En route pour l'Ecosse

Rassemblement Fife

Bénodet, l'Odet, étape privilégiée

5-8 mai 2022

Dès la naissance de la plaisance en France l'Odet s'impose comme un centre d'activité nautique privilégié.

La baie de Bénodet et ses iles, le charme, la tranquillité et la sécurité qu'offre l'Odet attirent les « yachtmen » de la région et d'ailleurs. Et c'est en 1883, il y a donc 139 ans, qu'est créé le Yacht Club de l'Odet, initialement dénommé Club Nautique de Loctudy / l'Ile-Tudy.

L'attrait de l'Odet n'échappe pas aux yachtmen britanniques qui font de Bénodet une de leurs destinations favorites en France. De nombreux voiliers d'outre-Manche y font escale chaque année au point qu'un des mouillages est dénommé « mouillage des Anglais » sur la rive droite de l'Odet, près de Ste Marine, juste en face de Bénodet.

L'importance de Bénodet pour la plaisance anglaise se manifeste également avec la création dès 1934 d'une course-rallye Plymouth-Bénodet et en 1936, sous l'égide du RORC et du Yacht Club de France, de la course croisière Plymouth - Bénodet, première course croisière entre l'Angleterre et la France.

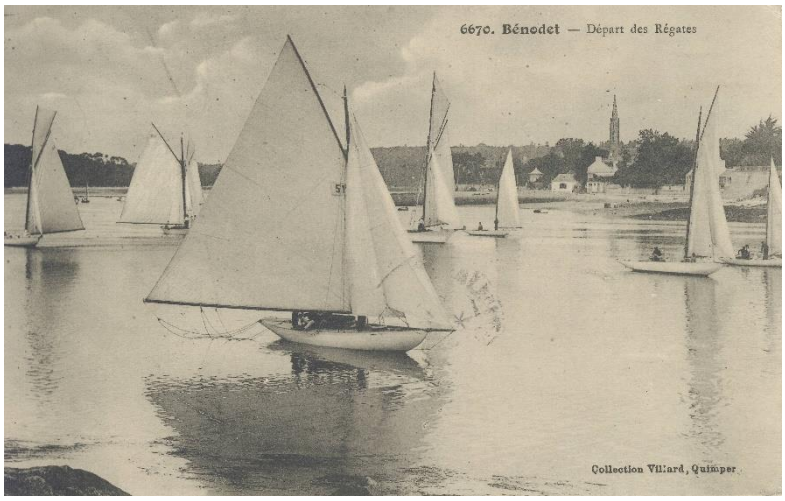
Il faut souligner que cette première course hauturière Anglo-Française a été gagnée par un « plan Fife ». Plan Fife bien connu puisqu'il s'agit de « LATIFA ».

Pour toutes ces raisons, pratiques comme historiques, une escale sur l'Odet pour les voiliers en route vers l'Ecosse prend tout son sens et le Yacht Club de l'Odet se fait un plaisir de les accueillir en mai 2022.

Yacht Club de L'Odet

Fondé en 1883 le YACHT CLUB de L'ODET (successivement Société des Régates de L'Ile-Tudy- Loctudy et Sociétés de régates de Loctudy-Bénodet) encourage depuis plus d'un siècle le développement de la plaisance sous toutes ses formes en Bretagne sud. Au fil des ans il s'affirme comme l'instigateur de régates prestigieuses et fait de Bénodet, à l'embouchure de l'Odet - *la plus jolie rivière de France selon Guillaume Apollinaire* - une escale essentielle pour les courses croisières et un lieu privilégié pour les rassemblements nautiques.

Dès 1900 son président, Maurice de Laubrière, fonde le « Comité des Coupes de Bretagne » dont le but est de règlementer et de coordonner les compétitions qui s'organisent le long des côtes de Bretagne sud.



En 1906 il met en place le « Comité Breton » chargé de construire et d'armer le yacht qui reprendra la prestigieuse Coupe de France conquise par les Allemands. C'est chose faite l'année suivante à Kiel avec « Armen » sous les yeux de Guillaume II.
En 1928 l'un des membres du club, Carl de la Sablière, se distingue en remportant les J.O. à bord du 8 m J.I « Aile VI » de Virginie Hériot.

Dès 1930, M. de Saint Père, président de l'« Union Nationale des Croiseurs », ancêtre de l'UNCL, met en place Bénodet - La Baule, la 1ère course-croisière organisée en France.
Puis toujours à l'instigation de M. de Saint Père se dispute en 1935 Plymouth-Belle-Île-Bénodet, 1ère course franco-anglaise sous le règlement du RORC (Royal Ocean Racing Club).

Après la guerre le club s'établit solidement à Bénodet et sous l'impulsion de M. Jacques de Kerallain, son nouveau président, les régates de yachting lourd et léger se multiplient.

Devenus une escale incontournable du programme du RORC, Bénodet et le Yacht Club de l'Odet sont aussi sollicités pour l'organisation de nombreuses courses et championnats nationaux ou internationaux tels que ceux des Snipes, Vauriens, Requins, Dragons, 5,5 m J.I, 6 m J.I ...
Les années 70 voient aussi la naissance de l'« Obélix Trophy », qui sera l'une des épreuves majeures pour habitables en France.

