

Melita 1934



Overview.

Melita has a great provenance and a wonderful racing track record which seems to have tailed off under my ownership! She is a great project for a classic wooden boat enthusiast, that would require **a moderate degree of investment to give her podium potential in European and World championships.**

Alternatively, and subject to some cosmetic uplift, she is ready to participate on a more Corinthian level with other sixes that don't have quite the big wallet to spend, either in

classic yacht Mediterranean events, 2024 Olympic Games centenary regatta, William Fife regattas, Cowes Classics, BCYCs etc., or to participate in club racing under IRC or CIM.

Provenance

Melita is a William Fife 6 metre commissioned by Mr Ronald Teacher which he hoped would be selected for the British-American Cup team challenge of 1934. **Melita was built in 1934 at the William Fife & Son yard at Fairlie as 'build number' 804 and was given sail number K42.**

Quote from an article on Clyde yachting by John Henderson, kindly shared with me by Tim Street:

"In 1934, I was able, thanks to the kindness of Ronald Teacher, to visit, with him, the yard of Fife at Fairlie to watch his six Melita being built. The craftsmanship, even to the smallest detail, was amazing and I doubt if any other yard has come up to this high standard, with the possible exception of Henry B Nevins of City Island, New York".

Melita did well in the trials and was selected for the BAC team along with Saskia II, Kyla and Vorsa.

The races were held off Oyster Bay in Long Island Sound in September that year, but despite the intensive preparations by the British team, they were soundly beaten, and the Americans retained the British-American Cup.

Under the ownership of Ronald Teacher and as an active member of the Royal Northern and Clyde Yacht Club in Rhu, **Melita was one of the most successful boats in the Six Metre class on the Clyde in the 1930s and usually topped the prize-winners list.** See the old clipping below.

THE CLYDE FORTNIGHT

Fuky Conditions: Melita Wins Main Cup: Another Victory for Fulmar

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.

HUNTER'S QUAY, Monday.

We had again an easterly breeze for the racing at this second day of the Royal Clyde Yacht Club's regatta at Hunter's Quay to-day. It was lighter than that of Saturday, yet of nice sailing strength in the morning, but, true to its reputation on the Clyde, it fell away in the afternoon, became very uncertain, and at one period the yachts were drifting in a calm.

In these fuky conditions the competitors met with varying fortunes, and in some of the classes the margin between the yachts at the finish were small.

The large auxiliary cruisers opened the proceedings and looked very handsome and impressive in their full light-weather canvas. Vadura, the scratch boat, did well on the opening reach, but then the wind lulled and spoiled her chance of wiping out the handicaps she was giving.

SPECTACULAR FINISH.

The finish was a spectacular one, the four yachts coming to the line in the closest formation. Vadura was first across with the others at her heels, and on corrected timings Dodo was winner and Fiona second. The race was stopped on the round.

In the handicap for the yachts between 20 and 50 tons the 12-metre Vanity scored another easy win from Elidh, that great sailor. Mr John H. Downes was at the helm of Fulmar in the Clyde 8-metre class, and that his genius in handling a yacht has not been blunted by the years was well demonstrated, Fulmar winning by over six minutes; Froys, which was again steered by Mr John G. Stephen, was second; Amita, third, and Heatia, fourth.

Valora was a good winner in the under 20 tons handicap, the other flags going to Torridon and Medea.

MELITA'S SUCCESS.

In the 6-metre class there were numerous changes in the course of the race. Mr Teacher's "crack," Melita, once more proved herself an outstanding boat in moderate and light winds. She secured the lead on the first turn to windward, and in the end won by over four minutes. Kyla was second and Saskia third, so that three of the new boats filled the leading places. The fourth prize was taken by Piccolo.

Melita's win to-day and her second on Saturday enabled her to capture the Main Cup. This trophy is competed for on points by the 6-metres at the two regattas of the Royal Clyde Yacht Club at the "Fortnight." Melita had a total of 19½ points, and Piccolo was runner-up with 13 points, and

the leading yachts on the closing circuit, in which Valora, which was steered by Mrs Simpson, added to her advantage, and Medea closed in somewhat on Torridon.

LEE BERTH PROFITABLE.

Vorsa, in the 6-metre class, was another of the yachts which found the lee berth a profitable one at the start. Melita, which was in the windward position, was the first to cut the line, but Vorsa reached into leading place and rounded the Gantocks mark about 20sec. ahead of Volga, the order of the others being Alana, Piccolo, Saskia, Melita, Fintra, Kyla, Susette, and Maida, all very close. In the tacking up channel in a light and fuky wind Melita took the lead and showed the way round the mark and on the run back to Hunter's Quay, when the first round was timed:—

	H. M. A.
Melita	2 37 43
Piccolo	2 46 11
Saskia	2 46 30
Kyla	2 45 56
Fintra	2 46 12
Vorsa	2 47 7
Volga	2 53 3
Maida	2 58 37
Susette	3 14 42

Alana had given up.

It continued to be very light and fuky in the second round. Melita held on to her lead, but the variable air brought changes in the other positions, Kyla coming home second, and Saskia beating Piccolo for third place by a considerable margin.

SANDA ABSENT.

Sanda was an absentee in the Scottish Islands Class. Led by Westra, the class was close together at the Gantocks mark, and Bernera cut out Iona, which had been in second place. This was the order still at the finish of the round of the race, and Westra won by 25sec. after a good tussle with Bernera, which took second. Iona had the third prize, while Cara was the only unplaced boat to finish.

