

THE PETER BICK CUP

ALL THAT YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW
ABOUT PETER'S PINT

Paul Constantine



The compilation of this folder

For me, this all began with the Naylor Noggin. I was fortunate enough to be awarded the Noggin and held it for my year. I read the names and was curious enough to wonder about the other people listed on it. I had met or seen one or two of them, but in the main I did not know the previous recipients or what cruises they had written about in order to win the trophy. I began to wonder about them and their boats. I also wondered about Brian Naylor the originator of the trophy, what had he sailed? To cut the story short, I read every Noggin winning account and compiled a folder giving a brief outline of each, for the benefit of other recipients. I was fortunate enough to meet with Brian Naylor himself and to discuss with him the success of his contribution to the DCA.

As I came to the end of that project I began to think that Peter's Pint should be similarly recorded. I met Peter several times and deeply respected his sailing knowledge, experience and work for the DCA. These 'awards of recognition' in his memory are doubly important because they comprise a dual award. The written submission that is judged to be the winning technical article is available to be accessed at any time in the bulletin by anybody who is interested, but this is not necessarily the case with the talk delivered by the Peter Bick lecturer. At the time of this writing there is currently no authorised mechanism for automatically recording the content of the talk. Unless a member attends the AGM, they miss the lecture and so far there have been no outlines published in the bulletin. AGMs 'travel' in order to give the members from different regions the opportunity to attend, but this means that they may miss a talk if it is at the opposite end of the country. In this folder I have tried to give an outline of who the person is who gives the lecture; say what their connection to sailing and the DCA might be and indicate the approximate content of the talk.

I would also make the following points about the award-winning technical article:

I have attempted to give a thumbnail sketch of the content of each written account, without repeating the whole article. In so doing I have indicated my thoughts and written my own personal opinion. Other people may not agree with all that I have written. It is a very subjective exercise. In places I may have digressed from the strict adherence to the written account to fill in some background detail which I feel enhances the reader's understanding. It has never been my intention to be personally critical. If I have offended anyone, please accept my apologies.

This is not a finished work. This is why it is in a file that can be added to. If you know relevant information that I have missed please let me know. I would be most grateful if you could tell me about factual errors that I may have made that you might find. My account is not perfect and I must have made mistakes somewhere. For the sake of those who may read it in the future I would like it to be correct. My contact details will be in the latest membership list.

Paul Constantine

March 2006

Since writing this introduction, Paul has added thumbnail sketches for the winning technical articles up to 2012.

Please note that, throughout this folder, references to the location of an article in the DCA Bulletin are given as follows: 133/19 which means you will find the article in Bulletin 133 on page 19.

The first part of Paul's folder containing thumbnail sketches of the winning technical articles has been scanned, edited and reformatted in 2020 by Jennifer Heney. This part of the folder is available to read as a PDF document and will be brought up to date when possible. Paul's outlines of the Memorial Lectures from 2006 – 2012 are only available in the hard copy which can be borrowed from the DCA Library.

About Peter Bick

We can learn much about the man who is commemorated by the award of a cup known as Peter's Pint, by reading this obituary written by Ted Jones. It was published in Bulletin 175/4.

Peter Bick 4th February 1932 - 15th March 2002

Members will be saddened to hear of Peter's death. A few years after joining the DCA in 1980, he took over the position of Technical Advisor, a job he held down until the end. Then, in 1991, Peter became our President and in 1992, took over as publisher. You'll quickly see from this that for a long period, he actually held three very demanding posts concurrently and even after relinquishing the Presidency to Roger Barnes in 1997, continued with the other two. For us, his life seemed to be the DCA.

There was another side to Peter with wide ranging interests including tennis, which he played well into later life. There was his house, built from a imported Swedish kit; the old car patiently renovated and a business run - in what we might term his 'spare time'. His general knowledge was prodigious and, on sailing and allied matters, almost encyclopaedic, enabling him to talk authoritatively about birds, river wildlife and the night sky. He shared his knowledge through the Bulletin on sails, binoculars, installation of moorings, boat building and handling. All his articles were extremely well written and would have done credit to any commercial magazine. You could say he knew it all, without being in any sense a 'know-all', probably because of another quality - that of being a very good listener, always willing to learn more. Eventually the RNLI recruited him as one of their Sea Check inspectors.

To most members he will be remembered as our Publisher. His keen interest in computers and his ability to come to grips with their complexities enabled him to bring the Bulletin up to date. He raised it from the "Roneoed" sheets, stapled together, to the present day format.

Peter and his wife ran a successful ski and sailing wear business, but upon retirement, he devoted more time to boat building, frequently arriving at rallies with a new one, always painstakingly, lovingly and beautifully built. You could be sure they incorporated some 'Bicky' innovation that the designer hadn't thought of. Who can forget *Maisie Lou* his Swampscott Dory or the *Bicky Finn*? He had a Roamer dinghy and I'm sure Eric Coleman would have been so proud of the cabin Peter installed in it. Charles Proudfoot, who now owns the boat, once asked him how he designed it. "Well", Peter replied, "first I took a saw.....". A very imaginative, adventurous and yet practical sailor, was Peter. The difficulty in writing about him is not where to start, but where to stop. His talents, his knowledge, his abilities, stretched in a seemingly endless line.

In a world where the media seem to hold in high esteem those who have taken most from life - bigger houses, bigger fortunes, more wives, larger salaries - Peter stood apart, a constant giver and sharer. Friends will remember him as a generous, thoughtful, kind, caring and humorous man. And for this, as well as his many other qualities, he will be missed. Our thoughts go out to his wife Wendy, with whom he had just celebrated his 44th wedding anniversary, and to his children.

No one knows for certain where we go once we die, but I like to imagine Peter as having run before the rising gale of old age, across the turbulent bar of illness and think of him now in a quiet river beyond. He'll be snuggled down, at anchor under a weather shore. There'll be something heating on the stove and he'll be sipping his usual whisky with the ice brought from home in a thermos. He'll be listening to the cry of the birds and watching the sun set before turning in. Sleep soundly Peter. Job well done.

