The Norwegian Steam:

The History of Norwegian Sailors in the America's Cup

Acknowledgements:

Eivind Astrup
Jan-Erik Sverre
Hans Ole Dalland
Turid Teigland
Jarle Petterson
Bill Lynn
John Rousmaniere
Venelaget for jåttseglarane frå Tysnes.
Skipsrevyen
Seilmagasinet
Herreshoff Marine Museum
New York Yacht-Club
Bergens Sjøfartsmuseum

Unsung Heroes in the History of the America's Cup

The glory days of the America's Cup were made possible in part by professional crews composed mostly of workingmen whose skills as sailors were honed in the rough waters of the North Atlantic and the North Sea. Seamen from Maine and Scandinavia crewed on the splendid yachts that kept the Cup in American hands continuously from 1851 to 1983. As part of this history, teams of Norwegian sailors, known as "the Norwegian Steam"-- helped the New York Yacht Club secure victory for many years.

In this compendium we have put together some interesting articles of the Norwegian Steam, what it was, why it was so successful, and why we should remember those glory days. In them the reader will find facts and stories that are little known, together with the others that sailors are more familiar with.

Did you know that today's Royal Norwegian Yacht was once a luxury tender in the America's Cup? Did you know that although Sir Thomas Lipton challenged the Americans five times and never won, he was hailed sometimes as an American hero because he started his successful business career in the US?

In this compendium you will know why. You will also get some of the dramatic history of the Cup and will learn even about the loss of life in the extreme competition between nations. It was rough, it was extreme, and of course "there was no second" as someone had to tell Queen Victoria in 1851, when an upstart schooner named America sailed past the Royal Yacht to win the 100 Pound Cup in a race around England's Isle of Wight. It was also a highly professional affair, a form of seamanship and sportsmanship practiced by the world's best sailors in the most prestigious --and popular-- competition at the time.

We have put together an exhibit that comprises objects from those days, film material, and bits of information that will help the visitor to understand a portion of the legacy of the America's Cup. When in 2019, the NYYC celebrates its 175th Anniversary, the America's Cup and the contributions of these brave sailors will be a part of the story. This exhibit salutes the past and present achievements of racing sailors and celebrates present and future contributions to the sport.

May we all lovers of yachting continue to move forward with swelling sails.

Juan E. Corradi
Chair Emeritus,
Seamanship Committee
of the New York Yacht Club.

The Norwegian Steam

BY SIGBJØRN LARSEN

Why did the English never win the America's Cup?
They were called "jåttseglarane" (the yacht sailors) back home in Tysnes, Norway, and "Norwegian Steam" in America. Norwegian professional sailors ensured countless regatta victories for very rich Americans. At one point, Tysnes had 250 of its best sailors serving as crewmembers aboard the America's Cup racing yachts.

Renewed US interest
Juan Corradi, a member of the New York Yacht Club, the Cruising Club of America, the North American Station of the Royal Scandinavian Yacht Clubs and Finland's NJK, has taken it upon himself to create exhibitions and raise awareness of "jåttseglarane" in the US. Corradi, at 74, is himself an accomplished sailor. He has sailed across the Atlantic several times, won several international regattas, is Chairman Emeritus of the Seamanship Committee at the NYYC, and has served in several positions at other sailing clubs on the East Coast. He's arranging a seminar and exhibition from June 21st, at the Herreshoff Marine Museum in Bristol, Rhode Island, one of its subjects being "The Norwegian Steam - 50 years with Norwegian Sailors on America's J-boats". The seminar covers the design and construction of J-boats from 1900-1937, with a separate part concerning staffing and crew organisation, as well as on the handling of sails on board.

"That's my father", Hans Ole Dalland explains. His father was one of the sailors working as a yacht sailor in the US. Photo: Sigbjørn Larsen.

England vs America
Well-to-do Englishmen and Americans competed against one another in the world's most prestigious regatta, the America's Cup, for over 50 years between 1887 and 1937. Harold Vanderbilt and Thomas Lipton were two of the legendary owners in the coveted "J-class", featuring racing yachts of over 120 feet. This includes boats like the Resolute, the Rainbow, the Yankee and the Ranger. The English never won the grand silver trophy first presented by Queen Victoria – a constant source of irritation and despair. When Queen Victoria attended one of the regattas, she expectantly asked who had finished second. The answer came swiftly: "There is no second place!"

A secret weapon!
The Americans had a secret weapon: the yacht sailors from Tysnes! John Johnsen, Kjell Arthur Lunde, Turid Teigland and Hans Ole Dalland from Tysnes are all descendants of the speedy sailors. "That's my father", Hans Ole Dalland explains, pointing at one of the famous crew photos from the regatta. He was on the winning team at the America's Cup, twice. Being part of a yacht crew was a fulltime job, and the sailors from Tysnes were particularly sought-after.

Salt water veins
People from Tysnes had seawater running through their veins. First they were rowers, then they sailed on small boats along the coast, and then they signed on for transatlantic ships going to the US. One of the people who assisted in the hiring of Norwegians for the America's Cup was John G. Normann from Brooklyn. He had a shop on Columbia Street, selling tobacco, watches and canned goods, as well as tickets for trains and steamboats. The shop had a pleasant atmosphere, and sailors would often stop by for a smoke on their days off. He often helped sailors find work, and many were hired by racing yachts. Normann was helped by John Lund, who later became a major in the U.S. Army, and Sigurd J. Arnesen, who became an editor at the Norwegian-American newspaper Nordisk Tidende.

Engjel Vaage
Engjel Vaage from Tysnes was one of the yacht captains who hired several Tysnes sailors. He called himself John Christensen in the US, but went by the name "Coconut John", since he was always telling his crew to use their brains. After all, those weren't coconuts

sitting on top of their shoulders. He moved back to Tysnes after his US sailing career ended. His boathouse has become a floating cultural heritage site, right in the middle of the Tysnes harbour. Enthusiasts, several of them descendants of the sailors, have turned it into a "Norwegian Steam" exhibition, with boat models, uniforms, scrimshaw, photos and diaries, among other things.

Pulling the strings

Juan Corradi, an American with both Argentinian and Italian blood running through his veins, recently visited Norway, hoping to secure the loan of some of the available objects for his planned Herreshoff Marine Museum and New York exhibitions. Jan-Erik Sverre and Hans Ole Dalland have been pulling strings in order to gather key individuals in Tysnes. Many of the Tysnes yacht sailors spent years in the US, even though they still had families back home. "I first met my father when I was nine", says John Johnsen, "and I left home a year after his return." That's just how things were back then. Many Norwegian-Americans sent money back home, helping to fund the youth centre in Tysnes. "It was important for them that the youth centre got built", Johnsen says.

The boat builders

The Herreshoff Shipyard on Rhode Island designed and built three J-boats: The Weetamao and the Enterprise in 1930, and the Rainbow in 1934. The Enterprise (1930) and the Rainbow (1934) won the America's Cup, both by using mostly Norwegian crewmembers, a majority of them from Tysnes!

The regattas

As part of its 175th anniversary, the New York Yacht Club is planning a regatta outside Newport, Rhode Island, which used to be where the J-boat races were held from 1930-1937. After first acquiring the America's Cup in 1851, the Americans then hosted the competition between Sandy Hook and Long Island, outside New York City, right until 1920. The cup remained in US hands until 1987, when the Australian Alan Bond finally won it with the Kookaburra III, snatching it from 44th Street and bringing it back with him down under.

The America's Cup boat which became a Norwegian Royal Yacht!

The Englishman Sir Thomas Sophwith was one of the challengers in the premier single mast yacht race – the legendary "J-class" in the world's most coveted regatta: The America's Cup. With his yacht, the Endeavour II, he challenged for victory in 1937, bringing his new leisure yacht, the Philante, as an accommodation vessel. It was designed by the famous designer and ship builder Charles Nicholson. After the war, the Philante was sold to Norway, as a gift from the people to King Haakon VII. Today the vessel is known as the Royal Yacht Norge. By strange coincidence, it was built and launched the same year that King Harald V and Queen Sonja were born, in 1937. King Haakon VII (then Prince Carl of Denmark) had been promised a kingdom and a royal ship if he agreed to become King of Norway. He'd been given a kingdom, but the royal ship still remained. After the war, it was time to make good on their promise. As a sign of gratitude for His

Image 1: Harold Vanderbilt with his legendary Norwegian crew, "jåttseglarane" from Tysnes. Archive photos from Jåttseglarlaget in Tysnes.

Majesty's support for his country during the war, a total of 1.5 million Norwegian Crowns were collected from the Norwegian people. Representatives could

then travel to England and acquire a royal ship. They chose the Philante, which was up for sale following its service in the war. Today the vessel is moored right outside Oslo, bearing the name Norge (Norway), and greeting visitors on their approach to the Norwegian capital.

Hoping for the Royal Yacht to Visit

The American sailing community is hoping to secure the participation of the replica of Sir Thomas Sopwith's Endeavour II, called Hanuman. And it would be quite a spectacle if the Norwegian Royal Family agreed to send its old support vessel, the former Philante, along with it! Video clips exist of the two boats together in the America's Cup at Newport in 1937, where the Philante acted as a floating home for Sopwith and his crew.

Image 3: John Johnsen, Kjell Arthur Lunde, Turid Teigland, Hans Ole Dalland, Juan Corradi, Jan-Erik Sverre, Olav Kalgraf and Jarle Petterson outside Engjel Våge's boathouse in Tysnes, where the exhibition is located. Photo: Sigbjørn Larsen.

Norwegian Steam boosted American sailboats.

BY KJELL MAGNUS ØKLAND

They didn't own expensive regatta boats, nor were they members of any yacht clubs. Still, Norwegians have contributed so much to the development of American yachting that they've made their mark both in the history of the America's Cup, and in the English maritime vernacular.

