

Dufour Association – UK

The membership association for the owners of Dufour Yachts

The History of Dufour Association

In 1981 Peter Morris bought a Dufour and when he found that there was no Dufour owners group he decided to start one. Initially he was assisted by the Dufour agent who helped them to contact owners and they arranged a meeting, which 15 or so owners attended. This was the start of what we have today. There was a link up then made with the East Anglian School of Sailing that owned several Dufours of different sizes, and this formed the basis of the East Coast Section, which held its own meetings and rallies.

Then in 1982 Denis Heesom and Charles Marchant acquired a Dufour 2800 named '*Deidi*' and discovered the Dufour Owners Association, (or DOA, as it was known at the time) through contact with Brian Cable of the Dufour Agency. He acquainted them with the existence of the Dufour Owners Association and possibility of helping with sources of spares and so their involvement with the DOA was born.

The Dufour Owners Association was still being run by Peter Morris who was the 'one man' committee. He took on all the basic roles and thus there were no formal AGMs. He organised various events in the Solent and started the Association's Newsletter, by inviting all 26 members to contribute to Issue No. 1. The result was a Newsletter with interesting contributions, and it reflected the limitations of that era - copying on a duplicating machine and a humble typewriter! Soon after a young couple, the Almonds, volunteered to become the Editors of the Newsletter and they did this for a few years.

On March 25th 1985 Peter Morris bought a Westerly and thus left the DOA. This created a need for Secretary, Treasurer and Events Organiser and it was then that Charles Marchant volunteered to do the South Coast Organiser duties and Brenda Hindley took on the Secretary and Treasurer duties. There was **no** Chairman.

Just after this Denis and Charles held a rally at the Folly Inn near Cowes where significantly one of the members attending was Luis Castillo. He was destined to become an active Association Officer!

Soon afterwards, the Almonds reported that they were moving to Canada and thus there was a vacancy for an Editor. It was then that Charles Marchant inherited this job!

It was in 1989 that Denis Heeson was elected as the first Chairman and he carried on these duties for several years even after selling his boat!

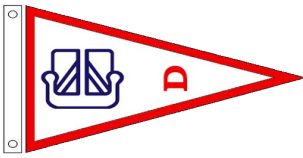
At the 1992 AGM, it was reported there were vacancies for Treasurer and Secretary. Luckily, Peter Oran was on hand to fill these posts efficiently for a few years. Then, he decided to live in Spain and Caroline Gerosa became Treasurer and Charles Marchant became Secretary, as well as continuing as Editor.

Also at the 1992 AGM Denis resigned and Peter Pitchforth was elected as Chairman, a job which he filled, very efficiently, for many years.

Additionally, Phil Hookham was elected as Deputy Chairman and Events Organiser and it was agreed that the DOA should have a 'Written Constitution'.

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As some point, it was realised that the 'DOA' was also used by others to represent "Dead on Arrival" and so it was agreed to become simply, 'The Dufour Association' and that membership would be open to anyone in the world who was also interested. (In reality, the *Dufour News* attracted people widely distributed outside of the UK).

Under this regime, the DA prospered and had on average 24 people at the AGM and well over 100 members.

Peter and Charles cultivated the friendship of the '*Portway Yachts*' family when they became UK Agents for Dufour boats, and they cooperated by automatically enrolling new customers who had bought a Dufour into the Association for a year. The climax of this relationship came in the year 2000 when Peter organised a rally in Dartmouth to coincide with the full eclipse of the sun. '*Portway*' whose base was at Totnes on the Dart, arranged moorings and organised a dinner at the prestigious Dartmouth Yacht Club. Association members came from both East and South coasts and the rally was deemed a great success - although cloud obscured the actual event!

In the mid 1990s, two significant developments for the Association occurred. Luis Castillo volunteered to take over the Membership Secretary duties from Charles. Importantly, David and Dorothy Eyre appeared on the scene and were particularly noteworthy for the events which they organised at Weymouth and their loyal attendance at all events and for David becoming our Webmaster and Dorothy, our very efficient Treasurer.

Very significantly, David Eyre was *au fait* with developments in the computer world, thus he was well qualified to take over the Editor/Secretary jobs when Charles finally gave up the roles in early 2004. He did an excellent job in bringing the Newsletter up to date and ensuring the Dufour Association prospered. Unfortunately David died after suffering a brain tumour in 2014 and both Dorothy and the Association suffered a great loss.

Luis had previously taken on the role of Chairman for seven years, eventually handing over to Derek Gardner in 2012.

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