APPENDIX 2

Members' Yachts and Their Use in the First World War

(from Ian Dear, *The Royal Yacht Squadron 1815–1985*, pages 159-172)

There is no detailed information on club yachts which took part in the First World War by serving in the Auxiliary Patrol. The Admiralty's Naval Historical Branch has extracts from the logs of some yachts, and it also has what are known as 'Red Lists' which record in which Auxiliary Patrol area each yacht was operating at any particular time. It is from these sources that the following list is compiled as well as from information in the club's second history, Further Memorials of the Royal Yacht Squadron, written by J. B. Atkins.

Agatha

Owned by Sir E. Walter Greene, *Agatha* was a 450-ton steam yacht built in 1905. She was taken into service in September 1914 and served until March 1919. She was armed with one 12-pounder and one 6-pounder, and was based in the Cromarty area between 1914 and 1915 and in the Granton area between 1916 and 1918.

Amethyst

Owned by Sir Edward Coates MP, Amethyst was a 330-ton steam yacht built in 1877. She was taken into service in March 1915, had her name changed to Amethyst III, and was armed with two 6-pounders. She served until February 1917, and was based at Holyhead.

Aries

Owned by the Vice-Commodore, the Duke of Leeds, *Aries* was a 268-ton steam yacht built in 1880. She was taken into service in September 1914

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and was one of the first yachts to join the improvised Yacht Patrol. Her owner, although fifty-three at the time, served with her for a year in the North Sea until he was transferred to another appointment. She served in the Tyne area in 1914 and in the Dover and Downs area in 1915. She was armed with two 3-pounders. In October 1915 she was sunk by a mine while on patrol in the vicinity of the South Goodwin Lightship with the loss of five officers and seventeen men.

Aster

Owned by Austin Mackenzie, *Aster* was a 249-ton steam yacht built in 1883. She was taken into service in September 1914 and armed with two 3-pounders. In June 1915 she had her name changed to *Aster II* and was based in the Valentia area on patrol and examination duty until May 1916 when she was paid off.

Atalanta

Owned by Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Decies, who came onto the list in 1915, *Atalanta* was a 1398-ton steam yacht built in 1903 which was taken into service in June 1915, and from November 1915 served with the Auxiliary Patrol based at Gibraltar where she had the opportunity to attack enemy submarines on three separate occasions, but without success.

Beryl

Owned by Lord Inverclyde, *Beryl* was a 1393-ton steam yacht built in 1898. She was taken into service in January 1915 and armed with one 3-inch and one 12-pounder. Until October 1915 she was on loan to the Director of the Naval Intelligence Division. Later, she was based at Queenstown with the Auxiliary Patrol and stayed there until early 1918. She was then based at Portsmouth and Kirkwall, and was based at Dundee when the war ended.

Boadicea

Owned by Lieutenant-Colonel A. Hickman Morgan, *Boadicea* was a 447-ton steam yacht built in 1882. She was taken into service in May 1915 and had her name changed to *Boadicea II*. She was armed with one 12-pounder and one 6-pounder. She was based on the Kingstown area

throughout her time in the Auxiliary Patrol and served until March 1919.

Branwen

Owned by Lord Howard de Walden, *Branwen* was a 151-ton steam yacht built in 1905. She was taken into service in January 1915 and armed with two 6-pounders. She was based at Oban until December 1916, when she was paid off, and she was then bought by another member, Arthur Salvin Bowlby.

Calista

Owned by Captain Alwyn Foster, *Calista* was a 265-ton steam yacht built in 1902. She was taken into service in September 1914 and served until December 1917. She was armed with three 3-pounders and served first in the Rosyth area before being moved to the Granton area in 1915. She was then moved to the Orkneys and Shetlands where she served throughout 1916 and 1917. In December 1917 she struck a mine in the Irish Sea and was lost with all hands.

Catania

Owned by the Duke of Sutherland, *Catania* was a 668-ton steam yacht built in 1895. She was taken into service in September 1914 and was armed with two6-pounders. She first of all served with the yacht patrol in the Cromarty area under the command of her owner, but in 1915 he was sent to serve with the British Military Mission to the Belgian Army. Later in the war, however, he returned to command her in the Mediterranean where she was serving as the flagship of a fleet of armed motor launches. These launches operated in the Suez Canal and the Straits of Otranto against Turkish mine-laying vessels and German submarines. She served until February 1919.