It seems clear that the story behind the term Norwegian Steam, and the role played by Norwegians in the America's Cup, still remain somewhat of a mystery, both in Norway and in the US. This article aims to clarify how Norwegians made their mark on American yachting.

America's Cup

In theory, the America's Cup is a friendly race between two boats from yacht clubs based in different countries. In reality, it's always been a dead serious war of technology, with both personal and national honour on the line, in addition to substantial economic benefits for the winners. America's Cup remains the most coveted prize in yachting, and is the world's oldest sports trophy. During the era of Norwegian influence, there was no doubt that the America's Cup stood out as the biggest prize in world sports.

The cup was established by Queen Victoria of England in 1851, under the name One Hundred Guineas Cup. An American boat, aptly named "America", competed against fifteen English boats, winning the race around the Isle of Wight. The Americans won the trophy, and eventually it was handed over to the New York Yacht Club (NYYC) and renamed America's Cup. NYYC established a set of rules for how the 68.58 cm, 3.8 kilo bottomless silver ewer could be won.
In order to compete for the cup, a challenge had to be presented from a yacht club from a different country than the previous winner. Eventually they decided on a format were the competition became a duel between two boats.

Until 1920, they sailed routes between Sandy Hook and Long Island in the New York Harbour. From 1920 onwards, the courses went from areas outside Sandy Hook to Long Island in New York Harbour, before the whole competition was moved to Newport in Rhode Island. The courses were 30 nautical miles long, either as what we today call a sausage course, or triangular with 10-mile legs.

Between 1871 and 1887, the Americans were challenged frequently by both English and Canadian syndicates. In other words, the America's Cup was a well-established competition and, without a doubt, the world's most coveted sports trophy once the first Norwegians joined in the early 1890s.

Importance of the crew

From the 1800s right up to World War II, a number of Norwegians served as crew members or officers on American racing yachts. The America's Cup challenges stand out, of course, but it's worth pointing out the countless other regattas featuring boats of varying sizes where Norwegians also served as professional sailors.

The Norwegians were skilful, and quickly became recognised as highly proficient crew members. Their discipline and work ethic ensured that they were much sought after, and it certainly helped that they usually had experience from a variety of different ships and boats, many from working with boats since early childhood, often as fishermen.

Norwegian Steam

In American yachting, these qualities gave rise to the term The Norwegian Steam, which is still well known in parts of the US. The term is a child of its time, reflecting the speed granted by steam power. Like steam engines, the Norwegians were known for their reliable persistence, and boats with Norwegian crews were known for being able to maintain the same speed as steam powered vessels, if not faster.

The term Norwegian Steam also alludes to the fact that Norwegian sailors relied on pure muscle power, without using machines or mechanical tools. The term still exists as part of English maritime vernacular, but the original meaning is lost.

Today the term simply means using manual force. For example, you might hear someone say that "you have to use Norwegian Steam to hoist the anchor!"

Perceived as Scandinavians

Another well-known fact concerning the Norwegian Steam phenomenon is that Norwegian sailors were mostly regarded simply as Scandinavians, rather than

specifically Norwegian. The literature on America's Cup seldom elaborates on crew specifics, and if it has any information at all, it's usually just a sentence about the crew being Scandinavian.

The term Scandinavian was confusing to Americans. While it's true that racing yacht crews were almost never one hundred percent Norwegian, the Swedes and Danes rarely accounted for more than a small fraction of the total numbers. The use of the term Scandinavian instead of Norwegian can probably be explained by the general lack of knowledge of European geography among many Americans.

Sailors often appropriated English terms, like yachting business, which in Norwegian became "jåttabransjen". Yacht and "jått", as well as the two Norwegian ship types "jakt" and "jekt", are all terms derived from the Dutch word "jachten/jaghten". The appropriation of the word "jått" is yet another example of how easily words wander between languages in various ports of call.

The Yankee experiment

Around the turn of the century, it became somewhat of a sore point that the US was unable to provide enough quality sailors of its own to crew American yachts. Since America's Cup was supposed to be a competition between yachting clubs representing different nations, it was suggested on several occasions that all US America's Cup boats should have Yankee crews led by a true Yankee. The designation Yankee refers to people from New England, which is where the term originated.

As a result of this, American businessmen experimented with recruiting crew members among sailors and fishermen from Deer Island and other locations on the Maine coast. Though these were highly competent in familiar surroundings, they lacked the training and discipline required for yacht racing. They also lacked the trademark Norwegian determination and enthusiasm.

Following this experiment, The Norwegian Steam reigned supreme right up until the Second World War.

The Norwegian background

So, what were the historical preconditions that made Norwegians such a popular choice as crew members on America's Cup boats? What was happening in Norway that made it possible for these sailors to train and adapt to careers in the US?

A simple answer to this is the exceptionally long Norwegian coastline, which at that time more or less made the ocean a national highway. In order to get around, you had to be able to row and sail. A boy growing up in the old inland farm communities was not considered a man until he went through confirmation and was ready to sign on.

Learning by doing

Before all this, young boys growing up near the ocean gained experience through being around sustenance fishing, herring fisheries and other coastal activities. The ocean was the main highway, and therefore the most important male arena. Youngsters had to master the ocean as soon as possible, and they learned through observation, imitation and hands-on experience. It was learning by doing. Internalising the very concepts of boats and seamanship was vital for the cultural education process.

Boys learned to sail by accompanying their fathers out to sea, gradually being given more responsibility. As put by an old fisherman: "Sailing wasn't something we learned, it was something we knew!"

In other words, making good sailors out of boys was embedded into local tradition. Keeping in mind the concept of Norwegian Steam, one might argue that Norwegian fishermen were at the very top of their class in terms of seamanship. And in the end, the newly confirmed boys stand ready to serve on larger ships.

Across the oceans

Norwegian shipping towards the late 1800s was entirely dependent on sails. As late as 1900, two out of three Norwegian vessels used sails. Sailors were still in high demand. Many signed on and received invaluable experience on sailing vessels before motorised shipping slowly began to take over. Engines required significant investment, and many of the older captains and ship-owners remained reluctant to abandoning sails. For many young men, there were only two realistic options if you couldn't find work at home. Either you signed on for a ship in the merchant navy, or you emigrated to America – and sometimes you did both. People signed on in Norway, and signed off when the

ship reached the US. So, where in Norway did Norwegian Steam originate from?

The answer is complex, and changes depending on which time period you choose to focus on. The number of sailors from various locations is closely connected with the local rate of emigration. There were also local variations in terms of opportunities for training and experience, and the kind of work available to a young sailor, in addition to how common the idea of emigration became.
Some areas along the western and southern coast stand out, especially Horten, Arendal, Egersund, Stavanger, Karmøy, Bømlo, Bergen and Tysnes. Tysnes in particular, but we'll get back to that. Most of the people who left were young men, under the age of 30.

These historical factors have therefore contributed to the fact that there were many Norwegian sailors in the US with appropriate skills, at a very appropriate time, right in the hay-day of the America's Cup, with a growing demand for skilled crew members. The inherent expertise and seamanship skills of the Norwegians were suddenly in demand within a completely new and modern context. Then it was all about getting hired by the right boats.

Recruitment and hiring
How did they get hired by a racing yacht? Knowing the details of how hundreds of sailors were hired over a period of 50 years is difficult, of course, but there are some common denominators.

The owners of a Cup-defender boat were organised in syndicates. The people behind the syndicate were usually quite wealthy, like J.P. Morgan and C. Oliver Iselin. They often had a couple of other fully staffed boats as well, and chose the best suited skipper, or sailing master, from among them. The skippers were full-time sailors, and handsomely paid. It was in a skipper's best self-interest to have competent crew members, since it increased their chances of doing well and earning bonuses.

Crew recruitment usually took place during spring, from February to April. Boats were usually launched in April or May, with sailing season lasting until late October.

The skipper had the final say regarding crew selection, and they were on the lookout for the very best human resources available. For instance, they were very strict when it came to alcohol consumption. Christen Christensen, one of the most successful Norwegian skippers, said this about why he always hired Scandinavian crews: "It wasn't the result of any particular guideline. It was just a question of hiring the best people we could find on the American Atlantic coastline."

The skipper had to be sure that the people he picked had the right experience and discipline. In order to find them, you needed a finely tuned ability to judge both skills and character. That's one of the reasons skippers often used people around them to aid their search. Maybe one of the mates had a better network of possible candidates, or perhaps they knew someone on land who had valuable connections.

Crew agents
One such man was John G. Normann from Brooklyn. In 1888, he established a small business on Colombia Street in Brooklyn, where he sold tobacco, watches, canned goods, train and steamboat tickets, as well as various other goods. He wasn't that concerned with wealth, and his shop had a serene and harmonious atmosphere, much to the delight of his customers, many of which were sailors. If they were feeling lonely, they could just light their pipes and head over to Normann's, where they were likely to meet fellow sailors with whom they could share great tales of the high seas.

John Normann was always a good pal, always interested in people and their stories. If they needed goods, he was there to provide, and if they needed work, he would help them find it on one of the ships in the harbour. Normann was on a first-name basis with everyone, and knew everything about their careers, history and skills, as well as most of their vices and virtues.

He was especially good at finding competent sailors for racing yachts. He had help from John Lund, who later became a major in the U.S. Army, and Sigurd Arnesen, who later became a publisher at the Norwegian-American newspaper Nordisk Tidende. They were both former sailors, and knew sailors like a preacher knows his prayers. If someone was in urgent need of a lone seaman or an entire crew, they could get

in touch with Normann, knowing he would be able to pick the right people. As mentioned earlier, the America's Cup syndicates left skippers in charge of crew recruitment. Normann provided a valuable service for skippers looking to hire.