Ted Jones

Peter and the DCA

Peter Bick made an enormous contribution to the DCA. For a significant period his knowledge and energy drove the Association forward. Under his guidance the production of the Bulletin evolved, one might say, from being almost a newsletter into being a magazine. His presence at rallies was entertaining and inspiring and his technical knowledge of all things maritime seemed encyclopaedic. He built, sailed and modified a string of boats demonstrating craftsmanship of the highest order. His writing was informative but there was invariably an undercurrent of humour and dry wit.



Peter discusses technical matters with George Saffrey at a DCA Medway rally in August 2000



Peter and George continue their discussion. The DCA burgee is on a short staff at the bow of his launch *Slippers*. Deckchair and flask (often for ice) were his essential equipment.

The 'sailing' section of his life was told in the Bulletin. The story of the early years unfolded in what he termed a 'composition': a word which places him in a particular era with a certain attitude to school and learning. It will be seen that he loved learning. *One Man's Boats* commences in Spring 1988, Bulletin 118 p.14 and it has a mature and easy style right from the very beginning. This first episode is six and a half pages long and tells the tale with a series of interesting anecdotes which explain how he learned, what he learned.

Here is how it begins...

ONE MAN'S BOATS

by Peter Bick

The inspiration for this composition comes from a series of articles which appeared in the magazine, "Motor Sport" in the 1950's, entitled "Cars I have Owned". Cars manufactured in those days, and more particularly those of recent memory at the time and still available second-hand at low prices, were more interesting and individualistic than those of today; preferably open cars kept for the pleasure of the open road, not as status symbols or for investment; to be compared in fact to today's reasons for owning small boats... but I digress.

I was fortunate in having a father who, whilst not being very interested in boats, had spent his boyhood by the banks of a river. Accordingly I was taught to row a river skiff and paddle a Canadian Canoe before I entered my teens.

Living in North London and attending boarding school did not give me much opportunity to get afloat as a boy, and my experiences had to come second-hand from the pages of books, as did my tuition. However, it was the centre of the Metropolis which was to give me my first chance to sail.

Attending Hotel School, and having an unexpected afternoon off, I found myself in Regents Park. I stopped near the lake and gazed down at the pontoon where the hire boats were moored, meaning to take out a rowing boat for an hour. It was a lovely afternoon in May, and below me, unexpectedly, were a couple of lugsail dinghies; they had just been taken out of store after the War and reintroduced into the hire fleet. The sun shone through the idly-flapping sails, a light breeze blew and the ripples chuckled under the lands of the planks. To add to this assault on the senses the smell of fresh, sun-warmed varnish rose about me. Involuntarily I stepped forward to present myself as a prospective hirer. The attendant looked up. "You have experience of sailing boats, I suppose?" I nodded untruthfully. The result was a blissful afternoon in which I sailed about the inlets and islets of the lake, with the murmur of London traffic as an inappropriate but not unwelcome background accompaniment. Such were the benign conditions and the benefit of my "book learning" that I had no difficulties of technique in sailing back to the landing stage at the end of the afternoon - only those of inclination!

Being a trainee in the hotel trade and then in the Army meant that sailing boats did not come my way again for some time, as in those days there were very few inland sailing clubs, and in any case I was not a very "clubby" person. Rowing boats and canoes were freely available for hire, however, in many places that I found myself, and I have paddled Canadian canoes in the beautiful, cedar planked form which we then took so much for granted, in at least six counties. A useful and easily launched vessel, the Canadian; two or more people can share it for trips, picnics or fishing. It is much easier to enter or get out of than a kayak, carries a bigger load, and if you are inclined that way, can be converted to rowing or outboard motor propulsion. Its only fault is its handling in strong winds when one is single-handed and lightly loaded.

It goes on to briefly mention his boats and selected adventures. He moves swiftly through domestic life that might have checked the flow of the maritime narrative but this does not mean that it was not important to him. It is more that he knew how to tell a story to his selected audience. He writes with economy at these points.

'Shortly afterwards I started to run my own business. Six day working weeks and Sundays with the children became the norm and a couple of years passed before plans for leisure combined with water could become a reality.'

At this point in the story comes one of the most significant events in Peter's life from our standpoint. He meets a man that he refers to as P. B. which is confusing because they are his own initials. P.B. passes on to Peter his very individual love of messing about in boats in the marshes.

'I met P.B. when buying a car - he sold me the car and also introduced me to all the pleasures of marsh and salting. A man obsessed by wildfowl, he led me over mudflat and marshes of the Medway and the Swale. We were always pursued by the tide and regretted that we had to abandon the estuaries when the water rose.'

A couple of boats later he writes:

'We were spending at least one whole day a fortnight in all seasons throughout the year recording the birdlife which in winter was magnificent. Because our mooring dried out on the tide, we more often than not returned after dark. Navigation was helped by the roosts of the various waders and their calls in the darkness were a useful check on our progress. Beautiful, nocturnal homecomings, especially in winter with the call of the wildfowl, and accompanied very often by brilliant phosphorescence in the water created by the movement of oars and propeller.'

Now here is a slightly surprising thing about Peter. He was equally at home in a boat powered by oars or engine as he was in a boat powered by sail. He later wrote (see 157/27):

'As I come from an engineering background I have no prejudice against engines' and he didn't.

The oars were not an auxiliary method of propulsion as they are to most sailors; they were often to him, the primary method. He built, repaired, converted, used and appreciated craft which specialised in each of these spheres. No other writer could write so enthusiastically about the qualities of different oars, nor wax so lyrically about *'a 17 ft. cabin launch just found on a garage forecourt near Rye'*. He even appreciated the qualities of *'a three-quarter decked gunning punt'* to such an extent that after another four boats he designed and built another craft based upon it.

The second episode of One Man's Boats (six pages) was in Autumn 1988, 120/13 and commences with him selling the gunning punt and buying an outboard motor powered GRP dinghy, a package which he explains...

'I was offered at such a discount I couldn't refuse. The dinghy had come over from Norway as part of an odd lot. The resultant boat/engine combination was a revelation as it planed at what then to me was a frightening speed. I had a lot of fun in surf with it as it could accelerate away from breaking waves at will.'

