



## Founded 1968 by Pat Patterson

By its very nature a boatyard is a place where its history makers are transient and much of the history itself will sail away with them. But fortunately, in the case of our



2018

Multihull Centre some of the history making was so profound it can now be found all over the world in the form of Pat Patterson's designs. Some of the history never sailed away at all and some sailed off and returned. Some is still in the making. But all of it includes

you, our customers. Some of you have been coming and going for decades and all of you have contributed to making the yard what it is today. Sometimes, for all variety of reasons, the people haven't returned but the boats have.

To try and get a handle on 50 years of history I found myself spending a fascinating couple of hours with Pip & Debbie Patterson and Tom Rees. Debbie and Pip ran the yard for many years, first in partnership with Pat, Pip's dad, and then for another decade after Pat sadly died. And Tom? Well, Tom is actually where the story starts...I call it a story because that is how it was told. An enthusiastic recounting of memories that became a torrent of people, boats,

events... tumbling through time, sometimes all three of them talking at once about



Tom's ingenious system to make the kettle boil faster...at cost to his own warmth!

different things remembered and me struggling to follow! Each memory a story of its own, a stand out event or person, key moments in the life of the Multihull Centre that have all made it what it is today. Some of these were relatively minor things, yet they have lingered in memory as formative moments. ...sadly, most of the early photos have been lost so instead I try to capture some of the light that shines in all their eyes as they talk about Pat and the times they shared with this eccentric and extraordinary man. The light flickers between emotions, love, admiration, amusement and occasionally frustration as their tales include memories of his single-minded stubbornness! As I began writing this history, a slight discomfort began to settle as the words grew into

sentences, paragraphs and then pages and I realised that instead of writing the history of the boatyard, as I'd set out to do, I appeared to be writing the story of the man who had started it. However, as the pages went on and it seemed impossible to change tack I realised this was because the two are inseparable. Without this man and his inimitable personality, the yard would



Pat at his design desk. The first computer still resides in the old office!

never have become what it is. Pat Patterson was a true pioneer who achieved remarkable things and attracted remarkable people. He created a space where dreamers of all varieties were welcome. Perhaps this was inadvertent and he was simply trying to pursue his own dreams. Regardless, this environment seems to have

fostered creativity as well as attracting the creatives, adventurers and those who simply wanted to opt out of the normal life routines. Temporary respite seekers and permanent escapees mingled. A legacy which lives on in the spirit of the MHC and has grown up as a result of the stories that Pat Patterson allowed to develop around him.

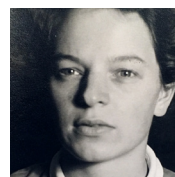
### **Before the beginning**

Tom and Pat met by chance when they were just 16, during a walking holiday in Wales. There began lifelong friendship so strong that Tom moved to the yard after Pat's death in 2004 and has lived there in his caravan ever since, making occasional forays away boating.

As young men they often met to go walking, climbing (Pat also climbed with Chris Bonnington!) or on theatre trips to London. They went travelling together (and apart) and even spent a year living together in Copenhagen. After Copenhagen they decided it was time to try and behave like grown-ups and soon afterwards, at 22, Tom married the love of his life Jeanne who he had first met when he was

just 17. In due course Pat married Ethel and went off to training college to study craft and woodwork teaching.

Tom and Jeanne were soon off travelling again. They were hitch-hiking their



Ethel, around the time she and Pat met.

way north and stopped off at Barrow in Furness where Pat was now teaching and Ethel working as a nurse. It was then that to his surprise Tom found Pat building his first boat, a 16ft Yachting Monthly Senior. Although both owned classic canvas clad Percy Blandford canoes and would go off kayaking together they'd never talked about sailing so Tom was curious and went off on his travels leaving Pat building his little boat, interested as to what he would find on his return.