In 1901, it was Normann who hired the Columbia crew; 34 Norwegians, two Swedes, one Dane, and one German. The hiring process wasn't always that organised, though. Chance encounters at the harbour or in a pub could easily result in newly arrived Norwegians getting a chance to test their mettle in the races. But once you were part of a crew, you stayed loyal. Crews often stuck with their skippers for several years, changing boats in the process. Work on these boats was also desirable, due to fair pay and reasonable hours, compared to other opportunities at sea, but maybe mostly because the racing itself was quite thrilling.

Norwegian NYYC-Commodore

Another explanation for the large number of Norwegians on the US America's Cup boats is Niels Olsen. He came to the US from Norway in 1886, as chief mate on the schooner Fleetwing, which participated in the first ever ocean regatta across the Atlantic. He was then hired as skipper on the racing yacht Colombia, quickly earning a reputation as one of the best sailing masters in America. He was eventually appointed Commodore at the New York Yacht Club, and he probably played a significant role in boosting the reputation of Norwegian sailors in general.

Sailing Master

The crew size of a Cup-defender boat varied, depending on ship size and which time period you choose to focus on. But some things remained the same throughout the Norwegian Steam era. Every boat had a skipper, of course, or a sailing master, as it was often called. Then there were two or three officers, a boatswain, a couple of quartermasters and a few stewards. The crew usually lived on board, and if they didn't, they most likely had a fully staffed accommodation vessel following them. Accommodation ships often doubled as tugboats, and sometimes carried spare sets of sails.

Afterguard

During races, there was usually an afterguard on board. It consisted of 3-5 individuals, often people from the syndicate, ship builders, sailmakers or others with considerable sailing experience. The afterguard shared responsibility for certain tasks, like tactics, strategy, sail trimming, steering and navigation.

When the afterguard was active, the officers acted as advisors and administrators. The skipper was an important cog in this machinery, of course. Commands were given in English, but when an afterguard didn't perform as well as one might expect, the crew might choose to berate them in their native language. An example of discontent in the crew can be found in the diary of one sailor: "But, stupid as they are, they let it pass us once again, and what use is it to work hard towards victory when they just give it all away."

Life on board

What did the crew do aboard the boats? When changing sails or performing other manoeuvres, every man had his own post and his own set of assigned tasks. To ensure speed and precision, they did plenty of training, often using a stopwatch to measure progress. Sailors who were on deck during the race, had to lie down in order to minimise wind resistance. Some were stationed below and tasked with folding and stowing used sails, ensuring that they were ready for the next change, as well as feeding new sails to those working on deck. From 1903, and the yacht Reliance, there were always people stationed below deck to handle winches.

A day at the regatta

A day of regatta racing on a yacht could go something like this: After breakfast, the decks were cleaned, and the cordage checked. The main sail was lowered and rolled onto the boom and covered every night. The cover was removed in the morning, and if it had rained, the sail was partially raised to let it dry. The boat was cleaned and tugged from the harbour at around 9 o'clock.

Well outside the harbour, sails were raised. About 20 to 30 men were needed to raise the main sails, and such a sail could easily weigh a tonne. Then they sailed around and lined up at the starting point. The race usually started between 10 and 11 o'clock. The crew brought packed food, usually consisting of sandwiches and liquids. During the race they had to eat in shifts in order to ensure that they always had enough crew available for manoeuvring.

The regatta usually ended around 3 or 4 o'clock. Sails were lowered and stowed, and the tugboat brought the yacht back to the harbour. When everything was neatly squared away, it was time to prepare dinner.

The evenings were often spent playing cards, since they were rarely given shore leave. This was the work they did for their wages, which were paid once a month. Every crew member had a base salary, but was paid extra for each day of racing, and if they won, they could expect a nice bonus!

Norwegian crews bring American honour

BY KJELL MAGNUS ØKLAND

The eight previous America's Cup competitions had given the "Auld Mug" significant prestige. Once the Royal Yacht Squadron submitted its challenge to the New York Yacht Club, America's Cup was already the world's largest sports trophy. The challenger was a boat named Valkyrie II, owned by the Englishman Lord Dunraven.

Four fresh American built vessels

The US constructed four new boats; the Jubilee, the Pilgrim, the Colonia and the Vigilant. In order to pick the best one, three try-out races were arranged at the start of September. The Colonia won the first one, with the American Henry Haff at its helm. The Vigilant trailed them by a mere six seconds, under the guidance of helmsman, skipper and sailing master William Hanson, the first Norwegian to really assert himself in the America's Cup.

William Hanson was from Bergen, having spent his youth as a fisherman in Norway. After arriving in America, he captained the schooner Alice, and his skills were soon rewarded with a transfer to a larger vessel. Eventually he became involved in yacht racing, and was branded one of the best racing skippers in America. He had plenty of experience from schooner regattas, and was an excellent schooner helmsman.

70 Scandinavians on board

William Hanson was free to assemble his crew whichever way he liked, and he picked the Norwegian James Gunderson as his chief mate. They put together a crew of 70 men, 68 of them Scandinavians.

The Vigilant had a wide beam, which explains the need for such a large crew. The large number of bodies could act as a useful counter-balancing tool. In addition, a lot of manual force was needed to handle the nearly 1,000 square meters of sail, as well as the four tonne centreboard which had to be lifted when running downwind, and lowered when beating.

The designer takes the helm

During the second try-out, the Vigilant was marginally behind, when C. Oliver Iselin ordered a change of helmsman. William Hansen had been at the helm so far, but was replaced by Nathanael Herreshoff, who had designed the boat. The move paid off, and the Vigilant soon took the lead. The Vigilant won the last two trials, and was selected to defend the cup against the English boat Vakyrie II.

The first race

The America's Cup was a "best of five"-series. The first race was held in light winds on October 7th, 1893. It started with a 15 mile downwind leg, then beating back.

The old way of timing the boats from starting line to finish line had been abandoned. Now, once the starting pistol fired, both race and timer started immediately.

Valkyrie II was quickest off the mark, flying a large spinnaker. The Vigilant was in close pursuit, also with a spinnaker, but the distance remained the same. About halfway through the first leg, the wind grew stronger, causing the Vigilant to gain momentum. She eventually passed the English boat, rounding the marker 8 minutes ahead of the Valkyrie II.

Then the wind shifted, making the trip back a close reach. Valkyrie II was the faster boat, using the change in wind to make up lost ground. However, shortly before reaching the finish line, the Vigilant caught a nice gust of wind, once again managing to increase its lead. The Vigilant crossed the line with a corrected lead of 5 minutes and 48 seconds. Since the boats were of unequal builds, a per-nautical-mile handicap was calculated into the final result.

12 knot jibe

The second race, on October 9th, was conducted on a triangular course, with each leg measuring 10 nautical miles. The first leg was a windward beat, then two reaches back to finish. The Vigilant had the best start, in close haul, rounding the first marker 4 minutes and 45 seconds in front. An increase in wind velocities made the subsequent reach a pure test of speed. On reach runs like this, there might be as many as 10-12 men at each sheet in order to properly trim the sails. There was no such thing as winches. Vigilant was still increasing its lead. The combined weight of the large Norwegian crew was a contributing factor. The Vigilant completed the second leg with an average speed of 12 knots.

The crew had their work cut out for them when having to jibe the 1000 square metre sail around the last mark,

but they managed well. Yet more wind made for a wet final leg, with the lee side dipping well into the water. They managed to increase their lead even more, finishing a corrected 10 minutes and 35 seconds before the English. Vigilant traversed the 30 nautical miles in 2 hours and 50 minutes, giving them an average speed of 10.6 knots, despite the windward beat leg.

The Friday 13th finale

Still, the final race remained – an event the New York Times named the most magnificent sailing duel ever fought. It happened on Friday the 13th of October, and the eastern winds were already at 15 knots from early morning, steadily gaining strength throughout the day. The race was a 15 mile windward beat and return.

The start was briefly delayed when the Vigilant had to repair one of its blocks. Parts of the Norwegian crew also began reefing the main sail, as winds were reaching gale force. The Valkyrie II crew followed suit. The Vigilant then had problems with their centreboard, which had become stuck.

An English lead

Valkyrie II had a good start, in a favourable windward position, giving them a nine second lead. The English remained strong through the beats, sailing both higher and faster than Vigilant. Both yachts reefed their main sails, but were otherwise running full speed. The lee side crew members had a tough run, constantly getting soaked. Their cotton uniforms were hardly waterproof. After two hours of sailing, the English boat rounded the first marker 2 minutes ahead of Vigilant.

Norwegian master class

What happened next was a sailing master class by skipper Hanson and the Norwegian Steam. When the Vigilant rounded, the spinnaker flew up, and the gaff-topsail went up along the forestay. At a critical moment, one of lines became stuck, preventing the sail from moving further up the stay. They sent a man up the mast and then lowered him alongside the stay in an attempt to fix it.

At the same time, another crew member cut the reefing lines of the main sail. He was hoisted by another halyard and pulled along the boom. The rest of the crew were busy hoisting the main sail gaff-rig. And as if that wasn't enough, two additional men were also heading up the masts – one to the top mast and the other to the gaff rig in order to secure the topsail line once it was fully hoisted. And all this while doing 12 knots!

The rig creaked from the enormous strain, but it held up. The English did not cut the reefing, nor did they hoist the topsail above their main sail.

Passing on the final stretch

Then, a powerful gust of wind hit the Vigilant, giving it a much needed boost, and helping reduce the English lead. Once the gust reached the Valkyrie, a small rift appeared in the lower part of its spinnaker. In a matter of seconds, the whole sail was ripped apart. They replaced it with a smaller spinnaker, which was also damaged.

As a last resort, they attempted to hoist a large headsail, but it was already too late. The Vigilant was in the lead, and as a gesture of respect toward William Hanson, Nathanael Herreshoff gave him the helm for the remaining mile. The Vigilant won by a corrected margin of 2 minutes and 40 seconds.

1895 – An American experiment

Following the 1893 defeat, Lord Dunraven criticised the NYYC for its lack of American crew members, among other things.

