

The History of the CBYA Dinghy Section

It all started on 15 June 2015, see '[The Story of Louise](#)' on the CBYA web site under Getting on the Water - Dinghy Section.

I purchased [Louise](#) for €1000 from Mike at the **Harvest Store Charity** and donated her to the CBYA. It was difficult to negotiate the price when the proceeds were going to a charity.

Initially (if you have read the story of [Louise](#)) it was CBYA member **Fernando Moneta** who set up [Louise](#) on the El Portet beach, and with a launch trailer sourced via Javea Connect, and a donation of a large plastic storage box by Hugh Epsom, we were up and running.

Then Mike contacted me again to advise that he also had a rubber dinghy and an outboard engine for sale. After a second difficult negotiation, we eventually agreed to purchase them for €350, with CBYA Committee approval.

Piers Armstrong then donated another large (but old) Avon inflatable dinghy, together with a multitude of ropes, and other nautical bits. After some maintenance work, we now had a safety boat. Some members also donated life jackets. The Dinghy Section was now really up and running.

CBYA member **Wally Rees** was selling up and going back to the UK, so he decided to donate his 420 dinghy to the CBYA. She was subsequently named [Wally](#). We now had two dinghies, two trailers, and a safety boat with outboard.

Richard Evett appeared on the scene, and professed to know everything about dinghies, so I handed over the running of the section to him, which in the end showed that he did! It was Richard who started the **Dinghy Days** on every other Wednesday, apart from July and August, as there are too many tourists about at El Portet during these months.

The days grew in popularity and many members and friends turned up. Some to sail and some just to sit on the beach and enjoy the ambiance. Normally each day finished off with everyone having a drink and snack at one of the El Portet cafes, often after a swim! Richard became very popular, and he did an excellent job in co-ordinating these events. In the early days he had proved his ability by having the first capsized, and breaking the mast on the 420, but we forgave him for that due to all of his hard work with the dinghies! Dinghy Days cost **just €5** per member, and we managed to recruit quite a few new CBYA members as a result.

CBYA member **Dave Peachy** was a keen dinghy day supporter and made us a new, very large, secure box to replace the plastic one on the beach where all the equipment

was stored. The box was padlocked and the dinghies locked together with a chain. **Keith Leary** kindly donated two very expensive locks and a chain. Dave normally led the swimmers after the sailing, and the boats had been safely put away.

In October 2017 I was contacted and advised that a nice-looking German-made *Flying Fish* dinghy was on the Portet beach with a for sale sign on it for €250. I contacted the German owner and we did a deal for €200, paid by the CBYA. This dinghy came with a road trailer and proved to be a very solid and safe boat for our members to sail. A lot of boat for the price paid. This boat was later named *Yelly* at the 2018 AGM by the members present.

So now we had three dinghies, a safety boat with outboard, a very strong storage box containing the sails, life jackets and lots of other necessary nautical 'toot'. All was operating very well, and our members were enjoying sailing dinghies. One member, **Monique Neyzen**, an experienced dinghy sailor, came all the way from Finistat each time, about an hour's drive. She was a great contributor and took many novices out on all of the boats.

Christmas 2017 and New Years Day 2018 arrived when some 3000 people turning up on each day at El Portet beach to celebrate. A few days after this saw our first **'attack'**! The storage box was broken into and the outboard stolen. Bolt cutters had to be used. Some days later the wheels of the trailer *Yelly* was standing on were taken, together with her aft bulkhead hatch, which was torn off, and some life jackets stored in there were stolen. A few days later our Avon dinghy disappeared interestingly together with another Avon and outboard, which was sitting and chained next to our boats, but which did not belong to the CBYA. So now we had lost our outboard, our Avon, two wheels from the trailer, and some life jackets, but no other damage apart from a missing hatch, which was never found. I put it down to petty theft by opportunists who had sniffed about after Christmas/New Year.

We decided there was not much we could do but to try and recover, and further increase our security at El Portet, which we did. We set up a "**Dinghy Disaster Fund**" to which many members made donations, and **Chris and Sue Bell** organised a walk, followed by a paella lunch, that raised €250. In total we raised almost **€600**.

Barry McCrae kindly donated a 4HP Yamaha outboard motor, and Richard spent many hours fixing it and getting it running very smoothly. I found a replacement Avon, which was purchased for €400, so now the safety boat was back up and running. A very heavy chain and security lock were acquired by Richard in the UK, and brought back by him to Spain, together with 2 launching trolleys. Member **Rod Simpson** made a new after hatch for *Yelly*, and without missing a Dinghy Day, we were back up and running. We had three dinghies sailing, together with the new safety boat, on 11 April this year.

The 25 April Dinghy Day was spent sitting in the café, as the sea and wind conditions were not conducive to dinghy sailing, so we just sat and enjoyed watching the very rough sea rolling into the bay.

On the 9 May Dinghy Day, we were honoured with the attendance of founder CBYA members Maurice and Betty Pilkington, Brenda Bates and Diana Jarvis, who came along to watch the fun! We were all sitting having a coffee when.....Richard discovered “**Attack 2**”! This time they had slit both tubes of the inflatable dinghy from fore to aft, as well as the bottom. The replacement outboard had been stolen, but the worst of all was that a large stone had been used to put holes in all three of our boats.

This was a deliberate attack on the CBYA, as no other boats had been touched. I spent the rest of the day reporting this to the Police, who duly attended and took pictures.

Tragically the Dinghy Section has been ‘wiped out’. I think we may be able to repair *Yelly*, and maybe *Wally*, but *Louise* is destined for the marine scrap yard, together with the inflatable dinghy.

Where do we go from here? Dinghies have proved very popular with our members and we must try and recover from this disaster. We need a **new location** to keep them, possibly the **Club Náutico Moraira**, which we are currently investigating, together with other potential locations, and **time** to re-position and make repairs.

I would like to finish by thanking everyone who has been part of the Dinghy Section, made a financial contribution, as well as material ones. Many members have given up their time and assisted in the project. I have mentioned a few, but there are many others who are not listed here. A big thank you to you all. I am quite devastated by this latest event, but I hope to see you all back on the water later in the year.

Bob Gordon

Past Chairman and founder of the Dinghy Section of the CBYA