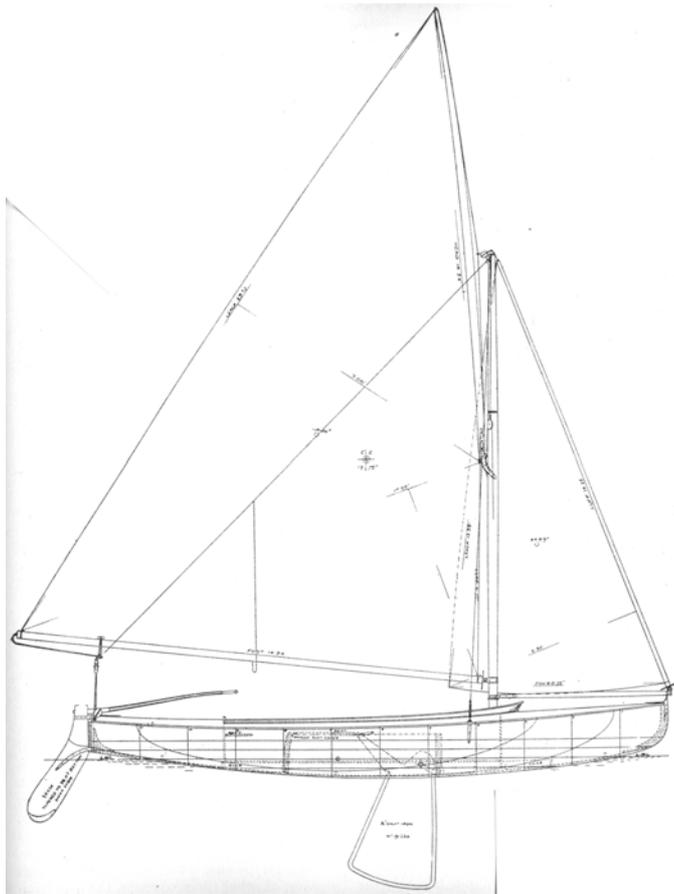


LOUGH ERNE CLASSIC YACHT ASSOCIATION

Linton Hope One-Designs Lake Naini Tal, India

In the first of a series of articles on Linton Hope's one-designs we feature his work for the Naini Tal Yacht Club in India and its connections with the Enniskillen Yacht Club.



One-design class centerboard gunter sloop rig yacht designed by Linton Hope and built by R. J. Turk & Sons, Kingston-on-Thames between 1911 and 1913

During the hey day of the British Raj, before the Great War, every year at the beginning of the hot weather the majority of Europeans migrated to hill stations, to escape the excessive heat of the plains that lasted for five to six months. Dotted about India were various stations, varying in popularity according to the opportunities for sport and amusement they offered. Perched as they are, in most cases, on top of precipitous razor-backed hills, flat places, even large enough for ball games, were hard to find. Life, though cool, was apt to be a bit dull. The town of Naini Tal was one of these hill stations, in the Kumaon division of the United Provinces, 6,400ft. above sea level, in the foothills of the Himalayas. Naini Tal was modeled on a small English town, with several European school, Churches, army barracks and a convalescent depot for soldiers. In 1901 the population was recorded at 7,609. Popular as a sanatorium for the residents

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of the plains it was also the headquarters of the provincial Government. Situated on a lake and surrounded by high mountains, it was subject to many landslides, making the approach from the plains only possible by the Rohilkhand & Kumaon Railway from Bareilly, which had its terminus at Kathgodam and then 22 miles by cart road to the town.