The criticism eventually led to change, and in 1895, when the Americans launched its new boat, the Defender, its crew was recruited from among sailors and fishermen on Deer Island and other places on the Maine coastline. The Defender was also assigned an American skipper, Henry Staff. However, it soon became clear that the crew members, despite remaining highly competent in familiar surroundings, lacked the training, discipline, enthusiasm and determination of the trademark Norwegian Steam. The Defender was the only new boat this year, and had no trouble beating the Vigilant during the try-outs.

Sore loser Dunraven

60,000 people watched Dunraven's new boat Valkyrie III battle the Defender, but this was not to be a repeat of the spectacular finale two years earlier. The Defender won the first two races quite easily, with Dunraven complaining and protesting at every turn. Valkyrie III started the last race, but soon forfeited.

The Defender won 3-0, and Dunraven was remem-

bered as the sorest loser in America's Cup history. It was probably a better boat than the Valkyrie III, but neither boat nor crew were especially impressive this year.

1899 – The Columbia victory
Following the Dunraven incident, the Americans feared that others would be reluctant to challenge for the America's Cup. However, in 1899, the tea merchant Thomas Lipton was prepared to enter the arena. He eventually challenged for the "Auld Mug" a total of five times. The NYYC accepted, and a new boat, the Columbia, was built to battle with the Shamrock, the green boat representing the king of tea. In addition, the Americans brought back the Defender.

Even though this is mostly all about the efforts of the crew, some words need to be said about the Columbia skipper, a 38-year-old Scotsman who'd earned his American citizenship. In the history of America's Cup, he had a past as well as a future. He was an energetic pint-sized man, fiercely committed to discipline, and fully capable of commanding and verbally leading a large crew. His name was Charles "Charlie" Barr.

Charlie had an older half-brother, John Barr, who was considered Scotland's best yacht skipper. He captained the Thistle, but didn't manage to avoid a British defeat.

In 1892, Charlie arrived in the US, finding work as a sailing master on the former cup-winner Vigilant, among others. Charlie Barr spent most of his time at the helm, communicating with the rest of the boat via crew members stationed in front of the ship's wheel. He was the best yacht skipper of his time, and perhaps the best there ever was.

Barr was unpopular
However, before the 1899 America's Cup, Charlie Barr was not a popular man in the US. There were two main reasons for this. First, he was not a native born American. He had become a citizen, but that was not enough to silence the critics, who claimed that an American boat defending the Cup should be led by a true Yankee. Second, he chose a Scandinavian crew, and the start of his Colombia season was somewhat troublesome.

Columbia was based at the Herreshoff shipyard in Bristol, Rhode Island. The crew lived aboard the tugboat St. Michaels. Officers received a monthly wage of $60, and the crew got $45. Each victory ensured an additional bonus of $5.

34 Norwegians on board
When assembling his Columbia crew, Charlie contacted the Norwegian John Normann in Brooklyn, who helped him find the right people. The chief mate was Lem Miller, a native German, while the second mate was Christen Christensen from Norway. He was born in Arendal in 1864, and grew up at Torsplass by Logumvannet.
33 additional Norwegians, two Swedes and one Dane made up the rest of the crew, who were expected to handle more than 1,200 square metres of sail. Charlie spent a lot of time personally training the crew, shaping them into an extremely well-oiled team.

The 22 trial races between the Defender and the Columbia were quite intense. On August 2nd, the Columbia lost its mast outside Point Judith, but nobody was injured. It was still quite clear that skipper Barr and his crew outperformed the Defender and its skipper, Uriah Rhodes, resulting in the Columbia being selected as cup defender. Charlie Barr's former critics conceded that even if they had swapped boats, Barr and his crew would probably still have won.

7 delays
The first race between the Shamrock and the Columbia was planned for October 3rd, but didn't actually happen before October 16th. The first four tries from October 3rd to October 7th involved starts, but were subsequently abandoned due to lack of wind. The following planned starts from October 10th to October 14th were all postponed due to fog. The number of postponements resulted in booming public interest, and the U.S. Navy had to deploy six torpedo boats and six cruisers to keep all the spectator boats in line.

Two Norwegian drownings
The first race had a 15 mile windward beat and return. The Shamrock was quickest off the mark, 3 seconds ahead of the Columbia, but the Columbia sailed higher, soon passing the leeward Shamrock.

When rounding the marker, something happened which is rarely mentioned in America's Cup histories; Three Columbia crew members were thrown over-

board while working on the bowsprit. One was saved, but two Norwegians drowned. The Columbia still finished the race, winning 10 minutes ahead of the Shamrock.

About half an hour into the second race, the Shamrock lost its topmast, and had to forfeit the race, leaving Columbia to finish unopposed.

Decided at the leeward mark

On October 20th, Columbia could decide it all. Morning brought winds around 18-20 knots – a fresh breeze. The first leg was downwind, and once again the Shamrock took the lead, with Columbia in close pursuit. The spinnakers were difficult to manage in the gusty winds, but the Columbia eventually claimed pole position.

At the marker, Columbia was 17 seconds ahead, getting ready for the return windward beat. Columbia executed the rounding well, but the English crew were a little late taking down the spinnaker. They also took too long trimming the main sail. This practically won Columbia the race. They sailed higher and faster, increasing their lead with each beat, as a result of the superior seamanship shown by the Norwegian crew. Thus the last America's Cup of the 19th century was decided.

1901 – Lipton's second attempt

Thomas Lipton wasn't about to give up, and during the autumn of 1900, he had the Royal Ulster Yacht Club challenge the NYYC a second time. This resulted in two new American boats being built, the Constitution and the Independence. The Columbia also returned.

Charlie Barr assembled a crew very similar to the one who helped him win two years earlier, including officers Lem Miller and Christen Christensen.

The people in charge of the Independence syndicate wanted a native born American skipper, and chose Henry Haff, who brought with him a fresh crew from Deer Island. However, Independence turned out to be

a terrible boat, so badly riveted that she came close to sinking. She was dismantled a mere six months after being launched. The third boat, the Constitution, was under the command of Uriah Rhodes.

Columbia vs. Constitution
Many were surprised when it turned out that Columbia was a better boat than the newly constructed Constitution. The trials between them were tough, and both ships suffered broken masts at some point during the summer. But in the end, it was the Columbia which was selected to face Thomas Lipton's second green boat, Shamrock II.

At this point, Charlie Barr knew Columbia so well it was practically like riding a bike. He took chances which would be considered too extreme for a more average skipper. For this to work, the crew had to be on top of their game, both in terms of speed and precision. Once again, many claimed that the victory in the try-outs was due to Barr and his crew.

Columbia from behind
September 28th, 1901 Columbia is set to take on the Shamrock II, through a 15 nautical mile windward beat and return course. Tensions are high, and the odds favour the English boat, which has performed well during its US test runs, sometimes reaching speeds of over 14 knots.

A tight start resulted in a head start of mere seconds for the Shamrock II. The English boat sailed both higher and faster than Columbia. At the marker, they had increased their lead to 41 seconds. Since Shamrock II had larger sails, and was a more recent build, everyone expected it to pull even further ahead on the return leg. However, the opposite happened. Columbia managed to catch up, and finally even overtake Shamrock II. Columbia crossed the finish line a corrected 1 minute and 20 seconds ahead of Shamrock II.

Yet another comeback
On October 3rd, it was time for the second race, consisting of three 10 mile legs. The first two were reaching legs, before finishing with a beat. A bad start by Charlie Barr gave Shamrock II a lead of a minute-and-a-half. Through precise trimming, Columbia managed to gain 22 seconds on the first leg, and another 30 on the second leg. This left Shamrock II with a 42 second lead, going into the final beat leg.

The wind grew in strength, which Columbia took full advantage of through well- executed beats. They caught up with, and eventually overtook, Shamrock II.

Both ships maintained speeds between 8 and 9 knots. Approaching the finish line, Columbia increased her lead, winning the race by a corrected margin of three minutes and 35 seconds.

This gave Columbia an opportunity to decide the challenge in the third race. On October 4th, the boats embarked on a 15 mile downwind course, with a beat return. Once again Shamrock II got the better start, gliding out from Columbia's wind shadow, slowly increasing her lead. At the marker she was 49 seconds ahead, but like last time, Columbia managed to catch up through superior beating.

Then suddenly, the wind dies, leaving the two boats slowly gliding towards the finish. The Shamrock II crosses the line a mere two seconds ahead, but due to the 43 second handicap the Americans are awarded the victory. The Norwegians had helped defend the America's Cup for a second time.

Lipton could find comfort in the fact that the 1901 America's Cup was extremely tightly fought. Three races covering 90 nautical miles were decided by a total margin of only three-and-a-half minutes. For the Norwegian sailors, those minutes resulted in handsome bonuses.

1903 – The monster Reliance
It's starting to become a familiar pattern; Lipton regains confidence, the NYYC receives a letter challenging them for the America's Cup, and the Americans build a new boat. In April 1903, yet another yacht is launched by Nathanael Herreshoff. This time it's a monster of a boat called the Reliance.

Reliance was the most extreme sailboat ever launched. It had a hull length of 43 metres, but including the overhangs it measured 62 metres. Its waterline measured 27 metres, but wind speeds of 7-8 knots would force a heel increasing it to 39 metres. The hull was built in bronze, with a 6 metre lead keel. The mast was 60 metres tall, supporting over 1,500 square metres of sail. Reliance rightfully gave rise to the term "racing freak".

47 Norwegians
Reliance was of course skippered by Charlie Barr. Christen Christensen was hired as chief mate, while another Norwegian, Georg Petersen, became second mate. 45 additional Norwegians made up the bulk of the 65 man crew.

Typical examples from among the crewmembers are Engjel Vaage from Tysnes, Olaf Berg from Bergen and Geo Lisberg from Porsgrunn. They had been working on cargo ships along the Norwegian coastline since confirmation age, gaining valuable experience. In order to cross the Atlantic, they signed on for transatlantic ships. Then, through connections and chance encounters, they ended up in the American regatta business. But once they got a foot in, it was no coincidence that they ended up in the America's Cup.