He followed this with a Deb 33 ft. based upon an ocean racer which cost him a fortune and took all of his time, but he hardly sailed it before selling her to *'a tomato grower from Norwich'*. He seems to have had much more fun with the little tender that he built for her and retained for another three boats after her.

Then he buys a 16 ft. Fairey Falcon:

'Whilst examining the boat I asked the vendor point blank whether the c/b case leaked! He looked me straight in the eye and swore that she was as tight as a drum, 'Caveat emptor' - I had a deep water mooring at my club and put her on it - two hours later there was 6" in the bottom.'

He sells it for a Hunter Europa 19, and then he orders a Sonata but builds a 12ft Phil Bolger double ender whilst he is waiting for it to arrive. The boats come thick and fast with a liberal sprinkling of inflatables in between. The pace slackens only slightly with his discovery of Eric Coleman's book *'Dinghies for all Waters'* and he gets through a couple of smaller constructions whilst waiting for his Roamer hull to arrive, and a couple more afterwards, one of which is an aluminium canoe with outrigger stabiliser. Phew!

He concludes by saying that 'because of his intense curiosity where all sorts of boats are concerned, he expects and hopes that there will be a few more to come.' He was correct in this assumption but it was more than just 'a few'.

To avoid having to print an exhaustive list we can perhaps highlight just three:

1. The Roamer called *Snufkin* which he referred to as 'he'. One of his first articles (110/23) was his Naylor Noggin winning cruise entitled 'Peter and the Three Bars' sailed mainly in the Rivers Ore and Alde. Other articles can be found in 130/25, 142/11, 150/31, (166/54).
2. The Finn called *Bicky Finn* which he checked was old and 'inactive' in class racing before he let loose with his tool kit on it. See articles in 141/27, 145/28, (166/36).
3. The Orkney Coastliner called *Odin's Horse* which was a cruising motor dinghy, preferred for when he 'got older and stiffer.' See article in 157/27.

It invariably came as a surprise to dedicated, younger, 'sailing dinghy' sailors to find Peter arriving in his outboard powered launch, relaxing in his deck chair, sipping whisky from his iced mug with an engaging fund of stories to tell. I once knew a salty old longshoreman of whom it was said 'that he had wrung more salt water out of his shirt lap than we had sailed on.' He looked the part with scruffy skipper's cap welded to his head, down-at-heel wellies with rolled tops, threadbare jeans and a jumper unravelling at neck, elbow and cuff. Peter wasn't like that. He was closer to the cravat than to the soiled smock. Always smart, sharp of eye, mind and speech, something about him said 'good school' or 'military,' so it was surprising to find that he easily qualified for the salty-shirt-lap accolade.

The Bulletin index lists roughly 80 articles which he contributed in addition to producing it. They cover just about every aspect of sailing including some that you, the reader, have not yet thought of. They are instructive, informative and still relevant, hence the recognition of his technical expertise with this trophy. To read every article that Peter wrote in the Bulletin is a challenge that would furnish enjoyment and reward for anyone willing to take it up. But there is much more than just the words there. Maybe we can indulge ourselves and appreciate just a few more extracts. Most times Peter was writing technical stuff, but here, we are searching for Peter amongst all of his prodigious output, so we are concentrating on other aspects which we only find sometimes.

Sometimes

Sometimes we are teased, tongue in cheek. Who or What is he talking about here?

'When my daughter went to university, I found the hassle of launching and antifouling by myself a bit much. I slapped her rounded quarters as she went jauntily off down the road, behind her new owner. I last saw her in the Blackwater on a fine day; draped over the decks were four beauteous damsels in an appropriate state of undress; she was in good company!' (120/16)

Sometimes he paints a memorable picture, not always of direct 'sailing.' Take this example from his teasingly entitled 'Two Topless Trips' (149/24). His morning tea arrives in his Bed and Breakfast accommodation in Yarmouth I.O.W...

'I was aroused in the morning by a gentle voice, "Good morning Captain, a cup of tea for you." Having grasped the fluted rim of Minton china I leant back on the soft pillows. The sun glowed through the colourful chintz curtains; the room was filled with the faint aroma of potpourri; the tinkle of cutlery and frying pan came up to me from below. Would I willingly return to the lonely saltings? Well- not yet...'

Sometimes we are wittily entertained, as in his Naylor Noggin winning account (110/23). Here are some extracts. His first sentence sets the scene as he introduces what he describes as 'A Cautionary Tale for Dinghy Folk.'

'There are, I suppose, only two good reasons for putting pen to paper; to entertain or to instruct. Writing of my experiences of attending the Alde Rally may do the former by intent, but the latter I regret, only by example.'

He heads for a quiet rural anchorage at the limits of navigation called the 'Oaks' to meet up with other DCA cruisers. They anchor and the tide ebbs.

'We were protected by the low cliff and the 'Oaks' and were enjoying the sunshine. The local farmer not having concern for his fellow humans had placed a pig unit behind the oak trees over the bank. This became only too apparent with the southerly breeze and the centre of the beach remained untenable whilst the said wind held.

After supper had been prepared and consumed in the evening sunshine three of us walked to Snape for a few beverages at a licensed bar. The pub remained calm, but later the riverside path seemed distinctly unsteady as we rolled home in the pitch dark.

In the car park by the beach the light from our torches revealed several powerful motorbikes. Oh dear. When we arrived at the beach a Hells' Angels party was in full swing, with close on a dozen leather clad participants. A bonfire, a cassette player of the type generally described as a 'Ghetto Blaster' and a stock of beer sufficient to see them through the night. And see them through the night it did. Our dinghies were already aground, so we and the crews of two cruisers, anchored to that fateful spot by their keels were the unwilling audience of rock music of a type generally described as 'Heavy Metal', played at maximum volume until after 6 am the following morning! The peace of that place was destroyed utterly for the whole of that beautiful starlit night. When the music became bland to them they accompanied it with their 'singing'. Later on they added to the cacophony by throwing full beer cans into the flames, which then exploded with loud bangs, met with delighted shouts by the participants. Their conversation revealed that it was not the first of such parties, nor presumably the last, so let future Oaks "rallyists" beware.'