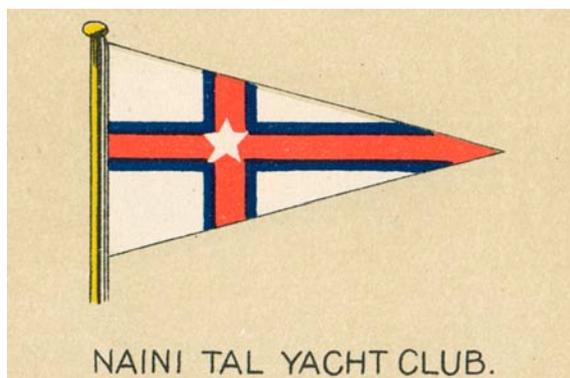
Recreation was somewhat limited due to the geography of the place, but yachting had always been popular. The Lake Naini Tal Sailing Club was founded in 1897 and contained an odd mixture of boats. Some were native built, a few imported, the others copies of English designs, but the best was *Wave*, owned by Col. Harry N. Thompson. Built on the *Dee*, *Wave* was sent out to Bombay, where Thompson purchased her and had her transported to his new posting at Naini Tal. Up until this point in time yacht racing on the lake was described in the yachting press as being mere 'bumble-puppy', meaning without fixed rules, with a handicapping system that resulted in some boats finishing last, but on time difference, actually winning. Thompson recognized that unless a one-design fleet was introduced the sport of yachting would not properly develop. In 1910, together with two brothers and fellow army officers, named C. W. and F. Carey, Thompson founded the Naini Tal Yacht Club. After much discussion between members it was agreed to start a privately owned O. D. class. Thompson became the Club's first Commodore and the driving force behind the decision to place an order for a new class of boat with the yacht designer Linton Hope.



All the original Linton Hope boats survive to this day, but the fleet name 'Half-Raters' has, over the years, been corrupted to 'Half-Rafters'

His choice of designer was not a random one. Thompson was born in Ireland, the son of the Rector of Clonmany, Donegal. After taking a medical degree he joined the army, rapidly rising through the ranks of the Royal Army Medical Corps. He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in 1904 and following a posting to India; Thompson was placed in charge of the army convalescent depot in Naini Tal with the rank of full Colonel. On his many return visits to Ireland he enjoyed yachting on Lough Erne with one of his relatives, Rev. Walter Stack, a member of Enniskillen Yacht Club and part owner of the Fairy Class yacht *Snipe*. Undoubtedly Thompson's experience of one-design racing, on a body of water not dissimilar to Lake Naini Tal, led to the recommendation of Linton Hope for the design job; the boats all built by the well-known firm of R. J. Turk & Sons, a company Hope had many dealings with over the years.

The class was limited to ten boats and by 1913 was fully taken up. The first of the new boats arrived in 1911. Each cost £110 landed at Naini, considerably more than the cost of a Fairy Class yacht, but considering the distances involved and the logistics of hauling boats over miles of mountain track, perhaps represented a very good price. Shortly after the boats were delivered the yachting press reported, "the old salts of Naini shook their heads: "very nice in light breezes," they said, "but what about the Cheena squalls?" Despite the doubters the new boats proved an instant success. The strong and sometimes unpredictable winds of the lake were no match for the boats rugged construction. In light winds, with a good man at the tiller, they held their own with the best of the older boats, including Thompson's *Wave*, which had a sail area almost twice as big, while on hard blows they frequently raced when the older boats would not go out. Occasionally they did upset, but if the crew clambered onto the centerboard (½in. galvanized iron plate weighting 191 lbs.) the boats righted themselves directly any weight touched the plate, in fact, if a person did not get back quickly he would find himself in the water.



Ownership of the boats changed many time over the years as club members were posted elsewhere in India or returned home and it is interesting to note that in the list of members the name Stack and Lemon also appear. Col. G. H. Stack (related to Rev. Stack) and his daughter, Marcia Stack lived in India for sometime and returned to Fermanagh in the early 1920s and joined the EYC, sailing with Harry Thompson in *Snipe* and *Petrel*.

R. Ernest Lemon, another EYC member and Fairy owner was a Lieutenant in the Indian Army, but after the war he was stationed at Naini Tal in an administrative role. In June 1925 the Fermanagh Times reported Ernest Lemon had returned from India for the summer 'ill-health has brought him home and we sincerely hope that "Paxie" and Lough Erne will soon bring about his speedy return to good health.' He never returned to India.

