKE GARTON for some reminiscences of what Squibbing was like in the 70s:

"Mike was already a keen sailor before he raced Squibs. He raced Dragonfly No 2 at the club and also cruised in a small yacht called a Caprice. He and a friend Dick Noller had also crewed for George Turner in a Dragon. Mike and Dick saw the Squib Fleet founded at WSC and noted that "the Squibs were coming on". They also had a preference for keel boats, and the idea of being part of an affordable One Design keel boat class, promising close racing, appealed. Having decided to give Squibbing a go they set off in search of a boat and became aware of a reasonably priced one available at Woolverstone, handy because it was local. It did not come with any major pedigree. It had never been raced, did not have a certificate and had not been weighed. Moreover, it lacked quite a bit of racing gear and did not have a back stay! It was purchased, and after updates and improvements it

was taken down to Burnham to be certificated and of course weighed. The boat was around 20 kg underweight. Lead was “obtained” from some gash laboratory desks being disposed of by a local college, at which there were some connections, so their Squib was now legal. This was one of the earliest produced Squibs, from 1968, 23 *Grayling*. So a boat that was originally bought just to cruise was now kitted out for racing. Would it be competitive? Yes, it would, and it has remained so to this day. With the current owner it is often in contention at the front end of the Nationals fleet. No 23 was always a fast and rewarding boat to race Mike says.

The keel boat courses tended to be longer, and both the Cork Plate (then actually around the Cork light ship) and Deben Week, provided regular opportunities to sail at sea. During Deben Week triangular courses might be laid offshore from Felixstowe Ferry. Boats would be sailed down to the Ferry and accommodated on moorings.

Mixed keel boat courses did have their own problems. Mike can remember the “enjoyment “and challenge of meeting the Dragon Fleet at a turning mark in the river. He noted that not only was a Dragon bigger and heavier than a Squib, but they also had “long sharp noses“.

Squib racing was competitive, not only at the front of the fleet but further down as well - plenty of talking and discussion approaching and even leaving marks, within the fleets which often might comprise 10-12 boats.

They raced her for several seasons, had a break to commission and campaign a Popcorn 23 racing yacht, before returning to the Squib fleet in the late 1980s for another decade of Squib , in a different boat No 302 *Romac* built by Hunters.

However Mike and Dick’s early days with No 302 were not quite the same as with the preparation of No 23. They found that the floor was in poor condition and needed replacing. Undeterred they set about the task themselves, but found some difficulties, not least because the hull was not symmetrical so each side had to be made a different shape. The project was duly completed with a few extra bits of glue, tape and filler, and finally it was decided to have the boat weighed ..... deep breaths were taken .... no need to look for more lead for correctors. The boat was 80kg overweight! Virtually all Squibs have gone through the replacement floor process at one time or another.

Mike recalled that the fleet did not seem to spend too much time discussing technical and boat speed issues. The Squibs were less sophisticated in controls and equipment than they are now, folk just got on and raced them.

Scrubbing was less of an issue than it is today. Boats were scrubbed about two or three times a season, Mike said.

Spinnaker poles were not fly away as they are now, they were freestanding stored on the boom or in the boat.

Jibs were sheeted to the gunwale edge, until barber haulers were introduced in the late 1980s. Jib halyards were often led to a traditional winch arrangement on top or the front buoyancy tank - easily accessible!

The focus of the fleet was primarily at the local level rather than seeing themselves as part of National Fleet. However inter-club racing did take place with the Haven Ports Squib Fleet. The WSC Fleet did have some success, not least with helms like George Turner, a regular Squib racer by then.

In response to a mention of the regularity of running aground - a Squib tradition that is maintained to this day! - Mike confirmed that they did do their fair share of attacking the mud. The method of getting off if sailing/ heeling did not work, was for the crew to clamber over the side and push off. That was the easy bit, getting back on board was often not so easy. You did not expect to be towed off by a support boat as happens now. Mike does remember being towed back once, maybe by Ted Kaznica, but this was when their mast split in two and collapsed. The early masts were glued together in two halves."

GEOFF MAYHEW comments on his ownership:

"Mark Stone and I shared Squib 673 *Major Bloodnok*!