Sometimes Peter could laugh at himself whilst keeping a straight face and he does that perfectly here.

Sometimes, just rarely, we find ourselves alone, with the man alone. For many of us this is the essential experience of dinghy cruising. One person, one boat, alone. Yet we who do it usually still retain our bubble of security, surrounded by our boat, our tent and our possessions. Peter went beyond this and left an enduring image for us to ponder. This is edited from 'Two Topless Trips' (149/22).

'With such a summer as we have just experienced I decided to try neaping and for good measure, do it without the land tent as well. I proposed using Maisie Lou my Swampscott Dory for transport as she has a narrow flat bottom and weighs only 170 lbs in spite of her sixteen feet of length. Both of these are assets for pushing over soft mud.

Accordingly I launched from a creek on the south shore of the Medway estuary one day last August. I sailed and rowed out into the Thames estuary, round the outside of the Isle of Sheppey and into the East Swale. On the northern shore of the Swale is Windmill Creek with extensive saltings on either side. I had my eye on a level bit of marsh with a narrow runnel entering it. I placed myself nicely so that I could drift in later, threw over the hook and settled into coffee, whisky and the Proms on my Walkman. Then over the side in my waders to plant anchor and grapnel. I took ashore just my sleeping bag and cover together with a camping mat. It had been some years since I had slept under the stars without even the canvas of a tent above me and it was a great pleasure for this urban man to see the Milky Way unobscured by the loom of street lights. The springy plants of the saltings made a very acceptable mattress and I was lulled to sleep by the contented cries of waders settling into their roosts not far away.

Come dawn I was awakened by that 'warden of the marshes' the redshank whose shrill piping was no doubt stimulated by this odd creature lying among the samphire and sea lavender. I lay gazing up at the heavens listening to the cries of the wildfowl that were fighting about me. I was in no hurry to get up and continued to enjoy the cool air brushing my face and bringing the scents of harvest from the other side of the sea wall. Finally I rose and removed my galley box from the dory which was lying against the edge of the saltings. I cooked a leisurely breakfast while watching the soft brown water creep slowly over the mud towards me. All was quiet on this summer morning; nothing but the call of the birds and the hiss of the approaching tide.

The day passed as pleasantly as those summer days of boyhood. A visit to Minster for an ice cream; swimming in water warmed from flooding over sun soaked mud and sand; mugs of hot tea and buttered buns; then sunbathing while admiring Maisie Lou lying afloat offshore. '

He sails to Yantlet Creek which faces the open estuary...

'It was my intention to use the saltings as before. The babble of fowl was different here and I could hear the quack of mallard, high pitched calls of teal and even the whistle of an early migrant widgeon as the evening drew in.

In the morning I was roused from my slumbers by the call of geese. Unlike the Swale the northeast breeze here was fresh and salty and straight from the North Sea, unsoftened by the land. The approaching tide was different too and in place of the sibilant flow was a hoard of chattering wavelets that ran at me to shatter against the stem as I rowed out against them. In the deeper water the waves were bigger and I could take them on the beam as under sail I set off for the mouth of the Medway.

I had not yet come to the end of my utopia as I would not be able to reach my mooring 'till that evening. I still had the marsh and the wildlife of the Medway to enjoy and I idled the day away with book and binoculars. Eventually that night I slid up to my launching point in the dark; with phosphorescence trailing away from my wake and accompanied still by the cries of birds. For the best part of three days the only human being to whom I had spoken was the ice-cream seller.'

This was Peter. He is missed.



Peter with John Ayde

The Memorial to Peter Bick

Peter's death was reported at the DCA AGM in 2003 and they went on to discuss the possibility of a memorial. Here is an extract from Bulletin 179/10:

The President reminded the members present that Peter Bick's contribution to the DCA in his official capacities and his presence at various rallies and functions requires suitable recognition and asked for suggestions. These included:

1. Prize for the best technical article
2. Naming a DCA cruise – *The Peter Bick Memorial Cruise*
3. Prize for someone encouraging youth into the DCA
4. Naming the AGM lecture – *The Peter Bick Memorial Lecture*
5. Prize for anything that doesn't meet the criteria of the Naylor Noggin

A proposal was made by Phil Clamp, seconded by John Kuysler to name the AGM lecture after Peter Bick and also to make an annual award for best Technical Article published in his memory.

The first award was therefore made in 2004 and reported at the AGM as follows (183/6):

Peter Bick Technical Award:

This was introduced at the last AGM to commemorate Peter Bick's technical contribution to the DCA. This was the first time that this award, which is given for the best technical article published in the Bulletin, had been presented. It had proved difficult to decide which articles would be considered as technical as many descriptions of boat design and preparations for cruising had been published this year and many of these were well written. However the award this year was won by an article that was definitely technical and very much in the vein of those that Peter Bick used to write himself. The President announced that the winner was Cedric Jones for his description of building a hollow wooden mast. This article had unfortunately appeared in two issues of the Bulletin as the diagrams had become separated from the text – ironically for technical reasons. A trophy has yet to be selected for this award but it will be passed to Cedric as soon as it has.

The choice of a pint "pot" or tankard for the trophy was reported in Bulletin 184/11. There is a picture of it and a letter from Cedric which includes the following paragraphs:

Dear Roger,

Making a mast and Peter's Pint! What a surprise!!! I thought all my birthdays had come a few weeks early when I received the parcel. Eventually I opened it after my partner convinced me it that it was nothing to do with her. My effort was in the nature of a 'thank you' to all the other contributors who have made my reading of the journal such a pleasure. I am proud to have been awarded the pot and I must say it has particular resonance because when I first started thinking about my boat project I had a lot of help from Peter, particularly regarding aspects of trailing and launching.

....

The pot is in such pristine condition that I must ask you to reassure me that I can use it. In any event the beer flows wonderfully over the lip. This is an opportunity for me to thank you for the work you put in, and as for the selecting committee – well, what superlatives are there!

Cheers, Cedric

By the following year it had been decided that one of the DCA Technical Advisors should choose the winning article and in the extract on the next page from Bulletin 189/07, recorded in the Minutes of the AGM held on 19 March 2005, the joint Technical Adviser, Dave Jennings explains how he came to choose that year's winner.

