

Dinghy Cruising

The Quarterly Journal Of The Dinghy Cruising Association



Autumn 2020 | Bulletin N° 247



- Red Admiral, Part II
- Proas: A Solution Defined the Question
- The Smiths, *Nova Espero* & The Solent
- To France in a 14ft Dinghy — in 1951
- Sailing & Pedalling Through the *Kleinseenplatte*
- 'Great Escapes' — Sailing after Lockdown

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If you are a paid-up DCA member and have an email address, you can register to join the **DCA FORUM** and become one of the contributing group. Instructions on how to join and a link to the Forum can be found on the website:

www.dinghycruising.org.uk/forum.

Why not join us?

DCA Membership Subscription: £24 pa

Contact Tony Nield, New Membership Secretary (*above left*), or visit our Website (*see top right of this page*)

Cover Picture:

This painting by David Weston is a visualisation of the final stage of his circumnavigation of Cornwall, recorded in the third book of the project, *Epic Over & Out*. Part II of *Red Admiral* appears on page 40, with David's text and pictures. Further comment on the cover picture may be found in my editorial—Ed

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Razorbills

Editor's Letter

Keith Muscott

JUST AFTER DAVID WESTON SAW the five cows looking down on him in the Tamar, silhouetted on the bank with their ears sticking out like stetson brims (see page 45), a much brighter image flashed across the scene:

An exception to the rule of green,
a microsecond pleases —
kingfisher against white hull,
as different from chalk as cheese is

If you are confused by the cover picture, these words might point a way in. In his online catalogue he says, 'The final volume of the circumnavigation (*Epic Over & Out*) is illustrated here, complete with that favourite Cornish cheese, Edam! I sign my work with a stylised fish. Here you have at least 32.'

That should help a bit, too.

I know that some of you bought David's book *Red Admiral* after reading Part I. If you are interested but are yet to buy, please keep in mind that he sells new copies on his website at a much lower price than the secondhand book bandits sell used copies. Two of the three big books that preceded *Red Admiral* are still available, too:
davidwestongallery.co.uk/store/products

In Ben Jones's introduction to *The End and Beyond with the Great White* (DC246), the text stated that *Epic* flew a Beaufort dinghy's jib as a mainsail, which is clearly wrong — it is a Bosun jib. That mistake was mine, not Ben's, committed when I had my mind on Beauforts while editing; you may remember why. And proof-reading the last issue became a very rushed job, so it was unnoticed. Apologies.

You would have to be insane or a millionaire to buy certain Stan Smith books secondhand these days, but let me remind you that *Smiths at Sea* and *October Potter* can be bought online, in e-book and print editions, from **shop.robinsomes.co.uk**. And very good value they are. See details at the end of Robin's article (page 70).

There was discussion on the forum earlier in the year concerning a pdf version of the Journal instead of the existing paper version, and how this would be the right choice to avoid the need for a rise in subscription (see next page). Now that the dust has settled, I can say that there has indeed been a rise in the numbers wanting to receive



photo: JH

a pdf. There are 26 now, 3.9% of the membership, as opposed to only one previously. The 3.9% includes some applicants who were part of the sharp rise in membership that occurred when Jennifer created an online application form within the Website.

Their numbers may well increase further when the new rates for overseas members are applied (see next page again), but perhaps not. I am not disappointed to see this increase; I have after all been supplying a pdf for one or two members for about the last five years. Plans are already in place for the efficient distribution of the 26+, with checks to ensure that they arrive in good order.

Last but emphatically not least, I wish to post my heartfelt thanks to my partner Jenny, who has helped with the Journal in so many ways and is making such a good job of the Website. The Journal is once more a source of delight for me, not just of satisfaction. KM



All material for DC248 – paper, digital images and text – should be sent to Keith Muscott at the email or postal address given on page 2 as soon as possible.

DESTITUTUS VENTIS REMOS ADHIBE

'When the wind will not serve, take to the oars'

DC Association Business, Autumn 2020

Notification of Subscription Increase, and Due Date of Subscriptions

At our last AGM we discussed income and expenditure for the Association. Our largest expense is production of our excellent quarterly journal. This provides one of the most important ways for our members to communicate.

Many years have passed since our last subscription increase and we are now at a point where the production and postage costs of the journal alone outstrip our annual subscription income, eating into our reserves.

Our new subscription arrangements will differentiate between UK and overseas members, whose postage costs for the journal are considerably greater. Also, the journal has been offered in pdf format for some time for those members who may prefer this. Overseas members can choose the pdf option at the same rate as UK members if they wish and not receive the hard copy journal. I suspect many will stay with the hard copy.

For 2021 and onwards we have moved the due date for annual subscriptions to the earlier date of **1st February**. This will allow officers to undertake most of the membership administration during the darker, colder days of winter instead of doing this later in the year when they could be sailing.

Those members who currently pay by Direct Debit, saving us a considerable amount of work, will have their annual debit altered automatically, with email notification by GoCardless of the increase in good time for their consideration. Here are the new annual subscription fees for 2021 onwards:

UK Members £30, with the choice of a paper journal or a pdf

Overseas Members £35 for a paper journal

Overseas Members £30 for a pdf journal

Jeff Rogers, Treasurer

Membership Lists

In order to test a system for sharing membership information with those who would like to make contact with other members in their local area or check their own membership number, a password protected page has been created on the website: dinghycruising.org.uk — it can be found in the **Members Section**.

Two lists are available — one alphabetical with membership numbers, names and email addresses, and one sorted by region and county, which also contains details of members' boats and sailing areas. No addresses or phone numbers will be shared. New members will be added on a quarterly basis.

If any member does not wish to appear on these lists, please let the Website Editor know as soon as possible by emailing jennifer@dinghycruising.org.uk

In order to access these membership lists, please complete the form which you will find in the Members Section of the website and you will be sent a password to access the page. The password will be changed regularly, so your access to the lists will be time limited. We plan to gauge the level of interest in this added membership benefit and then decide whether or not to move to a more sophisticated individual password system in the future.

Jennifer Heney, Website Editor

An Important Alert for Regular Late Payers

We now have a new printer, as our old one is still closed owing to a number of their key workers being vulnerable to Covid-19. It is unlikely that they will open again in the near future, if at all, so we will stick with the new one. The more modern and precise printing machinery used by Craig y Don of Llandudno (the new printer) means that very few if any extras will be printed above the number I order from them.

I arrive at that number by checking the latest members' list at the time I complete an issue. I am particularly careful to ask our Membership Secretary for the names

of non-payers who have not told us that they are leaving the DCA. This year there was a significant number who had not paid by midsummer, but then submitted their subscriptions (after repeated reminders from David Morton) just as we were going to press.

In future anyone who pays so late in the year will receive a pdf version of the journal, by email, as s/he will not have been taken into account when I placed the order, so a printed copy will not be available for them.

Next year's subs will be due by Feb. 1st, of course (see above).

Keith Muscott, Editor

Welcome to our 39 New Members

David Morton

3717	Colin Webb, starspider75@gmail.com	2 Rykhill, Chadwell-St-Mary, Grays, Essex RM16 4RR 01375 405697 / 07475 089912	Small motor cruiser, dinghy planned	East Coast estuaries
3718	Mike Beavan, michaelbeavan@hotmail.com	52 Heol Ffynnon Wen, Pantmawr, Cardiff CF14 7TP 02920 657332 / 07592 805311	Drascombe Lugger	S. Wales, Brittany, Cornwall
3719	Grant Seeley, grantseeley1@gmail.com	07810 655970 Hawk 20 Cabin	Ridings, North Widcombe, West Harptree, Bristol BS40 6HW	South West
3720	Andy Johnstone, a.Johnstone64@btinternet.com	01316 695743 / 07905 151248 Wayfarer	25/3 Brighton Place, Edinburgh, EH15 1LL	E & W Coast of Scotland
3721	Robin Stringfellow, robin.stringfellow@btinternet.com	01983 875823 / 07796 838538 Cornish Cormorant	5 Isenhurst Court, Bembridge, IoW PO35 5XJ	Solent
3722	Graham Burton, graham2burton65@gmail.com	01628 850883 / 07835 254610	47 Highfield Road, Bourne End, Bucks SL8 5BE Swallow Yachts Bay Cruiser 20	South Coast, Poole
3723	Edward Laver, ed@laver.me	07804 611248 GP 14 and Mirror	3 Derrick Avenue, Sanderstead, South Croydon CR2 0QL	Hedgecourt Lake
3724	Alistair Wasey, alistair.wasey@googlemail.com	07789 854801 Percy Blandford Goblin and an Otter	58 Melville Road, Churchdown, Gloucester GL3 2RG	River Severn
3725	Phill Dyne, philld99@yahoo.co.uk	01623 619750 / 07572 510650	14 Cross Drive, Rainworth, Mansfield, Notts NG21 0JU RS200, Supernova, Laser 13	Notts County
3726	Henry Farley, Henryfarley56@gmail.com	01983 564156 / 07515 325624	Augusta Lodge, Augusta Road, Ryde, Isle of Wight PO33 3AT Heard 14' 6" GRP dinghy	Solent
3727	Patrick Gordon, pat.gordon@virgin.net	07502 274880 Drascombe Dabber	Ryehill Farm, Station Road, Great Ayton, N. Yorks TS9 6HE	North East
3728	John Naughton, jonapots@mail.com	353 646 683958 International 420	Fehanagh, Lauragh, Killarney, Co Kerry V93 RX29, Ireland	Kenmare Bay
3729	Toby Cook, toby.c66@hotmail.co.uk	07984 898041 8' Barrow Boat	3 The Lodge, Causewayside, Cambridge CB3 9HD	Fen Rivers
3730	Neil Elliott, neilthomas.ne@gmail.com	07794 840972 Curlew 9 sailing dinghy	Flat 2, 30 Glentworth Crescent, Skegness, Lincs PE25 2TG	The Wash, Lincolnshire coast
3731	Tony Braviner, tony.braviner@hotmail.co.uk	01270 760883 / 07899 063 407 Don Marine Wooden GP14	4B Mill Hill Lane, Sandbach CW11 4PN	Winsford Flash, Windermere
3732	Jake Smith, jakebnk@gmail.com	07523 772305 Drascombe Lugger	4 Upland Gardens, Wembury, Plymouth PL9 0LH	South Coast
3733	Steve Hancock, steve@leeuwenburgh.co.uk	07768 232810 Minicat 420 Inflatable	43 Down Road, Winterbourne Down, Bristol BS36 1BN	Thames, SW Coast
3734	Chris Sherwood, chris.sherwood@virgin.net	01384 395950 / 07974 675 498 Self-build planned	40 Whittington Rd, Norton, Stourbridge DY8 3DB	Not decided
3735	David Bull, dave@davebull.net	07977 453632 Cornish Coble	112 Fawe Park Road, London SW15 2EQ	Thames, coast, lakes
3736	Will Kentish, willkentish@hotmail.com	07809 411550 Drascombe Scaffie	72 Bishops Court, Cambridge CB2 9NN	Suffolk Coast
3737	James Vineer, mde00166@myport.ac.uk	02085 403646 / 07809 432 667 Laser 2	6 Shaldon Drive, Morden, Surrey SM4 4BB	Portsmouth
3738	Sean Smith, Paddyfore@gmail.com	+353 838 362860 Swallow Yachts Bayraider 20	13 Sli na Scoile, Kealkill, Bantry, Co.Cork P75 XK57, Ireland	SW Coast of Ireland
3739	William Boss, williamjamesboss@gmail.com	07941 758379 No boat at the moment	11 Broughton Avenue, Ham, Richmond TW10 7TT	Thames
3740	Kevin Sheffield, kevin@cheiron.co.uk	07976 563690 Planning to get a 17' dinghy	41 White Hedge Drive, St Albans AL3 5TU	W Coast Scotland, SW England

3741	Tim Butcher, Tim-butcher@hotmail.co.uk	7 Jervis Close, St Anne's, Lancs FY8 2RL
	07568 364371	Enterprise
3742	William Lewis, williamalewis@hotmail.com	9 Gabriel Court, Stoke Gabriel, Devon TQ9 6GX
	07597 765633	Wharam Hitia 17
3743	Stephen McCann, mccann_stephen@hotmail.com	21 Old London Road, Benson, Wallingford OX10 6RR
	07718 270746	Wayfarer – World and Mk 1 W315 Woodie, Lark
3744	Jolyon Patten, jolyonpatten@gmail.com	46 Ridgmount Gardens, London WC1E 7AT
	07515 338035	No boat at the moment
3745	Tom Smith, tomsmith_uk@hotmail.com	2 Grange Cottages, Papplewick, Nottingham NG15 8FA
	07817 908307	Laser 13
3746	Piers Skinner, pierskinner@gmail.com	26 St Catherines Hill, Bruton BA10 0DG
	07891 159654	Mirror
3747	Paul Taylor, paul.mister.t@googlemail.com	36 Tarnside Fold, Simmondley, Glossop SK13 6ND
	01457 868155 / 07587 144 640	Westerly 22, planning to get a dinghy
3748	Dyfed Jones, dwjblacksmith@outlook.com	4 Lôn Y Gelli, Dinbych LL16 3DJ
	07900 494686	No boat at the moment
3749	Paul Kennaugh, manxspike@gmail.com	Steigstraße 1, 72622 Nürtingen, Germany
	07624 221069	No boat at the moment
3750	Martyn Webster, martyn@martynwebster.com	38 Chesterfield Avenue, Glasgow G12 0BL
	01413 340261 / 07850 790 738	Wayfarer
3751	Dallas Harris, dallasharris@live.co.uk	2 Houndean Cottage, Brighton Road, Lewes BN7 3JH
	07780 773470	Selway Fisher 16' Petite Brise
3752	Don Ramsay, don.ramsay@outlook.com	162 Seven Sisters Road, Willingdon, Eastbourne BN22 0PB
	07860 703920	Drascombe Dabber
3753	Julian Hector, diomedearchrysostoma@gmail.com	1 Somerset Street, Kingsdown, Bristol BS2 8NB
	07921 525236	Wayfarer
3754	Denis Flores, denisfkercem@gmail.com	134 Mill Street, Tonyrefail, Porth, CF39 8AF
	+34 798 867352 / +34 698 867 352	Selway Fisher 16' Petite Brise
3755	Jeremy Humphreys, jerry999@sky.com	Spain – Alboran Sea
	01443 676 901 / 07949 512668	Wayfarer Mk2
		South and West Wales Coast

Roger Barnes, President

I am pleased to welcome the thirty-nine new members to the Dinghy Cruising Association. Our membership continues to increase, and I would like to hope that this trend will continue. It may seem frivolous to think about cruising a small boat in these difficult times, but maintaining good mental health is important. We need something to look forward to, beyond the current health crisis. I know that many of us have taken the opportunity given by the lockdown to complete programmes of long-overdue maintenance on our boats, and have been eager to take our newly glistening craft out under sail. As I write, we are all now enjoying freer access to the water.

In the meantime, the Association's rally programme has been one of the casualties of the current pandemic. We could not guarantee our rallies would be organised in accordance with evolving health regulations and changing government guidance, so we felt that it was safest to formally cancel the whole programme. But it may be that some rallies can still be rescued in some form later in the year, and members are recommended

to visit the Website and join the Forum (if they have not done so already), where updates will be posted.

It is a delicate balance to keep faith with the treasured traditions of the Association, while at the same time remaining relevant in changing times. In many ways everything remains the same, but there have also been changes. *Dinghy Cruising*, which drops through your letterbox every three months, seems to grow ever more beautiful and comprehensive with each issue. The Website has been extensively revised, so it has become a valuable resource for members, rather than simply an advertisement of the Association, and the Forum is being streamlined. We are also to be found on Facebook – but this is a place for general worldwide chatter and includes non-members. If you want to keep up to date with official DCA news, the Website and the Forum are the places to look.

I hope to see your sails on the horizon as we head towards a rendezvous, and later to share convivial sea yarns with you in a cosy anchorage. *Roger Barnes*

Listening to New Members...3

John Franzese #3704

RECENTLY JOINED THE DCA after completing my winter project. I bought a Ranger 12 that was built in Kent, WA in 1978. It's said to have been made from a mold of an Aldeburgh Lapwing designed by Morgan Giles, which was brought back by a Pan Am pilot in a 747 in the early 1970s.

This particular R12 had one previous owner before me. I fully restored the cockpit and hull to like-new condition. I decided to replace the original aluminium mast, standing rigging, Marconi sail and jib with a sprit rig. I used Douglas Fir for the mast and Sitka Spruce for the sprit yard and boom and designed the mains'l based on a Wineglass Wherry 14ft and the jib off the Haven 12ft using 4.5 oz Dacron in Tanbark.

