



Testreport from Martin Smith – Editor of UK-Magazine “Classic-Boat”

There's much activity going on around the Elephant Boatyard as we wander along the pathways to our meeting with Mark Chapman, the UK marketer of the Scangaard 21. The Elephant is an old-school yard, and it's got more than its share of classics in varying states of repair; it's the kind of place that you'd remember wandering around as a kid. Activity about the yard seems and sounds brisk for the time of year, as a decent spell of weather towards the end of February has brought the fact that the season's start is perhaps just a couple of months away into focus for a few owners. Power tool and hammering noises reverberate around, and it seems a fitting place to be coming to review a boat with the Scangaard's blend of history and modernity. In fact, when we meet with Mark Chapman, managing director of Global Yachts, he gives this as one of the reasons that he's keeping the boat here rather than down Hamble at Global's main facility at Hamble Point Marina: he feels The Elephant yard is the right place to show off a classic.

The idea is that the Elephant's background will set the right tone for the series of try-out sails for potential owners that Mark has planned, for we are lucky enough to be seeing the boat at an extremely early stage in its introduction to the UK market. In fact, we're the first aboard. The Scangaard has only been in the UK since just before Christmas and as yet none has been sold into the market. Mark though is keen to quickly set about working down a list of half a dozen or so names that have signed up for a closer look at Padua, as the one-and-only UK Scangaard is named, at the boat's first public outing in this country at the Earls Court Boatshow. In fact, Mark only received Padua two weeks before the show started in December, so it was a rush to get her in shape and there's still some shaking down to do before she's properly set up for the market here. But Mark has agreed to let us out for a sail while there are still some issues in flux. And after a long winter, we're just keen to get out for a sail.

Mark has been snatching time aboard the little dayboat whenever he can in order to get comfortable with her handling characteristics and, as he begins talking about the sailing that he's done since Christmas, it's easy to see that he's been having a ball. He mentions ghosting the engineless Padua gently through the moorings in the fading winter light, trying to get in as the evening breeze dies, and making the most of every puff and catspaw; as well as experiencing some more threatening conditions. Though the forecast for the day of our test sail was for the latter conditions, a look at the flat thinnish cloud overhead prompts us to put away waterproofs and implies that we're in for the former instead. The cloud is extremely benign and looks like it could dissolve before long.

First sight of the Scangaard is not a disappointment, and the overwhelming impression is of doughty simplicity and a cleanliness of line. The fore deck is noticeably expansive and with just a single grabrail running down its centre, it is pleasingly unadorned yet practicable for sliding forward from the cockpit to the forestay area if needs be. Leaning forward or over the sides from the cockpit is made more comfortable as the forward ends of the teak slat benches that run down each side are finished a good 18 inches before the aft end of the deck, so this can be done from a standing posture rather than kneeling if the benches were full length. It's a small feature,



but one that, like the moulded non-slip coatings on the side and foredecks, facilitates easy movement around the boat.

Fittings and fixtures are a mixture of makes, but all of good quality, and modern design, and the teak tiller is a particularly artistic blend of curve and tapers. I begin to crawl over the little hull and immediately a huge amount of stowage space becomes apparent. With a fairly broad entry and a modest counter, ending in a wide, angled, wine-glass transom, she's got relatively blunt ends for what is effectively a portly one-design racer, as a consequence, lockers forward and aft have plenty of space. Each locker ends in a bulkhead that can either be sealed to provide additional buoyancy, allowing her to float if swamped, or could be given a hatch door for even more stowage, and it's good to see that even the hard to get at surfaces and edges are flow-coated smooth. When I mention the spaces to Mark he makes it clear that for day-sailing the additional storage is irrelevant as there's so much available already – there's even more open stowage beneath the slat benches – but with all this volume and plenty of width to the cockpit, I'm beginning to see a market for using her as a really sleek camper-sailer. The deep keel is not ideal for shallow waters, but you could have a lot of fun overnighting while exploring harbours and estuaries. She is RCD Category D rated, so is permitted to venture into sheltered coastal waters when up to force 4 is expected, so you'd have to pick your weather, but there would be a lot of fun to be had. I mention to Mark about offering the option of boards to fill in across the slat seats making a double-sized sleeping platform and perhaps a third on the floor beneath, and he seems amenable, going on to point out that in future models there will be pad-eyes fitted to each sidedeck for securing a cockpit tent or fenders. So there could well be some mileage in the idea. The overall finish, as you'd expect for a boatshow boat, is very good and the hull is undoubtedly of classic lineage, but more of her heritage later (see panel) for now the time has come to sail.