Ceto

Although never recorded in the club's list of yachts, *Ceto*, a 185-ton steam yacht, built in 1888, was owned by Viscount Iveagh. She served at Dover in 1914 and the following year she became part of the Downs Boarding Flotilla and served in this capacity until the end of the war.

Clementina

Owned by Frederick Harrison, *Clementina* was a 625-ton steam yacht built in 1887. She was taken into service in September 1914 and was

armed with two 6-pounders. She served with the Auxiliary Patrol in the Orkney Islands area in 1914 and in the Larne area in 1915. On 8 August 1915 she was in collision off Tor Cor Point. She was beached, but the attempt to salvage her was abandoned.

Corycia

Owned by James Miller, *Corycia* was a 250-ton steam yacht built in 1896. She was taken into service in September 1914 and armed with two 6-pounders. She was used by the Auxiliary Patrol in Peterhead in 1914, the Orkney Islands area in 1915, the Portsmouth area in 1916, and the Harwich area in 1917. In November 1917 she was purchased by the Ministry of Shipping for use as a salvage vessel.

Diane

Owned by Cecil Slade, *Diane* was a 259-ton steam yacht built in 1902. She was taken into service in September 1914 and served until November 1917 with the famous Dover Patrol. On 24 April 1916 she was with the 11th Drifter Division in the vicinity of the Dunkirk Roads guarding an anti-submarine net barrage which had been laid ten miles off the Belgian coast. A U-boat – which from German records was later found to be UB13 – became fouled in the nets of one of the drifters and *Diane* dropped two lance bombs and then a depthcharge. The latter was dropped by the mate, a man named Dunstan, who after the war became skipper of Captain Slade's schooner *Diane*. Although it shattered part of the yacht's stern, the depthcharge also found its target.

'A heavy explosion took place, followed by a large eruption of bubbles and oil,' wrote Sir Reginald Bacon in the second volume of his history of the Dover Patrol.* 'The air bubbles became much reduced later on, but oil continued to come to the surface, and when the yacht *Diane* returned through this position at 5.25pm she passed through pools of oil. The vessels concerned received the usual award.'

Diane continued to serve with the Dover Patrol and sank several German mines by gunfire. In June 1917 she captured a German seaplane off Gravelines. She took two prisoners and tried to tow the seaplane into Dover, but it began to disintegrate and was cut adrift.

Hersilia

Owned by Sir Walpole Greenwell, Hersilia was a 454-ton steam yacht

^{*} The Dover Patrol, in two volumes, by Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon, Hutchinson Ltd, 1920.

built in 1895. She was taken into service in September 1914, armed with one 12-pounder and became part of the Auxiliary Patrol in the Stornoway area in 1914 and 1915. In January 1916 she was caught in a bad storm while hunting a U-boat and was wrecked on North Rona.

Jason

Owned by Frank Bibby, *Jason* was a 702-ton steam yacht built in 1913. She was taken into service in February 1915 and had her name changed to *Jason II*. She served in the Orkney Islands area throughout 1915 before moving to the Humber area in 1916, and becme part of the Hydrophone Flotilla there. She was armed with two 12-pounders and one 3-pounder. She served until February 1919.

Lorna

Owned by Lord Hollenden, and then by Walter Preston, on the list with her in 1916, *Lorna* was a 484-ton steam yacht built in 1904. She was taken into service in September 1916 and armed with one 12-pounder and one 6-pounder. She was based in the Stornoway area in 1914 and 1915, and then in the Portland area between 1916 and 1918.

Lorna is the only club yacht credited with destroying an enemy submarine unaided. This remarkable incident, which happened on 26 May 1918, is most vividly described in a report of it made by Lieutenant C. L. Tottenham RNR, who was in command of the yacht.

At 8.50 the followig SOS signal was intercepted from the SS *Julian*: 'SOS. Two miles SW of Portland Bill SS *Julian* torpedoed'.