I replaced the one-piece rudder with a kick-up rudder made of marine ply and Okume. It's been a fun and educational project like fashioning the rope-stropped blocks from ash (roughed, formed, in service). The addition of the brailing line has been worth its weight in gold. Next, I need to add some reefing points to the mains'l. I have not encountered any issues regarding the sprit becoming unwieldy (10-15 kts. sustained gusting to 20-25 kts.), despite the twisting effect some have experienced. I use a boom on days with very light wind, and boomless 90% of the time.

I do not have any reefing points yet. But I plan to sew a few in before the summer is up.

The brailing line works as designed. I ease out the snotter and the mainsheet before sheeting the brailing line. I then walk the clew (with the block in hand) towards the mast while sheeting in the brailing line. Once the brailing line is sheeted in and tied off on the belaying pin, in the thwart near the mast partner, the top half of the mains'l is tight against the mast with the sprit yard, I take the excess brailing line and take a couple of wraps around the lower portion and it's good to go.

I hadn't really thought about making a bow pudding until the other day when the tides and wind decided it wanted to slam the bow into the dock and I needed to jump 11ft from stern to bow to avoid a rather unpleasant incident. It was now time to make a bow pudding...

The tide in Everett is pretty strong (generally ebbing and flowing from -2' to 11'). The docks have large steel couplings in between them without coverings. With a good breeze, it can be disastrous for a dinghy. So the more protection the better.

The whole thing took about 13 hours of weaving, hitching, tugging and wrapping. It was pretty tiring and took a few layers of skin off my index finger despite the leather gloves and sports tape. I used the same method for the rope-stropped blocks for making the loops which I connect with a some short pieces of 5/16" line to the gunwale. *JF (in the Seattle area)*

(Right) John's Ranger, with (top) heavy duty bow pudding in place and (bottom) equally heavy duty boathook being tested, driven into the seabed. Both beautifully made.



LAPWINGS in brief

Lapwings are 12ft 6ins two-person clinker dinghies, designed by Morgan Giles to be sailed on the River Alde. The first one was made in 1947. About 77 have been built in total, of either larch or mahogany.

A number of Lapwings — including Lapwing Number 1 — have been in the same ownership since they were first launched.

Nearly 30 boats are currently active, sailing on the Alde. Many Lapwing owners prefer cruising to racing, and it is the ideal boat for this. Lapwings have two rigs. The larger, white sails are used by adults, and the smaller red sails are the junior and youth rig, though in strong winds lighter adults sometimes use the red sails.

(Information from Aldeburgh SC)



MY NAME IS NEIL and I live in Skegness, Lincolnshire. I'm ex-Royal Navy and had the privilege to serve in HMY Britannia. Each year I normally travel up to Oban where I try to help crew the *Bloodhound*. I say 'normally' because for the last three seasons a combination of work and Covid-19 has led to cancellation. I must admit to being secretly pleased though, as in November 2017 I suffered from heart trouble that required surgery.

Now that I am a bit fitter I have decided that a little dinghy sailing will fit the bill for relaxation and stress relief. And so with this in mind, I have recently bought myself a Curlew 9ft dinghy. An unfortunate event with the trailer left a small hole in the starboard side on the way home from buying her. With a stress-free time in mind, I have taken it in my stride and made repairs. On the plus side it has prompted me to do a bit more sanding and varnishing. Her sail number is 1066, and with this in mind I have named her *Mora*.

I would welcome any advice and knowledge on the Curlew 9ft from any members; especially I'd like to hear from any members that live near to me.

Thank you for reading this small essay, it is good to be with you all. **NE**

Welcome to the DCA, Neil, and I owe you thanks. In 16 years of editing this journal I have never before had the chance to produce a single page containing such disparate vessels as: two royal yachts, a mediaeval Duke's flagship and a 9-foot plywood sailing dinghy!

May you enjoy many years of relaxing sailing and good companionship in the DCA — and robust good health.

Best wishes,
Keith



(Left) Percy Blandford's little 9-footer, CURLEW, seen in the photograph from his old catalogue showing 'boat #1'.

(Below) William's flagship, *Mora*, which conveyed him and Bishop Odo across the Channel to seize a nation by force of arms in 1066. CURLEW 1066 is named after this sail-and-oar galley. (No-one can explain fully the choice of name or its meaning.)



A scene from the Bayeux Tapestry showing *Mora* and the Duke heading for the Anglo-Saxon coast

Neil Elliot #3730

...4



HMY Britannia is listed as part of the National Historic Fleet and a visitor attraction moored in the historic Port of Leith in Edinburgh, Scotland, and cared for by the Royal Yacht Britannia Trust, a registered charity. There was controversy over the siting of the ship, with some arguing that she would be better on the Clyde where she was built.



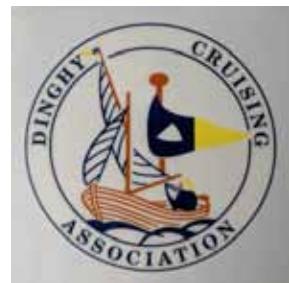
In 1962 *Bloodhound* (above) a Camper & Nicholson racing yacht, was purchased for the Royal Family at the request of Prince Philip. During royal ownership *Bloodhound* accompanied The Royal Yacht *Britannia* in the Western Isles. When not in royal use, *Bloodhound* and her crew were chartered to yacht clubs across the country at a daily fee of £1 (later increased to £2) per participant, and so exposed thousands of people to offshore sailing.

In 1969 *Bloodhound* was sold and effectively retired from racing. In January 2010 she was purchased by The Royal Yacht *Britannia* Trust and is now berthed alongside The Royal Yacht *Britannia* in Leith.

During July and August, the fully restored, 63-foot Royal Racing Yacht is available from Oban Marina for private day-sailing around Scotland's West Coast, for up to eight guests.

DCA Shop

The DCA Shop stocks a range of items carrying DCA branding, which can be purchased by members of the Association. The Shop is run by Liz Baker. If you are based in the UK and would like to buy something from the shop, please download and complete the order form which can be found on the DCA website at: dinghycruising.org.uk/dca-shop. Then send it, together with a cheque made out to the Dinghy Cruising Association, to Liz at the address given on the form. Prices include postage and packing to UK members. Overseas members will be charged extra for postage and should contact Liz, using the contact details available on the order form, to find out how much to pay before ordering. Use of Paypal is accepted from overseas members.



Car sticker

DCA Mugs



The mugs have the DCA burgee on one side and on the other a photograph of members' boats beached at Long Island during a daysail in Langstone Harbour.

Two types of mug are available: one is the usual straight-sided pottery variety which is dishwasher proof and a similar one in Melamine plastic, unbreakable but probably not dishwasher proof.

Price for either type: £8.00

Burgees and Badges

DCA Burgee: Made of nylon - white triangle on blue background, yellow tail. They have an open hem which can be slipped over a small staff and two loops.

Large burgee - 8 ins x 16 ins £15.00
Small burgee - 6 ins x 11 ins £12.50



Lapel badge / brooch:	Hard enamel with DCA burgee	£5.00
Cloth badge:	63 mm x 48 mm oval woven badge with DCA burgee on dark blue background	£3.00
Boat sticker:	Round, 90 mm diameter, with colour DCA badge	£3.00
Car sticker:	As boat sticker but for attaching to any glass window	£3.00

Hats, Sweatshirts and Polo shirts

Baseball cap with badge: Navy blue cotton with DCA printed badge in white, size adjustable £8.00
Baseball cap, no badge: As above but plain to enable you to sew on a cloth badge if you prefer £3.00

Sweatshirts: Navy blue, white DCA badge £17.00

The following sizes are available:

Small	36-38" chest
Medium	38 - 40" chest
Large	40 - 42" chest
Extra large	44 - 46" chest
XXL	above 48" chest



Polo shirts: Royal blue, short sleeves, button-up collar, white DCA badge.
Available in the same size range as sweatshirts £16.00



Knitted hat:
Designed to match the DCA burgee; hand knitted in navy with white triangles around the turned-up brim and a yellow crown.
Two sizes are available (same price): Small (skull cap) and Large £12.00

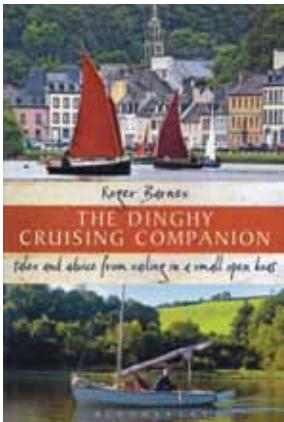
Journal back numbers

An archive of the DCA journal Dinghy Cruising covering the last 60+ years is available on CD

£10.00

DCA Members' Advertisements

Books...



The Dinghy Cruising Companion: Tales and Advice from Sailing a Small Open Boat (1st Edition), by Roger Barnes, President of the DCA

The text covers: Finding a good boat, Fitting out for daysailing, Boatcraft under engine and oar, Mooring and anchoring, Preparing for open water, Out at sea, Coastal navigation, Dinghy homemaking, Keeping comfortable and safe.

Dimensions: 234 X 156 mm. Paperback 256 pages

RRP: £16.99 (Bloomsbury) and online price (Amazon) £11.89

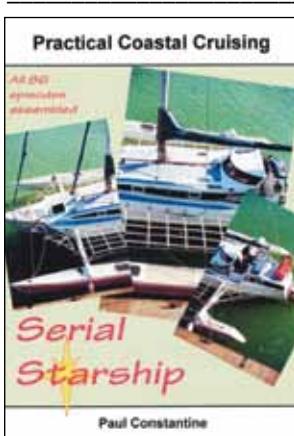
Details: Published 13.03.2014 by Bloomsbury.

Imprint: Adlard Coles

Beautiful colour illustrations and photographs throughout.

Buy online from Bloomsbury:

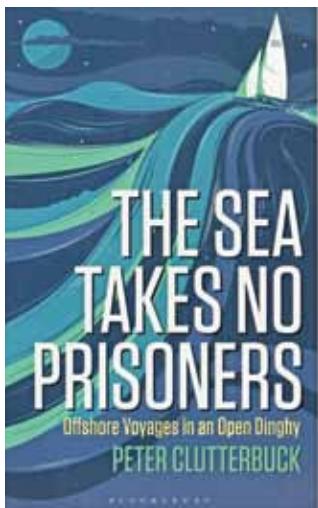
<http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/the-dinghy-cruising-companion-9781408179161/#sthash>.



Practical Dinghy Cruiser (2nd edition) begins at the beginning by asking Who Cruises? and What is Dinghy Cruising? The next question is Can I do it? Sprinkled through Practical Dinghy Cruiser are many references to the DCA's articles that further expand the relevant information and add the experiences of numerous different people, in different boats, in different locations.

Practical Coastal Cruising: Serial Starship tells how Paul singlehandedly builds a 35ft x 22ft cruiser in his garden and then goes on a four year journey to circumnavigate Britain including the Hebrides, Orkney, Fair Isle and Muckle Flugga in Shetland. The story describes the wonderful locations, the varied wildlife as well as the challenge of surviving Force 10 in the open Atlantic and navigating rock strewn passages in thick fog without modern electronic navigation aids.

Both books can be purchased direct from www.moonshinepublications.co.uk and there is a discount for DCA members.



(Left - Current Edition) Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: Adlard Coles Nautical (11 Jan. 2018)

ISBN-10: 1472945719

ISBN-13: 978-1472945716

Product Dimensions: 15.8 x 1.7 x 23.7 cm

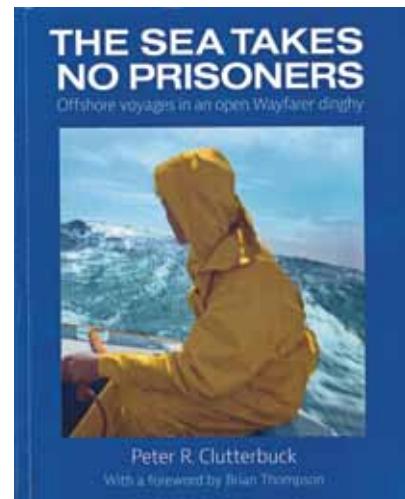
Price: £11.99; RRP £14.99 & \$22.00

Available as a Kindle Edition (£8.77) and as an audio book: Audible (£9.18)

(Right - First edition 2015, no longer available)

Self-published by Peter Clutterbuck

Product dimensions: 26 cm x 21 cm x 1 cm



As soon as Wayfarer#265 entered his life when he turned 14, Peter Clutterbuck's thoughts focused on

cruising adventures. He joined the DCA in 1966 — aged 16 — and on July 27 1966 he attempted a cruise along the South Coast with a school friend, which was aborted late due to vile weather, dangerous seas and major gear failure. He wrote up the log as 'Part I' for his second Bulletin article and it won the Naylor Noggin. The Wayfarer Owners Association inspected his logs and awarded him the Viking Longship Trophy in the same year. As he approached 18, he sailed across the Channel and down to Marseille, via Bordeaux, Toulouse and Sète, achieving the longest voyage made by a class dinghy to that date, for which he was once more awarded the Viking Longship Trophy. These adventures and many more are in Part One of the book, with plenty of advice given along the way, and in Part Two he passes on a fund of experience. Undoubtedly Peter is one of this country's most outstanding dinghy skippers. His DCA membership was cut short by his career, but his truly adventurous sailing wasn't, as you will see if you buy the book: it is well written, exciting and informative—Ed

Boats...

For Sale

Could this be the best Cruising & Camping Dinghy ever?

An 18ft Classic GRP sailing dinghy originally designed by Morgan Giles for the choppy waters of the Thames Estuary. A beautifully balanced boat to sail with furling jib and roller boom or slab reefing. Ideal for camping, cruising or racing. Lots of room for friends or children, and very safe with the cruising mast.

She comes with two masts, one for cruising, one for racing, three mainsails, all in very good condition, two jibs, two rudders (one lifting the other fixed) two fixed bilge pumps, six buoyancy bags, oars and rowlocks, hoops for a camping boom tent, anchor, fenders and warps, outboard bracket and Mercury outboard.

The heavy duty Shoreline trailer has been refurbished with new suspension and bearings, mudguards, tow hitch, winch and jockey wheel. New 8-inch wheels for launching and new 10-inch wheels for road use. A single-handed mast lowering and raising system has now been fitted.

When the class found they were being beaten by the National 18s they stuck another ten feet on the mast to raise the sail area to 206.6 square feet.

John Stamm, contacts:

Mobile: 07946 764 821

Email: jhs@waitrose.com

£4250



For Sale:

Hunter Landau 20 Motor Cruiser

I am very reluctantly selling my HUNTER LANDAU. This is a very innovative design and the only motor boat built by Hunter. She is a 'proper' sea boat, popular with sailors changing to a powered boat.

I am selling because the boat is frankly not getting enough use. She is on my Broads mooring at Horning.

She has a new cockpit hood and a brand new 40HP engine (cost £4000) and trailer. **£16000**. Further details from:

Bill Jones, 07885 729 062;
wrjarion@aol.com



For Sale

Sussex Cob Jay £1600

Built by Pearson Brothers of Arundel to a design inspired by Sussex fishing boats, with a 'cod's head, mackerel tail' and lute stern. Age unknown but the GRP hull moulds were passed on in 1978 to Salty Yachts after Pearsons folded. Purchased in 1995 by the present owner as a Bermudan yawl.

The sail plan was recalculated and an extensive rebuild undertaken with the help of the late Eric Scholes. We added: a retractable bowsprit, new fore and aft decking with extra built-in buoyancy, rear locker, side benches, s/s shoes to the bilge runners, a mast-raising facility, a new larger steel c/b and a new lifting rudder with laminated tiller.

Later an alternative standing lug rig, with a new tan mainsail, jib and mizzen, was added. The mast takes both rigs without modification.

LOD 16ft 6ins LOA with bowsprit: 19ft 6ins

Beam 5ft 10ins

Sail area (lug rig with mizzen) 140 sq. ft.

Draught approximately 9ins (c/b down 3ft 0 ins)

Old Gaffer yardstick : T[H]CF .788

The Cob always did well in OGA competition.

(The yardstick may make sense to the reader but it is a mystery to me).

The inventory includes:

Both Bermudan and Standing Lug rigs with sails, spars and gear.

Aluminium masts and boom, fibreglass main gaff, wooden mizzen boom.

Two sets of oars and rowing positions (9ft sculls and 7ft 6ins plain secondaries).

Four 150 lb. buoyancy bags. Two anchors, warps and fenders.

Road trailer with geared winch and pick-up extension bar.

Three covers, (mast up, winter and travelling) all prof. made to measure.

There is also a 4hp Johnson twin cylinder o/b, unused for some years, which will need attention. I prefer to row.

To be sold separately for £75 is a heavy beach launching trolley with guide arms, front wheels and a geared winch. The trolley was originally built by a DCA member for a Drascombe Dabber. Photo available.