We were very proud of our purchase from Oulton Broad, rushed it to Waldringfield, backed it in off the pub slip with the Land Rover and put it on a yard mooring in front of the pub.

We were called back next day because we had put it on a drying out mooring. When the tide came in it filled up through the holes in the gunwales used for cover ties. All we could see on arrival was the stem fitting peeking out of the water! At low water, our beautiful new boat was full of mud. It took a lot of cleaning and several beers in the pub while we waited for the next tide to eventually float her.

All good fun!"

JO McARDLE tells of her Squib adventures and successes:

"Brendan and I bought our boat *Ariel* after an adventure in William's Squib 387 *Katya* which he had bought in 1987. We sailed the Cork Plate in 1988 in 387 leaving at the appropriate time but not returning to the club house until 20.00 hours on a May evening having left our children (Edd & Matt) with my mother (Biddy Sudell). There were no rescue boats, nobody in the clubhouse, the Crow's Nest had all gone home and my mother thought we had gone over to Holland and left her with the children!!

Shortly after this there was a Squib party in the club house where we were introduced to Mike Bizzey and he told us he was selling his Squib 141. After a few drinks we decided we would buy it and left the party having bought a boat unseen, but we couldn't have it until July as Mike was attending the Squib Nationals.

Squib 141 has been in the family ever since. In 1995 Brendan was not well & decided he was giving up Squibbing and we purchased a yacht. We decided as a family that William and I would join forces and our father (Ted Sudell) would be the silent partner. Following this partnership our father spent many hours adjusting the rigging on the boat & we never knew what rigging adjustment he had made.

141
102

At the Squib Nationals 2001 in Lowestoft, William & I were near to being awarded the "Dick of the Day" prize. Squib members were awarded this for the most extraordinary event which happened during the Nationals. This award was made by Ted Reilly & Tom Crean who sailed Squib 120 *Squiblisatude.* We only missed this accolade by a whisker. Our father had fitted bilge pumps the wrong way round. This was quite a surprise to us when Will was pumping hard but found we were shipping in water!! Fortunately, the prize went to two Irishmen who managed to up end their boat on the trailer by both standing on the stern.

At this 2001 Nationals I won the Tulip Cup for the top woman helm crewed by William & my son Edd."

Another of our women helms at Waldringfield over the years had been MAGGIE LAMB but for the week of the 2001 Nationals she helped with rescue and commented "With constant force six winds and heavy seas one would expect to have to drag the boats back inshore with all manner of breakages. We didn't have to, the Squib is a truly great boat."

The Sudell family have raced Squibs for a long period and even earlier long termers are Richard Cooke and Jim Davis.

After giving up racing OKs here, JIM DAVIS comments:

"I eventually decided to try a Squib in 1982 purchasing 120 *Lisa* (changed to *Squiblisatude*). It took me a year of racing to challenge the likes of Jem Goddard and George Turner. I did a number of Championships in 120, one of the highlights being when Richard Cooke and I teamed up and won the Veterans Trophy at Lowestoft.

When we tried to defend the title at Howth in Ireland where over 100 Squibs started, The Irish hospitality did for us and we failed to retain the title (well that's our excuse anyway). I did crew for Henry Baker in 1988 and having had a good week, we were hailed by Commander Hewitt (who ran *Bluebottle* for the Duke of Edinburgh). He told Henry we had beaten him by one point for the Veterans Trophy which came as a complete surprise to Henry as I'd forgotten to tell him that I'd entered us. It was good excuse for Henry to fill up the cup with champers at that evening's dinner.

In 1990 I sold 120 and purchased 285 *Turtle* from Aldeburgh and proceeded to show the middle number boats can be fast if worked on. When finished I changed her name to *Tortured Turtle*. Now known as *Buck Up* and raced by Tom Brazier.

From around 1988, Richard Cooke and I shared the Class Captain and Secretary duties. I also looked after the moorings and the 1987 storm happened on my watch. Having put all the Squibs on sinkers, they turned up on the opposite side of the river still on their moorings and intact. The only boat that sank was John Buck's 723 which was on a private mooring.