I immediately proceeded at full speed to look for and render assistance to her if required. At 9.14 I intercepted W/T message 'Proceeded to port – torpedo missed fire'. I then altered my course towards SS War Cross, who had by this time turned and was steering to the westward. As she had also received the SOS signal, I spoke to her and advised her captain to lay the land and endeavour to round the Bill, as I deemed this the safest course for her to take. I also informed him that I would escort him, but her captain decided to wait for darkness and get round then.

Observing another steamer approaching from the southward, I headed towards her. After steaming for about 3½ miles I observed HM Drifter Evening Primrose closing the steamer. I then altered course W. by N. towards another steamer approaching the Bill from the westward. At 9.55 the ship had hardly been steadied on this course when I observed the

periscope of a submarine steering west. The periscope was approximately 150 feet distant, slightly on my port bow. Considering the course the submarine was steering and his position with reference to the approach-ing steamer, I presumed the enemy was manoeuvring into position to attack her. I immediately starboarded my helm, and when I was close on top of the periscope (say 10 feet away) the enemy dipped, and as my vessel passed over the spot a distant jar was felt, caused presumably by our keel passing over the conning tower. I then dropped a D depth-charge set at 50 feet (time 9.57pm). I then starboarded a little more and dropped a second D charge about 50 feet from the first one.

Whilst circling to pass again over the spot I observed four objects in the water among the disturbance caused by the depth-charges. I proceeded direct to this spot, assuming objects to be wreckage, etc., from the submarine. On reaching the spot I discovered the objects to be four survivors shouting 'Kamarad' and 'Help'. Right in the middle of them I saw a disturbance in the water, caused by the rush of escaping air, etc., from the sunken submarine. I dropped another charge in the centre of this disturbance and a can buoy at the same time. This charge killed three of the survivors in the vicinity – two were blown completely out of the water (position being 4¾ miles N.65W. (m.) from Portland Bill). I eased down to pick up the remaining survivor who was still crying, 'Help, Kamarad', etc. Close up to the survivor a German naval blue jacket's cap was picked up, the ribbon marked 'Unterseeboots – Abteilung'.

Survivor was covered with oil, as by now the surface of the water over a very large area was thick with it. When survivor was received on board everything possible was done to alleviate his pain. The man was evidently seriously injured internally, and after living for about three hours he died. I remained cruising in the vicinity till relieved at 2.40pm by HMTB 81, when I proceeded to harbour.

The following information was gleaned from the prisoner: His name was Lit Wilhelm Ventland [Wendland] of Cologne. Commander's name: Uber Lt. Schtiendorff [Steindorff]. Submarine's serial number was U.74 [UB74]. Stated they were one week out from [Zeebrugge?] and had torpedoed three ships. Whether this was in one day or the whole week could not be ascertained. Number of crew 31 all told.

The Admiralty paid £1000 to the officers and crew of *Lorna* and Lieutenant Tottenham was awarded the DSO.

Medusa

Owned by Alfred Farquhar, *Medusa* was a 627-ton steam yacht built in 1906. She was taken into service in January 1915, had her name changed

to *Medusa II*, and served until March 1919. She was armed with one 12-pounder and one 6-pounder, and was part of the Auxiliary Patrol in the Tyne area in 1915 and then in the Orkney Islands between 1916 and 1918.

Mera

Owned by Harold Swithinbank, *Mera* was a 293-ton steam yacht built in 1886. She was taken into service in December 1914, armed with one 12-pounder and one 6-pounder, and served until March 1919.

Minona

Owned by George Coats, *Minona* was a 249-ton steam yacht built in 1906. She was taken into service in October 1914 but does not appear in any of the 'Red lists' until 1918 when she was based in the Granton area. She was paid off the same year.

Miranda

Owned by Lord Leith, *Miranda* was a 942-ton steam yacht built in 1910. She was taken into service in January 1915, had her name changed to

Miranda II, and was armed with two 12-pounders and one 3-pounder. She served until February 1919 and spent the war with the Auxiliary Patrol in the Tyne area. Although she first tried to engage a U-boat in 1915 it was not until August 1918 that she was able to come to grips with the enemy. On 13th of that month a convoy being escorted by Miranda II was attacked by UB30. The U-boat was rammed by another of the escorts and then depthcharged by Miranda II. It then dived, but two hours later was forced to surface and was shelled by the escort force and forced to submerge once more. It was then again attacked with depthcharges and destroyed; divers later found the wreck.