Jay is well known to North West members and has given wonderful sailing and rowing over the years but **Jay** now needs loving care from someone else, as my age and recent injury force the sale.

Please contact Bernard Harman
On 01772 422 549 mobile 07722 471 851
Email: bkjaharman@blueyonder.co.uk



After rebuild



Bermudan rig



Standing lug rig with Bermudan mizzen

For Sale

Glen-L 14

14 ft Wooden Sailing Cruiser, *Little Egret*

Construction: 6mm marine ply and epoxy
Gunter rig, 2hp 4 stroke Honda outboard, anchor,
cockpit tent, road trailer — all serviceable and in good
condition.

The boat has a small cabin with sitting headroom in
which it is possible to sleep.

She is sailed regularly on Windermere, where she
spends 6 months on a swinging mooring.
In the winter months she is under cover in a farmer's
barn.

£650

Replies to Frank Dearden: 01229 716 078



Plans...

For Sale: Boat Plans

Two sets of boat plans at less than half price.
Both are unused: one Iain Oughtred MacGregor canoe,
3 sheets and construction notes — £45.
The other is John Welsford's plans for the PILGRIM, 13
sheets plus construction notes — £75.
No time to build, even under lockdown!

Peter Robinson
peterrobinson21@btinternet.com
01642 710 941



Wanted...



GREY OWL SIROCCO wooden double-bladed touring kayak paddle.
Either of the big sizes: 230 cms or preferably 240 cms overall, assembled.

Blade dimensions: 18.5 inches x 7 inches. **Cross section:** dihedral spoon high angle
Construction: 7-ply laminated Walnut, Basswood and Butternut. **Tip:** casting epoxy
Shaft: 3-ply laminated white cedar & basswood, oval, 1¹/₄ x 1¹/₈-ins
Ferrule: 14 ins carbon fibre, feather or unfeather 60° left or right
In excellent condition with the above spec: it has to match my present *Sirocco*



Keith Muscott
0754 717 6565
keithmuscott@aol.com

Do You Have Something For the Journal?

1. Create the text in your usual word processor but please do not waste your time on fancy fonts or complicated formatting — all that will go by the board when I drop it into InDesign and it complies with our house style and typography. Your complicated formatting could bring big problems, too, if it is imported along with your words.

Especially do not embed your photographs in a WORD doc (or in any other word processor). It will lower their resolution to a level that is fine for viewing but inadequate for printing. Do not send a pdf of your article, either; it will not stop me from manipulating and editing your text but only waste time. Avoid simply typing it into an email, which encourages sending what is really only a draft (see point #4) and may generate formatting problems as well. Ideally send it as a simple text file attached to an email, without any complexity, but I know that most people, except for those with pro experience, will be reluctant to do this. The words and pics are the only things of importance! If in doubt contact me by email — or phone / letter, if need be.

2. There is no set word limit but keep it interesting and avoid unnecessary repetition or excessive detail. Long articles may be split into two or more parts to appear in successive issues.

3. **Sending photographs.** You may use Dropbox or WeTransfer, or email me a link to a Flickr page if you really want to, but sending them attached singly to a succession of emails as jpg files in as high a resolution as you can, preferably not less than 2MB in size, is absolutely fine and foolproof.

Please name each photograph appropriately, e.g. 'Morning coffee in downtown Dokkum', 'Curlew at Linnhe Marine', etc., to enable me to position the

photographs in the text and provide suitable captions. Tell me who took each photograph and ensure that you provide copyright information where necessary for any © images, charts or maps you obtain from the public domain.

4. When you are ready, email your text file and photographs to me but only when you are certain that everything is as you want it — not before! It is very disheartening to have to change an article already positioned precisely in the Journal when its author submits a radically different 'final draft'... It may not be used — deadlines are always tight and the amount of time available to spend on one submission is usually limited.

5. If you are not conversant with computers and word processors, do not despair. I will accept typescript and make it editable by scanning it and putting it through an optical character recognition program. If my feet are really held to the fire I may even accept handwritten works of genius — they were once accepted as a necessary evil by bulletin editors in days of old, but never as typical submissions — typescript was the norm.

Editor, Dinghy Cruising

Now get down to it...

© Peanuts



**Help this man to relax!
Start writing now!**



Colin Holt enjoying DC#245 with a cuppa (or a panad?) in his Cornish Cormorant Frances



Correspondence



From Len Wingfield: The Riddle of Erskine Childers

I found Sam Griffiths' article *The Riddle Re-enacted* fascinating, particularly as I have sailed through some of *The Riddle of the Sands* waters myself. This included sailing from Nordeney through to the Memmert Balje, where the book's critical action took place, and also in the Baltic scene of earlier *Riddle of the Sands* action. In my case however I was sailing in well-found yachts, not in a little 12-foot dinghy like Sam's. Even so, the locals warned me of the serious risks of navigating the tricky Waddenzee and East Frisian waters. A converted ship's lifeboat with shallow draft like *Dulcibella* would have been ideal for navigating these shallow Frisian waters.

What sort of man was Erskine? A hero certainly, and rightly aware of the potential German threat. But was he a rabid German hater or simply a knight in shining armour always looking for a little nation in distress? When (in the book) Davis lands to visit the memorial to the Danish dead of the war of 1864, he fulminates against the Prussian 'aggressors'. However the Danish TV historical drama '1864' took a different view, blaming the war-mongering Danish Prime Minister for going to war over a German-speaking dukedom, and allowing the slaughter to continue even when Bismarck was prepared to call a halt at the old Danish boundary. He was then obliged to fight on to the tip of Jutland, when he only wanted the disputed German-speaking parts and enough land to build the Kiel Canal.

Erskine was born into an upper class Anglo-Irish family and held the usual British imperialist political views of his time, volunteering to fight in South Africa where the might of the British Empire was set to crush the tiny Boer Republic. The Boer farmers had other ideas, and put up a brilliant resistance, only defeated by the British disgracefully laying waste to their farms, and putting their wives and families into concentration camps, where many died of disease. Yet Erskine remained pro-British, although in 1914, just before WWI, he sailed at great risk to himself and his wife to illegally land a cargo of rifles and ammunition for the southern Irish, as a balance to the arming of Ulster Protestants. (These rifles may well have been used against the British in the ill-conceived and disastrous 1916 Dublin Post Office revolt.) Meanwhile Erskine was doing valuable work for the British Navy, earning the DSC (Distinguished Service Cross). After WWI he then fought on the Irish side against the British in the war of Irish independence, which concluded with the Irish leader Michael Collins having to accept a bad deal from the British. Collins famously said, 'I have just signed my own death warrant!'. The Irish civil war of 1921 ensued with Erskine on the IRA side. After the death of Collins the Irish Government Army were bent on reprisal. Erskine was captured at Glendalough

and tried for possession of a pistol by a 'kangeroo' court martial and shot. He died very bravely, shaking hands with the firing squad. He also asked his son to forgive them. An Irish President Eamon de Valera said, 'He died the Prince he was. Of all the men I have met, he was the noblest.' Erskine's son became a President of the Irish Republic.

Len

§ Childers' commitment to Irish independence while remaining a patriotic Englishman is not hard to understand: *cherchez la femme*. After fighting with the Honourable Artillery Company in South Africa he later went to America to honour the Boston contingent. Mary Alden Hopgood entered his life while he was there, and he married Molly, as she was known, in 1904, a year after *The Riddle of the Sands* was published. Her father ordered 51ft *Asgard*, the 1914 gun-runner, for £1,000 from Colin Archer in 1904; she was delivered in 1905.

How they met is a matter of mild disagreement. She either sat by him at an official dinner organised by the HAC — when he was sporting a black eye incurred during alcoholic high jinks with the boys — or they first met when Childers was touring the New England countryside on a hired motorcycle which broke down. He approached a large house for help, the local doctor's residence. Molly was the doctor's daughter. Whichever came first, both stories seem to be true. Her family was mainly of Irish descent, and most relatives, but particularly one close family friend, were fiercely pro-Irish Independence, so Molly's strong political views were formed from childhood and later found a receptive listener in her husband. She had been partially disabled in an accident when young, and as is so often the case the experience made her very resilient and tough..

At the end of WWI Lieutenant Commander Erskine Childers, DSC, RNVR, turned his face fully to Ireland, disillusioned with the lack of progress towards independence, and became a real zealot. As a matter of honour he severed his connections with the British military and English political life — and the die was cast. Michael Collins was reduced to tears when Childers rejected the compromise of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921; it led to civil war. Collins felt that the so-called 'bad deal' with the British was the best that could be struck at the time and should be used as a stepping stone, not seen as the last possible outcome. But Childers and the hard line contingent in the government were impatient. Collins was probably certain by then that this would eventually bring about the deaths of them both. He was right—Ed

From Henry Farley: John Owen's Log (p.52)

Dear Mr Muscott,

Firstly please excuse my brazen approach. The ink is not yet dry on my application to join the DCA and here I am bearding its editor with email PLUS enclosure. However, I read your instruction to submit potential material early, so here goes.

Last week in conversation, my stepfather mentioned that he had written an account of a voyage he made in 1951 which was published in *The Yachtsman* magazine in the summer edition of that year. John Owen's family think that, like him, the piece is pretty wonderful. He and his family would love to see his article brought back to life.

I hope you find the enclosure of interest and can use it. Needless to say if there's anything I can do to assist please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,
Henry Farley

Again From Henry Farley: John Owen's Log

Dear Keith,

Thank you very much for dealing with John's article so promptly. Everybody this end, including the writer himself, is delighted that the piece will appear in such an interesting and august magazine.

Sadly no one can lay their hands on a photograph of *Spindrift* but here is one of John sailing off Camber in 2014 (see page 55). He is on his last boat *Herself*, which, when he 'swallowed his anchor' last year at age 91, he was kind enough to give to me. She's a beauty!

Whether he will get another boat is a question which alarms and amuses the many people who love him in equal part.

To answer your question, the only survivor of the South Goodwin Light Vessel disaster was apparently a visitor from the Ministry of Agriculture. I don't know whether members of the crew who were good to John and his mate died in the wreck, but I have a horrid suspicion they may have.

Once again, thank you.

Best wishes, Henry

From David Morton: Jacques Moret, in New Caledonia

Dear Keith and Jenny,

Please send one of your spare journals to Jacques Moret. His exotic address is:

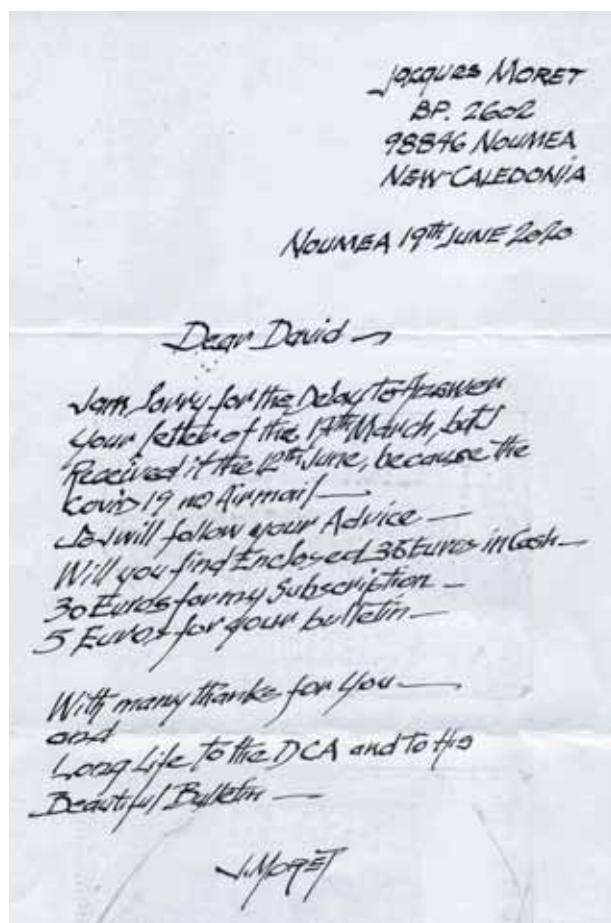
BP.2602, 98846 Noumea, New Caledonia

My letter to him sent on 17th March didn't reach him until 12th June, because their airmail was interrupted during the Covid-19 crisis. I have just received his reply and 35 euros in notes. You will remember that he wrote earlier to say that he could no longer make payment through his bank and that he has no email, so can't pay by PayPal, etc. Hence I suggested that he try sending euros.

I've scanned and attached his letter, which ends with 'Long Life to the DCA and to this Beautiful Bulletin'. I'd love to know more about him. Perhaps you could print his letter and invite him to write something about himself, his life and the *Club Nautique de Nouvelle Caledonie*.

Best wishes,
Dave

§ The journal was sent immediately. The letter from Jacques is shown below —Ed



From David Priestley: Jayne & Colin Firth

Hello Keith

I found myself deeply moved by your story of Jayne Firth's death so I wanted to write this, even though I didn't know her or Colin at all. I just wanted to say:

To Keith: thank you for a beautifully crafted piece. I feel sure that Colin will have found comfort in the sensitivity you managed to weave through it.

To Colin: Colin, I don't know you but we share a passion for small boat sailing. So, in that spirit I wanted to say how I can only imagine the hurt you must be experiencing, but also to let you know that if ever you wanted to talk, share an e-mail or whatever, please feel free to let me know.

David

From Noel Watkins: A Question asked on Facebook

Hello Everyone,

I'm re-reading #246 of the journal and something has jumped off the page which I hadn't noticed previously. I wonder if anyone can shed any light on this...

On p25, there are two pieces of correspondence from Alan Smith: 'The End of Whammeling' and 'Sirius and Mary saved.'

As some of you might have seen, I have named my slow-build Oughtred Guillemot *Sirius*, after my father. He has Sirius for a middle name, after his father who served on HMS *Sirius* during WW2.

So my question is whether anyone knows whether the *Sirius* in the journal has any connection with the same HMS *Sirius* or whether it's a more astronomical reference.

Thanks,
Noel

§ Jennifer fielded the question and asked me to look further:

From Alan Smith: The Answer

Hello Keith,

Great to hear from you, I have been thinking about you since receiving the last DC, what a lovely edition, so much of interest. Thank you also for the inclusions relating to *Sirius* and *Mary*.

As far as I am aware, and this is where I miss Tom for reference, the name *Sirius* will be in relation to the prominent star, with the boat being built for fishing, I am sure. Tom bought *Sirius* from a Mr Hall who lived in the

village and Mr Hall would have purchased her from the Townley brothers, who were fishermen in the village, after they retired from fishing. I have nothing to tell me otherwise that *Sirius* would have left the Woodhouse yard with that name.

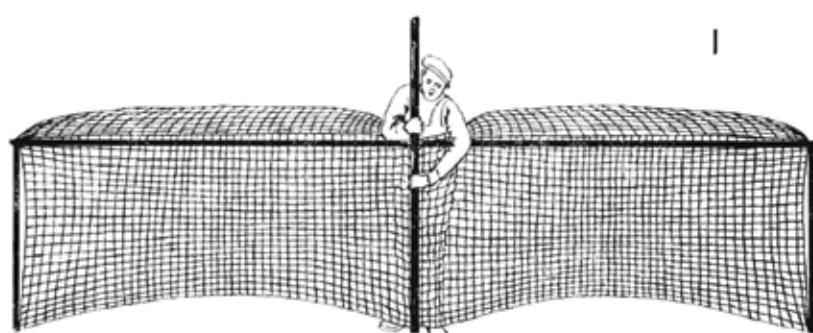
I think it is carved into the gunnel, which would have been done at the yard. I never heard any reference to *Sirius* having any connection with HMS *Sirius*, but an interesting enquiry.

Best wishes,
Alan.

§ Sirius, or the Dog Star, in the constellation Canis Major, is the brightest in the night sky. It is over 25 times as luminous as the Sun. A good friend of sailors and fishermen —Ed



From Last Issue: Using the Haaf Net



1

2

This simple and effective drawing showing how to deploy the haaf net should have accompanied Alan Smith's photographs of his brothers using them, in the Correspondence pages of DC246. Unfortunately I could not find the book at that time.

It's a sad reflection of a man's domestic life that he can't quickly lay his hand on a copy of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's 'Fishery Investigations' Series II, Vol. XXI, Number 8: 'An Account of the Fishing Gear of England and Wales', Second Impression, August 1959, First Published March 1923, HMSO, subfusc cover...
— when he needs it.

The net is positioned in a gully facing the flow of the tide (1), and when a fish hits the mesh the whole structure is swept up (2) to capture it with a downward thrust of the right arm and an upward pull of the left. And then the fun begins —Ed

From David Chatterly, 1267: Lugsail yawls

Hello Keith,

I've sailed lugsail yawls ever since I bought our Drascombe Dabber in 1982. It's a type that seems to suit a single-handed old guy and a small dinghy, not least on account of the ease and speed with which sail area can be changed in emergency.