Reliance crew members were among the very best around, and these three, along with several others, served on a number of subsequent defenders and challengers. For the Reliance crew, July and August consisted of intense training sessions. All kinds of different manoeuvres had to be perfected if they were to master the enormous racing yacht.

Three try-out races were planned, pitting Reliance against Columbia, skippered by Lem Miller, and Constitution, skippered by Uriah Rhodes. On July 27th, Reliance won convincingly, leaving the other boats helpless in her wake. It only took one trial for the NYYC- committee to decide on Reliance as its defender.

During one of the test runs, Columbia lost four men overboard. They managed to save three of them, but the fourth was never found. Once again lives were lost competing for Queen Victoria's silver ewer. During sail testing in early May, Shamrock III also experienced a fatality in an accident involving a falling mast, right outside Weymouth in England. These episodes resulted in some major criticism, with some claiming the boats had become too extreme.

18 knots through a light breeze
Reliance was no doubt a very fast boat. During a test run, it reached speeds of 18 knots in what was described at a light breeze!

Charlie Barr and Christen Christensen both remained sceptical of the whole idea. The rig was simply too big, making the boat a floating hazard. The long overhangs and the low freeboard meant that even minor waves resulted in quite heavy blows to the hull. In bad weather, the Reliance could almost be considered unseaworthy.

"The boat is extremely sensitive", one of the crewmembers observed.

The two Shamrocks
Approaching the end of May, Thomas Lipton began towing both Shamrocks I and III across the Atlantic. The American public could follow the preparations of both defender and challenger, and on August 22nd it was time for the first duel between Shamrock III and Reliance.

The race was a 15 mile windward beat and return. Winds measured 5-6 knots, and there were quite a few waves, something which favoured the more seaworthy Shamrock III. Shamrock III got the better start, riding the starboard wind. Charlie Barr chose to tack, hopefully towards calmer waters closer to shore. They chose a close reach approach, which proved sensible. Once both boats were approaching each other's paths, Shamrock III had the wind at its port-side, granting Reliance the right of way. Approaching

the marker's layline, the boats where quite close, Reliance leading by just a few lengths.

Averaging nine knots
At that moment, the wind shifted, leaving Shamrock III on Reliance's leeside, preventing her from rounding properly. The Shamrock III crew ruined their chances of ever catching up when hoisting their spinnaker in a curled state. It had to be taken down and straightened before it could be redeployed. Adjusting for handicap, Reliance crossed the finish line more than 7 minutes ahead of its opponent. Both yachts maintained an average speed of over 9 knots.

The next race came three days later, a triangle course with a 10 mile beat, followed by a 10 mile broad reach and finally a 10 mile close reach. Wind conditions were good, reaching a moderate breeze. This time Reliance had the better start, but Shamrock III managed to keep up, losing no more than 54 corrected seconds in the first leg.

Both boats raised a spinnaker for the second leg, but the wind grew too strong about halfway through, so they had to be taken down. Reliance increased its lead by another minute and 20 seconds, mostly because they adjusted the sails quicker, and exercised better trimming. The last leg was a close reach, and Reliance crew was ordered to hoist a large genoa. However, it refused to catch wind, so they had to bring it back down. This, combined with the fact that Reliance had less than favourable winds, led to Shamrock III catching up to them. For a while, it looked like she might overtake Reliance and win the race, but then the English ran into similarly unfavourable conditions. Reliance managed to cross the finish line with a corrected margin of one minute and 19 seconds.

Time ashore in a moderate breeze
The third race was scheduled to take place on August 29th, but was postponed due to strong winds. There were no gale force winds, only a 13-15 knot moderate breeze, but the fact that this was enough to justify postponement says something about the extreme build of these new boats.

September 3rd, however, brought favourable conditions. The race was a 15 mile windward beat and return. Reliance started best, 7 seconds ahead. Most of its crew was ordered to lie down flat along the upwind side. Reliance increased her lead throughout the leg through superior tacking manoeuvres, resulting in an 11 minute margin at the midway marker.

Heavy fog on the run
During the return run, the wind grew stronger, and they were hit by a patch of heavy fog. It became impossible for spectators, judges and boats to spot each other. The committee was considering sending out tugboats to retrieve the yachts, when they suddenly heard the flapping of sails. Then a gliding white hull emerged from the fog beneath a giant wall of sails. Reliance had crossed the finish line, successfully defending the America's Cup.
After a while the fog lifted, and they could the finally see the English boat, which had veered off course quite some distance away from the finish line.

Printed praise
Once it had all been decided, Thomas Lipton claimed that the Reliance crew were the cleverest group of sailors he had ever seen.
The Chicago Tribune wrote: Compared to the Shamrock III crew, the Reliance sailors were both smarter and faster. They were also quick-witted when translating orders into action. That can be of great importance in a race. They were men who anticipated which orders might come next, ready to perform them before they were even given. They were, in other words, expert navigators, and each man was selected with a particular task in mind.

The New York Herald joined in, writing that: In the eyes of experts, they were the best trained crew to ever sail a boat. Their amazing skills had also been recognised by their competitors, with the Royal Ulster Yacht Club representative stating that the Norwegian Reliance crew were better trained, as well as performing their tasks faster and smarter, than any crew he had ever seen.

Dismantling Reliance
Reliance was dismantled nine months after her launching. She was simply too dangerous to sail. But for the Norwegian Steam from Vigilant, Columbia and Reliance, there were still good times ahead. Many of them were hired to work on smaller boats in the following years.

The golden age of Norwegian sailors

BY KJELL MAGNUS ØKLAND

It started as regular communication via letters. After several years' worth of correspondence, Thomas Lipton and the New York Yacht Club had agreed that the boats in the next America's Cup should have a waterline length of 75 feet. In 1913, Lipton submitted his challenge, and the race was to be held in September 1914, right outside New York City. Lipton's fourth challenger boat was Shamrock IV.

Three American boats

The Americans built three new vessels, Vanitie, Defiance and Resolute. Vanitie sailing master was the American Bill Dennis, with Swedes Harry Klefve and John Swanson as chief and second mates. Most of the crew was Norwegian or Swedish. Defiance was skippered by Howard, also an American, and his chief mate Wilhelm Andersen and second mate Victor Pearson from Arendal were both Norwegians.

However, Resolute was best boat. It had a 107 foot bronze hull, a gaff rig, and a good 800 square metres of sail. She was commanded by sailing master Christen Christensen, chief mate Engjel Vaage from Tysnes and second mate Geo Listberg. All of its 32 crew members were Norwegians.

Start of the First World War

The boats sailed four races in the early summer of 1914, three of them won by Resolute. It looked like Resolute would be chosen as defender after the try-outs, but the remaining races never happened. Due to the outbreak of war in Europe, the America's Cup was postponed indefinitely.

The American boats were hauled out at the start of the war, but Vanitie and Resolute raced each other the following year. Following the 1915 season, when it started to look like the war might last a while, they were placed in more permanent storage. In 1920, the English King George V decided to ready his yacht, Britannia, spurring others to do the same.

The Lipton challenge was not forgotten, and the tea merchant came to an agreement with the NYYC that the America's Cup races were to be held outside New York City in July.

Many Norwegians on Resolute

The American try-out races between the Resolute and the Vanitie were exciting. Vanitie skipper was Gaute Gautesen from Haugesund, with Norwegians Martin Olstadt and Gunnar Gjerstad from Tysnes as chief and second mates. The crew was mostly Norwegian.

The 30-man crew of Resolute had undergone some changes. Charles Francis Adams led the afterguard, with Christen Christensen from Arendal remaining skipper, and Engjel Vaage from Tysnes the chief mate. During the try-outs, Charlie Olsen from Kolbjørns-

vik was second mate, but he was replaced by Vanitie second mate Gunnar Gjerstad before the main races. The remaining crew had 19 Norwegians, seven Swedes and one Dane. A third of the crew were from Tysnes. Sailors from this island in Sunnhordland would play a pivotal role in America's Cup for the next 17 years.

Resolute defender

Resolute won most of the 14 trial races, and was selected to defend against Shamrock IV challenge. The English boat had sails 150 square metres larger than the Resolute, invoking a penalty of just over 7 minutes per race. The challenge was a "best of five"-series. The first race on July 15th was a 15 mile windward beat and return. Shamrock IV committed a false start, giving the Resolute an advantage from the start. However, Shamrock IV was a faster boat,

and it soon started to catch up. Then a storm broke out, bringing heavy rain and winds. When the weather cleared, Resolute had increased its lead, rounding the marker more than 4 minutes ahead of the English boat. Considering the added handicap, things were looking good for Resolute.

However, on the run back, one of Resolute's lines snapped, causing the mainsail to drop, breaking the gaff boom in the process. Two men were hoisted up to investigate, in an attempt to re-hoist the sail, but there was no hope of recovery. Shamrock IV won the race comfortably.

A second English victory

On July 20th, the second race was underway. Shamrock IV had a good start in the light breeze, taking the lead on the initial beat leg. They managed to hold onto their lead, claiming yet another victory. 2-0 to the tea merchant.

The third race, on July 21st, was another 15 mile windward beat and return. Once again, Shamrock IV is quickest off the mark, 19 seconds ahead of Resolute. Half an hour into the race, the wind gains strength. Resolute is sailing higher than Shamrock IV, and after an hour she catches up, eventually overtaking the English. Approaching the finish line, Shamrock IV fights back, overtaking and beating Resolute by the starting margin, a mere 19 seconds, meaning they'd completed the race in exactly the same amount of time. Once the handicap is factored in, however, the Resolute is declared the winner, reducing the lead to 2-1.