Once back home from extended travels in Europe and Africa, Tom and Jeanne started their grown up lives for real. Pat and Tom continued to meet up from time to time enjoying excursions on Pat's little boat Peregrine, sailing to the Isle of Man and other similar exploits! Tom developed

a fancy for sailing and so when Pat and Ethel acquired a shop in the Lake District, with a large barn attached and they decided to embark on a bigger project. Together they built a 'Nugget'. A 23ft x 14ft Arthur Piver trimaran that Tom thinks was possibly the first cruising tri in Britain. They called it

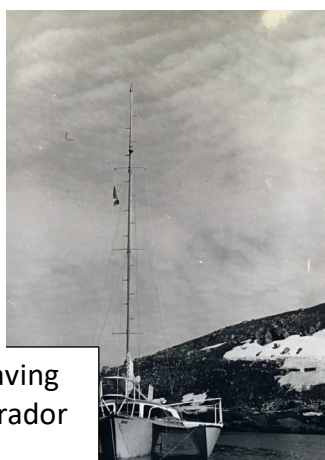


Gilded Fly

'Gilded Fly' and this boat led to many more adventures...

Pip was born in 1958 but this didn't deter Pat from adventuring. In the early sixties he was invited to help sail a 30' Nimble Piver back from Labrador, where, for reasons we will never know, the owner

had chosen to build it in the isolated frozen north. A few years later when Tom and Jeanne



Leaving  
Labrador

were expecting their first child Chris, they decided to move to Cornwall. Tom kept his boat at Torpoint and it was from here that he wrote to Pat telling him "This is the place to be sailing!". So, his good friend came down for a visit.

Somehow, Pat ended up a building catamaran named 'Iconoclast' from a pair of hulls, in Dereck Kelsall's yard in Wadebridge. The hulls were made from the moulds used to build Kelsall's famous "Toria". Toria had taken the lead in the first Round Britain and Ireland race and held her record time until 1974. She and five other multihulls who came home in positions 1 – 6 (!) were the first to show the world that multihulls could be serious contenders in ocean racing. Pat was Derek's first 'customer', thus cementing Derek's future in multihull design and build.

Clearly Pat had his mind set to things other than spending the rest of his life as a woodwork and craft teacher! When the hulls were completed he sailed them back to Furness and completed 'Iconoclast'





Iconoclast

During the hull build the two friends had spent time driving around the area in a tiny bubble car surveying

the landscapes. It was when they stopped at the top of Maker Lane that they first saw Millbrook Creek. "This is what I'm looking for" said Pat and down they drove for a closer look. Numbers 1&2 Foss Cottage were for sale, so that was it. The decision was easily made and cemented by the fact that the old Foss brickworks site was also for sale surrounding the cottage with 9 acres of land, save for a few other houses.

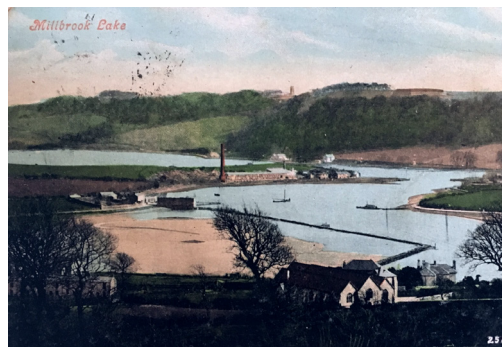
### The early days

In due course, the Patterson family, now also with a younger sister for Pip, sailed Iconoclast down to Cornwall. They lived on the quay at what would ultimately become The Multihull Centre while Pat did up the 1<sup>st</sup> cottage.

Very early 20<sup>th</sup> Century view of Foss



Pip recounts with amusement how Pat originally applied for planning permission to put a holiday park on the site but was turned down due to lack of access. At that time the 'new' road hadn't been built and all access was along Newport Street. There was also no dam yet so the road along to the yard was often underwater. In fact, there was no road, just beach.



In 1906 the landscape wasn't so different to the late 60s in terms of access.

Undaunted, Pat then applied for permission to set up a boatyard. Apparently at that time scrapyards were unregulated so he told the planners that if they turned down his boatyard application he would just put a scrapyard there. That seemed to do the trick and so his future had been determined! Perhaps though it was always meant to be that way. Pip recalls that as they sailed Iconoclast up the creek to their new home for the first time there were only five other pleasure boats on the Millbrook

lake. One of these was a She Cat, an Ernie Diamond design, owned by a local chap in his late teens. In the Britain of the late sixties there were few multihulls anywhere to be seen so they felt excited to see this one outside their new home! Frank Harvey, the young owner, inevitably became one of the first frequenters of the yard.