I enjoyed Steve Parke's article in Bulletin 246 very much: a lovely-looking boat, Steve. It set me looking into the history of standing lugsails. Former member John Glasspool's book *Boats of the Longshoremen*, (pub. 1977), covered many small traditional inshore fishing boats setting lug sails, from around Britain, Europe, and the USA. None of the boats John listed with standing lug sails had booms. Booms were confined to Bermudan rigs, balance lugs, gunter lugs and gaff sails.

I tried a boom on the Dabber briefly, and discovered the same problem that Steve appears to be having, namely that you cannot have the yard secured at the correct point to the mast with a traveller or parrel loop and still be able to lower it to the deck. The reason for this is that if the yard, still fastened to the mast, were to be horizontal on the deck, the distance between its forward end and the after end of the boom would be greater than the distance from throat to clew measured across the sail, which is lashed to the spars at these points! On the other hand, if you don't tie the yard to the mast and just rely on the pull of the halyard through the sheave to keep it in place when under full sail, then it sags away from the mast when the sail is set lower for reefing, and is liable to flail about when head to wind.



I solved the problem with the Dabber boom by terminating the halyard in a hook which was held against the mast by a parrel loop. The sail was lifted by hand until the hook could be engaged with a strop round the yard (prevented from slipping by a thumb cleat). This involved standing by the mast clutching a flogging sail while the boat was left to her own devices. In any case, the Dabber boom was long, and, in the fluky winds of The Lakes, delivered some horrendous gybes, sweeping low across the cockpit like a scythe. It was soon relegated to being a ridge pole for the tent!

I sail *Iona*, my 13ft yawl, without a boom for the standing lug mainsail, and out of convenience, not

necessity, I still employ the hook and parrel loop system for the halyard. When running before the wind I pole the sail out with the boat hook (a useful bit of kit to carry anyway). When I kitted out *Anwen* (the Lune Longboat now in Brian MacClellan's possession), I had to fit a main boom, as sheeting a loose-footed mainsail was impractical. I therefore changed the original design of a standing lug mainsail to a high-peaked gaff.



Steve mentions the question of how to raise sail under way. In *Iona* the technique is as follows: I have rapid furling on both jib and mizzen, and so set out from the beach by rowing off far enough to get the centreboard and the rudder blade down, without any sails set. From my seat at the helm I can then set first the mizzen and then the jib and put the boat onto a close reach. With the helm temporarily lashed she then sails herself *, while I hook up the mainsail yard and hoist the sail, which then hangs out over the leeward side. I finish by tensioning the tack downhaul and, lastly, the mainsheet.

I use the same trick, ie the boat sailing herself on a close reach under jib and mizzen, when reefing the mainsail under way. I find this gives much better control than the head-to-wind position where the boat soon starts making sternway, losing ground, and, unless the tiller is lashed precisely in the centre, veering off onto one tack or the other, even with the small mizzen well sheeted in. DC

* *Iona*'s rig was specifically set up to be able to do this: not all yawls are so obliging!



Great Escapes

Early Summer pop-ups and lockdown breakers in 2020 (all 'legal' outings and within the prevailing guidelines)

June 23rd & 24th, Two days around Hilbre, a sandstone island in the River Dee estuary off the western tip of the Wirral coast, by Chris Woodworth

Attending:

John Hughes, 17ft Hitia Wharram catamaran, *Starcatcher*
Chris Woodworth, Comet Versa, *Aria*: (below)



This was the first cruise in my Comet Versa, named *Aria*, and I was really looking forward to this day.

For a few years I sailed a Laser 2 on the marine lake in West Kirby. From the marine lake there is an unspoilt view of Hilbre Island and I was determined to sail over there once I had a more suitable dinghy. I purchased *Aria* two days before lockdown and was itching to sail her at the right time. During the lockdown period I found the DCA on a web search, joined, then contacted John and we made the Hilbre trip happen.

Launching from Dove Point, Meols, was uneventful. The slipway is good for launching with plenty of space to leave the road and launch trailers. In a light breeze I sailed over to meet up with John who was preparing his Wharram Hitia catamaran on Hoyle Lake. After a short time we left Dove Point on the ebb, the cruising novice following John with his 20-odd years of experience of



the area. We sailed towards Moreton, following the channels, then swung to port and headed out to sea. John had briefed me on the need for careful attention to the depth of the water as the coastline has many shallows. I had also spent the previous day viewing the flood, which gave an invaluable insight as to where the channels were situated; a great confidence booster.

Aria was sailing well. She was stable and not giving me any frights. Her weakest point was probably the nut holding the tiller! Roughly halfway through our journey the wind dropped to a calm and I was going nowhere. John was ahead of me and I noticed he had also stopped, probably being a gentleman and waiting for me. So I made a decision to get my oars out and to catch up. The sun was shining, the temperature was rising and I was doing hard exercise! Oh well, good for my shoulders, back and waistline. Then the *Versa* and I had some issues whilst rowing. One thing was that I could not row with the tiller in place as it kept hitting my hands, so I had to remove the assembly. I also had to drop the mainsail and boom as it kept bumping my head. The grey seals were having great fun popping their heads up looking at my antics — that said, they were good company. I needed to think about the rowing issues and look at my options for keeping things out of the way rather than removing and lowering. We live and learn, ironing out the bugs as and when, and I'm glad to say with John's help, we have solutions for both problems.

It took about 20 minutes rowing to get to John. There was still no wind so we sat for a short while before the breeze returned and we set off close hauled again. From



Chris in *Aria* (John Hughes)

then on it was excellent sailing over to Hilbre. We then headed out to the River Dee channel for a short period of time. This gave an outstanding view of Hilbre, unseen by most people unless they are in a boat. Then we followed the route we had previously navigated around the Island and tacked into a small channel to anchor the boats.

John and I went for a walk on Hilbre, the sun still shining and temperature in the mid-20s. We stopped and sat for a while and I had sandwiches and coffee, what a picnic area! John was saving his supper till later that evening, homemade pie...nice. Then, after spending some time admiring the view over to the Welsh coast we headed back to our boats. I had walked to Hilbre on many occasions in the past, but sailing over was a unique experience and one that is highly recommended.

Aria following *Starcatcher* (Chris Woodworth)



The plan was for John to stay overnight on his boat and I was leaving *Aria* at anchor and heading back home as my Comet Versa was not set up for sleeping on board. This has now been rectified with a fairly comfortable arrangement by up-cycling old bed slats and some plywood. The shelter is provided by a pop-up tent I had in the garage.

It was a beautiful short 20-minute walk across the sands to Red Rocks where I met my wife and son, who drove me home.



John Hughes in *Starcatcher* (Chris Woodworth)

The next day started at 8 o'clock. I was dropped off at Red Rocks, waved goodbye to my son, put on my wellies and headed back over to meet up with John. Again it was beautiful weather and the walk was delightful. John and I prepared our boats and before long we were afloat and set sail on the incoming flood.

A light breeze was blowing with hardly any waves, excellent dinghy sailing weather. The breeze stayed with us all of the way to Dove Point, Meols. What a difference from the previous day and the fun memories of getting the oars out. John remained ahead, showing me the route and putting in a couple of tacks to avoid the shallows. We basically followed the same route that we had taken on our way out, but on a close reach.

This trip brought quite a few firsts for me personally. It was the first time I had sailed with a DCA member, taken my Versa out on a cruise, rowed my boat over distance, anchored my boat overnight, sailed to Hilbre Island in a dinghy... and survived.

What a great couple of days! Thanks, John. *CW*

Postscript:

Chris has now been to Meols a couple more times since then — he is obviously keen. His boat seems very capable and versatile (why its called a 'Versa', apparently). I'd never seen one before.

John Hughes

Carrick Roads, The Homecoming, July 5th 2020, Alan Moulton & Neil Sutherland

Neil and I both purchased sailing dayboats in 2019 and spent the latter half of that sailing season getting to know them. My boat is a Deben Lugger, named *Eydis* and Neil purchased a Clovelly Picarooner called *Crinker*. As Winter approached, we determined that we should arrange a cruise together with the two boats in 2020, somewhere different to our usual Solent haunt. Neil's Picarooner was built by Martin Heard at Gaffers and Luggers in Mylor Creek, so despite the reference to a North Devon fishing village in her class name, she was built in Cornwall, close to Falmouth. We decided that our summer cruise would be on the River Fal, the Carrick Roads and that *Crinker* would be going home to the place of her birth. We both booked a week off for early July 2020 and scoped out a rough plan for our trip, consulting both Alastair Law and Google for detailed information to help refine our plan, Alastair proving the more helpful. Over winter we lamented the poor sailing weather but looked forward to the planned trip.

Crinker, taken by Alan Moulton



The year 2020 did not start well from a sailing perspective and then stopped completely when our government finally accepted that it needed to take responsibility and attempt to limit the spread of the Coronavirus in the UK. We set off for Cornwall on the 5th July, our original scheduled departure date, just one day after the pubs reopened.

After a long drive, our plan was to leave our boats at Mylor Yacht Harbour on arrival at the River Fal, adjourn to a local guest house overnight and launch the following morning. We stopped at the quayside to get our bearings and register our arrival but as we stepped out of our vehicles, we were immediately approached by a friendly looking gentleman gesturing towards Neil's boat. 'That looks like *Crinker*', he said to our surprise. It turned out that he was a former owner and had recognised her immediately. He welcomed us both and wished us good sailing and then talked with fondness about *Crinker*. It really did feel that *Crinker* had indeed arrived home, but

Crinker, taken by Alan Moulton



it wasn't long before an official from the Marina arrived to interrupt the conversation and direct us to where we could park the boats overnight.

Our first sailing day was spent in the Carrick Roads, the expansive estuary to the River Fal situated between beautiful Cornish headlands and two Castles. We made landfall at St Mawes first, anchoring at the sandy beach where we bought Cornish Ice Creams, relaxed and watched the small quay going about its business. A busy passenger ferry repeatedly shuttled back and forth to Falmouth and soon we felt ready to explore further. We tacked north past Mylor and had a brief look at Turnaware bar before seeking out Restronguet Creek to find the Pandora Inn.

This riverside pub obligingly has its own drying pontoon to attract passing boaters and to provide additional outside seating. Approaching the pontoon, it became clear that we were potential entertainment for diners at the many tables sited along the length of the pontoon but fortunately we managed to make our approach without embarrassing incident. Ordering a couple of pints involved first using hand sanitiser then registering ourselves and leaving contact numbers, waiting to be assigned a table and then a further delay before the staff brought the drinks to our tables. We subsequently found out that all pubs were following similar procedures in order to comply with Government Guidelines for the safety of staff and customers. We weren't complaining, if that procedure was necessary for us to be able to eat and drink during our trip then we were happy to oblige. Our final short trip that day was a short jaunt to the visitor's pontoon at Mylor where we had booked to stay for one night. We organised our tents and ate at a café at the Marina before turning in for the night.

We had planned to make the sea passage to the Helford River the following morning and studied the charts and the weather forecast. Slightly troubling was the promise of F6 Westerly winds arriving mid-afternoon



and remaining until mid-morning the following day. However, we both had good sea boats and were expecting to arrive at the Helford river before the strong winds arrived. Anticipating that we may well have to motor in the Helford itself we decided that we would go ahead and make the passage. In the event we sailed out of the Fal, past St Mawes Castle to Port and Pendennis Castle to Starboard in moderate breezes then tacked towards Helford in brisk but manageable conditions. As we tacked into the Helford river the wind started to strengthen and progress became more difficult. Eventually, we approached one of the anchorages we had identified in advance from the chart and although it was a little exposed, we dropped anchors to take a breather and drink some tea.

It was clear though that this anchorage was too exposed for an overnight stop, given the forecast for the strong westerly wind to continue overnight. From there we could see a tiny sandy cove which the chart revealed to be Bosahan Cove. There were several visiting dinghies and we motored over to see if it would be suitable for overnighting. The beach was sheltered and might have been a good location for drying out but the boats wouldn't settle at anchor, there were several troubling rocks and we wanted to see more of the river so we motored out and on into the stiff breeze whilst keeping an eye out for a sheltered overnight berth.

Helford Passage beach at the Ferry Boat Inn looked too small and crowded and too exposed. The Helford River Sailing Club, reputed to welcome visitor sailors onto its pontoons had notices stating that due to Coronavirus it had closed its pontoons and doors to non-members. A little further to the West of the club was a

(Above, top) St Mawes to Pendennis Castle,
© David Rust, Tregony Gallery

(Right) Alan Moulton, taken by Neil Sutherland

quiet and sheltered inlet which looked like it would dry to mud but as we considered anchoring there for the night an elderly lady appeared on the bank and shouted at us. We had no right to be there so please go away! We were starting to run out of options, so decided to take the only sensible course of action. We went to the Pub.

Our visit to the Ferry Boat Inn at Helford Passage beach provided us with a solution. Neil noticed a group of men who were all wearing tee shirts with the Helford River Boats Logo. It was clear that they were all colleagues in the marine services business based at Helford Passage and we decided to ask them where we

could safely spend the night. They had an immediate answer and directed us towards Tremayne Quay, a disused half-tide quay, now owned by the National Trust, who would not trouble us. It would be quiet and sheltered. The advice was also free as they declined our offer of a pint for their valuable local knowledge.



After finishing our pints, we motored to our overnight destination and indeed it was sheltered, and my lead line confirmed it was approximately half tidal with sufficient depth to avoid getting neaped the following morning. We didn't want to dry against the stone quay but there was a small pool adjacent to it which was perfect for our purposes. A local dinghy sailor who had tied his boat to the quay for a short visit looked aghast when I explained that we were there for the night and would be sleeping on our boats. He sailed away soon after, keeping a wary eye on us as we set up our tents. There was a grassy

area behind the quay where some local teenagers had lit a bonfire and were quietly strumming a guitar. After cooking and eating on the boats we retired to bed and fell asleep to the sound of amateurish but not intrusive guitar music.

Overnight, the boats gently settled onto mud before refloating in the morning as expected. So far, we had experienced dry weather with sunny periods but this morning we were greeted with cloud and mist. The forecast was for F5 to F6 winds from the southwest which would carry us back to the Fal in double-quick time. Having made the crossing in the opposite direction the day before into wind, we were confident and weighed anchor after breakfast.

After rowing out of our shelter we were picked up by the wind and made rapid progress towards the mouth of the river. We cleared August Rock and adjusted our course to 40 degrees to enjoy an exhilarating broad reach into the gloom as we embarked on our sea passage. With visibility of about a nautical mile, we could see land behind us and to port, but for a while we only had the compass to steer by. Both boats coped well with the heavy seas and strong winds. My Deben Lugger was well reefed, but Neil was sailing under full main with no jib. We stayed together for the crossing and I noted that both Neil and his boat looked very composed, his boat shouldering off any waves and remaining very upright. He subsequently reported that she felt very stable and had remained very dry. It was becoming clear that his boat was built for these conditions, not surprising when you understand that the lines were taken off a West Country fishing boat. For *Crinker*, these were home waters and she felt very much at home.

Eventually the light from St. Anthony's Lighthouse penetrated the gloom and later Pendennis Castle came into view. Soon, for the second time, we were safely anchored at St Mawes. We sat on the beach, this time eating delicious Cornish Pasties purchased from the local bakery and fussing over the boats as the still outgoing tide threatened to dry them out. The gloom lifted and the sun attempted to force its way through the broken clouds. We saw another Clovelly Picarooner dodging

between the moorings as we ate.

Eventually, more sailing beckoned and we had a table booked at the Pandora Inn for our evening meal, so for the second time we left St Mawes bound for Restronguet Creek by a somewhat circuitous route as we explored several other inlets on the way. We were too early arriving for the pontoon to be accessible, so we found a quiet spot in the shallows outside the Creek and dropped anchors. Watching the world go by, we determined that this would also be our anchorage for the night.

As soon as there was enough water, we made for the pontoon and were soon at our table inside the pub. It turned out that the procedure they had decided upon to minimise contact, and therefore the risk of spreading the virus, was to deposit your order on an adjacent vacant table from which we collected it ourselves. By now, we were getting used to different establishments settling on different approaches and were simply grateful that they were open at all.

After an enjoyable spell in the pub we made our way back to our chosen anchorage and I used my lead line to position us in water just deep enough so that we would stay afloat. We both set anchor lights and retired for a quiet night afloat.

The following morning was our last day and we were due to haul out around midday. It was also drizzling persistently, and we had the choice of hauling out early or exploring further. We chose the latter and sailed past Turnaware Bar into the River Fal. We came across the King Harry Ferry and then were surprised to see two large vehicle ferries moored in the river.