Thompson's tour of duty in India ended in 1913; 'It is with very great regret that the club has said good-bye to him, for, though no longer so young as when he first came to Naini, he was still one of the best helmsmen on the lake, and in almost the last race that he sailed had the satisfaction of carrying off the single-handed cup.' His boat, *Wave*, "the best on the lake", was purchased by the new Commodore, Sir James Meston, Lieut.-Governor of the United Provinces. During the Great War Thompson served with great distinction with various divisions and earned the nickname 'Handsome Harry.' He receive many honours including the French Croix de Guerre with two palms and the American Distinguished Service Medal for 'exceptionally meritorious services.' In 1919 he was knighted. He retired from the army to live at Dromard, Kesh, where he became actively engaged once more in yachting earning another nickname "Grand Old Man" of Lough Erne sailing.' He purchased *Petrel* from Lough Gill, had her brought to Lough Erne and completely refitted. One of the silver trophy cups he presented to the EYC is called the 'Dromard Cup.' Major-Gen. Sir Harry Neville Thompson, KCMG, CB, DSO, died on 28 June 1925 on the Isle of Wight and is buried in Omagh. Marcia Stack took over the ownership of *Petrel* in 1925 and in 1926 ownership passed to R. Ernest Lemon. After ten years, ownership passed to the Marquis of Ely, ending the Indian connection with Lough Erne sailing.

Today, Nainital, as the name of the town is now spelt, is in the state of Uttarakhand. All the Linton Hope boats survive, owned by the Club that Harry Thompson founded almost 100 years ago; a lasting reminder of Edwardian sporting life in the mountains of British India.

Linton Hope Half-Raters - Dimensions

Length overall: 18ft.

Length waterline: 15ft.

Breadth: 5ft.

Draught: 7½ in.

Draught (with centerboard deployed): 4 ft. 3in.

Tonnage: 2 tons (Thames Measurement)

Sail Area: 200 sq. ft. union silk (original supplier Ratsey & Laphorn)

Yacht Names, Owners (1919-20) and Yacht Build Year

<i>Katina</i>	Capt. J. C. Pearse & Capt. A. A. Smith	1911
<i>Kestrel</i>	Sir Harcourt Butler, KCSI, CIE	1911
<i>Molly</i>	J. T. Hunt	1912
<i>Pirouette</i>	Maj. C. W. Carey & Capt. F. Carey	1911
<i>San Toy</i>	Lt.-Col. H. Carr, RAMC	1912
<i>Scout</i>	Col. G. H. Stack, R.E.	1911
	(1922-23)	
<i>Scout</i>	Maj. E. P. Anderson, DSO, RE, & R. E. Lemon	
	(1922-23)	
<i>Spray</i>	E. Simmons	1913
	(1922-23)	
<i>Stella</i>	E. A. Smythies	1912
	(1919-20)	
<i>Una</i>	W. E. M. Campbell, ICS	1912

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Association's New Website

The Association plan for a website to be up and running within the next few months. As well as news and contact information etc., images and news about the Fairy Class yachts and past copies of the Newsletter will be available to view or download as pdf pages.

Edward Saunderson

The 'Wizard' & His Witch



Col. Edward James Saunderson, MP (1837-1906) 'the "Wizard of Lough Erne" should be remembered as having made the largest and most significant contribution to the development of yacht design, building and racing on the Lough.'