Having retired from BT, I had been repairing and maintaining boats and I got a call from John Buck to estimate for some work on 723. He said my quote was too expensive and after many conversations, he said he would swop my boat for 723. We shook hands on the basis he would keep the name *Buck Up.* 285 became *Buck Up* and 723 became *Bucked Up.* It took all of one winter to get the boat right but it served me well till I sold it in 2006.

Since then it's been crewing with Richard Cooke and the Nationals in Abersoch with Chris Arnold. I must say it's mentally more relaxing but physically harder at the pointed end. I like to think though that us veterans can still give the 'youngsters' a run for their money."

RICHARD COOKE comments on the same period and right up to the present day.

"I bought Squib 137 *Mary Ellen* from Peter Clapham in 1982, joined Waldringfield Sailing Club and have owned a Squib ever since. Racing in the early days seemed simpler than it is now. We had no jib barbers to fiddle with and wonder if we had them in the right position. The mainsheet was kept in the middle of the track at nearly all times. Jib halyard tension was via a winch at the foot of the mast but rarely used. Slack rigging was deemed order of the day. Not so much attention was given to the finish of the hull and I'm certain we scrubbed less. Spinnaker handling was interesting as the pole was manually fitted to the mast. This really required a crew who was eight feet tall but since very few were available, trips to the foredeck were frequently demanded especially when gybing from reach to reach and did add a bit of extra excitement, especially out at sea in heavy weather.

Having said all that the competition was still as fierce as it is now with Jem Goddard in *Aquarius* as King with Henry Baker in *Slipstream* who was very good in heavy weather. George Turner in *Black and Tan* used to trickle along in the light stuff, often appearing in the lead having sailed in what appeared at the time to be the wrong part of the river. "There's always wind in the tide" he used to say. The yachts were still racing in the early days and therefore we tended to have similar courses, a long one using the full length of the river. I remember the day when George and Jem stopped racing. We were all beating through the Rocks when I heard a large bang. George had put a hole through Jem's boat. Sadly George retired from sailing after that. Jem sold his boat and only crewed for Owen Williams. Deben Week was a much bigger affair in the 80s and great fun at the Ferry. I managed to win it in 1984, mostly I have to say, because George sailed a wrong course out at sea.

My crew at the start was Greg Webb who after a few years took Holy Orders. Whether that was a comment on my helming ability, I'm not quite certain. I then teamed up with Merv Sharman who stayed with me some twenty years. I sailed against and crewed with Jim Davis for many years – he had bought a Squib at the same time as me. We had some great fun at Championships, notably at Lowestoft. Unusually for Lowestoft, we had splendid weather and won the veterans trophy.

By 2007, *Mary Ellen* needed a major refit but I decided instead to buy 814 *Jumpin Jack* which I still have. Jim decided to stop sailing. This change of boat coincided with some changes in the Squib class and at the club. The boats had gradually become more complex with extra controls; the fly out pole system is a blessing. Club racing was changing, gone were the long races and the club line starts.

Although the class had more boats in the past, the number racing regularly seems about the same. The faces have changed but it's good fun and the Squib is a wonderful little boat to sail."

Over the years many Waldringfield Squibs have ventured to the Championships as will have been seen in the memories above. Nearest to becoming Squib Champions were Henry Baker and Chris Arnold in *Slipstream* 102. SUE ARNOLD comments:

“The Squib Racing Keelboat, launched in 1968, was introduced to WSC in 1970. Club members bought five boats and one trailer! They were able to sail to the National Championships at Haven Ports in 1978 where H Baker came 2nd overall and J Goddard 3rd. Henry, a Director at Manganese Bronze, took the club trailer to his “works” where a replica was built for him. This enabled annual trips to Aldeburgh YC and the Squib National Championships. Henry had good results both home and away with *Slipstream*.

His trailer sadly came to grief in 1986 on the way home from Abersoch in north Wales on a Saturday morning in heavy holiday traffic. Practical Welsh speaking locals took charge of the situation. They produced a JCB to lift *Slipstream* onto the verge and a one armed welder to fix the trailer at a nearby farm. Within two hours Henry was back on the road home to Suffolk, the charming locals having refused all offers of payment.”