Early 70s – the resident 'She Cat'!

From the very beginning Pat had design ambitions and he was also still acting as an agent representing Arthur Piver, the Californian designer of 'Gilded Fly'. Ethel was nursing and bringing in the income necessary to support the family



Lotus Isle

while things got going at the yard. Pat, helped by Tom, set to work building his first cat design, 'Lotus Isle'. Three

were built in total. Within a few years people started turning up to build their own boats.

Multihulls were attracted by Pat and Tom, also the location, but there were always others (monohulls) as well. Particularly concrete boats in the early days, as well as ducks, chickens goats...

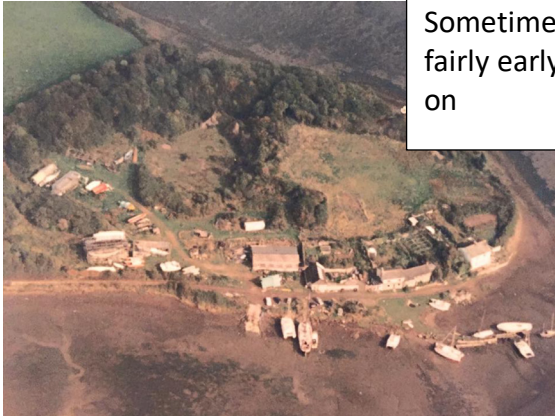
My history tellers informed me that concrete boats were popular because the basic cost to build the hull was very low. Unfortunately, many failed to account for the cost of fitting and rigging the boat. This meant that numerous unfinished projects were simply left to crumble back into the ground! Some however, live on today and one, after around a forty-year residency, finally left Multihull Centre about three years ago! She completed a cruise through the Med and Caribbean, where she was sold.

Gwendolyn, finally got her cruise after more than 40 years!



True to tradition, having sold her the young owners who took her voyaging are now back and planning their next adventure. It's good to know some things don't change!

### Getting established



Sometime fairly early on

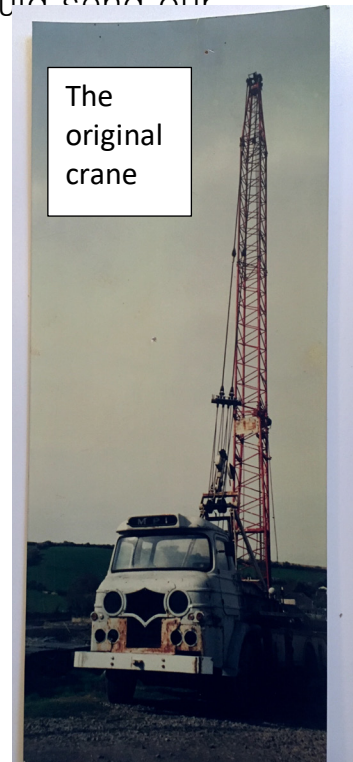
The land was in quite a mess when they took it on. Pip tells how it was full of flues left from the brickworks and that he spent much of his youth filling holes, after having fallen into them! He also had to row to get to school for the first few years as there was no road and the dam had not yet been built so access was frequently water covered!! There was however a crossing there which could be traversed at low tide, hence the name 'Foss', pronounced locally as 'Voss'. Until around 1985 the yard was known simply as Foss Boatyard.



Pip's earlier memories at the yard mostly seem to involve events that would send our modern-day health and safety officers into total meltdown.

