

## A Little Bit of Ongoing History

The following article by Paulo Maccione of the Italian Nautical Web Magazine, appeared in my Inbox last week and it has some links to this area. While very much a sales brochure, it has some interesting facts A photograph of Katja from the 1930's is included on Page 204 of the Club's History.

## The English vintage motor yacht *Katja* celebrates her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday

*Launched in 1929 from the Brooke shipyard in Lowestoft, after the war she came to the Mediterranean through the French canals. Katja has sailed without interruption ever since, proving herself a wonderful yacht, perfect for family cruising. Recently restored, this fascinating wooden motor yacht (14,70 mt) is looking forward to celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in prime condition, at sea! Currently Katja cruises in the north and central Tyrrhenian Sea.*



### **KATJA, FROM ENGLAND TO THE MEDITERRANEAN**

*Katja* was launched in England on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1929, the year of the Wall Street crash in America and the beginning of the Great Depression that was soon to assail Europe. She survived the destruction of the Second World War and it is claimed that she took part in Operation Dynamo as a Little Ship, (but she is not listed as such on the website of the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships).

### **THE TALE OF KATJA**

*Katja* is a 14.7 metre long motor yacht, designed by H. Parker and built of wood. She was built for Mawdesley Brooke, the owner Brooke shipyard in Lowestoft, was launched in 1929 and was named after one of his daughters. The yard's roots stretch back to 1874 when Brooke Ironworks, specialized in



engines, began activity in Oulton Broad, near Lowestoft. *Katja's* first main engine was a 100 hp, six-cylinder Brooke N° 4059 type 40 F diesel, with a 5 hp Brooke "Dominion" as auxiliary propulsion. In 1931 she was sold to a new owner in Leicester for £ 2,875 and was based for a period in Great Yarmouth. In 1950 she traveled through the French canals down to the Mediterranean, flying the white ensign as a Dunkirk Little Ship. *Katja* welcomed the change from the misty English coasts to the mild climate of the Mediterranean. In 1967 she was given a new main engine, a 145 hp Perkins T6354, and a new 30 hp Mercedes

auxiliary. In the early 1990's she was purchased by a new owner from Rome, who sailed her in the Tyrrhenian from Tuscany's Porto Santo Stefano. Sailing from her new base, *Katja* participated in classic yacht events in Montecarlo, La Spezia, Bocca di Magra and Anzio.

### **REFITS AND AWARDS**

In recent years *Katja* has undergone several refits in Tuscany and in 2003 the Mileo yard, founded by Constabile Mileo in 1951 and now run by the Mileo brothers Pompeo, Vincenzo and Domenico, began a major refit. The 25 mm pitch pine planking below the waterline was replaced, with planks attached to oak frames with steel screws. The keelson was re-built and the hull was caulked in the traditional manner with calico, then faired and painted. The keel and stem, both of oak, are original. A new main engine (Perkins 240 hp) combined with a four-bladed propeller now gives *Katja* a top speed of 12 knots. Other major jobs included rebuilding the teak deck incorporating a layer of plywood, redoing the hydraulic and electrical systems and fuel lines, and replacing the wheel with a new hydraulic control. Remote steering is also set up, allowing *Katja* to be run from on deck while underway. The auxiliary motor was upgraded to an 80 hp Perkins, with a folding propeller to port, giving her a respectable six knots. All this care lavished on *Katja* couldn't pass unnoticed, and during the 1992 Monaco Classic Week she was awarded 156 out of 210 possible points, putting her at the top of the ASDEC classification. The 'Associazione Scafi d'Epoca e Classici' has been protecting and disseminating the culture of classic and vintage yachting since 1987.



### A TERRACE ON THE SEA

"Her topsides have sleek and very elegant lines - a gentle joining of the deckhouses to their pavilions, a smooth transition between deck levels, with the aft deckhouse windows that follow the sinuous curve of the sheer, the handrails that gradually run lower as they approach the bow and the side deck that curves towards the coach roof. It all denotes the execution of an excellent design by a renowned boatyard." This



quote from the early 1990's by Piero Maria Gibellini, one of the world's authorities on motor yachts and auxiliaries, refers to *Katja*. Her present owner, after almost thirty years of cruising *Katja*, cannot but emphasize how well laid out she is, with many separate spaces to enjoy even when there are many aboard. The foredeck is a terrace over the sea, one of her strongpoints. It gives privacy when moored stern to, and there's always fresh air even on the hottest days. A sturdy awning covers the foredeck, with its two chaise longues (originally

from the ocean liner *Conte Biancamano*), table and benches for up to ten guests. Two sun pads are laid above the aft coach roof and the wheelhouse. A true gangway is mounted to starboard, for ease of embarking and disembarking.

### INTERIORS AND THE BAGLIETTO TENDER

*Katja's* refined interiors make her a welcoming and comfortable yacht. The fine finishings, from the wainscoting to the cabin cabinetry, plus the paintings and vintage gouaches in the owner's cabin, all combine to remind you of the Orient Express and send you back in time. She has seven berths: two in the owner's cabin forward, two in the guest cabin, and three from the seating in the main cabin – one twin and one single berth. *Katja's* vintage launch is a work of art. Built of wood in 1934 by the Baglietto yard in Varazze, she still has her original oars and oarlocks.

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