

Richard

Sometime back in one of the newsletters you said you wanted Yacht Club history.

What follows is more memories than history. The first Easter Regatta was held in 1936, my Grandfather Walter Fletcher's idea received incredible support from the RFYC. In a sense they sent two fleets - one by sea, the cruisers led by "Echo" & Stewart Sharp - and the small boat fleet which came by rail, dismasted and on flat beds watched over by "Chickie" the RFYC dock master.

Somehow they got to the Fletcher & Co wharves and were lifted off and launched by a derelict (even then) old crane. By then anyone with any knowledge of boats was drafted to help re-step the mast and re-rig and trim them so that when their owners and crews came by road from Kingston the boats were moored and anchored off the jetty at Doctor's Cave where the first regattas were held.

Kingston sent five classes to our first, "O" boats (7, I think), 3 snappers, very new - 4 stars and 4 pranchies ((?)) - a sailing dinghy and the cruisers. Montego Bay came through with flying colours, nearly everyone offered hospitality in the way of beds and of all things a proper printed program listing the boats with class, the names of owners and the start times of each race! On the top of Doctor's Cave diving tower were the start committee - at ground level the para military - all backed up by the Jamaica Regimental Band and the Governor for prize giving. For prize giving the men all wore club blazers and the ladies hats and white gloves. Rule Britannia!

*We got our first Yacht Club building in late 1937 I think, an old wooden building on Fort Street where the hospitality towards the sailors was almost legendary. You see we lived on the water two houses from the club, all cooking for the masses was done in our home and taken to the club by our staff or by dinghy. We never knew who or how many would be sleeping in our house. In the second regatta I went to bed in my own bed and woke up on a bunk mattress on the floor under my bed, surrounded by snoozing men - I crawled out and looked up just as a bare naked man hung his legs and everything else over the edge of the bed into, at that time, my most young and innocent face.*

*Anyway a note of thanks, Commodore, for taking on the job. You're doing a great job and I know. After all I've known every Commodore the club has had and I'm alive to tell the Tale.*

*Cheers*

*Gene*

*April 2009*