One of his most vivid recollections involves one of the times when he nearly died: a rainy day moving a Warram through the

yard. Pat was driving the tractor with the young boy Pip riding on the wings. Tom was on the trailer. Pip was suddenly flung into the hedge with an almighty shock. Preoccupied by the rain they had all been looking down and forgotten about the overhead mains power cable! An exciting few hours followed where they had to attempt to disconnect the trailer and detach the cable by means of throwing rope lassos...on another occasion both Tom and Pip recall the moment when the handle of the huge manual winch that they used to get boats up the



The original crane



slip went wrong. The winch itself was set into concrete so when the mechanism graunched it was the handle which gave way. Alerted to the problem when the handle which normally had a right-angle bend straightened itself in Tom's hands. The handle Pip was holding on the other side then flew off, at the speed of a missile, to land somewhere in the middle of the fundus. They both agreed that they still remember the sound of it flying through the air as vividly as if it had just happened. They never used that winch again! When the crane finally died Pat's solution was to rig the hook up with a block and tackle and operate it manually!



Some of the yard's history didn't sail away, it simply got buried. When the original Bedford van that the family had brought when they first moved down finally died, they merely dug a massive hole and buried it! Tom and Pip chuckle as they

speculate whether it will one day be discovered by archaeologists and hypothesis will be built around 20<sup>th</sup> century people giving their vehicles burials...

As more people turned up, Pat found himself with a few bureaucratic battles on his hands. Ancient law rules that the Duke of Cornwall owns all the fundus mud. Pat had serious conflict with them regarding who owned what, how much it would cost and which ordinance maps were the correct point of reference. The disputes were eventually resolved after much negotiation, which Pip had to continue! As well as this, both Plymouth and Cornish local authorities tried several times to take control of the river, but were thwarted at each attempt as locals united to prevent them. It was seen as the downhill route to having to pay for the privilege of using their waterway. The stand taken to prevent this is significant in the area retaining its freedom as one of the last bastions where harbour masters don't control who anchors where and how much they have to pay.



## Arrival of the Water Board

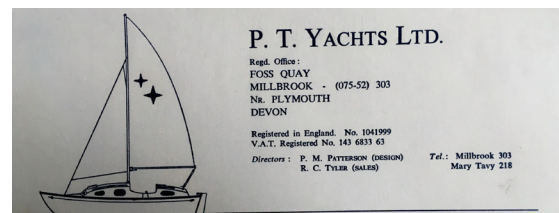


Through the 70s, infrastructure began to make its way to Millbrook and the dam was put in, a road to the yard and then later the water board came and built their plant on a section of the site. A special spit was constructed to enable them to install the outlet pipe.

**Pat is best known for his Heavenly Twins designs.** The 1972 prototype was built in Millbay Dock, with South Coast Marine. From this first one they took a mould and began to build professionally.



PT Yachts was formed, Patterson Tyler. The design office was here at Foss. Tyler took the build rights and Pat the design royalty. There are currently between 300 – 400 Heavenly Twins around the world. Ray Tyler was the salesman who drove this proliferation. Tom tells me that his own input into the design was limited to a suggestion to lower the cabin roof to give it a



better-looking profile. They all laugh at this and say it was perhaps the only time Pat didn't just produce an automatic "No" to someone else's suggestion!

All this however was really just a means for Pat to achieve his ambitions of going long

distance cruising. In 1977, he and three others set off on a two-year circumnavigation aboard his Ocean Winds 33.



The young Mike Golding on the far left



The year marked the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Drake's circumnavigation on the Golden Hind so they followed his route and called the journey 'In the Wake of Drake'. Pat published a book by this name chronicling the journey. The book, now out of print, was seen as a great source of information for Ocean Winds and catamaran owners in general. Pip, just 20 at the time, joined them for the Pacific crossing. Also on his crew was a very young Mike Golding. Inspired by Pat and the journey, Mike has gone on to have an internationally recognised sailing career. Tom, who had designed and built his own boat also crossed the Atlantic to join Pat and the

two boats went on an amazing adventure up the Amazon!

Less well known but equally deserving of recognition is Pat's wife Ethel who supported the family throughout such adventures. Without her nursing income none of this would have been possible.

Back home from the circumnavigation and more people began to arrive at Foss Quay yard, including a great collection of designers. In the early 80s Richard and Lillian Woods turned up and began building the Woods designs. Derek Reynolds started Palamos at the yard and began building Striders.