The Criteria for the award of The Peter Bick Technical Trophy - Peters Pint

Since it falls to me to pick the winner for the Peter Bick Technical trophy, I sat down a few days before the AGM to read through the year's technical articles for suitable candidates. In last year's Spring issue there were no articles that were 'out and out' technical in content similar to the previous year's winner about mast construction.

This set me thinking about what should be considered as a technical article (and therefore a candidate for the trophy) and I came up with the following list of potential categories:

1. Articles describing either techniques or experiences of making, modifying or repairing boats and associated equipment
2. Equipment tests and evaluations
3. Boat descriptions if they include an evaluation of their characteristics and suitability for cruising or if they describe owner modifications to improve their suitability for cruising
4. Discussions of sailing theory
5. Discussions on sailing techniques or tips or descriptions of experiences from which lessons can be learnt

I do not intend to be prescriptive about exactly which category an article fits into as many will fit more than one. If anyone thinks that I have omitted any significant category of article then please contact me and we can improve the list for future years. On this basis even the Spring issue yielded up several candidates in suitable descriptions of cruising boats. Although boat descriptions dominated this year, I think that we had articles in most categories, except perhaps for the 'theory' one.

There were many good articles and the choice was a difficult one but in the end I selected Keith Muscott's "Man Overboard Procedures and the Dinghy Sailor" since it dealt with some serious and important techniques but was written in an entertaining style with some humour to lighten up the narrative. In particular it took some of the oft-taught theories based on Yacht sailing and showed the inadequacies of these in a dinghy sailing context. Congratulations Keith.

The Winners of Peter's Pint up to 2012

Year	Winner	Article Reference
2003	Cedric Jones	178/30, 179/22
2004	Keith Muscott	185/34
2005	Mike Jackson	187/44
2006	David Platten	191/56
2007	Cliff Martin	195/32
2008	Roger Barnes	198/21, 199/25, 200/35, 202/34
2009	Keith Muscott	206/48
2010	David Sumner	208/34
2011	<i>No award</i>	
2012	Paul Constantine	217/52

Later winners are listed on page 22

The year quoted above is the year in which the winning article was published. As you can see in the photograph on the next page, the engraving on the trophy shows the winner's name and the year in which it was awarded. There is some confusion over 2011/12 as the trophy engraving says Roger Barnes won it that year but the AGM minutes say there was no award.



These are the names of speakers who have given the Peter Bick Memorial Lecture to date:

Year	Speaker
2004	John Perry
2005	Len Wingfield
2006	Mukti Mitchell
2007	Jim & Judy Andrews
2008	Mat Newland
2009	Roger Wilkinson
2010	James Wharram & Hanneke Boon
2011	Sam Llewellyn
2012	Tom Cunliffe
2013	Kevin Oliver & Tony Lancashire
2014	François Vivier
2015	Jeremy Warren
2016	Nick Beck
2017	Dave Selby
2018	<i>No Speaker</i>
2019	Will Hodshon

Winner 2003: Cedric Jones 178/30 & 179/22

Building a hollow mast

Text in 178; Diagrams in 179

The Peter's Pint award got off to a shaky start in that this winning account was not published in a single issue, but was split. (See President's comments 183/06). Reading it without the diagrams was a mental exercise designed to increase imaginative powers. When the diagrams caught up with the text it all became crystal clear. The illustrations had become separated as they were reworked for publication by Paul Constantine (attribution 179/22) and the text was published prior to this process being completed.

Cedric was at pains to point out that he did not invent the system. He says that he *'simply passed on what appears to be as old as the wheel'*. (184/11) He actually found the material in 'Wooden Boat' magazine July/August 1999 No. 149. Taking these other inputs into account one might wonder at Cedric being chosen as the first recipient, but it illustrates a relevant point about technical matters. It is difficult to determine if any object or process is the total product of one person's mind operating from a totally blank piece of paper in an information vacuum. There is the famous saying which goes roughly along the lines of ... 'If I have achieved anything it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants.' Which means that we gather other people's ideas, evolve and modify them, then fit them to what we are doing and to our own personal circumstances. We use the tools and materials available to us. This is what Cedric has done. He has acknowledged his sources and added *'I adapted the actual construction method to suit my equipment'*. Cedric has bundled together the stuff he's read, the stuff he discovered and the experience he gained; made it into a package and placed it before us. This is a valid technical exercise.

Cedric's article is very clear and informative but never tedious. It covers the processes in chronological order and answers all the questions for us as they arise. He highlights the pitfalls to be avoided and says when he is experimenting to try to find more practical solutions. The whole piece is seasoned with a bit of fun whilst the writer's relaxed attitude and pleasure in constructing comes through. Crucially, he makes it all sound so simple that the reader is left with the feeling 'I could do that ...' which is what it is all about.

Winner 2004: Keith Muscott 185/34

Man Overboard Procedures and the Dinghy Sailor

On first reading of Keith's writing, it is possibly difficult to understand why he is discussing the man overboard procedures for yachts in relation to dinghies. Whilst the two have similarities they are not the same and have always been taught differently to the two separate sailing groups. Anyone left pondering this unusual situation may have missed the importance of his very first sentence which refers to *the Quiz and Item 7*. Of equal importance, they should also know the *Answer* to question 7 of *The Quiz!*

Some brief words of explanation are required here for those who in years to come simply turn to Keith's piece to read it intending to absorb the wisdom it contains. The lead up to this came from Len Wingfield who has frequently demonstrated concerns relating to safety afloat. He has contributed much to the Bulletin on safety matters, but in Bulletin 183/43 he had his *Safety Quiz: Coastal Dinghy Cruising* published which had 20 questions covering all aspects of safety afloat. If we concentrate on Question 7 only, it read:

'Your crew (or skipper!) falls overboard. Describe with the aid of a sketch the RYA/RNLI recommended drill for a sailing boat without a reliable motor. (The RYA 'Quickstop' drill is 'good for lightweight modern boats with reliable engines'. It may not be applicable for sailing dinghies with outboard motors.)