We have to plan our movements with care as what wind there is is flukey and we have no other motive power. With the jib hanked on, we hoist it and follow it up with the main, both sails sit a little limply, but with the breeze off the land we should pick up a little more power if we can get out in to the river. We warp around a slender classic ex-racer and a GRP workboat, before jumping aboard and ghosting into the turn-of-the-tide stream. Sure enough, the sails fill and the hull immediately comes alive. As we round a corner the river broadens, bankside flora diminishes and the cats paws ahead promise more wind. And so it proves, for the next couple of hours we tack and jibe for the cameras with what feels like a gently increasing, mildly gusty breeze. The impression of an easily driven hull is borne out as she readily accelerates through these gusts, though it's at these times when a tenderness becomes apparent. I think if I owned a Scangaard, I'd explore beefing up the ballast, perhaps with a keel band, as Padua seems a little too eager to dip her rails. There's never any bother though, even as I test the limits of heel, the keel-hung rudder retains impressive bite and she remains controllable even when over-healed. I ought to admit here that I hadn't intended to go as far over as we did, but the main sheet snatchblock is fixed directly to the floor, and at present it's impossible to get the line low enough to release it in a rush, particularly when you're out on the rail. A method other than stamping on the sheet, which I resorted to in the end, needs to be sought, probably by fitting a different type of snatch block, and is just one of those jobs that Mark is working on.

Being an ex-engineer, Mark gives competent explanations of the genuinely minor flaws that have materialised to date, and when he's worked out how best to set up future boats he'll feed the



information back to the factory in Germany so that the modifications can be incorporated in future boats. He's also been working on how to fit a propulsion system – either electric or petrol – and at present feels that a side-mounted petrol outboard might be the best installation; he's tried many of the electric options but can't get a reasonable enough range to make it worthwhile. There is a huge amount of space below the cockpit sole that seems ripe for filling with batteries, but with any water that comes over the side draining straight into the bilges keeping them dry may be an issue.

For the time being though, purity is reigning and Padua is extremely well behaved. The original design, which came from renowned German boatbuilders, Abeking and Rasmussen, was intended for a fleet of boats for a sail-training school in the Baltic, so that's where her manners come from. Unlike some of the slightly hyper active one-designs, you always know where you are in the Scangaard and on the helm she is positive, with a good weight to the tiller, the boom is high enough above the deck to make ducking from side to side during tacks undaunting. As we flip around among some swinging moorings, I become increasingly confident with her movement and we climb right up to the boats before a big swing on the tiller and her bow steers quickly through the wind and off on the new tack. She's so well behaved, in fact, that on the few times when I erroneously pinch up prior to tacking, there's time to correct and still no drama as she goes through her routine immaculately.

I had felt that the two small stainless steel winches would perhaps be superfluous, but the jib is larger than I'd thought, and they are definitely a help when tacking, and a couple of turns around them means that a crew member can sit out to windward controlling the sheet without cleating off. There are an additional pair of winch pads moulded in to the gunwhale further aft, so it would seem that flying a spinnaker might also be an option.

Eventually we head back upriver again towards our pontoon and as we once again round the bend in the river, the spinnaker seems like it would have been a good option as the wind dies. Somehow, though, there is always just enough wind to keep steerage and progress us over the ebbing stream, allowing us to manoeuvre back onto the mooring at a controlled and relaxed paced: fortune favours the engineless sailor.