Pat holding Joel, Maureen, Debbie, Eric Dixon and Richard Woods



The young Richard Woods on the right

Steve Turner also set up at the yard building Tikis. He built a Tiki 21 called 'Cooking Fat' for a guy called Rory McDougal, who we think still holds the record for the smallest multihull circumnavigation. James Warram came by, and liking what he saw he set up further down Cornwall in Devoran.

In 1994 the young Darren Newton, Dazcat designer, moved into the quarry next door and set up workshops to build his fourth Dazcat and many others thereafter. When Pip was ready to retire in 2013 Dazcat and their builders Multimarine took over the yard.

### **The partnership**

In 1985 the yard was renamed The Multihull Centre to reflect the reality of the yard. Pip and Debbie, a local girl, were married. Debbie, who worked part time as a teacher at the Plymouth College of Further Education started doing part time bookkeeping for Pat when

she became pregnant with Joel, their first child. She never returned to teaching. In 1986 Pip left the merchant navy and with his technical engineering background started his own business alongside Pat's. By 1987 Eric Dixon had turned up and become Pat's boatbuilder.



Soon afterwards Pat proposed a more formalised arrangement and a four-way partnership was born between Pat, Eric, Debbie and Pip. Some exciting times began.

As well as continuing to design prolifically and running the yard, there were also numerous build projects taking place, some highly experimental. It seems though, that it was the community forming around the yard that was the most important element. It attracted all types Debbie recalls. She laughs as she tells me there was a time when they were called 'care in the community' because of the great variety of characters who turned up – the



doers, the dreamers, the eccentrics just following their own trajectories...It's clear how much they all enjoyed this time. Yard parties and MOCRA



gatherings afloat were a major feature of life.

Particularly popular were boat burning barbeques which happened when people realised that the wooden wreck they'd picked up so cheaply was actually...a wreck and projects were abandoned!



Tom's first cat was called Sian and after building the hulls in his garden, they were moved to the yard to finish the build. Sometime after he sold her and she sailed away from the yard they heard that the couple had split up, the man had run off, the woman was in prison and

the boat was impounded somewhere in North Africa. Pat's first boat, Iconoclast, was sold to a couple of lads from London who sailed off across Biscay and ended up having to be rescued, abandoning the boat at sea. When Pat and Tom heard this they immediately set about organising a rescue mission. But by the time they had found and commissioned a fishing boat from Fowey to take them there, the boat had been shot to pieces by the navy in an effort to remove the shipping hazard. They found a part of it eerily floating...

The yard suffered a disaster in the hurricane of 1990 when the shed blew down, with a boat inside it...



Pat was prolific in his designs which included Summer Twins 25 & 28, Heavenly Twins 26 &

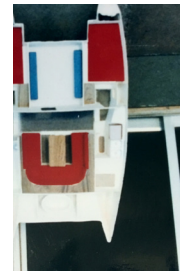


27, Ocean Winds 33 and Ocean Twins 38, Twins 31, 36 & 43, Star Twins 34 and Dive Twins.

Pat enjoyed making and testing models, spending many hours over these. Some of which never reached the build stage.



The Twins 43 was designed as a power sail boat, engineered to sail reasonably well and to travel at relatively high speeds under power. Pat won £50,000 in grant funding to help him to develop and refine the prototype



Tow testing a model below



After the storm damage the new shed was rebuilt just precisely big enough for Star to come out

## Debbie and Pip



When the partnership ended in 1992 Pip and Debbie took on the yard, renting it from Pat. With that also came the brokerage and running the agency for Saggita and Elf Woods designs.

Nick and Matt had brought them together first as they had made friends with Debbie and Pip's sons, Joel and Sam at the local primary school. When Mary started working at the yard, the boys spent many happy hours playing together.



Debbie and her two boys, Joel and Sam

Star'was launched in 1995 as an experiment in sail-power circumnavigation and Pat eventually set off on her in 1999.



Building the back slip

Pat continued to do builds until he went off sailing in 1999. Mary Theobald had joined the team in 1993, helping Debbie out around the yard and the brokerage. Her two children,



Star



Pat along with other friends ended up spending a season in South Africa to undertake repairs to Star after a bulkhead had popped out in heavy weather.

