



**HONNOR
MARINE**



Builders of the timeless classic Devon Range and Cape Cutter 19 boats

Marine House, Miall Street Rochdale, Lancashire

Tel: 01706 715986 Fax: 01706 342576 e-mail: info@honnormarine.co.uk

www.honnormarine.co.uk

From Bob and Norma Brown, Rochdale 10th December 2008 (Updated December 2010)



There has been much conversation within the Drascombe Association recently of the history of Honnor Marine since our obtaining the stewardship of this famous name in the boat building industry in 1997. This has been brought to our notice by our many customers and friends within the Drascombe Association.

We felt, as we cannot advertise within the Drascombe Association News (DAN) (See Appendix Note 1) or have access to the Association web forums, to publish this true and honest account of our dealings with Kate Watkinson, owner of the Drascombe Trade Mark name to clear any confusion or speculation. This also includes our dealings with McNulty and eventually Churchouse Boats.

From this account it can be seen that we have acted honourably at the highest level.

Lets go back to 1997.....

It was nothing to do with us that the trade mark "Drascombe" became separated from the Honnor Marine in 1997 when the company went into liquidation.

David McNulty of McNulty boats heard through a rep that Honnor Marine (UK) Ltd (based at Totnes, Devon) were in financial difficulties.

David McNulty then contacted Kate Watkinson and told her that he would pay her a £10,000 yearly fee for the use of the trade mark "Drascombe".

David McNulty would not deal in any way with the appointed liquidator- he was so sure that no one would buy the boat tooling and company without the trade name "Drascombe".

At the same time Bob and I were retiring (having worked together for 30 years in the plastics/chemical business) and we had bought a house in Newquay.



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Bob saw a second hand Drascombe Coaster advertised for sale at Nationwide Boats which is situated in Chesterfield just off the M1. We went to buy it as it was ideal for the estuaries around Falmouth.

The salesman at Nationwide Boat sales could not tell us how old the boat was. We noted the hull number and on the Monday morning we rang through to Honor Marine at Totnes expecting to speak to a sales person to try and find its age from the hull number, but the liquidator answered the phone.

Bob asked if there were any boats for sale but the liquidator said no, but all the boat tooling was.

He explained that he had been appointed to raise money for the creditors but no one had put any bids in and he had been trying to tie things up for nearly 6 weeks.

That evening at home Bob told me that after a lot of thought and consideration he would like to put a bid in for the company and as a hobby start to make boats.

So he did and the outcome was that our bid was accepted. When David McNulty heard about it he was very annoyed.

Once we discovered the situation, being honest people Bob drove from Rochdale to Devon and went to see Kate Watkinson. I had been a local magistrate here at Rochdale and Middleton for 12 years and we wanted to be fair to the situation that had arisen.

Bob went to see Kate and had bought a huge bunch of flowers for her.

She didn't invite him in but kept him on the door step.

Bob explained that he would pay Kate the £10,000 fee to keep the Drascombe name with the Honor Marine boat tooling.

Kate Watkinson listened to what Bob had to say, took the bunch of flowers from him and slammed the door in his face.

Poor bewildered Bob still trying to do the right thing then contacted David McNulty of McNulty Boats and made an appointment to meet him with the view of doing a joint venture to keep everything together.

We met at a hotel near Wetherby off the A1 where David just said "You do your thing" and I'll do mine!".

We were both disappointed with his attitude.

So as we had the original boat tooling and our 1 acre original factory site we started production there.



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David McNulty then had to buy existing boats, strip them of their fixings and woodwork, separate the hulls and decks and take new molds off them. This means, in fact the boats being built now by the licensed builder, Churchouse Boats are not from the original Drascombe tooling but from second hand boats! Some could say, as we have been told by posts in the forum that these are actually "copies" of the originals!

Lets move on to the McNulty boats liquidation in 2002.....

David McNulty lasted 5 years building these boats then went into liquidation the day after the Southampton Boat Show finished 6 years ago.

At this time Bob approached Kate Watkinson again by writing a letter and a direct telephone call offering to pay the licensing fee of £10,000 per annum for the Drascombe name. No response was made to the letter, the phone call was cut off.

Once Bob heard about the McNulty liquidation he immediately rang the acting liquidators for McNulty to ask to put a bid on the boat tooling that they had been using to take it off the market.

The liquidators asked "what boat tooling"- there was no boat tooling for these type of boats on the premises of McNulty.

At this point it must be said that McNultys went into liquidation owing some £800,000 to creditors.

They were not taken over by Churchouse Boats as some sources say but owed a substantial sum to creditors who were not paid.

Surprisingly a few weeks later Stewart Brown announced that he was now going to build the "Drascombe" boats.

The tooling must have left prior to the McNulty liquidation. No doubt that this had been done to avoid the problems that had occurred some years earlier with the sale of Honnor Marine (UK) Ltd and the loss of control of the tooling.

Since then we have built up the business to what it is to-day through commitment and hard work.

Bob and I worked long hours (and still do) and keep our attention focused on supplying and building these lovely classic boats at very affordable prices in order for families to be able to enjoy these lovely boats.

It is now 12 years on and we feel that we have kept the name of Honnor Marine very "honourable" and have built up a good reputation with all our customers and suppliers.



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Our quality is second to none- We OWN our premises and have invested heavily in all departments- we make everything in house (excluding fasteners!).

We laminate the boats, make our own custom built trailers (including roller coaster varieties) have a fully equipped carpentry workshop and even make our own custom Tufnol blocks. Details can be seen on our web site:

<http://www.honnormarine.co.uk>

It is sad that the majority of Drascombe boat owners do not know the full story about us. This is why we have decide to publish this summary.

Bob Brown is the only person to have been refused membership of the Drascombe Association and certain members of the committee (not all we must add) will not allow us to advertise our boat spares in the magazine.

This is generally because they are in most cases at a lower price than the licensed builder, although they are of equal quality, in some cases of better quality due to the use of original tooling.

It has been of great loss to the members of the Association of our services if they are not aware of us through their magazine and web site- as a lot of the mouldings for the original boats (such as Mk1/M11 lugger hatches) we possess. We even make the Scaffie, and has been a strong seller, even though the Drascombe Association site states it is no longer in production!

We go to as many boat shows as time allows, to let the our prospects and customers see our quality products and for them to get to know us.

This has enabled us to achieve our best year ever in 2008 and to move forward into 2009 with confidence whilst other boat builders are struggling to survive. This is not by luck or by offering a "cheap product"- but by offering products and services of excellent quality at prices that can be afforded. We offer a personalised service to all our customers, as we consider that buying a boat must be a pleasurable experience!. We say when you buy a boat from Honnor Marine you "join the family".



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We have built up an excellent rapore with a lot of Drascombe owners but it is the majority who do not understand the true story as we have been unable to convey it to them. Hopefully this document will go some way for owners of these beautiful boats and members of the Drascombe Association to understand the facts.

Bob and Norma



Beale Park 2008

Appendix 1 December 2010:

After much hard work by the Committee of the Drascombe Association this decision was reversed in Summer 2010. We thank all members who have made this possible.