The handicap for the Two (Old) Esters had only one boat with the likelihood of winning and this was Selene, which worked out a long lead at an early stage. The second prize also went to a 6-metre in Sheena, the old Coila III., while Sunbeam finished last of the fleet for third prize.

GARELOCH CLASS.

Only four starters were forward in the Gareloch Class, and they had the good luck of the cruisers in being stopped on the

It is thought that Melita was 'evacuated' to the south of Ireland during the war and then was purchased in 1945 or 1947 by George 'Van' Baird, was kept at the Royal Ulster Yacht Club at Bangor and continued to collect the silverware.

Melita was subsequently bought in 1951 by Noel Evan-Burns who sailed out of Donaghadee, Northern Ireland and subsequently by a Colonel Grove-Raines. At some point around this period a cabin top and engine were fitted, like many other Sixes. Folklore has it that Melita after sailing across the Irish Sea and whilst passing through the Crinan Canal, the chain drive from the engine's starting handle to the crank became inoperable. It is alleged that one of the crew solved the problem by pinching the chain off the lock-keepers bicycle enabling Melita to make a speedy exit from the lock!

Melita was purchased by Peter Fairley in 1958/59 and resumed racing again at the Royal Northern and Clyde in Rhu Scotland then sold to Colin Craig also of Rhu and appeared in the Clyde International Regatta in 1972.

She was subsequently sold by a Peter Strenger in 1978 to Sweden to a new owner Kent Persson, who spent a considerable effort to get her back into racing shape and trim. No longer K42, but S93, Melita won the Nordic Championships in 1985 and 1989, and came second in 1986-losing by just 1 point; she was second in the 1988 Europeans in Falmouth, and was in fifth place at the Worlds in Sandhamn in 1995 under Kent's ownership.

Melita was then sold to Stockholm based Jan Wiehager who successfully competed in the 2002 European championships in Rungsted Denmark coming 13th, and also participated in many local races and regattas in and around Stockholm.

Current ownership

The current owner, David Roberts bought Melita in Stockholm in 2004 and took part in local club racing in and around Stockholm, as well as the 2005 World Championships in Sandhamn where Melita came 13th out of 28 classics, now reverting to sail number GBR42. During the winter of 2006, Melita had a major refit, with the work undertaken in Sweden by the yard of Thomas Larsson and Jonas Lorensen, before returning to the UK after an absence of more than thirty years to participate in the 2007 WC at Cowes where she came 14th in the classics division.

Melita has continued to be an active participant in the classic UK fleet and has sailed in numerous championships over recent years in the UK and France, including the 2008 European championships in La Trinite, Cowes Classics week, several Panerai Regattas, and British Classics week in Cowes, recent BCYC Regattas as well as various National Championships. In 2022 Melita did the BCYC Regatta, and also participated in the Fife Regatta at the Royal Yacht Squadron open only to William Fife built and designed yachts.

Melita was weighed and remeasured ahead of the 2023 WC but was unable to participate due to the incapacity of the owner.

Inventory includes

- Benn's aluminium mast and boom
- Tactics Wireless set for wind, compass, depth, boat speed etc
- Carbon spinnaker pole x 2
- Roller headfoil
- Adjustable genoa cars
- Lewmar self-tail winches for main sheet, jib/spinnaker sheets and running back stays
- Mast table with winches below deck for all halliards, main outhaul, pole lift and downhaul
- Fenders and warps
- Anchor and chain as per class rule
- Jib sheets, spinnaker sheets, lightweight spinnaker sheets etc
- Winter cover, boom cover, mainsail cover, rear hatch cover
- Trailer with storage pods.

Recent renewals

- New backstay 2023
- New running backstays 2022
- New spinnaker halliard
- New main halliard
- New jib halliard
- New mainsail 2021 (One Sails Hamble)

Sail inventory

- Mainsails x 3. 1 North Dacron gc; 1 heavy Beilken gc; 1x One Sails vgc
- Jibs. No. 1 One Sails Dacron vgc; Heavy No.1 Beilken gc; No.2 North 3DL gc

- Spinnakers x 4. 1 North white high cut gc; 1 Beilken red full cut vgc; 1 Doyle green old; 1 red with white trimmings; 1 Sobstadt red, blue gold, old but gc
- Several older North/Sobstadt mainsails and jibs.

Ratings certificates

- BISMA (2023, valid 4 years)
- IRC TCC 0.924 (2009)
- CIM rating 2022

Present condition

- Good condition overall. Considerable care has been taken to maintain upkeep and appearance by the current owner of the last 19 years
- Melita would benefit from strengthening the area around the mast step, and port-side beam shelf in order to remain competitive with top performing classics in the class, many of whom have been strengthened in this area. Upwind performance might also be enhanced with a different mast section-the current one considered extremely stiff.
- The deck was thoroughly rubbed down and varnished (10+ coats) in 2022. Teak deck and mahogany in very good condition
- The hull is epoxy sheathed. Topsides are in good condition, but some cosmetic improvements could quickly be made by cleaning and polishing where for example some varnish has run.
- Winches would benefit a good servicing.

The trailer is not presently roadworthy but enables convenient storage and is easy to manoeuvre around a boatyard. Tyres are all inflated and all bearings checked or replaced 2021/22

A potential winter project, for the new owner to prepare for the upcoming season including European championships in Porquerolles France, Olympic Centenary/Mediterranean/Fife regatta, Challenge Lemanique, club racing etc. Melita has the potential to be a serious contender given its excellent provenance, William Fife design and build, and proven past racing track record.

Price: £25,000

Please contact David Roberts by email to dwro@btinternet.com if you have any questions or would like to arrange an inspection.

I have a full copy set of the original drawings from Fairlie Restorations—examples below.