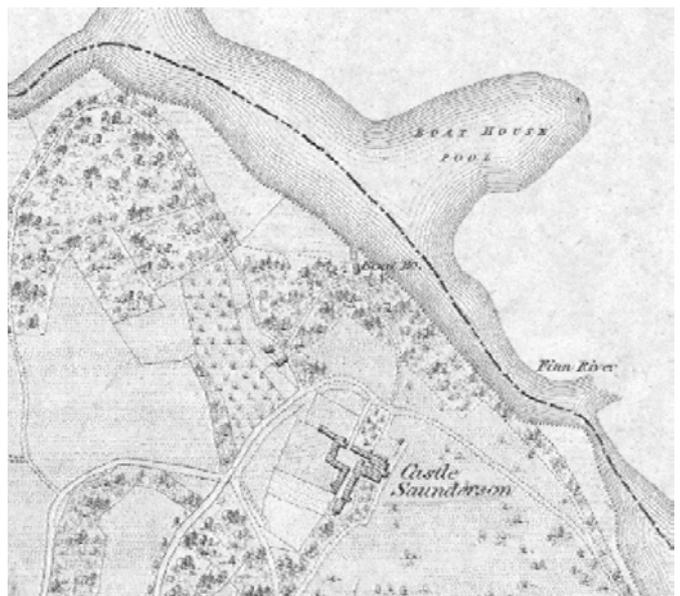
Edward Saunderson was born at Castle Saunderson in County Cavan on the banks of Upper Lough Erne. He was the son of Alexander Saunderson, MP for Cavan, his mother a daughter of the 6th Baron Farnham. Saunderson was educated aboard and, having succeeded to the Caven estates on the death of his father, married in 1865 a daughter of the 3rd Baron Ventry and in the same year was elected MP for the county. He lost his seat in 1874 to a 'Home Ruler' and when he again entered Parliament for North Armagh, he had become a prominent Orangeman and a Conservative; the question of Irish Home Rule had now come to the fore and Saunderson's political career as a representative Irish Unionist began. He entered the Caven Militia (4th Batt. Royal Irish Fusiliers) in 1862, becoming its Colonel in 1886 and in command of a battalion from 1891 to 1893. Almost from the first he became leader of the Irish Unionist party in the House of Commons; his uncompromising speeches being full of force and humour. In private Saunderson, it was stated, had a character marked by stern religious feelings and fine sincerity, that endeared him to his friends, but never lost him the respect of his opponents.

Although Saunderson had no formal training in the design or building of boats, he showed great natural ability and every moment of his free time was taken up with the design, building and racing of yachts. He designed his first yacht in 1862, at the age of twenty-five, when he was living in England