The most epic attempt to get to the Champs has to be Nigel Pusey’s. He aimed to sail from the Deben to Howth in Dublin Bay in 1996. Singlehanded no less. A broken rudder led to a Pan call and rescue tow by the Walton lifeboat. Off again, with spare rudders, he got as far as Fowey when it was obvious time was running out with the start of the Champs looming. Crew Andy Harding and a road trailer were summoned, and they arrived in Ireland in a more conventional manner than intended. It was still an amazing trip in an open 19ft boat.

Champs at Lowestoft over the years have been well supported by Waldringfield Squibbers as these photos show: 120 above, with Jim Davis and Richard Cooke, the Greatrexes with 763, David Cannell and David Craig in 40, David East in 857, Jo McArdle, William Sudell, Nigel Pusey, Patrick Wilton and others.

Only one of our Squibbers has skippered a yacht in the Fastnet. DAVID CANNELL tells his tale:

“I carry out work for and have become close to the Cirdan Sailing Trust over the past 20 odd years. This is a very fine charity who take youngsters from often very deprived backgrounds for a sailing experience. They have had notable successes in the past, when crew on board one of the three wooden sailing vessels that they operate, is smitten and either continues with sailing or looks for a career in the Merchant, or even possibly, the Royal Navy.

The famous Fastnet Race, which takes place at the end of Cowes Week, is open to vessels and crew (skipper) who can qualify racing from Cowes, around the Fastnet Rock off Southern Ireland and back to Plymouth, leaving the Scilly Isles to port. One of the vessels the Cirdan Sailing Trust operates is *Duet,* the 22 ton (Thames measurement) gaff yawl, originally named *Gaviotta II*, designed by Lynton Hope was built by White Brothers of Southampton in 1912. She is 72 foot length overall and 50 foot hull length, carrying a substantial bow sprit and bumpkin with 1372 ft^2 of working sail area.

The Fastnet Race runs every two years and in 2012 I thought it would be a great exercise to enter *Duet* in the 2013 Fastnet Race, she then being 101 years old and would be the oldest boat ever to have raced the Fastnet, to raise funds for the Cirdan Sailing Trust. After a lot of cudgelling and pushing, I finally got a "scratch" crew together and undertook the qualifying sail from the south coast of UK to France and back, one of the requirements to enter the race.

The race started well, but wind died steadily, sailing down Channel with the various "hot yachts" soon disappearing over the horizon. That night and the next day, we drifted backwards and forwards in the Channel with the tide – I realised too late that we should have hugged the shore, which would have given us slightly more wind and kept *Duet* moving. Our non-sailor friends following us on the Yellow Brick tracker were concerned that *Duet* appeared to be stopped and, at times, going backwards – we all know that experience in Squibs. However, wind picked up as we approached the Fastnet Rock and we apparently recorded the fastest time from the Scillies to Plymouth – roaring along with a strong south westerly and a beneficial sea under us.

To cut a long story short, we finally made it back to Plymouth in six days and six hours – not too bad for a 101 year old, at times leaking heavily, requiring 200 pumps of the hand pump every hour. We raised a substantial donation for the Cirdan Sailing Trust.

P.S. Much to everyone's disappointment, we did not have a good view of the Fastnet Rock – big seas, heavy rain and poor visibility, together with my cautious skippering not wanting to sail too close, but a great experience but here is *Duet* off the Needles early in the Race."

2018 was the 50th Anniversary of the National Squib Class. A huge Championships was held at Cowes with 100 Squibs to be seen. More locally Ricky East organised an East Coast Lunch at Haven Ports Yacht Club. To show us the route we had travelled along in 50 years, outside the Lightship was *Wouldn't It?,* the plug for the Squib. Squib number 1! When the boat had served as the plug for the hull mould to be created, it is rumoured Oliver Lee allowed her Burnham shipwright to take it as part payment for his work. In due course a fibreglass moulded deck was added and a complete sailing boat resulted. In the early 90s Nigel Pusey, who is still a Squib owner but not a Squib sailor, found a wood Squib sitting in the Andy Seedhouse boat sales yard in Woodbridge. Wood Squib? Nigel and his then crew Andy Harding decided it must not go on the scrapheap so Andy together with Mark Wincer bought the boat. Some repair work and lots of varnish was applied in the safety of Andy's aircraft hangar. They then had the good idea of sailing her at Waldringfield with the Squib fleet. Nigel thinks it did an Autumn Series and it went very fast in the hands of Mark. Lots of local fleet rumblings and moanings resulted and it was considered that a Certificate should be sought. The RYA deliberated at length and finally declared it did not qualify as a Squib. After all, the Rules state that a Squib must be built by a licensed builder, using the moulds for the hull and deck approved by the RYA. This one was the source of the hull mould, not its product. After that it was back to the hangar for a 20 year rest until 18 March 2018.