Tom then joined Pat for the sail to Australia, via the Kerguelen Islands, otherwise known as the Desolation Islands!

Debbie and Pip flew out to Australia and spent a season sailing with Pat.



Collecting water on an Island where no other supply was available



Later Tom re-joined the boat and he and Pat went on to do a circumnavigation of New Zealand. Tom tells me with a nostalgic smile that Pat was the world's worst singer but that they sang a lot together! Sadly, after Tom had flown home Pat fell ill while alone in New Zealand. The family back home didn't know until they heard from a passing visitor that he was in hospital with kidney troubles. They managed to get him back home but Star

had been abandoned on the other side of the world. Pip and Tom returned to New Zealand to prepare Star for shipping home. Pat never really got better and died in 2004, it was a difficult time for a man who had never really been ill in his life.

### After Pat

Interest inspired by Star sparked one of the more experimental projects undertaken at the yard. This resulted in the only monohull they ever built. A customer had become enamoured by the concept, only he was adamant that it had to be a monohull. The fact that this would require two 350hp engines to achieve the same speeds as the catamaran with a twin 125hp engine, left him undaunted and the project went ahead. The type of propeller which was huge, was inclined to rattle the boat to pieces (literally) until the team eventually persuaded him to change it.



Monohull model



The monohull

Another highly experimental project, which remarkably worked although not entirely successfully, was the wind turbine powered catamaran. The hulls were made using the moulds from the Twins 36. This project was in partnership with the University of The West of England who provided the turbine and the systems required to provide power to the massive propeller. It worked, to a point as the top-heavy weight of the turbines caused a great deal of pitching despite the massive keel. The boat does still live on, although now with a more conventional rig!





Debbie at the boatshow



Mary informs me that Debbie's parents and Ethel were the backup team that allowed it all to keep going – without the childcare they provided Debbie and Pip wouldn't have been able to put in the hours they did.

They continued making improvements to the yard, investing in equipment and services, building up the brokerage and sharing stands at boatshows with other multihull businesses.

They also continued to enjoy the social and community side of things with regular boat gatherings. Besides this, Pip participated in two Round Britain and Ireland races. Two is enough he informs me!



Tony Purser and Pip Patterson as co-skippers on the 1998 Round Britain and Ireland Race on Backlash. A boat that is still very much around in the yard. Tony inspired and mentored Matt to his love of sailing

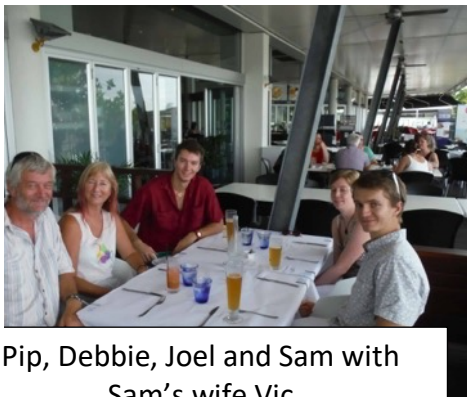
Not all the customers are memorable for the right reasons. Pip laughingly recalls, one who he had a dispute regarding non-payment of bills. In a moment of vindictive abandon, the customer decided to push Pip's transit off the quay wall.



They did eventually manage to retrieve it!

Another vehicle also ended up in the mud when a customer with starter motor problems took to parking his Cortina at the top of the slipway so he could bump start it down the slip. Inevitably, one day the 'start' never happened, only the 'bump – straight into the mud...

Around the time their boys left home Pip and Debbie decided it was time to retire and enjoy some cruising of their own. They fitted Star with a new twin-masted rig, and in 2014 they rented out the yard and started going on cruises and trips of their own, including



Pip, Debbie, Joel and Sam with Sam's wife Vic

visiting their boys, now both in Australia and one married.

Until then Multimarine Manufacturing LTD, run by Darren Newton and Simon Baker, had been operating from the quarry just around the

Star after her refit



corner building Dazcats since the early nineties. Multimarine also build other one-off craft including innovative and ground-breaking designs by the legendary Nic Bailey. They are also considered world leaders in building accessible craft and have built several record breaking craft; power, sail and accessible. Dazcats have grown their reputation as a world class performance cruiser-racer over thirty years,

so when they needed to expand, moving next door to the Multihull Centre made all the sense. See the Dazcat History document for more information about Dazcats.