As the river wound its way into the seclusion of the Cornish countryside we looked out for wildlife and saw deer regarding us nervously from the nearby hillside. Eventually, in the drying part of the river, it started to rain heavily just as we approached a little gravel beach on the southern shore. We landed and put the kettle on, sheltering under overhanging trees. Time was pressing as the tide had started to ebb and we needed to recover at Mylor and we reluctantly agreed that our cruise was very nearly over, with only the return to our point of embarkation remaining. So after drinking coffee we set

off to start the long process of returning home. Other than having to pause to give way to the chain link ferry, the return and haul-out was uneventful. We spent the afternoon derigging and preparing the boats for towing and then left them at Mylor before eating in Falmouth that evening. A second night was spent in the guest house so that we were well rested before the long drive home.

For us, Falmouth is a long way to drive to go sailing, particularly when you have the Solent on your doorstep. However, as a destination for a cruise it is wonderful and despite trying not to, we left many of the creeks unexplored. Maybe a return cruise beckons. **AM**



Kayaking Off the Coast of Anglesey, June 24th & 25th:

Day 1, Cemaes Bay,

Day 2, up the western coast to Carmel Head

Attending:

Keith Muscott Gumotex Thaya, Zeffiretti

Jennifer Heney, who took all the photographs

Chart below by Henry Glazebrook, revised 1961

Day One

It had been six months since our New Year's Day outing on Bassenthwaite Lake and the strain was beginning to tell. The forecast was encouraging and the tide times were right for the two days: clear skies, little wind and a 29-footer, four days after a new moon. HWs: 14:04/14:50.

On the 24th, Wednesday, we parked on the easterly side of Cemaes Bay opposite the harbour and close to Fox Cliff. The water was almost up to the line of shingle, which delayed the sun worshippers until the ebb set in and revealed more sand.

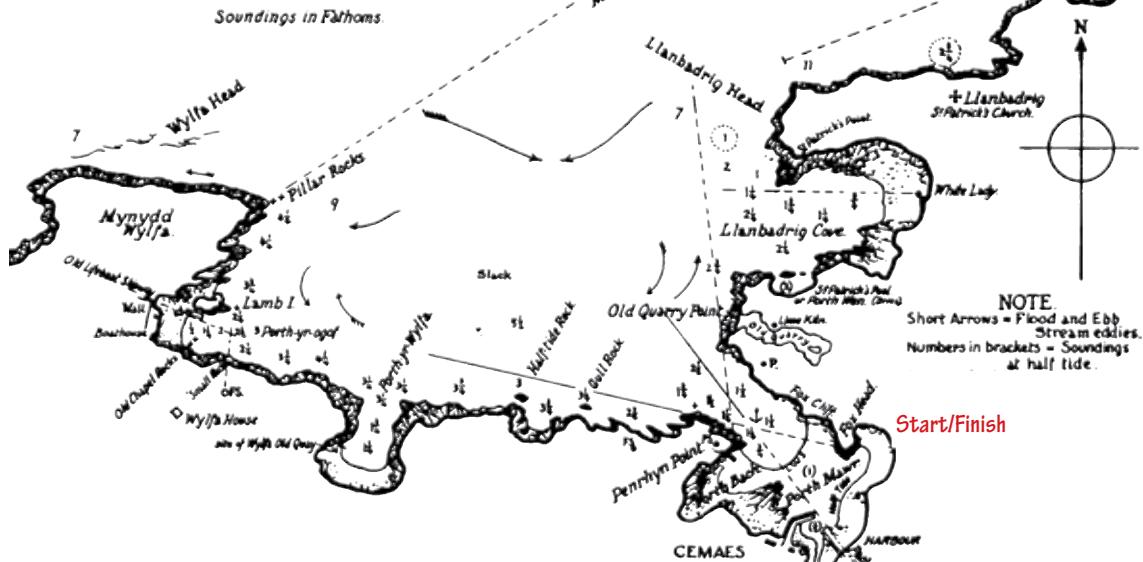
At the time there was an embargo on more than five miles of travel in North Wales, and everywhere local people were energetic in confirming it. So I had made careful enquiries before we decided to visit the beaches. Boats and kayaks were at last taking to the water, I heard.



Ready to go — The bags did not come with us

Cemaes has three distinct areas: the harbour, which has always been an official harbour of refuge when not dried out; the inner bay, comprising Porth Mawr and Porth Bach, which extends to Penrhyn Point; and the outer bay which opens out dramatically to take in Wylfa bay and Llanbadrig Cove. Then there is the slight constriction of the two arms of the Bay, Wylfa Head and Llanbadrig Head, that embrace a good mile of open water in which you

Cemaes Bay



sense the promise of the Irish Sea, with Middle Mouse (*Ynys Badrig*), a guano-whitened island, just half a mile offshore.

Round to the Harbour first, where the local kids were leaping off the end of the wall, a time-honoured test of daring. We picked our way through the boats floating at their moorings. By the time we left there and rounded Penrhyn Point, close in, we had two or three other kayaks following a hundred yards behind. We lost them as we passed Porth yr Wylfa.



Cave on Lamb Island. (Below) The end of the old LB slipway



It was very pleasant in the sunshine to close with cliff faces and caves and have the depth of water to round Lamb Island, the progeny of the bigger 'ewe', Wylfa

Head. The island used to provide cover during onshore gales for the lifeboat, after its long slide down the ramp from the boathouse. Then it was rowed out of the wind shadow into the maelstrom. This was the second station to be built here. The original boathouse was sited at the high water mark at the southwestern end of Porth yr Ogof bay. It is now derelict. The second one was constructed on wooden piles at the northern end of the bay. The building has gone, leaving only the wooden piles. Adjacent to them is the start of a stone slipway; the last vestige of the business end of that can be seen in the photograph on the previous page.

The date given for the construction of the second lifeboat house and slipway is 1907. It closed in 1932, so its dates are coeval with those of *Charles Henry Ashley*, the sail and oar LB stationed here from 1907 to 1932. It seems that the boathouse and slip were built for the new boat, and were demolished when it was withdrawn from service. As a member of the *Charles Henry's* present crew, I was sad as we paddled past the ruined end of the slipway: it seemed strange that the boat had survived and it hadn't.



Leaving Lamb Island to cross the outer bay shortly before we met the RIB. Middle Mouse in the distance

When the ebb tide begins to move, the swirling tide off Wylfa Head gradually reaches further in to Pillar Rocks, which we now passed after leaving Lamb Island. Out of the corner of my left eye I watched the people on the other side of the rocks, which explains why the young man powering out to inspect us in his official RIB escaped my attention until he was about 100 yards away. We concentrated on steadyng *Zeffie* in the lump created by his boat while he satisfied himself that we knew what we were doing out there, close to the rip in an open kayak. Whether he was happy or not, he then left us alone to dig in our paddles and head for Llanbadrig Head across the bay against the ebb. Jenny, keen birdwatcher that she is, wanted to move smartly offshore to round Middle Mouse, which would put us in the main tidal flow, probably to be carried downstream towards Holyhead. Hmm. Decisions, decisions...

We picked our way back in from Llanbadrig Head to complete the clockwise trip, past Llanbadrig Cove, marked by the 'white lady', a quartzite stack that assumes the shape of a Victorian woman with a basket in

a long skirt, cape and bonnet. These features contradict the guidebook explanation that it represents a tragic figure from 'ancient Celtic history'. It is more likely that she was the invention of a local hotelier wishing to boost his trade in the new age of travel by steam train, as so many 'historic' local features turn out to be. Even so, when visibility is reduced in a mist she can give you a bit of a turn when she appears suddenly, close to.

We rounded Fox Head, saw the sands packed with people, and promised ourselves that we would start from a quieter cove close to home the following day.



Day Two, June 25th

The cove we chose as a base next day was much closer to home but the trip north from there was more challenging than swanning around Cemaes Bay. We started from the little sandy beach of Porth Trwyn, intending to paddle to Carmel Head. On the way we would bypass popular Church Bay, and call in at Fidlyn island and cove (*ynys y ffidlyn*).

The distance to Carmel Head as the crow flies is 3.2 miles / 5.15k. We put in 7-8 miles of strenuous sea kayaking by the end of the day.

Between Porth Trwyn and Church Bay there are low cliffs, caves and occasional shingle beaches, like these:



Porth Grugmor, or Cable Bay, is the most open sandy gap in the cliffs before you reach Church Bay. From here there was once an underwater cable link that crossed over to Ireland, thence to the USA. I've seen the cable and it is still in remarkably good condition. We passed Church Bay well offshore to maintain an efficient line to the distant cliffs. There were not many people on



Cable Bay / Porth Grugmor. The cottage above the shore was built to take the end of a transatlantic cable. There is a cupboard inside which once housed the Morse key and record books. Lots of sand and caves when the tide recedes

the beach. Its Welsh name is Porth Swtan, suggesting frequent visits from Vikings long ago.

It was a hard slog to reach Fidlyn Cove after Church Bay, manoeuvring the boat through occasional eddies and unexpected adverse currents on our way along this ironbound stretch, among others:



Fidlyn certainly must have been a Viking hideaway in the first millennium AD. There is a shingle bank at the head of the cove behind which lies a marshy lagoon that would have been open to the sea without the bank. It is hidden from offshore by a stack in the centre of the inlet. It does not take much imagination to picture dragonboats hauled out on the banks of the little *Llyn*.

Fidlyn is a magical place with a haunting atmosphere, and there is a good story to go with it, too. A Viking sea rover abducted the daughter of a local chieftain and brought her back to a cave, her betrothed following them, out of sight. He tied her up in there (*see cave, above right*) and threatened to drown her unless she accepted him. A rockfall from the roof of the cave laid him low just as he found her lover cutting her bonds, giving them the chance to escape in his *cwrwgl* across to the stack and to scramble up its outer face. The remainder of the war party followed, bent on revenge. Suddenly, with a thunderous noise and a heaving of the earth, the stack split in two and left the lovers safe on the outer crag, which was now inaccessible. And still is.

No need to sneer, it no doubt has a kernel of truth, and if the only scribe available to write it all down was a monk, it is to be expected that he enriched the tale

with two miracles courtesy of the Almighty — part of a monk's job description back then, after all.



We spun our little *cwrwgl* round and approached the shore on the other side of the stack, where the cove is shallower and not rock-bound. The sea was limpid in there, its surface unruffled by wind. One paddle stroke and we floated gently in to the shore, over tendrils of kelp that stood upright from the bottom like miniature woodlands, looking as if they were growing in fresh air. Then we checked the time and realised that we had to leave in a hurry.

We almost reached Carmel Head, but decided at the last second not to push our luck when the infamous overfalls appeared around the corner, roiling and boiling. We fled from them and the tide behind us changed from breakers to waves with big blue muscles that carried us along while we concentrated on keeping *Zeffie* pointing in the right direction to avoid broaching-to. We made good time retracing our steps, but it was hard work. Some big headlands on Anglesey generate wide-ranging back eddies on the ebb, cartwheel currents that oppose the main tide. There were quite a few lobster pot buoys leaning in the wrong direction out there...

As we paddled back into Porth Trwyn we looked down to the seabed to find the rocks that once caught out Mary Brown (DCA) in her Roamer *Cara*, when she was holidaying close by. We found them, pale grey and luminous under the water, as one imagines Moby Dick might be, and close to the surface. "I hereby name these hazards 'Mary Brown's Rocks,'" I declared, as we slid around them and soon grounded gently close to one of the biggest black-backed gulls I have seen, strolling up and down the waterline.

A wonderful return to the water, after a long enforced absence! *KM*



Windermere In The Sun

June 15, Mike Harrington

WITH THE EASING OF COVID RESTRICTIONS and the weather forecast being good with light winds, Chris Lavender and I decided we would take our wives sailing.

On Monday morning Anne-Marie and I met up with Chris and his wife Val by the side of Lake Windermere to sail separately to maintain social distancing. Anne-Marie and I in our Wanderer and Chris and Val in their Wayfarer. After rigging the boats we launched from Harrowslack Beach into completely flat water and sat waiting for some wind. We didn't have to wait long. The lake was flat with a mirror image of each boat on the water, but then a gentle southwesterly breeze pushed us further north up the lake enabling us to sail in a very relaxed manner whilst drinking tea.



Wanderer on the left, with Chris Lavender's Wayfarer, Ben Gunn. Mike Harrington top right; Anne-Marie right

Despite the gentle wind there were other sailing boats on the lake, including a mirror dinghy and some yachts who, with sails up, were moving gently through the water, as well as a number of kayaks enjoying the calm conditions. We also saw a clinker-built rowing boat possibly built in the 1930s or earlier, with char lures either side of the boat. The wind picked up slightly and pushed us towards Wray Castle, where we decided to stop on a lee shore for lunch.

As is often the case with sailing in the Lake District, the wind turned 180 degrees and pushed us back for our return journey.



To see how the other half live we sailed past the jetties at White Cross Bay, passing some beautiful sailing and motor boats all doing nothing – how lucky we were to be sailing. With slightly more wind in the sails we made good progress towards the Windermere Ferry Museum, where I had decided a challenge was in order as I wanted to take the Wanderer alongside the museum jetty. The last time Chris and I sailed on Windermere together, Chris was at the helm and he brought the Wayfarer alongside the Ferry Museum jetty successfully, so it was something I wanted to achieve. With the wind having picked up slightly, I furled the Genoa and turned onto a beam reach towards the jetty. The Wanderer picked up speed as we entered the confines between the two museum jetties, but turning the boat into wind before tacking enabled me to bring the Wanderer alongside in a controlled fashion.

The weather for the day started with glorious, warm sunshine that stayed with us until our return journey, when there were a couple of really heavy downpours. After these, the view towards the Langdale Pikes, which had been clear all morning, was now covered in thick cloud, completely obscuring the hills.

Later with no rain or lightning but the continuous clapping of thunder over the hills, the strength of wind was enough for us to sail back and make our trip home. A fantastic day's sailing in mixed weather with good company. MH



Kielder in the Wind, Bill Haylock, July 6th 2020

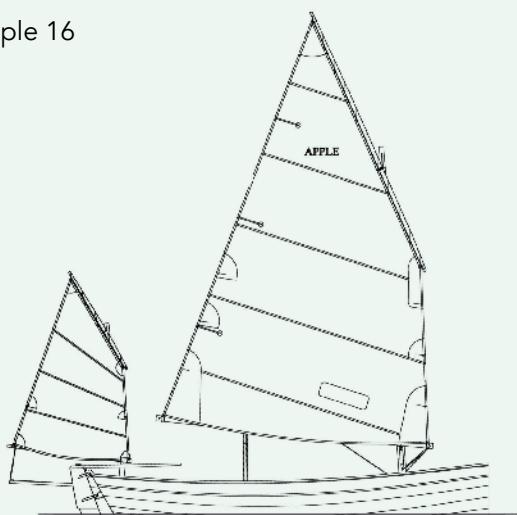
A WINDY AFTERNOON AT KIELDER YESTERDAY gave me the chance to test the capabilities of my self-build Campion Apple 16 *Soirbheas*. When I launched about midday the wind was F2 with gusts up to F4. I sailed across to a sheltered bay to raft up with Ken in his Winkle Brig and Ian in his Sunfish for a sociable lunch break. Leaving the shelter of the bay, I realised the wind had picked up to F4 with gusts up to the top end of F5 (as the forecast had promised).



Taken by Ken Lewis from his Winkle Brig as *Soirbheas* overtakes a Cape Cutter

With the water ballast tank just half-full and full sail, *Soirbheas* felt quite happy beating, despite the chop that threw spray in my face. She felt secure even with the lee gunwale right down on the water, the helm still light and responsive. I never felt the need to sit out and could easily ride the gusts by luffing up, rarely feeling the need to spill any wind. She let me know when I was getting too close with a flutter of the luff before losing power, so it was easy keeping her on the wind.

Apple 16



When I decided to turn around and head home she was now on a broad reach and suddenly she picked up her skirts, rose up on the plane and took off; 7 knots, then 7.5 on the GPS, until the gust passed and she settled back to 6 knots. On the final 2 mile leg from Leaplish back to the clubhouse at Tower Knowe the wind was dead astern. On the run, despite the wind now building to a steady F5, I was disappointed to see no more than 6 kt on the GPS. Getting near home, rather than trying to gybe in that wind, I decided to turn into the large sheltered inlet of the Belling. Once again she was on a broad reach and instantly accelerated, with 8.5 knots showing on the GPS for 30 seconds or so, before I entered the shelter of the Belling.

Having gybed onto the starboard tack, I sailed out of the Belling on a beam reach. I didn't fancy sailing back onto the exposed pontoon of Kielder Water Sailing Club with full sail, so I headed across to the Whickhope inlet and dropped the mainsail in the lee of Bull Crag peninsula. I had never tried sailing just on the mizzen before. I reckoned it would be easy enough running on the mizzen, but wasn't sure how the boat would handle with the wind on the beam for the final approach to the pontoon. Sure enough, on the run she made 2.5 to 3 kts just on the little mizzen. On the final turn into the pontoon I eased the mizzen right out and hoped the momentum would carry me in. However, the F5 was blowing me away from the pontoon, but sheeting in a little gave me enough power without weather-cocking into the wind.