Our Squibs have always contributed effort to the running of the National Squib Owner's Association and to the manning of the NSOA stand at numerous Dinghy Shows. Peter Thubron was an early Treasurer and Jo McArdle served as a member of the Committee. In her words "I was elected by the WSC Squibbers as it was felt that our fleet was one of the biggest in the UK and should have someone on the Committee to represent our interests". Jo was followed by David Pearce and Ian Waite and Ricky East served as Publicity Officer and Editor of Squibble magazine.

The very well attended Squib Suppers held at Felixstowe Ferry over the winter were in danger of dying out with the collapse of the Ferry Squib fleet so Jo McArdle and Ricky East took over organising them for a few years. Jo and Ricky had taken over at Waldringfield as Captain and Secretary in 2009 and encouraged the social side of sailing as a means of bringing the class together. Even tea and cake every Saturday after racing encourage unity. We enjoy supper and chat together after Wednesday evening racing.

In 2010 the 40th Anniversary of our fleet was celebrated with a day of racing and a barbeque at the Club. The fleet invited as many ex-Squibbers as we could, from Waldringfield and from Felixstowe Ferry who had traditionally raced with us for Easter Egg, Cartoon and the Autumn and Freezer series.

From 2013 Pete Greatrex became Captain and handed over to Barry Searle in 2016. Over the years from 2010, we have seen a progressive change to racing. Now we have two shorter races on a Saturday, back to back. The legs are also shorter which hopefully has improved our racing and mark rounding skills. We only see Green Point as we pass by on the Cork Plate race!

We had an Open Meeting in 2016 as well as encouraging visitors from the Ferry, Aldeburgh and Haven Ports to all Easter Eggs and Cartoons. Our Squibs have continued to venture forth to Inlands Champs at Rutland Water and to East Coast Champs as well as the Nationals.

As well as racing, we have endeavoured to train crews (there's always a shortage) and to support Oriel O'Loughlin in her laudable Go Sailing venture.

Our Squibs have traditionally been bought in from the other East Coast fleets - Burnham, Mersea, Lowestoft and Oulton Broad, Levington, Aldeburgh and in turn we have sold boats to these fleets. However four of our Squibs have travelled much much further to Malaysia. An ex-patriot former Burnham Squibber, Jeremy Camps, decided to buy old Squibs for a new fleet. Surprisingly it was economic to buy them, ship them out there and refurbish them ready for racing rather than buy new boats of another class. Four of our unwanted Squibs, *Rats, Buck Up, Zomark* and *Amble*, have been recycled and form part of a successful new fleet at Port Klang YC. Another of our boats was generously donated by Stafford Patient to the East Anglian Sailing Trust at Levington.

PETE GREATREX comments on scrubbing – our eternal problem:

"Throughout the 50 years of Squib sailing at WSC, fleet members have had to tackle fouling on their Squib hulls. Traditionally boats were careened on the beach on a rising tide, it's OK as a scrubbing method but you can't really see what you are doing and you are scrapping your keel over stones etc.