Simon and Pip



Daz, Matt and Debbie



Multimarine will be 20 in 2019. The coming together of three such experienced and well-established businesses has proven to be highly successful and collectively we are the biggest employer on the Rame Peninsula, which is great for the local community in an otherwise low employment area. Customers benefit greatly from having a full range of services available to them in one place, provided by people with a common interest. Many of our workforce are sailors and racers themselves, many are self-classified as multihull geeks! The result is genuine passion, great teamwork and a commitment and pride in providing the best possible products and services. In addition to continuing to build ground breaking and innovative designs, Multimarine are also committed to ongoing improvement of facilities at the yard, such as additional water and electric points. We have also been busy investing in new equipment. In October, a brand new 38ton capacity Roodberg trailer was delivered from Holland enabling us to more efficiently move bigger, heavier and more awkward boats.





Upgrades in all areas are ongoing and we have a super new office unit on site that we'll be moving into soon. In order to maximise our useable space we've had to move out a local bus company who had used one of the sheds for many years. Temporary sheds have been erected to accommodate the number of projects currently underway, including some interesting and highly innovative builds that will be revealed at their launches.

Most of the local Dazcats enjoy competing in MOCRA and RORC race events and often win their class. Hissy Fit (D1495), one of the first to be launched from the Multihull Centre regularly comes home with trophies. This year

Dazcats won first, second and third in MOCRA in the Round Britain and Ireland Race, with Hissy Fit coming in first. They also made it onto the front cover of Yachting Monthly's August edition with the happy making caption for multihull lovers .



Mary is still with us, managing the brokerage and yard administration. Her knowledge and experience, built up over 26 years has proven invaluable.





After spending nine years at the dockyard completing his apprenticeship as a fitter and turner, Mary's son Matt returned to the yard. First as banksman to his brother Nick,



who was yard manager and operated the crane, then later when Nick left in 2017 to follow his dreams of becoming a farmer Matt took over as yard manager and chief crane driver. How fantastic that another little boy who grew up running around the yard has gone on to become our yard manager.



Another boy who was a familiar sight at the yard was Tom's son Chris. Chris, a master craftsman in wooden boatbuilding, has worked on famous projects such as the Greyhound Lugger and Pete Goss' 'Spirit of Mystery'. Chris and his own young family have cruised extensively on a boat he had built himself.

History is still in the making at the yard. Not just through the Multimarine and Dazcat projects, but also so often coming full circle and remaking itself. This was recently brought home to us through the tale of one Multihull Centre boat: Some many years ago, a small blue Newick design trimaran called Acapella arrived at the yard, she was sold and then returned again, yellow by now.





This time, she was bought by Loick Peyron in 2014. He renamed her 'Happy' and is



currently racing in the Route de Rhum reliving the first 1978 race when her sistership, 'Olimpus Photo' was sailed to an astounding victory by Mike Birch.



It was this victory that inspired a whole generation of young sailors including the Peyron

brothers and designers such as Nigel Irens and Marc Lombard. Peyron is attempting to beat Birch's original time.

We love that the while the Multihull Centre is still making history, pushing boundaries of design and build, it's also still providing the roots in terms of both boats and ethos. Last winter we had 107 boats in the yard, 90 of those were multihulls. Some 40 different types, some ancient and rare. With these boats come the dreamers. Some who just dream and others who dream and do. All are continuing Pat's legacy, and we hope this special place continues to fulfil its unique role for many generations to come.

Very many thanks to all our customers. It's you who have helped to make this history that is constantly moving us all towards our futures. Just as it should be. Thanks also to Tom, Pip and Debbie for helping to bring it so vividly to life for those of us who weren't fortunate enough to be around for most of the previous 50 years





The Multihull Centre Team - 2018



Compiled, written and published by  
Oriol Butcher on behalf of the  
Multihull Centre ©2018



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