Rise of the Resolute

The fourth race was held on July 23rd, consisting of three legs – one beat and two breaks. In a fresh breeze, Resolute took the lead. She sailed higher on the beat, rounding the marker two minutes ahead of Shamrock IV. However, Shamrock IV averaged 12 knots on the following break, gaining 54 seconds. The final leg was through heavy winds, prohibiting the use of topsails. Resolute increased its lead once again, crossing the finish line three minutes ahead. 2-2, and it's all down to the final race.

July 27th marks the start of the fifth and final race of the most closely fought America's Cup challenges seen to date. They started at a quarter past two, in a gentle breeze. Shamrock IV crosses the starting line more than 40 seconds ahead of the American boat. Can Shamrock IV build a lead large enough to win? On the beat, the English boat was temporarily becalmed, allowing the Resolute to round with a four minute lead. The same thing happens on the run back. Resolute gains speed, while Shamrock IV hits another windless pocket. This decides the race. Resolute crosses the finish line 13 minutes ahead of Shamrock IV, denying Thomas Lipton the trophy once again.

The J-boats

10 years passed before Thomas Lipton's next challenge. 1930 marked the arrival of the first J-boats in the America's Cup. A J-boat was supposed to have a waterline of 76-87 feet, and a total length of 120-135 feet. The 50 metre mast supported 700 square metres of sail, plus a spinnaker which could be up to twice that size. Boats had a crew of around 25 men. Lipton's fifth challenger was of course called Shamrock V.

The Americans built four J-boats, with the first one

launching on April 4th. Enterprise was cradled into the Atlantic Ocean at the Herreshoff-shipyard in Bristol, Rhode Island. Its afterguard was led by Harold Vanderbilt, and the boat was skippered by the American George Monsell. The Swede Harry Klefve was chief mate, and Adolf Nilsen from Denmark was second mate. Half the crew was Norwegian, mostly from Tysnes, another third were Swedes, while the rest were from Austria, Estonia and Germany.

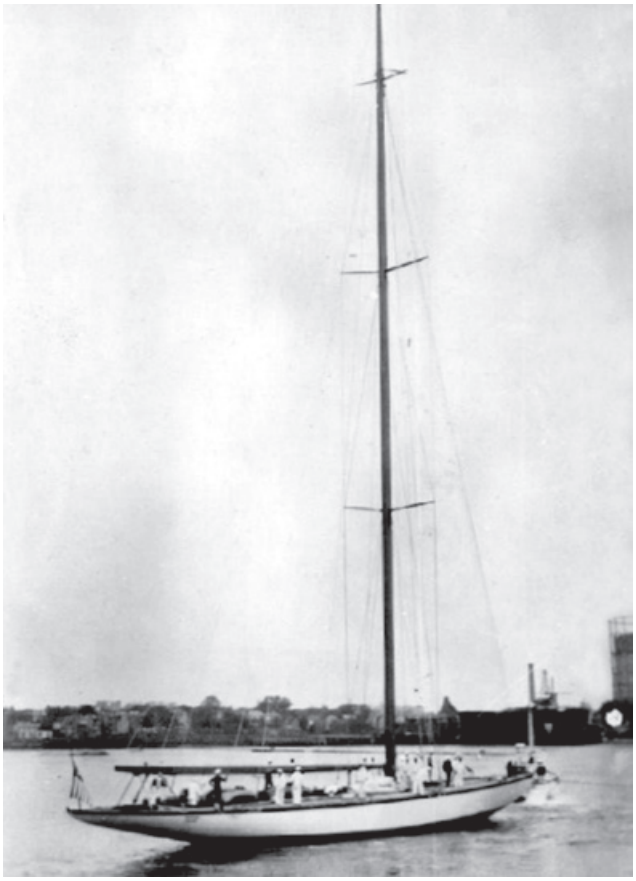
Whirlwind
The second American boat was ready three weeks later. Whirlwind was launched on May 7th from the Lawley-shipyard in Boston. Paul Hammond led the afterguard, while American John Muir was appointed skipper. John Andresson and his brother Hans were chief and second mates. Third mate was Tom Frøkedal. All three mates, and two thirds of the crew, were Norwegians from the area around Haugesund.

Yankee
Three days later, Yankee was launched, also from Lawley. Charles Francis Adams led the afterguard, with Gunnar Gjerstad serving as sailing master. The chief mate was Ole Hansen, while Hans Lande was second mate. The skipper, the mates and two thirds of the crew were from Tysnes, and the rest came from the Haugesund area.

Weetamoe
On May 10th, Weetamoe was launched from the Hereshoff-shipyard in Bristol. The afterguard was led by George Nichols. Engjel Vaage was the skipper, while brothers Ole and Karl Gundersen Teigland were appointed chief and second mates. Once again, the skipper, the mates and two thirds of the crew came from Tysnes, with the rest hailing from the Haugesund area.

Coconut John and Sandpaper Gus
Engjel Vaage and Gunnar Gjerstad, the two Tysnes sailing masters, were largely responsible for the large number of Tysnes crewmembers on the American J-boats, often actively recruiting sailors from their home region. Both were very well known at the time, and remain prominent figures in the written history of the America's Cup.

In America, Engjel Vaage went by the name John Christensen, but he was better known simply as "Coconut John". He was always telling his crew to use their brains. After all, those weren't coconuts sitting on top of their shoulders. Gunnar Gjerstad went by the name Gust Olsen, but became known as "Sandpaper Gus", since he always insisted on keeping the boat's brass and wood surfaces perfectly smooth and squeaky clean.



The first trials between the four J-boats were held from early June. The selection committee was focused on picking the boat best suited for dealing with different sailing conditions. The two largest boats, Yankee and Whirlwind, raced each other first, then the two smaller boats, Weetamoe and Enterprise.

Support crew
Olav Lunde, a 15-year old boy from Tysnes, worked on Twister, Whirlwind's tugboat. "At around 9 o'clock in the morning, we began towing the yacht out towards the starting line, which took about an hour", he says. "There, we let Whirlwind loose, and they readied their sails. During the regatta, we followed them around, just watching. We had a decent engine, capable of a good 10-11 knots, but in heavy winds the J-boats would easily outrun us. Once the race was over, we towed Whirlwind back to port, transferring the crew to the accommodation vessel, Minas Princess, a worn-down sail boat with a large galley and plenty of cabins. There, the crew could clean up and have dinner", Olav explains.

Whirlwind loses ground
Unfortunately for Olav and the others on Whirlwind team, it soon becomes apparent that she is the inferior boat. The competition between the three others remains tight. Yankee outperforms the others in strong winds, while Enterprise and Weetamoe are better in smoother weather. At the start of the season, Weetamoe is the better of the two smaller boats, with Enterprise performing better and better as the season progresses. On August 4th, the four fire J-boats compete in a longer race from Newport to Mattapoisett, Massachusetts, in a strong breeze. Yankee wins, beating Enterprise by a mere 20 seconds. During the race Weetamoe had to rescue a crewmember that had fallen overboard. The final try-outs were held towards the end of August. In the semi-finals, the boats started in pairs. Enterprise and Weetamoe went first, with Yankee and Whirlwind starting an hour later. Enterprise and Yankee won their pairs, and when the exact same thing happened in the second race, it was time for a final showdown between the two.

Victory for Enterprise
During the final race, there was so little wind that they reached maximum time. However, Enterprise was leading by more than a mile, and was chosen to defend the American's Cup against Shamrock V.

Enterprise victory was not a coincidence. The crew were thoroughly drilled, making them look more like machines than men. They all had their stations, and each crewmember bore a shirt with the number of the station on it. Orders were given by number, not names. If someone switched places, they also switched shirts. Enterprise was often called the mechanical boat. Eight crewmembers were permanently stationed below deck during the regatta, earning them the nickname "the black gang".

Spinnaker outmanoeuvring
On September 13th, it was time for the first duel between Enterprise and Shamrock V, a 15 mile downwind run with a beat return. This time it was a "best of seven"-series. Enterprise got the best start, quickly gaining a lead on the English boat. Shamrock V went straight for the marker, while Vanderbilt had his crew actively outmanoeuvring the English. This paid off, and Enterprise rounded two minutes ahead of Shamrock V.

On the beat back, Enterprise increases its lead by an additional minute, finishing a total of three minutes ahead of Shamrock V.

The second race was two days later, a triangle course with a starting beat followed by two reaches. Enterprise has the best start in the gentle wind, sailing higher and faster than Shamrock V, and she crosses the finish line 10 minutes ahead. 2-0 to the Americans.

Shamrock V has to forfeit
On September 17th it was time for race number three, a downwind run followed by a beat into crisp winds. Shamrock V started well, on an upwind heel and a boat's length ahead of Enterprise, which was attempting to sail through its wind shadow, and failing. A surprising change of wind came to Enterprise's rescue, and at the next gybe it was slightly ahead. Three quarters into the race, Shamrock V loses its mainsail fall line, and has to forfeit. Enterprise finishes, increasing the American lead to 3-0.
The following day also brings crisp winds. The triangle course started with a beat, followed by two reaches. Enterprise had the best start, increasing its lead with each beat, and finally winning the race by 5 minutes and 44 seconds.

World's best loser
This was Thomas Lipton's fifth defeat in the America's Cup. The King of Tea was very popular in the US, and many Americans felt sorry for the persistent gentleman who had been trying to win the "Auld Mug" for over 30 years. Following the final race, some Americans started a fundraiser, using the money to buy him a trophy bearing the inscription "World's best loser".

The Atlantic commute
Once the season was over, the boats were hauled out. Olav Lunde and the other sailors went back home to Norway. "That's how things were for many of us. We went to America in spring, raced through the summer and returned to Norway in the autumn. And those of us who got to work with racing, we'd hit the jackpot. It was very well paid, and the early 1930s were otherwise quite grim. The tough 1930's were not quite as tough in Tysnes, since they had plenty of cash coming in through from the American sailors", Olav Lunde explains.