Le Yacht Club de l'Odet s'affirme ainsi depuis plus d'un siècle comme un élément moteur de la plaisance et c'est donc tout naturellement que soucieux de faire vivre, rassembler et régater les yachts classiques sur la côte Atlantique il organise dès 2001 le **« *Rendez-vous de la Belle Plaisance* ».**

Bénodet – Années 30

NAN et les bords de l'Odet (*E. Quéméré - 2003*)

Pen Duick (Jakez 2019)

The increase in workload caused by the club's steady expansion led Maclean Buckley, who was in poor health, to resign in April 1936–he was soon persuaded to return–and his remark that 'he did not see how the club could hope to pay a secretary adequately or, in the ordinary way, to cover his expenses' showed that however successful it had been in establishing ocean racing, financially the club's future was still far from secure.

One way to help the finances was to increase the membership, and at the 1936 AGM, when membership stood at around 475, the introduction of provisional membership was approved. This allowed candidates to use the club house for a limited period while waiting to qualify. If they failed to qualify, their membership lapsed and they would then have to apply for an extension. Over the following years various forms of membership, including *cadet and veteran memberships, were also introduced and there was a scheme to take 'unknown quantities' on weekend sailing trips and passage-making. This enabled owners to size up the capabilities of individuals, gave novices some chance of testing out their skills, and allowed dinghy sailors an opportunity to race in larger boats.

courtesy Christopher Nicholson

Charles E. Nicholson, one of the greatest yacht designers of his age and a long-time supporter of the club

At the same time as introducing provisional members the rules were tightened so that an owner had to satisfy the committee that a candidate for full membership was a competent member of the amateur crew. High spirits, rowdiness, call it what you will, after races, particularly after the Fastnet, was also raised in committee and it was felt that unless 'the tendency to make an excessive uproar after races was checked the club might find itself unwelcome at clubs around the coast', though it was agreed that only public opinion would be the sole effective restraint.

The Plymouth-Benodet and the Falmouth-Clyde Races were added to the fixture list in 1936. It was a year which produced the largest-ever entry for any RORC event with 37 yachts taking part in the Channel Race, 21 in the Small Class and 16 in the Large. 1937 saw the introduction of yet more fixtures–the Southsea-Brixham, Ijmuiden-Solent, Plymouth-La Baule, and St Nazaire-Benodet Races were all held for the first time–and there were a healthy number of starters in the established ones. The Fastnet had 29, by far the largest the race had so far attracted, and was the showcase for the revolution in design that was taking place.

The Royal Ocean Racing Club - The First 75 Years – IAN DEAR

Among the starters were many types. It was also a truly international field, with entries from Germany, Holland, France, and the United States, and these brought out the punters. The most fancied, at 8-1, were *Bloodhound*, *Maid of Malham*, and *Ortac*; 10-1 was offered on the American entry **Elizabeth McCaw* and on Michael Mason's 53ft LWL Fife-designed yawl, *Latifa*; while *Zeearend*–which had been designed to the RORC Rule by Olin Stephens for Kees Bruynzeel–and *Stiarna* were quoted at 12-1.

Bloodhound and *Latifa* had both been built the previous year and had already proved themselves. Sherman Hoyt, no mean judge of a boat, thought *Latifa*, which had won the Plymouth-Benodet Race in 1936, the finest all round ship he had ever sailed in ocean passages or races, while *Bloodhound* became perhaps the best known ocean racer of all time. She replaced Isaac Bell's *Foxhound* after Bell had decided he wanted the rating advantage of a yawl. Instead of having *Foxhound*'s rig altered he sold her and Nicholson built him the slightly larger *Bloodhound*. She had immediately showed her speed by winning the Large Class in the 1936 Channel Race in which high winds and seas, combined with heavy rain, had caused 17 retirements out of the 37 yachts which had taken part.

Both *Bloodhound* and *Latifa* had been built, as Phillips-Birt later observed, with 'offshore racing and the RORC rule as the principal consideration, and they make, apart from their subsequent records which placed them amongst the greatest names in the RORC fleet, one of the highest tributes to the rating rule. They were that ideal combination of beauty, speed, seaworthiness, and habitability that rating rules have always sought to encourage but so rarely have achieved. To these two names should be added the earlier *Trenchemer*, and *Bloodhound*'s near sister *Foxhound*. These were the type of yacht that had been dreamed of when the RORC rule was founded.'

Nevertheless, it was the 35ft sloop, *Ortac*, which Phillips-Birt believed was unquestionably the boat of the year in 1937. Designed for the rear commodore, C.F. King, by the comparatively unknown Robert *Clark–who gave her the first pulpit to be fitted to a yacht–she won the Plymouth-La Baule Race and over the season accumulated enough points to win the Trenchemer Cup for the Class I individual points championship.

However, from today's perspective it was perhaps the appearance of Illingworth's **Maid of Malham* which was to prove more important. Not having played polo for some years, by 1936 Illingworth had saved up enough money–and plucked up sufficient courage–to build a 'flat out' 35ft ocean racer which had encouraged several other members, including King, to do the same. He discussed his ideas with both Fife and Mylne before opting for Jack Laurent Giles, who, with Robert Clark, represented the new generation of young[1] designers. He left the hull lines to Giles but laid out the yacht's interior

1 after one meeting of the technical sub-committee Charles E. Nicholson was heard to say: 'The trouble with these young men is that they think they know everything; the trouble with us old ones is that we know we do'

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