In effect, this was the trigger which prompted Keith to write his thoughts... but not quite. It was more, the answer, rather than the question. More explanation is needed. The person providing what was judged to be the best answer was David Sumner and his winning reply was printed in 186/44. His Answer to Q.7 was:

'Throw a dan buoy to the person. Detail a crew member to point at him continually. Press the MOB button of the GPS if available. Keep throwing rubbish overboard. Tack and return on a beam reach. Approach the casualty to leeward.' (Note: no sketch printed.)

There are contentious parts to this answer e.g. *to leeward (?)* but that is not the point under discussion here. It will be seen that Keith was basing what he wrote upon a list of actions similar to those in this answer. Keith's article was published in 185, **before** David's answers were published in 186.

Keith's writing has a subheading beginning *'Keith injects some common sense and humour ...'* which describes his approach. Almost immediately afterwards he writes *'I suggest that we plan our own response to such emergencies without borrowing guidelines for craft dissimilar to our own'* which describes his reason for writing. He goes on to deal with the practical difficulties of a 'dinghy' trying to follow a 'yacht' plan; throwing lifebuoys, setting the GPS and use of engine etc. Then he relates a real life experience which turns up the 'apprehension setting' of readers and forces them to think 'What would I do now?' It is real in that the incident was unexpected, the participants (with hindsight) realise that they have unwittingly made mistakes but now it is too late; they are surprised and unprepared (*'The element of surprise when your crew goes over is mind-numbing'*) and the really major decision (how to get the person back on board) is resolved in a way that one may not necessarily have expected it to be. Keith concluded that to effectively deal with such a situation one needs prior practice and to understand what may work best for you.

Maybe reference to the RYA Dinghy methods might have helped? They do deal with some of the questions that Keith asks and offer some solutions and additional strategies. If readers are prompted to seriously consider their own response to the MOB situation, Keith will have achieved his aim.

Winner 2005: Mike Jackson 187/44.

Topper Cruz Tiller Modification

Five photographs

The previous two winning articles needed rather complex explanations of their context to make them more easily understandable in years to come. It was refreshing therefore, to find what might be described as a classic 'this is how I made it' winning submission for this year.

Mike's description is very clear and throughout, it must be noted, he was greatly assisted by those who set out the Bulletin. The double facing-page layout has helped in understanding the piece because one can read the instruction then scan across to refer to the relevant illustration immediately, thus retaining the mental thread. This interleaving of pages took a degree of planning.

Photography

It must be noted that the clarity of the black and white (requiring good contrast) photographs is first class. Without getting too over-technical (about this technical award) the 'angle' chosen by the photographer in order to illustrate the text is very important. He/she has to minimise the distracting background clutter whilst directing the reader's attention towards the specific detail that is being highlighted. Whether Mike was responsible for the final cropping of his pictures I don't know, but their various different rectangular forms further focus the viewer's attention, so that for example, Fig. 2 is tall in shape and so is its content, whilst Fig. 5 stresses the width of what is being indicated as the subject of the picture. This particular picture has an amazing depth of field. In other words the picture is in focus from the nearest tip of the tiller to the farthest bit of wall behind. This sharpness of detail (that is hard to find in a camera) and lack of imprecise fuzziness means that the pictures can truly be called 'illustrations' in the same sense as an artist's drawing which selectively directs the reader's attention to the precise point under scrutiny.

The Text

For clarity of meaning the text is hard to fault. Mike sets the scene by giving just enough background detail about his reasons for undertaking his project and then with a series of simple two line descriptions he describes the making of each fitting. He demonstrates the importance of planning ahead but avoids going into every detail and dimension. He credits the reader with the ability to make some decisions for him/herself by saying, in effect, 'these are the critical pitfalls, make sure that you allow for them'.

In DIY boatbuilding there is a strong strain of Heath Robinson lash-ups. It would appear that there are 'Brownie Points' to be gained for including a bamboo carpet pole, a clothes peg spring and elastic from you-know-where in the components list. Mike's solution does NOT fall into this category. He has taken the time and spent a little money in producing a quality finish (powder coating etc.) so that his project blends in and is an integral part of the total whole. One might say that the proof of its success is that the casual observer might not even notice it. Each fitting that he fabricates appears to have simple standard components and it easily passes the 'Reader's Test' of 'I could make that'.

Mike concludes by testing his design and lists some of its benefits.

This is a worthy winner, setting a standard and being an example for others to aspire to. Peter Bick would have nodded his approval.

Winner 2006: David Platten 191/56

No-Sweat Dinghy Launching

Two B&W photographs incorporated in the text

It is rare that one reads about truly original ideas in sailing. Thirty or forty years of reading yachting magazines of all persuasions as well as library shelves full of sailing books is usually sufficient to adequately cover most sail-related topics, so it was refreshing to find a new and simple device to assist with a common process undertaken by many dinghy cruisers. David Platten's climbing experience made him familiar with the climber's equipment and he saw how one particular device called a 'Sticht Plate' could assist with controlling the check rope when easing a dinghy, on a trailer or trolley, down a sloping launch ramp. The device which slightly resembles an oversized washer, together with a carabine hook is used to provide a 2:1 purchase whilst acting as a friction brake on the rope so that the descent of the heavy load can be easily controlled by a single hand.

The article is written using modern terminology (see the title) and the casual youthful stance of the operative in the illustrating photographs gives it an up-to-date feel. It has an air of dry humour but is always to the point and economic with words whilst clearly explaining the methods and equipment involved. The commercial Sticht plate is described, as it was and how it might be today. Simple ways of fabricating it are outlined and a current source for purchase, are all given. Some strategies are suggested for dealing with problems of recovery up the slipway including keeping the boat aligned with the trailer with cross wind or tide situations. Protecting the wheel bearings from contact with salt water by the use of hub savers is mentioned in the final paragraph and again, a source of supply for them is recommended.

The complete article is only one and a half pages in length but it is packed with information and ideas in the most 'laid-back' of styles. David really means it, when he lets us into his actual secret. '*The trick is never to rush and always look nonchalant.*' Now that is a piece of very valuable advice that many of us should heed. I would say (with apologies) that he has got these problems all 'sticht up'.