It was an exhilarating sail and gave me more confidence in the boat. I'm still getting to know her, but so far she has more than lived up to my hopes. Sorry - no action pics as I was rather too busy to mess about with a camera! Here's a pic of her in rather tamer conditions on Kielder. BH



"The Apple 16, a five-strike stitch-and-glue balanced lug yawl came closest to being everything I wanted. The classic lines and balanced lug were just what I was looking for and the somewhat flat aft section of the hull allows the boat to get up on a plane. I'm a sucker for a plumb bow, so as soon as I saw pictures of the Apple 16, I knew it was for me."

Boat Profile by Matt Browser in *Small Boats Magazine*

All Is Safely Gathered In

by Peter Menear, 2773

ON SATURDAY MORNING 11TH JULY, Penzance Harbour wallowed in the warm sunshine which had for most of the month been hidden behind dark rain-bearing clouds, adding to the 'lock down' despair of the townsfolk. But now at long last I was free to launch *Red Swan*, a little later in the morning than I would have preferred.

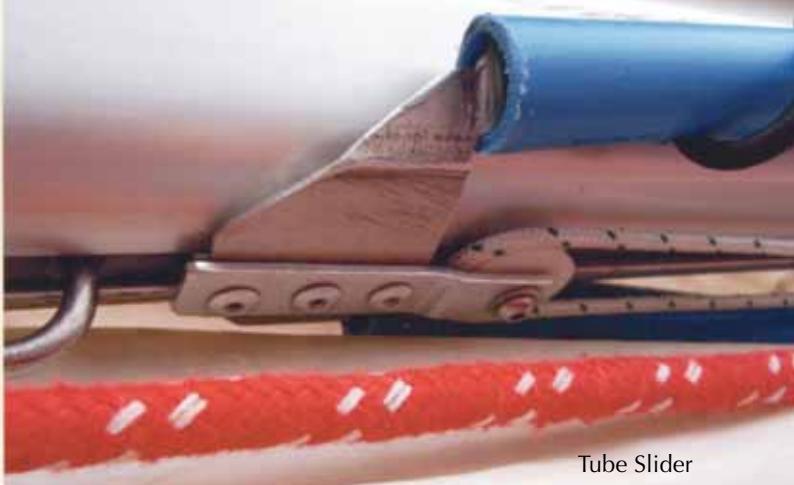
My ever faithful Liz, whom some of you will know, has no interest in my dinghy sailing other than to ensure that I follow all necessary safety procedures to facilitate my safe return; when satisfied she left me to get on with things.

Single handing a Mk 2 Wayfarer at the age of 84 years can at times be quite demanding, so I constantly attempt to make things easier, usually successfully, for the sheer fun of it. A particular difficulty for me arises when trying to flake down the main (often offshore) so that I can then row, paddle or motor into harbour when things are busy. Lazy jacks would of course solve this difficulty but the lines would then come in the way of my hoop framed tent, which I set over the boom, so something else was needed.

Cruising sailors are well known for finding two or more uses for whatever piece of kit they have on board, mainly to save space, and I am no exception to this concept. The tent frames had thus far been single-use items and as I don't yet require support, once upright, it seemed they were to remain so for the foreseeable future. However, things were about to change.

After much thought, and well steeped in Covid despair, I conceived an arrangement whereby the frame tubes might have a dual purpose. So after rummaging through my scrap metal bin followed by some nifty metal bashing, those flogging sail gathering-up days must surely be over! Well, I was about to experience the results on the water presently. And so at 10.30 hrs at the start of the ebb, *Red Swan* slipped out of Penzance and into Gwava Bay, in a warm and gentle southwesterly to enjoy a leisurely sail due east for St Michael's Mount.

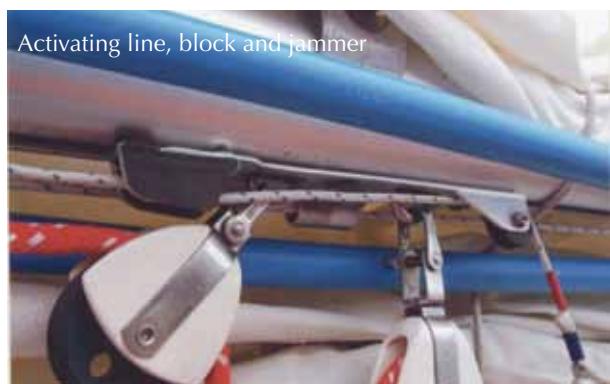
Sitting comfortably and enjoying the feeling of being out at sea again after a long absence, one is inclined to postpone things that may prove troublesome, and so when the Mount did eventually fetch up close on the port bow I pushed the tiller down lightly and set a course for Porthleven, knowing that the tide would only allow me to make about half the distance before I would have



Tube Slider

to put the *Swan* about. It was a good decision, and I watched Penzance recede into the distance and enjoyed the superb scenery while sailing happily along. But the tide was receding and before long I had to reluctantly turn about for home.

Half an hour later St Michael's Mount was on the starboard quarter and I seemed to be making better time than I thought, so I thought I should now consider my flaking idea while there was time to put things right should problems occur. Once again I scanned my handiwork! The tubes (now straight) and not pleasing to look at, are fixed to the lower sloping sides of the boom, the forward ends clipped to swivel brackets and the aft ends held captive to a common slider. The centres are held down against a small slotted plate midway, fixed to the underside of the boom, from which a cord loop keeps the tubes in place with pegs until tripped by the line and block arrangement, amidship, and connected to the slider. A long loop suspended from the spreaders passing under the boom is hooked to the terminal end of the activating line and serves to support the tubes when the aft slider compresses them upwards, into which falls the unsuspecting mainsail. Simples! Except I now had an audience as the bay was now quite busy with speedboats and other motorised objects, resulting in an uncomfortable level of wash.



By now I was closing the Lighthouse so no time to lose. The activating line hangs down from a small block just forward of the centre sheet blocks, and therefore is easy to reach; it was now in my grasp, and with a confident yank downwards, aft shot the long support lines, pegs tripped, forward comes the slider forcing up the hoops and line cleated. Eureka! Without further fuss the main halyard was uncleated, and down into the waiting envelope flaked the main, not particularly tidily, but well held in place to smartly lash up. Altogether a very pleasant sail, with a successful outcome to an old problem. **PM**



St Michael's Mount

Île de Ré

Wednesday 24 June and Thursday 25 June 2020.
Report by David Priestley

Attending:

David Priestley and Miles Dent in Cornish Coble *Valentine IV*.

The plan, hatched a week earlier, was for Miles in his boat *Water Rat* and me in *Valentine IV*, to sail from the huge marina at Minîmes (la Rochelle) to the beautiful port of Ars-en-Ré at the northern end of Île de Ré for an overnight stay before heading home – a trip of around 20 miles each way. But, in that week, the anti-small-boat-sailing gods got together to conspire against us!

Firstly, the coastal forecast got worse every day in that the forecast wind strength lessened to the point where the day before, there was no wind at all predicted. Then my partner Niky, who normally looks after the sharp end of *Valentine IV*, developed a nasty tendonitis in her shoulder, which made it impossible for her to sail.

Then, on the morning of departure Miles rang me to say he'd got a very bad back and couldn't manage his boat! Anyway we are not the DCA for nothing. We looked those demons straight in the eye and re-cast our plan. We decided to go ahead with Miles and me in *Valentine IV* and Niky and Miles's wife Lyn driving over to the island to meet us. We also decided to aim for Ars-en-Ré as planned but to go into the nearer port of la Flotte if, as predicted, we didn't have the wind to reach Ars-en-Ré.

We cast off around 10.30 into a very light breeze and limped out of the la Rochelle channel trying to find any bits of breeze available. We continued like that up to the stretch opposite the beach at la Pallice then just stopped. With several other boats nearby also becalmed there was an odd feel to things. Very hot (30+C) and after a while we decided to put the motor on (apologies to those purists among you). We alternated sailing/

Miles and David with *Valentine IV* in the port of la Flotte



Miles in *Water Rat* on another occasion, rowing to Port Paradis
Photograph by John Perry

motoring up to and under the imposing bridge to the Île de Ré but once through we found a super westerly wind on the beam of *Valentine IV* and off she went! The wind was steady; the sea was flat and we were able to put her on auto-pilot (aka John Huntingford's Helm Impeder – a really brilliant invention) and have lunch whilst sitting back taking in the glorious scenery and reminding ourselves how lucky we were to be doing this!

We both looked up – completely unchoreographed – and offered a few words of advice to those aforementioned anti-small-boat-sailing-gods.

(The actual words are probably best not printed in a family publication such as this; we leave to you dear readers, to guess. Answers on the usual postcards please). So we sailed like this for the next 5/6 miles – all on the same fetch – past the lovely harbour of Rivedoux-Plage, past the old Vauban Fort de Prée and the old abandoned abbey. Just glorious! Then we needed to make a decision about whether to try to get to Ars-en-Ré or go into la Flotte. By now it was getting on towards 3.30pm and we would still have another 9/10 miles to go to Ars-en-Ré, so we decided to put into la Flotte, which we did around 4.00pm. But first, given we would have to wait until 4.00 or 4.30 to have enough water to enter la Flotte, we continued on that tack way over towards the

Vendée coast, in sight of the seaside town of la Tranche and the Pointe de l'Aiguillon. Fabulous sailing!

Once we had got level with the entrance to the port of St Martin (the next port along the coast of the island) we turned and crabbed across the bay using the tide to slide us towards the entrance to la Flotte. We rowed into the harbour and tied up in front of the port office. Niky and Lyn were there to meet us and after a couple of truly medicinal beers we went off to the hotel that Miles and Lyn had booked for the night.

After a very tasty dinner at the hotel and a couple of really nice walks that evening and the following



morning we got back to the boat and set off under the jib at 10.45 out of the very pretty port of la Flotte into another stunning morning and another good westerly breeze. Once out of the channel we were again able to put her on auto-pilot, again on a long fetch which would take us up to and under the bridge. This time though, the wind was noticeably stronger and more gusty, so a bit of work to do. Within reach of the bridge we decided to heave to and reef in. *Valentine IV* duly obliged – she sits very quietly hove-to – and we sailed more comfortably under the bridge. With the gusts calming a bit we shook out the reef and put in a tack to take us over to the beach at Sablanceaux in order to give us an angle to get back to Minîmes.

At this stage I had cunningly taken the tiller, allowing Miles to carry out the job that Niky normally does so well, ie protecting me from the frequent soaking from the spray given that we were now in a wind-over-tide phase. Apart from Miles being drenched (I did loan him my oilskin – I'm not all bad you see), we again enjoyed a fast and steady sail back, putting into Minîmes at around 2.15pm.

So, despite the worries beforehand we had enjoyed two days of glorious sailing. I had enjoyed and benefited from Miles's excellent company and greater experience; Niky and Lyn had done their best to help several shops and cafés to recover from the financial deprivations of the Covid crisis; we had enjoyed a very pleasant stopover on the island, and *Valentine IV* had looked after us well and thoroughly enjoyed her outing. She had averaged 4.9 knots on the run up to la Flotte and 5.5 knots on the run back so win-win don't you think? We'll do Ars-en-Ré next time! *DP*

Valentine IV preparing to sail out of la Flotte under jib (and below)



Newtown Creek Rally, July 11th & 12th,

Steve Bradwell



Newtown Creek is a beautiful natural harbour on the north shore of the Isle of Wight between Cowes and Yarmouth. Sailing there from the mainland in a dinghy involves crossing relatively open water, working with the tide in and out of harbours and estuaries while dealing with whatever the weather brings. All this makes for an interesting challenge in passage planning and sailing, for those of us who enjoy this kind of thing.

Attending, in order of boat size:

Cliff Martin	Mirror	Gilkicker
David Sumner	Mirror	Curlew
Steve Bradwell	Enterprise	
Jamie and Jude Scott	Wayfarer	Josh

With the official rally programme having been cancelled due to the pandemic sailing was organized on the DCA forum with four boats taking part, all sailing from the east. Cliff sailed from Emsworth in Chichester Harbour on Friday evening, passing under Hayling Island bridge into Langstone Harbour and overnighting at Sinah Lake before sailing for Newtown on Saturday morning.

Jamie and Jude also sailed from Chichester Harbour while Steve and David launched from Warsash on the River Hamble on Saturday.

Setting off just before 08.00 Steve caught the last of the ebb tide out of the Hamble and made steady progress tacking into the forecast westerly wind before landing in the mouth of the Beaulieu River in order to wait for a favourable tide to cross the Solent closer to high water. While waiting the wind speed increased



Steve's Enterprise lying restlessly to anchor
(Below) Cliff in Gilkicker

above the forecast and Steve sailed with a single-reefed mainsail and jib and had a fairly wet crossing, bailing out his boat before reaching the shelter of Newtown.

Jamie and Jude were next to arrive, having sailed a greater distance, passing Hayling Island and Portsmouth. With the local pub closed we elected not to land at the usual Shalfleet Quay but instead to stay afloat by anchoring in the deeper water in the Western Haven allowing us to make the most of the flood tide in the morning. Cliff joined us at the anchorage having first checked for us at Shalfleet Quay.



A text message from David let us know that he had turned back. With an adverse tide on Saturday morning he had launched later in the day, spending time at Power Station Creek. By the time he rounded Calshot and started tacking towards the headland at Lepe the wind had strengthened and a rough chop had built up. With progress slow and with the possibility for worsening conditions off Lepe point he felt he might not reach Newtown in time to reach the rally destination and wisely used the last of the flood tide to return to the relative shelter of Southampton Water.



(Above) Jamie & Jude Scott bed down in Wayfarer *Josh*
(Below) Dusk falls on Newtown Creek, © National Trust

For the rest of us with our boat tents up and meals heated and eaten aboard as the sun set we had a quiet night at our 'deep' water anchorage for we were keen to make an early start next day in order to make the most of the flood tide as the forecast was for light and variable winds.

Jamie and Jude were first to leave Newtown Harbour on Sunday morning, followed shortly after by Cliff and Steve. At first the wind was very light and progress east slow but soon a steady and very usable easterly wind picked up as we once again tacked to our respective destinations under a sunny sky. The better than forecast wind on Sunday made for some very enjoyable sailing. All in all a technical but very rewarding weekend's sailing. Thanks to everyone for joining in. *SB*



Another Dip Into The DCA Facebook Page

chosen by Jennifer Heney

In early June Windsor Weber took DCA Facebook users on an odyssey in his Sea Pearl 21 around the Yahara River and Madison Lakes in the USA, providing daily updates. Here are one or two extracts...

Windsor Weber 1-14 June

Day 2 - Took the rig down to get under bridges and overpass; possible weather out of the north tonight so I will hunker down in a sheltered area in a place known as Gilligan's Island on the Yahara River above Mud Lake. Forecasting a marvellous sunset - anchor beer imminent.



Day 9-10 - The adventure and challenges continue as Wisconsin braces for what would be only the fourth tropical storm in 170 years; remnants of Tropical Storm Cristobal move north right towards my location. All day to prepare and batten down the hatches; had to do 4 anchor sets throughout the evening as I moved location due to the ever-changing wind direction. Tarp tent survived and performed well, though there was a bit of swinging on the hook. The adventure continues.

Day 12 - Going to use the OEM camper top to see how it compares to my tarp tent of previous nights; it sure is a lot smaller and a lot quieter. Hmm, looks cool...



Richard Shipman 12 Jun

My £1.99 12volt anchor light.



Half metre of cool white LED strip off eBay £1.99

Empty mustard jar plastic top

Empty plastic tablet tube

Old twin core cable from defunct lawn mower

2 x small cable ties to keep strip unwinding from tube

Don't ask about current draw... that's well beyond me.

Aaron de Ruiter 8 Jun

I'm trying to track the title of a book I read years ago about an Englishman who sailed a small boat to the Mediterranean. It included some B&W images of him diving on amphorae. Does anyone know the book?

Chris Frisby

Is this the book, Solitary Journey by Charles Violet? I know he does some sort of diving on a Roman shipwreck at a Mediterranean island he stops at. His boat is a small 20ft yawl called *Nova Espero*. It's an inspiring read for any small boat sailor!