During the inter-war years *Miranda II* served as one of Trinity House's best-known yachts under the name of *Patricia*.

Narcissus

Owned by E. Miller Mundy, *Narcissus* was a 816-ton steam yacht built in 1905. She was taken into service in January 1915, had her name changed

to *Narcissus II*, and was armed with two 12-pounders. She served until February 1919 with the Auxiliary Patrol, and was based at Gibraltar until the end of the war. *Narcissus II* had several engagements with the enemy. On 25 August 1916, the extract from her log records the following: 'Observed enemy submarine (1505). Heard gunfire five minutes later and at 1520 opened fire herself at extreme range. The U-boat submerged. Arrived on scene at 1540 to find a French steamer, SS *Socoa*, sinking. Searched area for submarine without success.'

Another submarine was spotted on 24 April 1917, but escaped, as did a third which was seen on 19 May 1917, when *Narcissus II* went to investigate the sinking of SS *Mardinian* after hearing gunfire.

On 7 September 1917 she had another encounter with the enemy, this time with some success as related by her captain, Captain J. P. Rolleston RNR.

At 11.40pm being in latitude 35.36N., 6.54W., steering east at 10 knots, a submarine was seen about a mile ahead crossing the streak of light thrown by the lately risen moon. Her conning tower was showing and a small portion of the hull could be seen as she rose on the sea, she was in fact in diving trim heading about south-east, moving slowly. The ship's company were assembled at quarters and the speed increased to the utmost. I held fire for three or four minutes, as the range was decreasing, and eventually opened fire with the bow gun with common shell at 800 yards at about 11.43pm. The first shot was an undoubted hit at the very base of the conning tower, and the second was very close but short. Only two shots were fired, as the submarine submerged immediately fire was opened on her. I continued on my course and speed until a little past the spot where she disappeared, which was still obvious owing to the disturbance of the water, then dropped a type D depth-charge which unfortunately failed to explode. The evidence of an officer and a petty officer shows that the charge was correctly set to fire at 40 feet depth.

It transpired later that this was UB49. She was so badly damaged in the clash with *Narcissus II* that she was forced to make for neutral Cadiz and was interned there. However, the captain broke his parole and, much to the fury of the Spaniards, took his boat back to sea.

Although the Senior Naval Officer at Gibraltar was convinced that it was *Narcissus II* which had caused the damage to UB49, and claimed for the usual money award on her behalf, the Admiralty was equally

convinced that the damage to the U-boat had been caused by ramming and not by gunshot. The award was never paid.

This was not the end of the yacht's active service for she was involved in three more U-boat sightings. On 15 September 1917 she heard heavy gunfire and, on going to investigate, found a sinking steamer with a U-boat on the surface. The enemy submerged before

Narcissus II could approach closer but she was able to rescue the steamer's crew who had taken to their boats. Then, on 29 April 1918, she was escorting a convoy from Genoa when it was attacked by a

submarine. Narcissus II attacked by dropping her depthcharges, but without any apparent effect. Finally, on 23 September 1918, while escorting a convoy from Gibraltar to Genoa she again attacked a U-boat with depthcharges after it had sunk a steamer, but without any result.

Ombra

Owned by Baron W. von Schroder, *Ombra* was a 275-ton steam yacht built in 1902. She was taken into service in September 1914 and after patrolling in the northern Irish Sea she became part of the Dover Patrol in June 1916. Almost immediately she had her first contact with the enemy as the following extract from her log relates. 'Struck submerged object. Turned ship round, fired depth charges, and buoyed position. Later heard explosion NW and leader 16th Division reported sub in nets.'

Later, *Ombra* was bombed while at Ramsgate. Part of her stern was blown off and one crew member was killed. She served until March 1919.

Portia

Owned by Herbert Foster, *Portia* was a 527-ton steam yacht built in 1906. She was taken into service in October 1914, had her name changed to

Portia II, and was armed with one 12-pounder and one 6-pounder. She served until April 1919 and was based in the Orkney Islands area.