It was interesting to hear at the AGM when the winner was announced, that one person volunteered that they had used climbing equipment for many years, but had not made the 'connection' of using it for this purpose. Since reading the article, the suggested method had been tried and it had been found to work well.

Winner 2007: Cliff Martin 195/32

Comfort on a Dinghy Cruise

One B+W photo in text. Colour photo in 195/08.

A South Coast rally report (including the all-important hot water bottle) by Cliff begins in 195/17. His boat to this point was Mirror 11 'Daydream' (oar and sail). In 200/24 South Coast rally reports, on 12/13 July Cliff attends in his Mirror, but on 26/27 July he is sailing in a Wayfarer with a crew. B+W pictures in 200/26+27.

In the introduction to this piece Cliff is described as *'one of the most enthusiastic dinghy sailors in the DCA'*. His own assessment of himself is in the first paragraph. *'I have gone from non-sailor to rally host in just over five years. All my stupid mistakes are fairly recent memories. My first year with the DCA was awful. We live and learn'*.

Cliff records some of what he has learned in the following three pages and it has a freshness and a directness not often found in such pieces. There is something else which elevates it. The personality of the person doing the writing is included in the phrasing. The words reflect something of the inner person, the pressures they feel, their vulnerability, their level of confidence and how they relate to outsiders. Cliff has not been guarded about revealing himself in his effort to convey useful lessons to other beginners. Any 'newcomer' to the sport might look upon the other participants as 'experienced old hands', immune from sharing their own doubts and fears. Cliff, almost uniquely, dispels such thoughts by saying *'I too found it hard, wet, and uncomfortable, I too was scared, was tired and I too had little money and saw myself as being without exceptional qualities, yet still I loved the challenges and rewards of the sport that I pursued on my shoestring budget'*.

Cliff tells it how it is.

'I use bucket and chuck it ... so don't be seen.'

'If you are very unlucky and go for a swim the salty clothes you were wearing will not dry properly until you have rinsed the salt out. Hanging the clothes in the rigging with a hot water bottle inside usually dries them quite quickly.'

'Avoid getting drunk in the evening. Falling into the mud or water in the dark is not good.'

Now how and where did he learn all that?

At the time of receiving the award Cliff was easily picked out from any group of dinghy cruising sailors, by his youth and his desire to gain experience. His small boat was easily identified by its cruising-aid equipment roughly fabricated from converted plastic bottles, polystyrene and gaffer tape. These very qualities endeared him to every dinghy cruiser who met him. They understood and demonstrated their understanding, by their spontaneous cheers and sustained applause when he was announced as being the winner of this technical award.

Winner 2008: Roger Barnes 198/21, 199/25, 200/35

The Seagoing Dinghy

3 B&W pictures in 198 and 199; 3 B&W pictures, including a picture of himself, in 200

Roger continues the subject in **The New Seagoing Dinghy** published in 202/34

This is probably going to be the longest article to win the Peter's Pint. It was published in three sections (with another to follow). It is a comprehensive discussion of the qualities required of a small open, traditionally constructed and rigged dinghy used for open water cruising, mainly singlehanded. The account features Roger's *Baggywrinkle*, a Tideway class boat and compares her with other more modern craft. Roger has long been President of the DCA and his observations on dinghy cruising have been published regularly in commercial sailing publications. This article, however, had not been published previously.

In the first section his experience and his ability as a writer are used to illuminate the practical realities of this kind of dinghy cruising. *'A cruising dinghy does not cut a dash. If by chance you sail into a marina, she inevitably looks battered and weather-beaten beside the rows of beautifully kept yachts. She seems to be full of ropes and huge muddy anchors, her varnish could do with some attention and her gear looks like it has come off a boat several sizes too large. She is hardy and workmanlike and has proved to be a good friend when the going gets tough.'*

The second section is devoted mainly to the sailing systems of this boat. *'The heart of a cruising dinghy is her rig and it is essential that her sails can be set, lowered and reefed easily on the open water.'* He describes clearly and in detail how the (slightly unusual) rig is arranged, explaining the reasoning behind each of the choices that he has made. The whole of this piece on sailing arrangements is filled with useful practical tips relating to the equipment.

His writing style is quite direct.

'A cruising dinghy must have a serious reefing system'

'It is often necessary to get the jib off her quickly ...'

'I do not ship my outboard when cruising ...'

And his words sometimes are flavoured with the old-time, tang of the sea. *'...the sails must be set in a hurry, after a stiff row off a lee shore, in a lumpy chop and a stiff breeze that threatens to set you ashore again if you don't buck up.'*

The third section of Roger's article completes his description of his dinghy with the domestic arrangements used for the tent, sleeping and cooking. He adds his thoughts on anchoring and getting ashore. In total there is much wisdom in the 3 sections of the article. They would provide a basic framework for anyone contemplating the activity. They conjure up the image of what it is like and the practicalities that must be focused upon in order to make a start.

Since writing this article Roger has moved to a much larger and more elaborately equipped cruising dinghy, possessing a serious sea-crossing ability. His later article "The New Seagoing Dinghy" (202/34) with several sketches, 3 B&W photos and 2 colour photos on pages 37 & 38, carry his thinking forward as a totally integrated extension of the original three sections. In effect it is the fourth section, to be read with them. It tells the story of how he set *Baggywrinkle* aside for a while to sail a small cruiser, then returned to the boat. She leaked and felt extremely small but his sociable experiences whilst sailing her in France led to him acquiring his next boat, an Ilur class designed by Francois Vivier called *Avel Dro* (Breton for whirlwind). This 'section' continues with detailed explanations of domestic arrangements, the addition of some very sophisticated modern electronics (for dinghy cruisers) and by contrast, a description of her robust but, what might be considered by some, 'antiquated', traditional sailing systems.

The meeting showed its appreciation at the selection of the winning article, especially so, because of Roger's surprised reaction and the fact that this was the first time that Peter's Pint had been awarded to someone actually present in the room to accept the award.