A new English challenger
The NYYC received a new challenge for the America's Cup in September 1933. For the first time in over 30 years, it was from someone other than Thomas Lipton. This time, it was from T.O.M. Sopwith. His background was in aviation, and he was a man of ideas. His boat, Endeavour, would turn out to be one of the best ever British challengers.

NYYC accepted the challenge and started preparing for the races, which were to take place in September 1934. Enterprise did not pass the new regulations, so Vanderbilt led a new syndicate which commissioned Rainbow, launching May 15th from the Herreshof-shipyard in Bristol, Rhode Island.

Rebuilding Weetamoe and Yankee
During the winter, the two other relevant boats, Weetamoe and Yankee, were rebuilt. For Weetamoe, reconstruction was pretty much a failure, while Yankee managed to improve its performance in slow winds.

Weetamoe fielded the same crew as in 1930, while the Yankee made some minor changes. Gunnar Gjerstad was still skipper, with chief mate Magnus Johnsen from Tysnes and second mate Ivan Pohlson. The majority of the crew was the same as in 1930, mostly consisting of men from Tysnes and Haugesund.

Rainbow hired George Monsell as their sailing master, with Harry Klefve as chief mate and Knut Bruntveit from Tysnes as second mate. Around half the crew was Norwegian, with the rest was made up of five Swedes, three Danes, three Americans, an Estonian and two Austrians.

The crew demands higher wages
At the start of the season, the crews on Yankee, Weetamoe and Rainbow came together in protest, demanding higher wages. They each received a raise of $15 a month, and the bonus for winning the America's Cup was raised to $50.

Across the Atlantic, the professional crew of Endeavour also went on strike. Sopwith fired the lot of them, which meant having to replace most of his crew just a week before crossing to the US. The replacements were all enthusiastic amateur sailors. When arriving in America, Gerhard Lambert, the owner of Vanitie, offered his ship as a sparring partner for Endeavour. After all, the fresh crew needed to practice handling the yacht.

Sailing with a hardhat?
Since times were tough, Rainbow became a sort of poor man's J-boat, re-using many of the sails and winches used by Enterprise in 1930. Blocks that worked fine in 1930 were now starting to fall apart. Sherman Hoyt, part of the afterguard, writes that "it was so bad that we considered equipping the crew with hardhats to protect them from the metal parts falling from the rig".
Gunnar Færevåg from Tysnes served as a crewmember on Rainbow. "I remember one time when Sam Mollevik injured his finger. Vanderbilt thought he was too late releasing the jib sheet when changing tack, so he called out: 'Let go of her! She won't bite you!' And Sam, who had just managed to free his finger, answered: 'Well, she bit me just now'", Gunnar explains.

Bad start for Rainbow
Rainbow had its share of trouble at the start of the season, though Weetamoe and Vanitie didn't really pose a threat. Rainbow beat Weetamoe five out of six times, and Vanitie three out of four. Yankee, however, was better than ever, winning ten of its eleven races from June to August.
"I was one of the people painting Rainbow's mast. We were six men on the job, moving from one spreader to the next, with 16-17 metres between them. The whole job was done in one afternoon. It was quite windy, so I was covered in paint. That was the only time I went up the mast. My main task on Rainbow was trimming the mainsheet, but it became quite heavy in strong winds, so we were often several people. The skin on our hands became coarse, and some days they bled quite heavily" says Gunnar.

Tight race between Yankee and Rainbow
Tensions were running high once official try-outs began in early August. Weetamoe had an early exit following three straight defeats, once to Yankee and twice to Rainbow. This resulted in a duel between Rainbow and Yankee for the right to face Endeavour. Yankee won the first race by over six minutes, while Rainbow won the second by three minutes. In the third race, Yankee had to forfeit when discovering a loose stay in the strut atop the mast.

Close call for Rainbow
Everybody thought it was all lost for Yankee, but the NYYC try-out committee decided to hold yet another race. The last race is so close that the boats cross the finish line virtually side by side. The audience is silent. Nobody knows who won. Eventually Rainbow is judged to have crossed one second before Yankee, so the committee chooses Rainbow as its defender.

Harold Vanderbilt said that the try-outs against Yankee were some of the toughest races he'd ever taken part in. Gunnar Gjerstad claimed that Yankee would have won if he hadn't been unlucky and broken his foot during one of the earlier trials. They depended on him, while he depended on crutches.

The first race between Rainbow and Endeavour was scheduled for September 17th, a 15 mile beat and return with good winds. While hoisting the mainsail, one of Endeavour's mast men was knocked out cold, resulting in a short delay. Once they got underway, Endeavour was a boat length ahead, but Rainbow was better positioned in terms of wind. After about an hour, Rainbow had a slight lead, but once the wind grew stronger, Endeavour began catching up. At the marker, she was only 23 seconds behind. On the return run, Endeavour overtook Rainbow, finishing more than two minutes ahead.

Straight as an arrow
September 18th also brought fine winds, through a triangular course starting with a 10 mile reach, then a beat, then finally another reach. Endeavour wins the start, claiming a slight lead. The leg is mostly a straight-forward downwind run. On the beat, Endeavour sails quite defensively, covering Rainbow the whole time. Endeavour wins by 51 seconds, making it 2-0 for Sophwith.

The third race, on September 20th, is a straight run with a windward beat return. In theory, this should have favoured Rainbow, but once again Endeavour wins the start, slowly pulling away. At the marker she was 6 minutes and 21 second ahead.

Sherman Hoyt takes command
Gunnar Færvåg remembers the mood on Rainbow when things were at their worst. "After losing the first two races, everyone was discouraged, especially Vanderbilt. When we were behind by some distance, Sherman Hoyt was given command. Vanderbilt told us not to take any more cues from him, before disappearing below for lunch", Gunnar reminisces.

What happens next remains one of the most famous incidents in America's Cup history. Rainbow is way behind, but Endeavour wants to ensure victory by beating into the wind, placing Rainbow in its shadow. When making the first tack, Endeavour actually turns away from the finish line. It could take up to five minutes for a J-boat to regain its velocity following a tack in slow winds. Rainbow is still sailing towards the finish line, while Endeavour struggles to gain momentum. "The whole crew is on the lee side. Nobody moves or says anything. Sherman Hoyt and Zenas Bliss are the only ones who can see beyond the boat. We slowly glide towards the finish line, in the lead", Gunnar Færevåg explains.

Rainbow wins the race by three and a half minutes. But the English still lead 2-1.

Yankee reinforcements
The situation was still dire for the Americans. Vanderbilt chose to seek assistance from Yankee. In the races between Yankee and Rainbow, Yankee had always been better when flying their spinnaker. Sail trimmer Lars Syre Viding from Skudeneshavn and Frank Paine, the afterguardsman in charge of the spinnaker, were brought over as reinforcements.

The fourth race, on September 21st, was a beat-reach-reach triangle. Rainbow started marginally ahead, and following a short beating battle, they were even further in front. However, this left Endeavour alone in fresh winds. When the boats met again, Endeavour was on a starboard heel, slightly ahead. The English boat rounded the marker with a 27 second lead. After rounding, Endeavour breaks towards Rainbow. Vanderbilt didn't react, and Sopwith had to fall off. Endeavour waited too long to hoist its flag, resulting in their protest being denied.

An American journalist coyly wrote about the incident: "Britannia rules the waves but America waives the rules". Rainbow glides past Endeavour, winning the race by 1 minute and 15 seconds. 2-2, and things are getting tense.

Man overboard
September 24th. It's time for the fifth race, a 15 mile downwind run and return. Following an even start, Rainbow flies its first spinnaker, allowing it to pull ahead. But they come close to forfeiting the race when losing a man overboard. Halfway through the first leg, Rainbow jibs, and one of the crewmembers manning the running backstay falls into the ocean. He manages to grab hold of the line, which is also in the water, and the other crewmembers haul him back on board.

At the marker, Rainbow had a lead of 4 minutes and 40 seconds. Endeavour manages to narrow the margin, but not enough. Rainbow wins, making it 3-2. The Americans finally have the advantage.

This gives Rainbow the opportunity to decide the challenge in the next race, on September 26th. It's a triangular reach-beat-reach, and the start is somewhat chaotic, with both boats raising protest flags. Endeavour is slightly ahead from the start, but Rainbow crewmembers demonstrate their excellent reaching skills, slowly overtaking the English. Rainbow rounds the marker 2 minutes and 45 seconds ahead. A quick change of headsail right before the marker also helps Rainbow on the beat. On the final run, Rainbow is quick to hoist the spinnaker, while Endeavour takes a full six minutes. Rainbow crosses the finish line 55 seconds ahead. The protests are withdrawn, and once again the Norwegians had helped the Americans retain the America's Cup.

Englishmen drinking tea
Gunnar Færevåg describes what it was like after the final race. "Everyone was happy, of course, but for us crewmembers it was all about packing the sails and sorting the rigging. Once we arrived back at the harbour, we were done. I remember the English taking a

long time, because right after crossing the finish line, they all sat down for a cup of tea", Gunnar says with a smile on his face. The 1934 America's Cup victory earned him a handsome $50 bonus.

Sopwith has another go
After all the protests during the 1934 America's Cup, the English were somewhat dejected, and there was a sense that they might not challenge for quite some time. However, Yankee spent a quite successful season sailing regattas in England in 1935, helping rekindle British interest. Sopwith builds another J-boat, Endeavour II, and issues a challenge towards the end of summer in 1936. The races were scheduled for July and August the following year. Sopwith wanted time to test Endeavour II against his previous boat. The defender was not chosen until a month before the first race. It was called Ranger.

Ranger was the only new American boat that year. It was the tenth and final J-boat to be built, and she was launched by the Bath-shipyard in Maine on May 11th 1937. Harold Vanderbilt led the afterguard once again, with George Monsell as sailing master, the Swede Willy Karstens as chief mate, and Hermann Wegge from Horten as second mate. The rest of the crew was the usual mix of Norwegians (most of them from Tysnes), Swedes, Danes and a couple of Americans.