The old scrubbing days – Chris Thompson enjoying his pipe and chat

The idea of a trolley to lift boats out had been mooted over the years but little had materialised, until 2009 when David East took up the "scrubbing issue". David set to - mainly on his own - to plan, design, and campaign for his vision. Over a year or so he gradually won support, answered many technical questions and overcame some reservations. The plan was to install a yacht winch on a concrete base on one side of the head of the main club slipway, with a matching strong point on the other side, thus creating a self-centring pull to keep our treasured Squibs on the straight and narrow. We were fortunate to be able to call on help from within the local and National Squib Fleet. David Cannell is a naval architect and he undertook the critical structural and engineering calculations. Mick Rust from the Rutland Water Squib Fleet was familiar with construction techniques, and willingly offered his time free, together with dealing with fabrication. We just needed to find between £2000 and £2500. The costs were eventually split 3 ways. One third from individual voluntary contributions from WSC Squib fleet members, one third from our accumulated fleet funds, and the final one third, generously, by way of a grant from the Club.

Construction work at the slipway was done by Ian Waite and friends. There was significant discussion about how, and indeed, if it would work. However on the big day it did all work, first time. It is quite easy to pull the Squib into the trolley cage, balanced on its keel with gaps under to allow good access for scrubbing, and then secure it ready for transport out of the water. It pulls up the slip way manually with a 4:1 purchase and the winch locks the boat for safety when at the top of the ramp. After scrubbing the winch is used to lower the Squib and trolley weighing just under a ton down into the water. Scrubbing is a collective and a social activity. We scrub our Squibs about every 2 weeks. We do it collectively so we might scrub 6-7 Squibs in about 2 hours working in 3 teams. There are a few lulls in activity so that allows the shore team at least to catch up with each other's news, set the world to rights, and collectively inspect Squib hulls and keels and anti-fouling, always a hot topic. When "chewing the cud" during scrubbing, it is not unknown for someone to mention that scrubbing Squibs in this now accustomed way would not have happened without David East's vision, skill and

determination. Our scrubbing system is indeed a fitting legacy for a long standing and committed WSC Squib fleet member."

Why did we come to race Squibs? first comment by LOUISE BREAREY:

"Our first decision was which class, (Waldringfield Sailing Club sensibly still run fleet racing in classes). We wanted to sail together, so the choice was Lark, RS200, Wayfarer, Dragonfly or Squib. We rejected the RS as too exciting and the demographic was far too young, we couldn't drag a Wayfarer up the beach and Larks were being superseded by RS. We were tempted by the Dragonfly, but having spent 15 years repairing and restoring wooden boats for a living, it seemed like a poor choice for retirement.

This left the Squib, the demographics within the fleet looked closer to our age, and with a mix of men and women sailing. We were slightly wary of a keel boat, having not much enjoyed our experience with Flying 15s many years ago, but the attraction of not capsizing and the enthusiastic welcome from the sailors convinced us to give it a try. We had a number of test sails, members were very kind and generous with their time. We learnt that the Squib is nothing like our previous experience of keel boats, it was comfortable to sail, and it felt more like a dinghy when sailing, more responsive and definitely more fun than anticipated.

We decided to take the plunge and buy a Squib. We received lots of advice about which numbers to buy and which to avoid and which were best. Needless to say, the advice wasn't completely consistent, and we weren't entirely sure that the keel shape would be the limiting factor to our racing. We looked at a few boats and eventually bought a boat from the widow of a club member. It was lovely to be able to keep the boat sailing on its home river. We are proud owners of *Whirl'n Dervish*, number 812.

Again, our fellow Squib sailors were generous in their help, support and advice. Our first race was not a great success, as we found, the first issue was avoiding the sticky Deben mud. We have slowly made every rookie mistake when it comes to rigging the boat and have found most of the mud banks on the river. We have also learnt that local knowledge can be unbeatable on the river."

IAN WAITE follows up:

"After renting a few riverside cottages with rowing boats attached, Gilli and I bought a 'Wanderer' dinghy in 1990 which we trailed around to various places. One of these trips was to Waldringfield where we spotted WSC where everyone seemed to be having lots of fun so in Spring 1992 we applied to join the club. At our membership interview it was suggested that a Squib would be the ideal boat for us and our three children (Eleanor then 11, Alex 9 and Tom 7). Ben Sutcliffe found someone to buy our Wanderer and *Blue Touchpaper* (614) for us to buy from Mersea Island.

A couple of coats of antifoul and there we were at Waldringfield boatyard being helped by Jim Davis to be ready to be lifted in just before Deben Week 1992. On our shakedown sail with all five of us aboard I managed to put us aground on the horse across the river from the 'The Rocks'. Luckily a kind gentleman came to our rescue and towed us off again.

