

History of NAVA

By the 1970s Newbridge Boats had taken over from Leisure Craft (Topaz) and Heron Marine (Corribee) as the builder of a series of yachts from 18 to 28 feet long. Newbridge were unusual in that they formed a different owners' association for each class of yacht instead of one owners' association for all of their boats as done by Moody, Westerley, Hurley and many other boat builders. As each new class was launched, a new Owners' Association was formed. In the 1970's the Corribee Owners' Association (COA) and the Virgo Owners' Association (VOA) were formed. No evidence can be found that there was ever an Owners' Association for the Spinner, Topaz, Eclipse or Cracksman classes and NAVA is currently tracing the information about these so that it can be coordinated. Our first Eclipse owner joined in 2015.

In 1980, the Navigator Owners' Association was formed. However one gets a feeling that perhaps, it had become a problem for Newbridge Boats Ltd (the builders) to deal with so many different Owner Associations, as each one was soon asked to accommodate other classes:

Navigator Owners were joined by Venturer owners and became (NAVA);

Corribee Owners were joined by Coromandel Owners and

Virgo Voyager Owners were joined by Pioneer Owners.

However older classes such as the Topaz were still not supported and potential help was divided between the three organisations set up with the help from Newbridge Boats. It was a period when new boats were supported by an active owners' association. When Newbridge Yachts went bankrupt in 1987, trading continued and yachts built until NB Yachts ceased trading in January 1990, when help for the all the owners' associations from the builder stopped.

During the 1990's, the three organisations provided different solutions to the change in position resulting the COA suspending their constitution & rules to allow them to reduce the help to a flexible team of five members and NAVA had an EGM and found sufficient members to carry on into this century.

The COA found it harder and harder to get volunteers to fill vacancies and have been described as 'dormant' for some years by one website.

The Virgo Owners changed their name to the Newbridge Owners' Association in 2012 but this did not provide a solution to a general lack of help and they closed in 2014.

NAVA has had talks with former members of the (dormant?) COA to look at the possibility of the COA merging with NAVA.

For NAVA traditionally concentrating on the Navigator and Venturer yachts, there was much similarity between the two classes. However no account was taken of the similarity between the Navigator and the Corribee / Coromandel classes (depending whether bermudan rig or junk rig was chosen) - However the other Associations did not take into account the similarities between the yachts so very little is known about each of them re their rig, hatch design and runner cross-section to rudder bearings. Now NAVA is sharing information about all classes of Newbridge yachts with our members and expanding its technical library to the other classes.

For all three associations, the story is probably similar – here is NAVA's:-

The Navigator & Venturer Association (NAVA) stems from the Association formed by Newbridge Navigator owners who wanted to share with other owners the pleasures of these small sailing cruisers. Owners of Venturers were invited to join when they came on the market and developed source of information regarding these yachts, their construction and maintenance, faults and foibles. Many yachts were bought as kits and fitted out by their owners.

Some made quite radical alterations to the original design and members are always delighted to share their knowledge and experiences with new owners.

Several members bought Pioneers and Virgo Voyagers and still remained in NAVA. NAVA, through the accumulated experience of its members, since production of new boats ceased has provided a wealth of help and support to other members.

Now that NAVA, is the only active Newbridge owners' association, our information about other Newbridge classes is starting to grow. We now have Coromandel, Eclipse, Virgo Voyager and Pioneer owners who have joined us. They have never owned a Navigator or Venturer and at the 2015 AGM our Constitution & Rules were amended to allow them to be full members. Their knowledge of their boats is being shared. Slowly NAVA is evolving to become a useful organisation for ALL Newbridge boat owners. Much of the old NAVA information is being digitised and placed on-line in the Members' Area. This had allowed an expansion for other classes to be accommodated. A Topaz page was launched in March 2016 – other classes will follow. 'Tips and Tricks' for Virgos and Pioneers was published in 2017.

So, if you have a question about any aspect of owning and sailing a Newbridge yacht there should be someone who can provide an answer - Members find that this is only an email or a telephone call away. The launch of the email discussion groups has seen questions asked and answers given by several owners as well as the technical team - a good support network has been developed over the last 35 years.

April 2017