Rhiannon

Owned by Lord Howard de Walden, *Rhiannon* was a 138-ton auxiliary ketch built in 1914. She was taken into service in September 1914 and used in the Auxiliary Patrol in the Harwich area. On 20 July 1915 she was sunk by a mine off Longsands.

Rosabelle

Owned by Theodore Pim, Rosabelle was a 614-ton steam yacht built in 1901. She was taken into service in March 1915 and was armed with one 3-inch and two 6-pounders. She served until March 1919 and spent until August 1916 with the Auxiliary Patrol in the Falmouth area and the rest of the war in the Orkney Islands area. In both places she engaged the enemy and was unlucky not to be able to claim the destruction of at least one U-boat.

Her first sighting of the enemy was in March 1915. Soon after she had departed from Portsmouth, she spotted a U-boat and tried to ram it, but the submarine escaped by crash-diving.

On 10 April 1916 she 'sighted merchant ship on starboard quarter which suddenly gave out large volumes of smoke and steam, then took a heavy list, and disappeared under water, head foremost, torpedoed by enemy submarine'. She steamed at top speed towards the scene and managed to pick up two of the crew before making for Penzance.

In January 1917, while on patrol from Kirkwall, she saw an enemy submarine and opened fire with her aft gun, but the U-boat submerged, apparently undamaged.

In May 1917 she saw another enemy submarine which was attacking two steamers with its gun. *Rosabelle* immediately opened fire with her 3-inch gun, but the U-boat crash-dived. However, shortly afterwards its periscope was sighted and *Rosabelle* again opened fire with both her fore and aft guns. Despite this the submarine pressed home its attack on the two steamers and an hour later it torpedoed both while only about 500 yards from *Rosabelle*. The yacht dropped her depthcharges, but without any visible effect.

Finally, on 24 July 1917, Rosabelle saw yet another U-boat on the surface, this time off Stromness. She gave chase but the submarine dived before she could reach it.

St George

Owned by E. J. Wythes, St George was a 871-ton three-masted auxiliary schooner built in 1890. She was taken into service in March 1915 and renamed Oriflamme. She was then lent to the Director of the Naval Intelligence Division and based on the Humber, but nothing is known of her activities. She ceased her active service in June 1918 and after being renamed Wallington was used as a base ship on the Humber.

Sapphire

Owned by the Duke of Bedford, Sapphire was a 1421-ton steam yacht built in 1912. She was taken into service in September 1915, had her name changed to Sapphire II, and was armed with one 4-inch and one 12pounder. She served until February 1919, first of all in the Irish Sea as a patrol and escort ship before performing the same role when based on Gibraltar. She initially patrolled between Gibraltar and Algiers, and then spent 1916 escorting convoys between Gibraltar and Malta. She had contact with the enemy three times while based in the Mediterranean. The first time, in July 1917, she sighted a U-boat but it submerged before she could attack. The second time was in January 1918 when a steamer in one of the convoys she was escorting was torpedoed. She attacked the U-boat with depthcharges, but without any positive result. The last time was in May 1918 while escorting a convoy from Genoa to Gibraltar. The wake of a submarine was spotted, but before any action could be taken two steamers were attacked and sunk. While depthcharging the enemy Sapphire II was in collision with another of the escorts. Despite a bad leak which had left the forepeak full of water Sapphire II picked up the survivors of both steamers and the escort. She then sank the crippled escort with gunfire and managed to make Toulon with the survivors.

Scadaun

Scadaun was a 157-ton steam yacht. Although she never appeared in Lloyds Register of Yachts or in the club's list of members and their yachts, she appears in the Admiralty 'Red Lists' as being owned by the Earl of Dunraven, although the present Earl cannot find any proof that this was so. The 'Red Lists' show that she served in Galway Bay in 1914 as part of the Auxiliary Patrol before being moved to the Nore in 1915 where she spent the rest of the war acting as escort to drifters and as a minesweeper. She was armed with one 6-pounder after being taken into service on 7 October 1914 and was based at Queenstown. On 12 May 1915 she was sent to look for survivors from the Lusitania. She searched for forty-eight hours but found only bodies and one liferaft. She very nearly revenged this appalling attack when, the following month, she sighted a U-boat some twenty-five miles south of Brow Head and immediately opened fire. 'First shot,' her log noted, 'appeared to take effect when s/m disappeared. Arriving on scene

discovered a large quantity of oil on surface – approx 400 yards by 100 yards. Also found part of cigar and bubbles amongst oil.' However, after the war, when German U-boat records were made available, no U-boat was reported missing on the date or at the place *Scadaun* made her attack.