Much more about *Nova Espero* in Dinghy Cruising 247. We were very glad of this lead from Chris Frisby! (Ed)

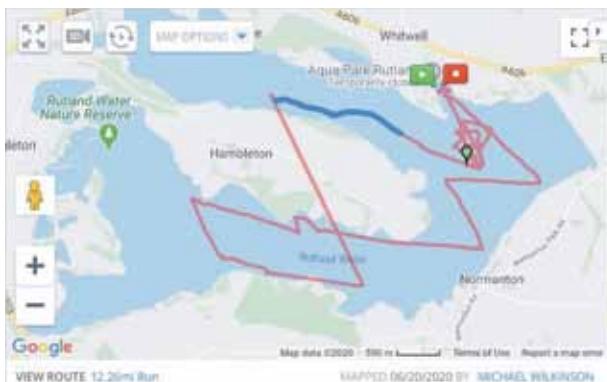
Jean Troad 12 July

Balade en Ilur près de Bréhat



Mike Wilkinson 20 Jun

Hmmm... I thought I felt a bump!



Tracking app was not particularly accurate today. However, a great day's sailing. 5h 45m on the water (memo to self: buy a cushion!) and I was able to reach the limit of sailing on both arms of the reservoir. My new little tiller extension is worth about half a reef: just gives me enough extra ability to shift my weight to reduce the need to sheet out in the gusts and to give me confidence that I have more in reserve. Also makes it more comfortable to steer standing up when conditions allow. Overall, possibly my best day's sailing on Rutland yet; apart from the shortcut across the peninsula, obvs.

John Hughes 20 Jun

Anyone know what this is?

Very common near the water's edge at low spring tide, like a collar with one side open, composed of light, leather-like gelatinous substance, in shape and size rather like a plastic coffee cup holder. I can find nothing that resembles it in any seashore guide.

**Russell Poole**

Think it might be a 'sand collar', egg mass of a moon snail. Google it and compare photos and description, seems to fit the bill.

John Hughes

Thank you, yes, that's it - the description fits the sand collar perfectly! I've never heard of a moon snail and don't believe I've ever seen one. I find plenty of large whelk shells on the beach but never anything like a moon snail shell large enough to produce collars this size. This year is the first year I've ever come across a sand collar.

Neil Sutherland 26 Jun

Overnighting allowed from 5 July. My friend and I will be sailing our boats in the Carrick Roads for 4 days; my friend in his Deben Lugger, a lovely 18ft lug-sailed beauty, and myself in my charming Clovelly Picarooner 15'8" gaff-rigged love affair. She was originally built by the Heard family and I'm bringing her back to home waters for what we hope will be a memorable few days sailing. If you see us say hello, I'll be flying my DCA Pennant. (see pages 23-25 — Ed)

**Rob Wilkinson 27 Jun**

I have built this split junk rig for my Pathfinder over the winter. This was the first run out in very light winds. It worked as well as I could expect and I'm looking forward to playing with it in a few different conditions.

Ian Fairclough

Ah ha! Mystery solved. I was out on the lake yesterday; in fact that's me in the background between your main and mizzen. I saw your sails and wondered what on earth it was. You did seem to be doing well in the light airs we had in the afternoon. Great experiment, would love to see the control lines.



Robert Aspey 28 June

Adventure on the Trent: this was the first holiday we have been able to take this year. The easing of the lock down restrictions has allowed live-a-board boaters to use the waterways and stay overnight on their boat, without having to return to a home mooring. We therefore took the opportunity and towed our 10-foot sailing dinghy from where we keep it at Normanton on Soar, down the river through 3 locks and moored up at Cranfleet Cut visitor moorings



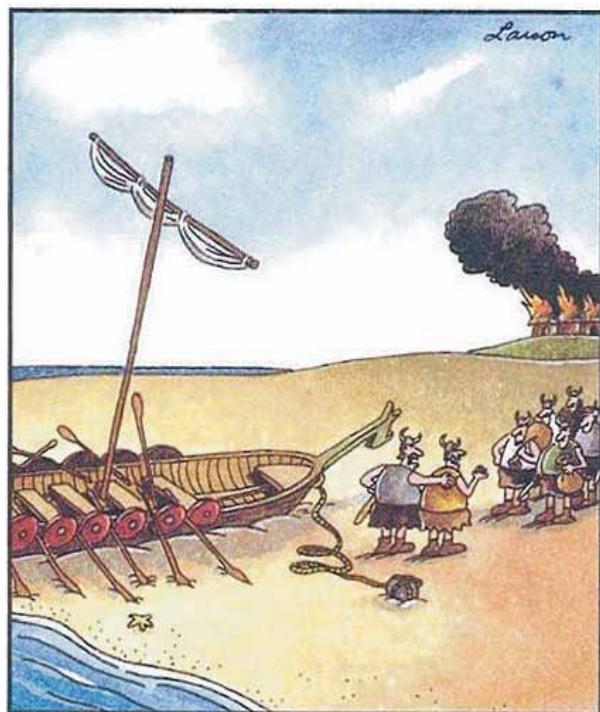
This was my first experience of sailing my dinghy on a wide expanse of water. The River Trent here is quite exposed and at one point I got stuck on a shallow lee shore opposite where the Soar runs into the Trent, but finally managed to row away and escape on a close haul. I made wide tacks up river against a gusty S/W wind. Later my wife threw a tow rope to me and towed me further up river. I then had a cracking sail back down river on a broad reach and up into the River Soar, my wife following behind. The effort of towing the dinghy down to the Trent was definitely worth it, and is a trip I will try to repeat.

David Tolan 10 July

We just sailed from Valentia Island to Beag Inis, landed, went for a wander, and returned. It's my first time sailing to anywhere, rather than just sailing around. It's only about a mile across to the island, but it's a bit more exposed, and I was glad for the weight of two of us with the unreefed main. I'd done a couple of hours of sailing drills in more sheltered water first, so I'll sleep tonight.

**Trent Watkins 12 July**

Seems fitting for this group...



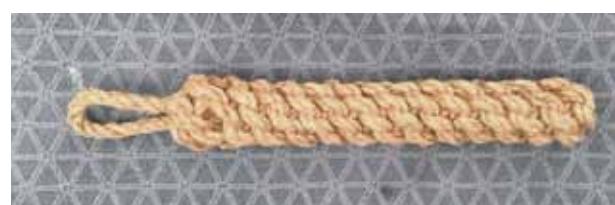
"Everyone can just put down their loot and plunder, and Sven here—yes, old Sven, who was in charge of reading the tide chart—has something to say to us all."

Phil Steam 17 July

Testing the 'pop-up tent on dinghy' arrangement; not much living / cooking space so have to spread onto the land. It's a Swale Windmill 12 ft with a home-made lug rig. It also has a gunter rig.

**Noel Watkins 27 July**

Sitting in the English summer rain; decided I'd have a go at making a fender. Came out OK I think, following Fender Maker on YouTube



Anne Wroe 5 July

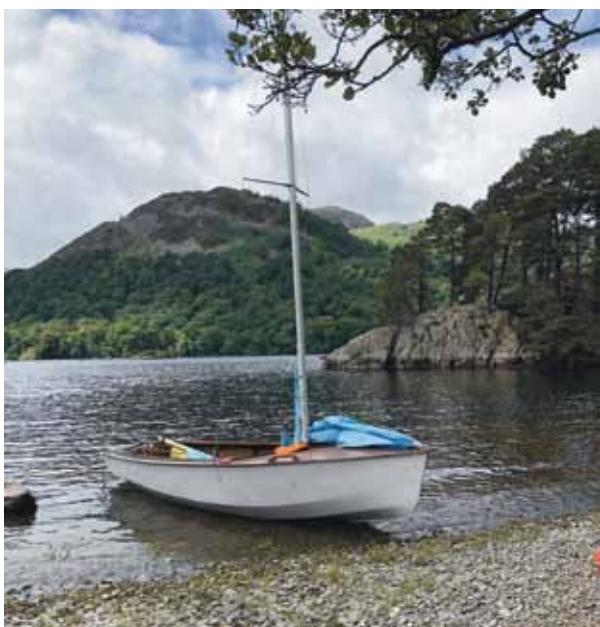
There are 4 Tideways based at Wintersett (Wakefield); 3 out yesterday in, what were for us, good conditions. Had the lake almost to ourselves.

**Janusz Ostrowski 14 July**

The fleet makes a stop in BoSport, Chalupy, Poland

**Tim Butcher 20 July**

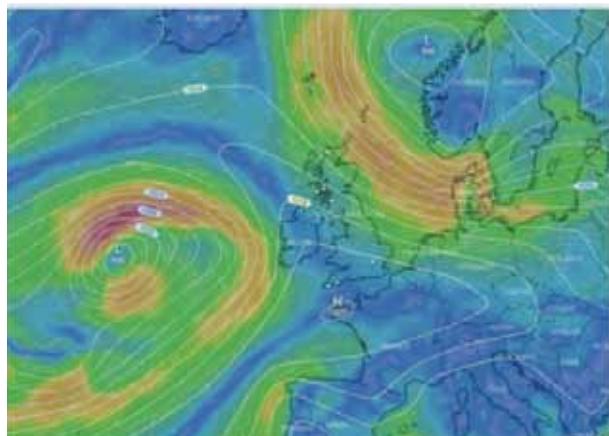
First sail of the year yesterday; went for a family sail on Ullswater. Very fickle northerly swirling around from the mountains didn't make it particularly easy. Repairs to the centre board housing over the winter kept the water out though.

**Joseph Macgregor-Griffith 27 July**

I enjoyed a brilliant 'micro cruise' on Saturday night. After getting the children to sleep with my wife I headed down to the boat at Poole YC. In the last of the evening light I motored the mile and a half to Shipstall point, anchored in deep water and settled down to a very comfortable night aboard. I awoke to a beautiful sunrise on Sunday morning and enjoyed a cup of tea watching Sammy the Seal fishing for breakfast. A quick anchor reset to a hypotenuse mooring to the beach and I was exploring ashore, I had the whole RSPB reserve to myself (except for the deer and oystercatchers!). It was a lively downwind sail home in a fresh F5. The boat packed away, I was home by 11am for a day with my family. Won't be long till my crew (children) are old enough to come with me!

**Kevin Sheffield 29 July**

Does anyone else here use 'Windy'? Remarkable stuff!
<https://www.windy.com/>

**Paul Smith**

One of the nice features in Windy is that you can select different weather models... so you have 5 different sources within the one app. I use that a lot to gauge how stable the forecast is... if the forecasts are significantly different then keep a close eye out for changes! Also you can turn on a tide times layer and see isobars and wind forecast in units of your choice. Then animate the whole lot over the next few days. It's a fantastic tool for dinghy cruising and sea kayaks.

Kevin again

I would add that reading the help pages is useful as they give notes on the different models they offer. The German station seems to be the best for wind and waves. It's such a shame that the Met Office don't produce this level of data publicly.

Red Admiral



Part Two

Gudgeons, Pintles and Paddling Cows ~ Celebrating the art and audacity of David Weston

BEFORE THE LAST LEG *EN ROUTE* to St Ives in Part One, David asked a fisherman at Sennen Cove, 'Is a passage to St. Ives possible in a small rowing boat?' He was wondering whether a future North Coast adventure was on the cards, but had no intention of continuing the voyage at that moment. Minutes later, having been told there were five hours of favourable tide left, he was on his way... Once more, a spur of the moment decision.

And so began his voyage along the north coast of Cornwall, first to St. Ives and then on to Newquay, Padstow, Port Isaac, Boscastle and Bude. Here he is leaving Newquay:

Powerful surges pounded the lower wall and I wondered when the 'southerly three' would arrive. I was relaxing in the sunshine at the top of stone steps on the seaward side of the harbour. Had I not completed what was for *Epic* a long passage (in excess of 25 miles) the previous day, I would have felt even more a fraud. There I was, lounging around in a holiday resort after a mollycoddled night, and just one day into the voyage. The remainder of the Atlantic coastline beckoned, and my impatience to be on the move took the edge off what could have been a more enjoyable interlude.

On the horizon, a mile off Trevose Head, I saw three small islets (there are more). I was eager to take a closer look but had to be patient and wait to see if conditions improved before making a dash for Padstow - seventeen miles away. As the harbour emptied, a couple of fishing boats set off to sea leaving a free harbour wall. I tied alongside, close to the entrance, in order to be afloat at low tide.

To kill time, for I felt too anxious to paint, I took a stroll along the beautiful golden sands of Watergate Beach. I passed by Sea World where one can walk through a glass tunnel beneath swimming fish, including some shark-like specimens. There is a shallow pool, the sandy bottom of which turns out to be carpeted with huge rays and other flat-fish. To add authenticity there lies, submerged in the pool, a wrecked boat which turns out to be the remains of a Mirror dinghy that met its end off Newquay. With my Watergate investigations completed I returned to watch over *Epic*.

Two hours after the ' ... southerly, three to four...' forecast, I put my life jacket on and rowed away from Newquay Harbour. It was very windy but the sea had flattened considerably. I hoisted the red jib which I had attached to the forestay while still in harbour, unwrapped the 'Bosun' from the mast and hastened away towards the Quies (the previously mentioned islets). After a mile or so, when I had left the protection of Towan Head and the other Newquay headlands, large swells became apparent. The whole sea surface was bedecked with little waves which gave the crests of swells sinister serrations. The conditions did not bother me too much for I was going the weather way. The waves overtook me slowly and rocked me onwards.



The Bull Rock outcrop off Dinas Head, by Trevose Head

As I approached Trevose Head I aimed for a small rock, The Bull (off Dinas Head), less than a quarter of a mile offshore. A little under ten miles had been covered in two hours forty five minutes. At times just the summit of The Bull, looking black and shark-fin-like, would show and then it would be lost to view along with the headland. It was how I imagined being in mid-Atlantic would feel. The shallowing sea around The Bull caused the swells to become steeper with breaking tops. Not wishing to push my luck I set a course outside the islet. I soon found unpredictable, confused waves, steeper and much closer together. All went well till in an attempt to avoid a small portion of ocean that came on board, I rapidly stood up — more of a crouch really. The manoeuvre courted near disaster. When making my foolish stand I accidentally lifted off the tiller and



Trevose Head Lighthouse — seen from the safe side

rudder. In less time than it takes to say 'Aaaghhh!' I was lying prone with my feet thrust against the dinghy sides and my elbows locked over the transom. Vice-like I grasped the rudder stock and thrust its pintles into the gudgeons. I need not have known that the pins on the rudder were called pintles, or the eyes on the back of *Epic* were gudgeons, to know that within seconds they had to be reunited. To be out of control in that situation would be an event of short duration. Those of you who have dinghy sailed will know how difficult it is attaching a rudder while afloat. The sea steers the blade till luck lends a hand and allows docking. For rapid repositioning one needs special stimulation — a rush of adrenalin released by acute fear will do the trick.

The Bull rapidly receded; so did the angry waves as I bore right, round the white lighthouse of Trevose. I was in the lee and headed towards Pentire Point, five miles away, though I would take another right-hander before then and head up the River Camel...

Once more David succumbs to the attraction of making snap decisions as he continues his voyage from Boscastle to Bude.

After a climb up to higher Boscastle I had the pleasure of visiting an art gallery. There was plenty of time for me to paint, and rich subject matter on hand, but I could not settle and muster the necessary concentration. My mind was engaged in running through my forthcoming push towards Devon — out through the channel and along the coastline to Bude. I became increasingly worried about the procedure as time passed. I ambled round for a short while, then to conserve energy, made my way back down the hill. Not far from the harbour I chanced upon the Toby Jug Restaurant where I enjoyed a second breakfast. I received more than my requested much-mushroomed and tomatoed pieces of toast. It was suggested I have a word with a local seaman who worked out of Boscastle. The proprietor recommended I make haste to the harbour from where Ken was preparing to set out.

Presently I was engaged in a short, shouted conversation with the obliging skipper who was on board *Pengenna*. After introducing myself and stating my destination. I gave the forecast wind direction and strength. The oracle said, 'Don't go.' Until near to high-

water a Bude landing is a beach landing and not safe for boats, even in a moderate onshore wind. The sensible course of action has been given loud and clear — an unequivocal, not yet. I should have been delighted with my reprieve but foolishly thought I could just pop out into the Atlantic Ocean and if the lunch-time forecast showed no improvement, just pop back.

Again, bedevilled by the lure of adventure, I had been tempted to ignore prudence and continue the voyage. This strange quirk acts against my better judgement. A self-hypnosis just happens. While things were going well I enjoyed my immortality. I informed Falmouth Coastguard of my intentions and at 11:25 cast off...

Captain's log, '1:40 Black sk all across. Bos. lost. Ominous calm. Ghosting — poled out Bosun. Must get Ship/f.cast'. That forecast was virtually the same as the previous one. The only difference being that rain and drizzle were no longer occasional.