Winner 2009: Keith Muscott 206/48

The Rise of the Microboats

8 B+W photographs, 4 diagrams

Keith introduced this new topic (or 'thread' in modern parlance) in the editorial of 206 by saying that there is '*a growing number of very small boats that is attracting fanatical devotees*'; and this '*must offer great opportunities for those who like to test their own extreme design ideas.*'

He begins by contrasting the DIY, sail-on-a-shoestring attitude of the American small-boat sailor with the one that they perceive as being the European approach (as typified by those who participate in 'Raids'), which they consider to favour expensive, over-sophisticated craft. Americans (*fanatical devotees*) tend to go more for the 8' x 4' Puddle Duck Racer or Bolger 'Brick'. Keith highlights several websites where American and Antipodean designer/builders of such craft offer designs that 'represent the triumph of the rational approach over conventional boat aesthetics', i.e. dispensing with the pointed bow on a box-like hull shape.

Moving on to even smaller craft Keith looks at designs and websites for boats shorter than eight feet. Traditionally we think of such craft as being for training children to sail (he includes a brief history of the Optimist), but there is a suggestion that boats of this size could also be used for dinghy cruising.

Observing present trends, Keith bought himself the plans (Two A4 & three A1 sheets), plus building instructions for the 7' 9" PBO Pup dinghy, similar in basic appearance to the Mirror dinghy but using an interesting daggerboard offset to port. Looking back in time, Keith mentions Matthew Flinders' activities in *Tom Thumb*, a 6ft boat used to map parts of the Australian coast and Percy Blandford's 7'7" 'Gremlin' design, one of which Keith constructed for himself.

The conclusion is extracted from Michael Storer's description of the Puddle Duck Racer: '*few expect such a silly looking boat to sail so well. It proves that form never follows function - form only being a bunch of stylistic trends that are accepted by a group at one time or another.*'

Such sentiments are bound to inflame 'discussion'. Knowing this, Keith contents himself with his final line: *Remember the arrival of the Paradox...?*

The 'thread' was taken up by several people in subsequent issues of the bulletin, quite a few in the next issue 207.

Winner 2010: David Sumner 208/34

Gaff-rigged Mirror

3 Colour photographs, 3 diagrams

David Sumner is probably best known for a series of articles on Solent cruising in his Mirror dinghy. His accounts have spanned the dinghy cruising learning process and then continued on into Mirror cruising 'research and development'. He has evolved his equipment and his methods to become a most knowledgeable DCA stalwart, constantly evaluating and improving on systems that most others just accept as 'standard'.

Dinghy Cruising in the small Mirror is challenging in itself, but in this article he goes against conventional thinking and undertakes a further challenge, by experimenting with converting his boat to a gaff rig. David's writing is deceptive in that at first glance it appears minimal and this brevity could possibly mean a lack of detail, but this is not so. If carefully followed, the article will be found to contain all the salient details in the correct logical progression. He relates how he came to his gaff rig idea; how he modified his equipment and what tools he used. When he mentions an unusual device it is accompanied with a location for sourcing it.

It was a Gunter-rig arrangement that was changed to become a Gaff rig, so to convey total clarity he explains the operation of reefing that rig. This alone is of great interest to Gunter sailors as it can be the prime problem that needs addressing on every Gunter boat, so finding this information within the article is an additional bonus. Further illumination is added by the three major diagrams with ancillary sketches that focus attention on those points needing additional explanation. All the major dimensions, all the materials, fittings and arrangements are named, making it possible for anyone to duplicate David's efforts with confidence. Crisp colour photographs that show the run of every line in the rig leave the reader in no doubt about the relationship of all the parts involved.

By way of conclusion David relates how he tested the 'new' rig and outlines the characteristics that he found it to have under a range of actual sailing conditions. He mentions that further evolutions are currently under examination, so regular readers can look forward to additional material of great interest.

There was no winner in 2011.

Winner 2012: Paul Constantine 217/52

Reefing the Sliding-Gunter Main

3 diagrams, one of which is by Len Wingfield and taken from 127/34

Reefing this rig, which is common in dinghies, is a perennial problem that has exercised many minds both in and out of the DCA. Paul starts with *'when you need to reef and you don't reef, then it's time to think or sooner or later you're going to be scared, very scared'*. He breaks down the complete process into its component parts then methodically records his practical responses to each of them.

To secure the tack and the clew he uses a single-line system as illustrated by Len Wingfield. To lower the gaff he evolves a line attached to the gaff running inside the marling rope that attaches the sail to the spar. Perhaps his most original suggestion is that for rearranging the standard reefing ties seen threaded through most sails. The ties are used to gather up the fullness of the sail once the corners at either end of the foot have been secured. The problem is to access the one on the opposite side of the sailcloth that cannot be seen and then to thread it under the foot to allow both ends of it to be pulled tight and secured with a reef knot. He takes the standard tie and rethreads it so that it has one long end and one short end. The long end will reach down to a securing cringle at the foot of the sail directly below the reefing cringle. The end is passed through the cringle and finished with a figure-of-eight in its end. Both ends of the reefing tie are now accessible on the same side of the sail. One short end is in the usual position at the reefing cringle; the other end is visible as a knot close to the foot of the sail below it.

His simple systems reduce the reefing time to an acceptably swift process using a minimum of additional equipment. He concludes with *'Having put this off for years and having suffered fear as a result, I now wish that I had tackled it sooner because the answer turned out to be fairly straightforward. The final result, a relief.'*

The article prompted several responses and observations about various aspects of different reefing arrangements from other DCA members. The systems are included in the book *Practical Dinghy Cruiser* (2nd edition) by Paul Constantine.

A final word from Peter Bick:

I had not yet come to the end of my Utopia, I still had the marsh and the wildlife of the Medway to enjoy... I lay gazing up at the heavens listening to the cries of the wildfowl that were flying above me...
I was lulled to sleep by the contented cries of waders settling onto their roosts not far away...

The story will continue....

Here are the winners of Peter's Pint since 2012:

2013	Roy Downes	219/36
2014	Chris Waite	222/26
2015	John Perry	228/56
2016	Andrew Dawson	230/58
2017	<i>No award</i>	
2018	Bill Haylock	239/61
2019		

Thumbnail sketches of each technical article will be added in due course.