Shemara

Owned by Earl Fitzwilliam, *Shemara* was a 588-ton steam yacht built in 1899. She was taken into service in September 1914 and armed with one 12-pounder and one 6-pounder. She served until March 1919, first of all in the Shetland Islands area between 1914 and 1915, and for the rest of the war in the Granton area.

Vanadis

Owned by Edward Whitwell, *Vanadis* was a 333-ton steam yacht built in 1880. She was based in the Portland area until she was paid off in January 1918, but by then she had been sold by Whitwell.

Vanessa

Owned by A. Salvin Bowlby, *Vanessa* was a 445-ton steam yacht built in 1899. She was taken into service in October 1914 and armed with two 6-pounders. She served until March 1919, first of all in the Stornoway area, between 1914 and 1915, and then in the Holyhead area.

Venetia

Owned by Harold Swithinbank, *Venetia* was a 568-ton steam yacht built in 1905. She was taken into service in August 1914 and armed with one 12-pounder and one 6-pounder. She served until February 1919, first in the Orkney Islands area, between 1914 and August 1916, and then in the Falmouth area. In 1917 her name was changed to *Venetia II*.

Like *Rosabelle*, she too was unlucky not to be able to claim at least one U-boat victim. From the records she was the only club yacht to be engaged in a surface fight with a submarine.

In July 1916 she sighted the enemy for the first time when a U-boat was spotted dead ahead. She increased speed and opened fire, but the shells fell short and the submarine crash-dived.

Her next sighting was in May 1917 when she dropped depthcharges in an area where a submarine had been seen, but without any visible effect. In July 1917 she received an SOS from a steamer that was being attacked, and on arriving at the scene she opened fire on the U-boat at a range of 7000 yards. The submarine promptly dived and although depthcharges were dropped it escaped.

In September 1917 she was picking up survivors from a torpedoed steamer when a submarine surfaced. She opened fire with both her guns, but instead of diving the submarine returned the fire. The shots fell short but the engagement continued for half an hour before the Uboat decided to submerge. *Venetia II* then depthcharged the area, but the submarine escaped.

Her next sighting of an enemy submarine was in April 1918 when she spotted its periscope. She attacked with her depthcharges, but without any visible effect.

In September 1918 *Venetia II* intercepted an SOS from a steamer while on escort duty to Brest. When she arrived on the scene the submarine was still in sight and she opened fire at short range. The second shot looked like a hit. The submarine then dived while heading in a northnortheasterly direction. *Venetia II* steamed over the spot and dropped her depthcharges, and a large quantity of oil was seen on the water. However, there is no record of her being credited with a 'kill', nor was any German submarine subsequently reported sunk on that date.

Verona

Owned by Hugh Andrews, Verona was a 437-ton steam yacht built in 1890. She was taken into service in November 1914 and served in the Peterhead area in 1914 and 1915, before moving to the Cromarty area. On February 1917 she was sunk by a mine off Portmahomack with the loss of four officers and nineteen men.

Yarta

Owned by the Rt Hon Arnold Morley, Yarta was a 357-ton steam yacht built in 1898. She was taken into service in July 1915 and armed with two 3-pounders. She served until April 1919, at Portsmouth in 1915, the Stornoway area in 1916 and 1917, and in the Yarmouth area in 1918.

Zaida

Owned by the Earl of Roseberry, Zaida was a 350-ton steam yacht built in 1900. She was taken into service in May 1916 and served as tender to HMS Hannibal in the East Indies and Egypt stations. She was sunk by gunfire from U.38 in the Gulf of Alexandretta on 17 August 1916 with the loss of three officers and eighteen men, the remainder of the crew being taken prisoners-of-war.

Zaza

Owned by Sir William Beardmore, Zaza was a 455-ton steam yacht built in 1905. She was taken into service in September 1914 and armed with one 12-pounder and two 6-pounders. She served until March 1919, being based in the Orkney Islands area in 1914 and 1915, and then in the Granton area.