Since those far off days I have discovered that all you need to do after a grounding is to hop over the side and push the boat off. There have been more than a few as we have tried to dodge the tide in the river, but these have just added to our other memories of Squib sailing on the Deben. These happy memories include birthday picnics on the beach at the 'Ramsholt Arms' and family barbecues at 'The Rocks' along with the racing on our lovely river and occasionally out to sea.

I think it is safe to say that all five of us and some of our friends have overwhelmingly happy memories of sailing in our Squib and I hope that in the next few years we may be able to introduce some of our grandchildren to the joys of 'Squibbing' on the Deben. No going aground included as I am not as fit as I once was and getting back into the boat might prove difficult these days."

GILL LAMB on her progress towards Squibbing:

"Prior to Squibbing I was an occasional Dragonfly crew on D33. It was the most beautiful boat and provided year-round activity. The winters were spent with continuous maintenance / repairs / varnishing. And the summers were spent protecting the previous winter's work. 'MIND MY VARNISH!!', was the most frequent command from the helm.

Then came Wayfarer 9115. It was questionable whether we controlled the boat or whether the boat controlled us, as we capsized in every stretch of the Deben. I was crewing for an old friend, but we not only fell out of the boat, we also regularly fell out with each other. After turning turtle at the bar and drifting ignominiously past The Ferry… it was time to stop. It was time for a Squib!

Squib 745 came into my life with scrubbing needs, but without precious varnish or a high capsize risk. I happily settled for that. The Squib is an easy boat to sail and an interesting challenge to race. After a stint helming, I now crew with Ricky East. Despite losing key components, and a woman overboard, we have never had a cross word. And happily, we can race the Squib in (nearly) all conditions without risk of capsize. THE MAGIC OF SQUIBBING."

50

Waldringfield
Squibs
1970 - 2020

BARRY SEARLE, WSC Squib Fleet Class Captain, concludes

"While sitting in the Maybush garden one afternoon, I became aware of a fleet of spirited wooden clinker dinghies enjoying themselves on the delightful River Deben. I decided I should have one so started my Dragonfly phase first with No41 and then No43. A steep learning curve in marine furniture restoration, steam bending oak ribs and other dark arts commenced, and great fun was had for a number of years. The conversion for me to Squibs came in the mid 1990s while negotiating a tricky jibe during a blustery Deben Week. It didn't end well and while at water level waiting to be rescued by Lance, I observed these rather smart mace sailed keelboats nipping round the mark and getting on with their race, I decided that perhaps I should try out a Squib. I ended up buying 343 along with Mike Head and Paul Elliott, naming her *Chaingang* after Paul's business. We raced her for a number of years, changing the name to *Amble* along the way to better reflect her natural boat speed! In 2014 I decided that it was time for a change and went up to Anglesey and bought

my present Squib 468 *Ignite* which I now race with Susanne Eddis who has had a Squib in her family since she was a girl.

The Squib was designed by Oliver Lee in 1968 who was based at Burnham on Crouch and was ideally suited to our East Coast Rivers. In 1972 the Squib was adopted by the RYA and became the National Keelboat. The Waldringfield fleet was established in 1970 and has been consistently successful with over 80 different Squibs racing in the WSC fleet over the past 50 years. There are 27 local Squib fleets around the British Isles with annual National and Regional championships. Almost 900 Squibs have now been built by 5 different builders. The Squib is a strict one design but has gone through some class approved mild adaptations over the years. The current builder, Rondar, introduced a self-draining cockpit and upgrade options for older boats. The National Squib Owners Association actively looks after the interests of the class and continues to own the hull moulds.

The WSC Squibbers are a friendly lot and are looking forward to their Covid delayed 50th Anniversary in 2021. It is hoped that the planned weekend of racing will bring together again some of the past owners. We are also expecting several new boats and owners to join us for the Anniversary and Centenary year continuing the tradition of successful organic development of the WSC Squib fleet in our beautiful river setting. Long may it continue!"

PS Many thanks to all Squibbers past and present for their contributions and we apologise for the lack of credits on their photos.