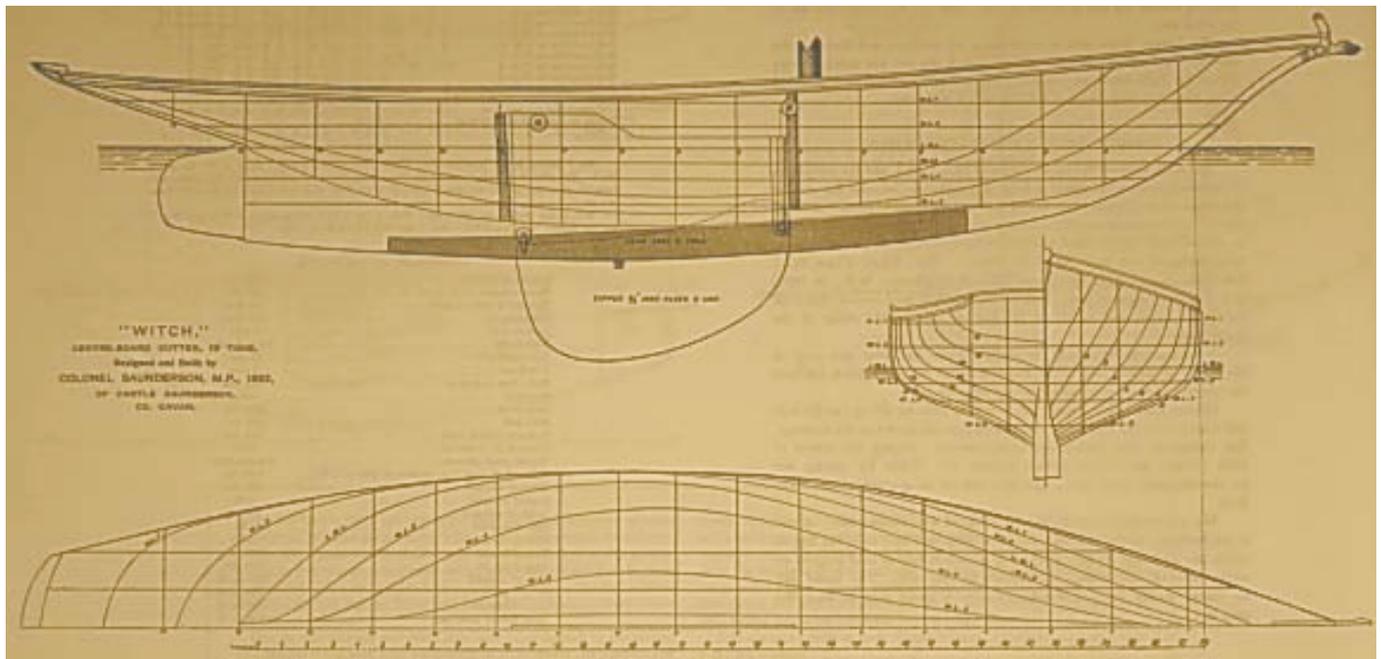


Becalmed on Lough Erne - the centerboard cutter *Witch*, with the steam launch *Firebrand* (32ft. 6in. LOA) lying alongside. *Firebrand* was designed and built by John Pomeroy at St. Angelo in 1879 and at the time one of the largest launches on the Lough - Fermanagh Museum

A year later Saunderson took up residence at the Castle. One of his first successes was *Imp*, designed to compete against Lord Erne's *Gossamer*, built by Marshall of Dublin and G. Gartside Tipping's *Spray*. He defeated both. In reply Lord Erne ordered a new cutter from William Fife, senior, of Fairlie and Saunderson designed and built *Sprite* another winner.



All his boats were built at the Castle Saunderson Boathouse and fitted out in the Boat House Pool. This was his playground and together with a team of boatwrights employed on the estate and managed by Charles McCabe from Enniskillen, they produced some of the largest and fastest



Witch (dimensions as altered in 1882)
Length overall: 38ft. 9in. Breadth: 12ft. 6in
Draught (with centerboard deployed): 4ft. 6in.
Tonnage: 21 tons (Thames Measurement)
Sail Area: 2,000 sq. ft. (Ratsey & Laphorn)

racing yachts on the Lough. Chief among his many creations was his beloved *Witch*. The shallow waters of the Upper and the turbulence of Lower Lough Erne, necessitated a compromise in design between the shallow American centreboarder yachts and the deeper-bodied English keel boats. Lloyd's recorded *Witch's* build date as 1877; Dixon Kemp, noted yacht designer and writer of several important books on the design and construction of racing yachts, recorded her build date as 1878 and it maybe that she was completed in that year. Kemp also noted that at the time of her construction a 'large fleet of various sizes from 18ft. to nearly 40ft. in length – some thirty or forty in all – of these centre-board yachts are on the Lough, and most of them were designed and built by their owners.' Saunderson devised a method of raising or lowering the forward or after end of the centreplate, or 'dipper' as it was called, by means of two winches, this allowed for any amount of 'tuning' adjustments to be made. Sometimes whilst sailing in shallow waters only the after end of the 'dipper' was raised; but at all times, with

the forward end below the keel, lateral resistance was found to be very effective. The 'dipper' was made of 5/8in. boilerplate and weighed 11 cwt. A channel cut inside the centerboard case at the fore end 1 1/4in. deep and 2in. wide, the edges protected by iron plates, allowed the 'dipper' with its locating stud to smoothly travel up and down and trough the lead ballast keel that weighted 5-tons. *Witch* was altered in 1880 by filling out the bow and rounding up the fore foot, these major structural alterations considerably improved performance. During the winter of 1882, he further altered *Witch* giving her an overhanging swan stem and the plan (above) is as she was finally completed.

Saunderson, the most prolific and creative of designers, not satisfied with designing and building yachts for himself, built for his friends including Dean Massy Beresford at St. Hubert's and Viscount Bangor at Castle Ward. The original design for the coat of arms of the LEYC and drawn by Saunderson, survives to this day, its motto 'on a boat we are rivals, on land we are friends' aptly demonstrated the friendly rivalry that existed between yachtsmen at the time.

Edward Saunderson, the 'Wizard of Lough Erne,' should be remembered and honoured as having made the largest and most significant contribution to the development of yacht design, building and racing on the Lough.



Bonito, designed by Saunderson for Viscount Bangor and built by Charles McCabe in 1884 at Castle Ward's Boathouse on the banks of Strangford Lough, bore a striking resemblance to *Witch* as completed in 1878

Fairy Class List - Update

Thanks go to Alan and Warren Cooper, Michael Whaley and John Phillips for providing information helping to fill in some of the gaps in the Fairy Class Owners List. We hope to circulate an amended copy to Association members in the near future.

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