In case Ranger turned out to be a flop, Rainbow and Yankee had also been readied. Rainbow was skippered by John Andersen, with Henry Rasmussen as chief mate and Thomas Frøkedal as second mate, all of them from Tysnes. Around half the crewmembers were Norwegians, mostly from Tysnes and some from Haugesund. The rest were from Sweden, Denmark and Estonia. Gunnar Færevåg served as quartermaster on Rainbow. "I was asked to join Ranger, but I enjoyed being on Rainbow, so I said no", he explains. Gunnar Gjerstad retains his position as sailing master on Yankee, hiring pretty much the same crew as in 1934.

Ranger turned out to be a very fast boat. The two other J-boats were beaten by more than five minutes in every single race. "I really thought we had a chance with Rainbow", Gunnar Færevåg comments. "Just goes to show, I guess", he says with a grin.

A 1,600 square metre spinnaker
During one of the try-outs, Ranger flies a spinnaker of 1,600 square metres, the largest sail ever made. The crew of Ranger really proved their mettle jibbing with such an enormous sail. Naturally Ranger was chosen as defender, and the day of the first challenge race was approaching. Everyone was excited to see what kind of resistance Endeavour II could muster.

Superior Ranger
The first race, on July 31st, was a 15 mile beat and return. Endeavour II wins the start, and Ranger is left in the English boat's shadow. Then Ranger changes tack, with Endeavour II quickly beating to cover. However, Ranger has already managed to catch some wind, eventually overtaking its challenger. From there on out, it's only a question of how big the lead will become. Ranger finishes 17 minutes ahead of Endeavour II. 1-0 for the US.

In the second race, on August 2nd, Endeavour II once again takes the lead, leaving Ranger behind in unfavourable winds. After a while Ranger changes tack and finally gets going, but Endeavour II still has better wind, and when they meet again the challenger is still in front. Ranger immediately changes tack, ensuring the same wind conditions as Endeavour II, and eventually overtaking it through sheer boat speed. At the marker, she rounds a full ten minutes ahead of Endeavour II. The last leg is a close reach, and Ranger increases her lead by another two minutes. She crosses the finish line 18 minutes and 30 seconds before Endeavour II, increasing the US lead to 2-0.

Endeavour II improves
Before the third race, both boats are hauled out for hull cleaning and maintenance. On August 4th, they're all set for a 15 mile beat and return through moderate breeze. A close start gives Ranger a slight advantage, but Endeavour II is on a windward heel. Ranger pulls away, but the distance remains close. Endeavour II is actually beating faster and smarter than the Americans, but Ranger has them covered, and they never quite manage to get free. Endeavour II's superior tacking comes as a surprise, since Ranger's crew was considered the better of the two. At the marker, the defender rounds four minutes ahead of its challenger. Not much changes on the return run, and Ranger finishes four and a half minutes ahead. 3-0 to the Americans.

The final race, on August 5th, featured a triangular beat-reach-reach. Endeavour II made a false start, giving Ranger an easy task. By covering their opponent, they maintained full control, crossing the finish line over three and a half minutes ahead. 4-0 to the Americans, and once again the America's Cup remained in the US.

This marked the end of the J-boats and the Norwegian

Steam in the America's Cup. There were no more challenges before the war, and five years of war, blockades and occupation had killed the Norwegian line of recruitment. There were still Norwegians working with American racing after the war, but they were mostly veterans from the J-boats. The steady stream of recruits was gone.

An exciting place to work

Gunnar Færevåg remembers the J-boats as exciting places to work: "I liked it a lot. Not many people get to win the America's Cup, you know", says Gunnar, who worked for eight years on different US yachts. In the seasons between America's Cup challenges, the sailors worked on smaller yachts. The history of the Norwegian Steam is just as much the story about what happened in-between the America's Cup events. But the America's Cup is something special, a trophy that the Americans managed to defend for 132 years. Something they probably wouldn't have been able to do without the efforts of the Norwegian Steam. The story is an interesting one, in more ways than one. It's about the relationship Norwegians have with the ocean, and about entrepreneurs taking risks. It's about practical skills being passed down through generations and then suddenly becoming highly sought after in the modern arena of American sports. It's about working immigrants, expertise and connections. For example, Norwegian sailors were sure to be hired on the spot if they mentioned that they were from Tysnes. One would think this made the history of the Norwegian Steam a point of national pride and interest in Norway – the land with the endless coastline. So far, the only seafaring heroes in Norway have been the Nortraship sailors from World War II. And boy, do they deserve it! But a land with so many mariners surely has room for another set of heroes?

From promise to public gift

BY HELGE MARTIN MARKUSSEN

The Royal Yacht Norge in the Oslo Fjord.

Photo: Taral Jansen/The Norwegian Armed Forces

The Royal Yacht Norge (Norway)
During negotiations with Norwegian authorities concerning him becoming king in 1905, Prince Carl of Denmark was promised "a yacht, outfitted and ready for use whenever needed, payed for by the state". But more than 40 passed before the promise was finally fulfilled.

Thomas Sopwith built the Philante in 1937

The Royal Yacht Norge was built in 1937, but was then called the Philante. It was constructed at Camper and Nicholsons in Gosport, Hampshire, as a luxury yacht for Sir Thomas Sopwith. He was a famous English aircraft designer, and exceptionally wealthy. When the boat was launched, it was one of the largest of its kind. It was originally built as part of Sopwith's failed attempt at winning the America's Cup regatta, when it was used as a mothership for the racing yacht Endevour II. On the journey back to Europe, the captain of the Philante died, and was buried at sea.

In 1939 she was used a base of operations by the committee organising the Teignmouth Regatta in Devon, where Sopwith competed with his new yacht, the Tomahawk. However, the regatta was abandoned when Germany invaded Poland on September 1st, 1939.

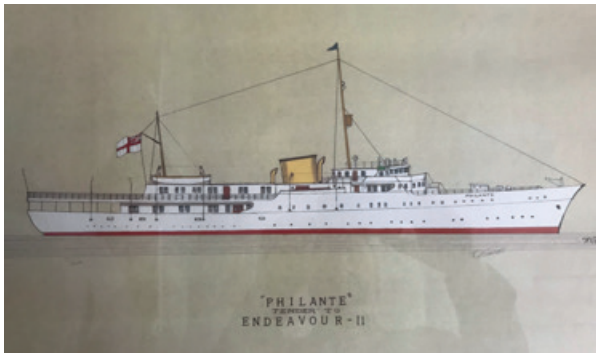


Photo of the Philante plans
photo: Sigbjørn Larsen

The War Years
Once the war broke out, the British Admiralty got in touch with Sopwith, requesting to take over the yacht. He agreed to sell it to the Navy. Some sources claim that it was commandeered, while others claim that it was handed over as a gift from Sopwith.

The Royal Yacht Norge leaving Haakonsvern
Photo: Lars Røraas/The Norwegian Armed Forces

During the first couple of years, the boat was used as an escort for convoys crossing the Atlantic, completing the crossing seven times. In 1942 it was put into service as a convoy escort training ship.

The Philante's final war contribution came in May 1945. Under the command of Admiral Horton, they oversaw the surrender and disarmament of 33 U-boats off the northern coast of Scotland. In 1946 she was sold back to Sopwith, though he had already acquired a replacement, the Philante II.

The Royal Yacht Norge in Bergen, 2005.
Photo: Michael Gwyther-Jones

A gift from the people
In July 1947, the Philante was purchased by the Norwegian government as a gift to King Haakon VII. On his 75th birthday, he was presented with a model of the boat. The boat itself had to be remodelled and refurbished before it was ready to be handed over.
The architect Finn Nilsson was in charge of the interior. The yacht's commander, Christian Monsen (1907-1966), could finally raise the masthead pennant for the first time on May 17th, 1948. The gift from the people was handed over to King Haakon on June 9th.
The yacht was christened Norge (Norway).

Royal Yacht
In the following years, King Haakon used the ship both for voyages along the Norwegian coastline, as well as for more distant destinations. In June 1955, the King sailed on the Norge when visiting Molde. This was to be his final sea voyage before passing away.

Following the death of his father, King Olav took over the yacht in 1957. A survey of the boat resulted in a ten-year plan for upgrading both the hull and the boat's technical equipment. King Olav followed his father's traditions, using the yacht both for official and private matters.

Fire
In the winter of 1985, the Norge was undergoing repairs and upgrades at the Horten Shipyard. As a result of welding work, a fire erupted, quickly spreading throughout the boat. When they managed to extinguish the fire, the boat was already completely burnt. However, closer examination revealed that the hull and engine were mostly intact. King Olav decided to rebuild the boat.

The architect Finn Nilsson was once again tasked with designing the interior. About a year later, the Norge could once again be handed over to the King, in a much more secure and technically superior condition than before the fire.

Key facts, the Royal Yacht Norge
Length: 80.2 metres
Width: 11.6 metres
Depth: 4.7 metres
Gross tonnage: 1628 tonnes
Top speed: 16 knots
Cruising speed: 14 knots
Range: 6500 nautical miles
Engines: Two Bergen Diesel, 1760 hp each
Built by Camper & Nicholsons Ltd., Gosport, England in 1937.

The Royal Yacht today
King Harald took over the boat following the death of King Olav's in 1991. The King uses the yacht on official voyages in both Norway and abroad. It is also used as a base when His Majesty competes in international regattas.

The boat is staffed by the Royal Norwegian Navy. It has a crew of 18 officers and 36 conscripts. The majority of its conscripts are recruited annually from the navy base KNM Harald Hårfagre towards the end of February.

Following refurbishment and crew training, the season officially starts once the King embarks in May. His Majesty usually debarks in September.

King Harald greets officers of the Royal Yacht when debarking in 1996
Photo: Torbjørn Kjosvold/The Norwegian Armed Forces