

# “Notes from the Bridge”

Burnham on Crouch Sailing Club Newsletter – November 2020



As soon as we entered National Lockdown, we had to close all club facilities. We fall into leisure and recreation and are not a public place so cannot allow usage for this time. As soon as we can begin another unlock, we will. We hope that you are all keeping safe and well.

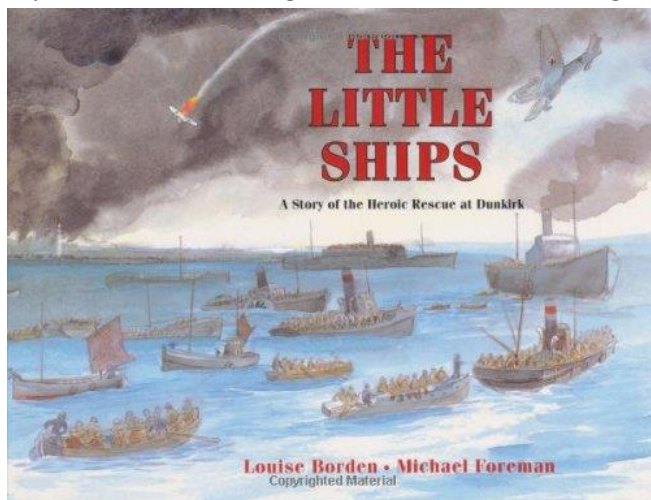
## Membership

All members who are fully paid up this year will be offered a 50% discount on renewal next year. The renewal will be due by 31st March, which will be ratified at the AGM so that it can become a permanent date for renewal. We hope that this goes some way towards thanking you all for your support this year.

## A bit of history

You may have seen the Vanguard restoration story, which involves several of our Club members. The Vanguard was part of the Little Ships evacuation. Over 800 privately owned boats went across the channel, mainly from Ramsgate in convoy, to Dunkirk to evacuate our stranded troops off the beaches. Boats of shallow draft were mobilised and leant by owners and were crewed up mainly by naval ratings with many fishermen going. These boats made countless shuttle runs from the big naval ships to the beaches under heavy fire from the air. The operation is known to have rescued at least 330 000.

If you have children or grandchildren and want to give



them context to this story, a great book to read is The Little Ships by Louise Borden, which tells the story well with really lovely illustrations.

The Vanguard, designed by Norman Dallimore, grandfather of Will Dallimore, built and launched at Priors, was a Burnham fishing boat that took part, with local skipper Albert Grimwade, 66, on board. He was a Burnham oyster fisherman, and he still has family living there. Three boats from Burnham went including the Vanguard, and late BSC member, Colin Cook's father Dick was another local who was part of Operation Dynamo aboard Seasalter. The third boat to go from Burnham was Ma Joie.



Past President Murray Prior was also involved (underage) and went on a boat with two others. They were first sent up to Harwich, then on to Ramsgate, but they missed the convoy. Murray was sent with sandwiches by his Mum to last the three of them three days! He also told the story of the gun – each little ship had a gun, but no instructions. Murray's skipper sent him forward to find out how it worked...all the ammunition went in one go, and the story goes the skipper threw the gun overboard calling it useless!

More details are in Peter Pearson's A Century of Yacht and Boat Builders in the Town of Burnham On Crouch, and further reading about the Little Ships and all they contributed over those intense few days can be found in Dunkirk by A D Divine DSM.

The Vanguard was a wooden shallow draft oyster dredger, and it is thought the Burnham Little Ships saved around 600 of our troops during this operation. Post war she fell into disrepair and ended up rotting away at Canvey. Her return to Burnham was privately funded, and now there is a fundraising campaign to secure her restoration. The local boatbuilding college at Lowestoft will allow its apprentices to work on her, hoping to get her back to her former glory by 2025, the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Little Ships.



Club members Will Dallimore and Tracy Saunders are heavily involved in the project. It will be great to follow the progress and we look forward to updates throughout the project.



You can follow and find out more about the history behind this amazing story at [www.vanguardrestorationfoundation.org](http://www.vanguardrestorationfoundation.org)

**AGM** we are currently investigating how to make this doable. Please keep an eye on future correspondence to know when and how.

**Thank you** to Liz Tolhurst who has been gathering photos and reminiscences for our 90<sup>th</sup> Celebration publication that will be coming out in December. There is time if you have anything more to send it to me by end of November very latest.

**Club work** - obviously since the imposed lockdown, much planned work is now on hold, so we will have to

wait a bit longer to see changes to the pontoon and other maintenance work underway. As always thank you to everyone who is involved in ensuring the club works are done in a safe way during these times.



A reminder of works past, and a taste of what is to come in our 90<sup>th</sup> celebration!

Please remember to send all articles to [commodore@burnhamsc.co.uk](mailto:commodore@burnhamsc.co.uk)