

A Dragon is Reborn

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Summary. David Harris tells how four ex-rugby friends at Medway Yacht Club bought GBR 591 Tia, a past Edinburgh Cup winner built in 'Sweretex', in 2014 – and how she sank on her mooring when relaunched with the drain plug left out. After salvage she was refurbished at Trevor Cox's yard in Sittingbourne: some 13 layers of antifouling removed, the hull stripped back to the gel coat and re-surfaced, new cuddy-steps, Barney Post, fittings, sheets and paint, a new mast fitted with the good parts from three older masts, and all-new rigging. Renamed Flos ('Fat Lads Out Sailing'), she was relaunched on 30 June 2015 and was soon competitive.

Dragoners may travel diverse paths before they finally arrive in MYC's Dragon Fleet. This is the story of one such journey and the rebirth of Dragon GBR 591, that became Flos.

A group of ex-rugby playing friends arrived at the Medway Yacht Club and got hooked on Dragons. Dragons do have this effect on people. On arrival at the Club, one of them, stepped aboard GBR 645 Dax, and was amazed at the amount of rope required to sail a Dragon! He also learned that age is no barrier, when it comes to sailing. He got to know Mike Lutener and John Walker and realised that there wasn't much, if anything, that these two put together didn't know about Dragon sailing on the Medway.

The infection spreads

In 2014, Steve Rushbrook, Toby Attack, Ivor Allcock and Kevin Beck, thought it was a good idea to buy a Dragon. It didn't take long for this idea to become a reality, and an offer was made for GBR 591 Tia. This Dragon has a pedigree, and has been a past winner of the Edinburgh Cup. It is also one of the legendary Dragons that were built using 'Sweretex', which provides a more rigid hull construction.

Flos is re-born!

Having made the purchase, Steve, Toby, Ivor and Kevin planned to restore Tia over the winter period. The Yard Team lifted the vessel out for inspection, and on relaunching – disaster struck!

When Tia was returned to the water, the drain plug was inadvertently left out and much to everyone's dismay she sank overnight on her mooring. Do not panic – having worked for the Port of London Authority, Steve Rushbrook knew about boat salvaging and had the right contacts. Tia was re-floated the next day, but she looked a sad sight.

Lots of silt got into every nook and cranny. Then the real work began

Following the salvage operation, *Tia* was moved to Trevor Cox's Yard in Sittingbourne. (Fibreglass is Trevor's thing and he's good at it). Over the next few months they set about a complete refurbishment of *Tia*.

The first challenge was the removal of some 13 layers of anti-foul that had accumulated over the years. The hull was stripped back to the gel coat and re-surfaced. New Cuddy-steps, Barney Post, new hull fittings and new sheets were installed, along with a new paint job both inside and out. A bare Mast was purchased and the good parts from three older masts were transferred on to the nice shiny new one. A complete replacement of all the rigging was also undertaken.

What shall we call her

Throughout the refurbishment, there was an ongoing discussion about what to call the 'new' boat. Eventually the group settled on *Flos*. This stands for 'Fat Lads Out Sailing'. Some of the crew are yet to achieve their advanced pie eating qualification, but I'm sure given time and age full membership of the group is not far away!

On the 30th June 2015, after lots of hard work by all involved, *Flos* was re-launched. The pictures reveal the transformation she has undergone. No mean feat for a team brought together through sport and friendship alone. It was now time to go sailing....

In two years a lot has been learned....

There is more to learn going forward. The group said; "In such a short time, it's nice to have the top end of the fleet looking over their shoulders knowing that *Flos* has the potential to win". And success came swiftly ...

— *David Harris, Captain Medway Dragon Fleet, October 2017*

Steve Rushbrook is starting a life with his family in New Zealand. He has been appointed Harbour Master in Dunedin and surrounding areas. The Medway Dragoners wish Steve continuing success in his new adventure in New Zealand.



Bottom right, left to right: Steve Rushbrook, Ivor Allcock and Kevin Beck receiving their awards at the Dragon Prize giving, January 2017.

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