Having now become more familiar with the Padua, I survey her with different eyes. Her lines are without doubt attractive, but there has also been considerable thought given to the detail. The deck moulding is made with a long lip that overhangs the hull moulding by a good 11/2in (37mm) forming a natural rubbing band. But left like this the corner would look very plain, so two narrow teak rubbing strips, one on the deck – optional – and one on the hull side – standard – form a very practical and attractive feature. Also the teak-faced plywood sole, with three small access panels to the bilges, has a reassuringly solid feel, even around the openings. There may, for now, be a few areas that can be tuned to make her easier to sail, but Mark is well on top of these and the German/Finnish-based manufacturers, Degerö, are not only able to incorporate these changes, but they're keen to stress that the yard is flexible and will gladly adapt the design to owners requests or one-off alterations.

It will be interesting to see what the future hold for the Scangaard 21. She would so obviously make a great one-design racer that it's tempting to imagine a new classic racing class starting once there are a few more around. If that happens though, the racers are likely to 'advance' the design, releasing more of her performance potential and losing all the endearing simplicity and



accessibility. Alternatively, she would make a great weekender for exploring sheltered areas with a friend. For now though, she is simply a fun dayboat with masses of appeal. Mark, though, is rightly not concerned, he knows he's got a winner.

History

In 1943 the German Laeisz shipping company, unable to use its freight ships due to the war, decided to train its cadets on a new fleet of sailing dinghies. So the firm approached renowned designers and builders Abeking & Rasmussen to produce a small number of wooden sail training boats that could be utilised to give the young recruits an understanding of the intricacies of sailing. The class was to be named Padua after the company's largest ship. Two sizes were produced by A&R, the 20ft version that has been updated and reproduced today, and a smaller version. Around 10 or 12 20-footers were built for Laeisz and it is believed around 25 to 30 were produced in total. There are still six of these boats in use in the area around the German/Danish border today.

Following the war, Erich F Laeisz became president of Germany's offshore sailing association, Deutsche Hochseesport-Verband Hansa (DHH), which is still, today, Germany's best-known sailing academy. Laeisz's awareness of the Padua's capabilities meant that by 1951 the 20ft dinghies were being employed as the sea-school's basic trainer. By the 1980s, though, the amount of maintenance and upkeep required of the wooden workhorses was becoming excessive, and the school set about producing Paduas in GRP. These proved equally successful, becoming known as the Hanseatische Kieljolle, or Hans KJ, and have since been used to train thousands of sailors. Once the school's fleet had been produced, the moulds were discarded and fell into disuse and disrepair.

Twenty years later, following a chance visit by members of the Degerö yard, the moulds were discovered in the ownership of Danish boatyard Æroskøbing. Recognising the beauty and practicality of the boat, but not knowing its history, Degerö decided that building the boats would be ideal to form part of the training for its own apprentices. The moulds were in a poor state, but following refurbishment, two boats were produced and the sale of these caused so much demand that the company decided to build new moulds for further production.

The chance to make new moulds also offered the opportunity to update and amend, and so alterations were made to give more buoyancy aft, a slightly longer waterline and a fully internal ballast system. The new Padua was shown at the 2005 Hamburg Boat Show with updated rig and fittings and soon feedback from owners highlighted further areas that might still be improved upon.

The conclusion of that updating process was the Scangaard 21. The lengthened dinghy now incorporates modern sandwich and vacuum forming construction techniques, internal ballast and improved cockpit design.

The resurrection is now complete, but the responsibility for the building of the Scangaard 21 still lies with the Degerö's apprentices.



Technical Data

LOA: (6.4m)

Beam: (1.9m)

Draught: (0.95m)

Displ: (800kg)

Ballast: (400kg)

Sail area

Main: (11.2sqm)

Jib: (7.1sqm)

CE cat: D

Basic boat price including aluminium mast and boom, mainsail and jib, wooden tiller, teak rubbing strake, deck fittings and manual bilge pump is £13,950 including VAT.