At 3:00 the breeze almost deserted me and I did a spell of row/sailing with the sails boomed out with oar and boathook. Not long after, the wind picked up and I made good progress for half an hour. Exhilarated, I stood up and held on to the mast for a few minutes. The dinghy did seem small then — a bit like a slow-motion windsurfer. Wind-strength increased and games were over. Off Dizzard Point (well over half way) and other nearby outcrops there were breaking seas. By the time I was abeam Millook Haven, a mile on, I was frightened — not by the threatening conditions, which I was getting used to, but by being propelled at too great a speed towards a destination I knew to be inaccessible at that time of the tide. Dawdling along had suited me fine. *Epic*'s sudden acceleration during that irresponsible journey to Bude caused me great anxiety. I dreaded the thought of arriving in bad weather and not being able to land because of the surf. Two hours later there would have been sufficient depth of water to allow *Epic* to round the breakwater and find shelter...



Bude beach with surfers — and surf...

Visibility improved and there was definitely a beach ahead. Was that Widemouth? No, there was a tower on the skyline and a breakwater a few hundred yards ahead. I had found Bude. An hour earlier I had decided,

if I found myself off Bude, to head straight in and take my chances. There would be people on the beach even if it was raining. Where there are waves and an accessible beach there are usually surfers.

The emotions experienced in the period that followed were beyond my usual. Though worried, I did not think my life was in danger so I decided not to use my distress flares. It had been comforting to have them with me throughout the trip. Fear had not gone away but I felt a bizarre eagerness to experience the outcome. In a supercharged state I rushed through the necessary preparations. Approaching Bude, after the long period of anxiety, I felt comparatively composed — I quite impressed myself. I wrapped and tied the Bosun round the mast. (The increased wind strength had forced me to take down the jib half an hour before.) There was no time to close my bulging painting bag into which I had hurriedly pushed the map and logbook. Odds and ends, including the broken polystyrene surfboard, fender bits, I stuffed into the cubbyholes. The lid of the red picnic box fitted tightly, giving me confidence that the Walkman and camera would be safe in what I imagined to be a thoroughly seaworthy container. The centreboard and the rudder I placed on the stern-seat, having de-shipped them in a frantic trice. For the second time in my life I fully inflated my life jacket. (The previous occasion was off Portwrinkle, three years before, when I was in a similar situation with *Epic*. At least I knew where I was this second time.)



Bude Breakwater and beach (to the right)

When I passed by the breakwater, *Epic* was perhaps two hundred yards out from the beach. Considering it was not sun-bathing weather the sands were well dotted with people. With *Epic* already rising to the swells I increased my row rate and headed for the breakers. Rowing aggressively, I surfed on a pre-breaker waveface for a couple of seconds. I had watched surfers and suddenly I was one. For a beautiful moment I really thought I could surf onto the beach. Seconds later,

boiling froth piled high over the stern and *Epic*'s blunt bow dipped into the surface, tripping my 'surfboard'. When *Epic* became vertical a great weight of white water descended. Still holding the oars I awaited the engulfing.

Waking, warm and weightless, I became aware of the situation but felt no panic. A pleasant serenity cradled me. 'I was cold before but now I was warm.' I was face down, under water. There was no need to breathe. Time was standing still. For a few moments I felt something round my legs. Eventually I forced my mouth to the air and as I gulped a little, I heard, then saw the next 'avalanche'. I wanted to breathe then, but had to be patient.

I wore a heavy jumper, jeans and green wellingtons. Heading towards Bude I ran through my beaching procedure many times. Removing wellies was a major priority but I somehow forgot in the 'excitement'. When I came out of the second roller I took in a good supply of air. I saw the Mirror riding high on her buoyant side, dragging the mast and drifting onto the beach. My wellingtons made contact with the sand. As I bobbed towards the beach a bronzed life guard on a surfboard paddled up to me and asked if I was all right. I said, 'Yes thank you.'

Another amazing example of 'Weston's Luck'!

And *Epic* was not badly damaged, either — an oar had come adrift and broken a rowlock plate; he had lost a bucket, some ropes and his oilskin, and had a lump on his head from a close encounter with the rudder. He went home to recuperate and repair the boat...

Had I taken my unorthodox arrival at Bude as a sign, my story would have ended there, on a suitably dramatic note. Devon was only eight miles away and there was no sensible landing place before Clovelly on the north Devon coast. Sensibility had not interfered up to that point so I decided to try to take *Epic* right round Cornwall.

Perhaps the idea of a circumnavigation came because I did not want the adventure to end. It would also be a tidy way of 'finishing off Cornwall' — taking *Epic* right round the County border. Cornwall is not an island, and I must admit that at first a circumnavigation seems rather an odd proposition. After looking at a map the idea does not seem so crazy — at least to me it did not. The Tamar, save for four miles, severs the counties. In reality, the northern extremity of the river is barely a trickle in the summer. That was of no consequence, for the border did not follow the course of the river exactly. After taking *Epic* overland I would relaunch some miles downstream. Above North Tamerton there is a five square mile portion of Cornwall that lies east of the river. Below, the river divides the counties all the way down to the tidal waters below Gunnislake. Surely from North Tamerton such a modest vessel as mine would be able to drift down the mighty Tamar, I mused. To check would have taken away the mystery.

The road section I reckoned was about twenty-five miles. The distance did not deter me, even though the first mile would include a rise of four hundred and thirty



Transporter for *Epic*. Built from wheels off his son's old bike, some old tent poles, wood strips, and aluminium carpet edging

feet. I would build a set of wheels and, given time, push or pull *Epic* to North Tamerton, then drift down to salt water; I mused on. To make life easier I would leave behind the mast, centreboard and rudder for the final coastal leg, which would be rowed...

And this is exactly what David did. He relaunched at Bude and rowed the boat to Welcombe Mouth with wheels aboard, carefully positioned so as not to hinder his rowing. (page 45) Marsland Water, which marks the Cornish border, drains into the sea at the south end of this beach. He dragged the boat up the cliff path until he could put the wheels on and head overland to North Tamerton and the River Tamar by way of such splendidly named villages as Ugworthy Barrows, Derril and Pyworthy. As David remarks they could have been a character list for a Dickens novel. He reaches the Tamar...

My first view of the upper reaches was quite sobering. *Epic* could have floated happily on the bridge-pool, but distressingly, the outward flow was no more than six feet wide and very, very shallow. It was to join the Deer a few yards downstream, and not too far away the Claw. Surely the combination of all that water would be sufficient to float me down to Morwellham. I trundled *Epic* the last few wheeled yards over deep grass, back up to the Deer bridge, and prepared to launch. The whole story was unfolding beautifully. In blissful ignorance I believed I was stepping from dairy-land to fairy-land. 'Hark, a merry tinkling, the popping of iridescent dewdrops showering stardust ...'

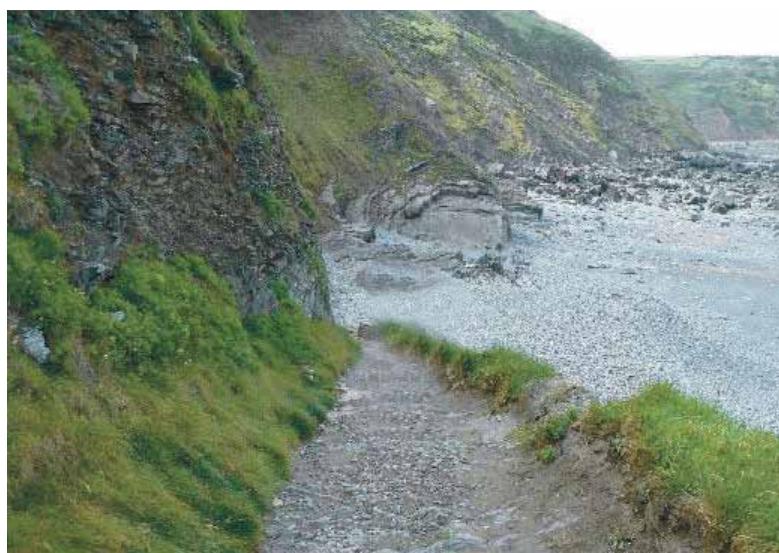
Without the slightest inkling that all was not to be

plain sailing I depleted my sparse food and drink reserve — devouring two bananas and consuming an extravagant quantity of water. Refuelling would be made at waterside establishments, I assumed. 'What waterside establishments?' you may be thinking. Between riverside shops and pubs I may have had it in mind to pluck grapes and the occasional peach from overhanging boughs as I drifted by.

Although still in a field, *Epic* looked happier the right way up. I fixed the wheels further back — as for the last sea leg — then tied loops of cord to the rowlock holes, for use with the little paddles. Between clumps of thistles and a few wands of foxgloves I launched *Epic* vertically down an eight-foot bank, taking on board, over the stern, a quantity of non-drinkable water. I dropped my 'luggage' down onto the foredeck and precariously followed, lowering myself from tussocks. *Epic* floated on brown water in the shade of overhanging trees, while I sponged out the dinghy and positioned the ridiculous midget oars. I thought it was of no consequence that the proper oars were still stabled — for they were too long to fit between the banks. At a speed that would barely have seen off a tethered pudding, I thrashed my way a few yards up to the Deer bridge. Had I not, there would still



Welcombe Mouth Beach, where David rowed ashore. He fitted the wheels and hauled *Epic* up the track (below) to reach the road





The paddling cows he met in the river

have been a thin strip of Cornwall non-circumnavigated.

The loop/rowlock idea was a total failure, but it did not matter. With a paddle in each hand, butterfly-stroke fashion, I headed the few yards to the Tamar. I passed out of the shade and before reaching the 'mighty river', rounded a bend and met foliage and shallow water. Wearing my flip-flops I stepped into the cool unknown. My feet became intimate with mud and weed, and I sensed the presence of piranhas and electric eels. Back on board I drifted a few more yards. The sun warmed my sun-hat and glinted on flowing water ahead. Silent flitterings of electric-bluey-green damselflies entertained me. I recorded the joyous moment in my log-book. '... peace beautiful. Quietly drift — cover legs — sun. V hot — nice breeze sometimes 2:36 just paddled off - no drift perfection!' and on that note I exited fairy-land.

There began a journey to tidal waters; a journey unlikely to be repeated, for there is just too little water. Not enough for a small canoe, or even a large washing-up bowl. It soon became apparent that I would be afloat

Bridge over the Tamar



very little in the early stages. Though rowing more than an odd stroke was off the agenda, till 'at least round the next bend', the wooden oars would have been very useful as rollers, sliders or levers. One of the first pools upon which I was able to float was a twenty-five to thirty foot wide, leafy canopied affair that provided cool shade. The retreat was occupied by paddling cows. The herd — palomino, russet and black and white coloured — were fairly still as I paddled towards them. They became a little inquisitive as I wove within hoof steps of two mid-brown ones. To prevent the cattle wandering, barriers of single or double strands of barbed-wire were stretched across the river in many places. The height of the pneumatic tyres was a problem — I was lucky not to be punctured.

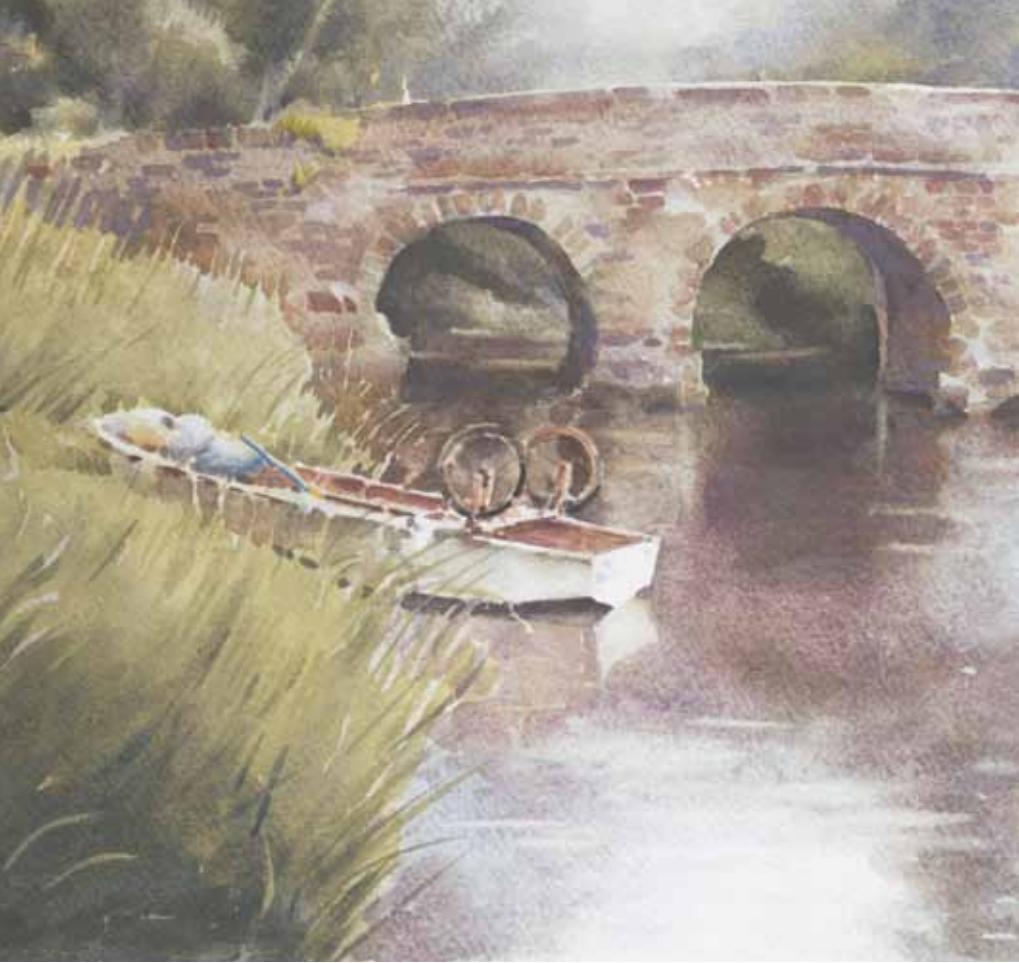
Between the odd pools where *Epic* could float I splashed alongside or walked on the exposed gravel bed whilst guiding the dinghy along narrow rushing channels, no wider than itself. Where the river was wider the hull grazed the stony river bed and needed coaxing over even smallish stones. The flimsy ply hull ruled out rushing. When not immediately downstream from wading cows the water was reasonably clear and flip-flops seemed ideal footwear, at first. Quick-drying shorts and a shirt completed my ensemble.

Before clocking up the first mile I encountered what looked like a beaver's lodge. The huge dam of branches and twigs had been caught in a riverside tree at the height of a winter's flood. The impenetrable barrier stood five feet high so a slight detour over the grassy bank was required. I was travelling light so there was no need to unload.

Epic slid over the deep grass with comparative ease. Those first obstructions, I should have realized, would not be the last. Flowing in from the left the River Claw joined the Tamar, theoretically boosting the flow but making no apparent difference. By that time I had progressed half a mile south. That was 'crow-measurement', the twisting Tamar at least doubled that distance. The OS showed, below the Claw, many little streams adding to the volume of water which would surely build up the power to whisk *Epic* effortlessly down to Gunnislake.

Alone, I moved slowly through a tranquil landscape. Apart from glimpses of reflected sky and breaks in the tree canopy, a full, lush spectrum of greens pervaded. The river slipped quietly past spits of exposed gravelly riverbed, then on, gently scouring and chuckling to new, dark pools.

When two and a half hours or so into the trek - with a little over one crow-mile travelled, I sighted a fine, stone, shallow-arched bridge of similar proportions to the North Tamerton one. A chance to replenish supplies and find out where deeper water could be expected, I presumed. I dragged *Epic*'s bow onto a shallow bank



Druxton Bridge, its four arches separating Devon and Cornwall, lies four miles from Launceston. David hauled *Epic* partly out of the water here to tape over a leak. The wheels are stowed for rowing

of small angular, pale, pinky-brown-purple stones, the same colour as the bridge, then sauntered up to the absolutely deserted, little trodden grass track that so gracefully spanned the river. On the plus side, it was extremely peaceful and picturesque; but I was in need of drinking water, and could have murdered a cream tea with extra scones.

Thwarted, I paddled off downstream with *Epic* in tow. Pools on which I could float for a few yards were still rare, often ending with an obstruction that resulted in portage. Every fifty to a hundred yards I undertook a haul down mini-rapids. Difficulties with shallow water and overland hauling necessitated the rapid under-standing of the art of driftwood manipulation. Placed crossways under the dinghy, soft slippery timbers allowed *Epic* to be dragged onwards using less energy. It was a pity that sections of the brass strip were lying on the cliff slope - the hull would have slid more easily had it been intact. Two or three pieces of wood, arm-length and thickness, were ideal for the task. One major obstruction demanded a thirty yard or so detour along a sloping and undulating sandy bank. A selection of contorted lengths of branch - readily available from the dam, were used to help prevent sideways slip. As a user of logs in boating I have few equals.

Early into the haul I was perturbed to find a leech fastened to my right calf. Being a non-smoker I resorted to finger-flicking the 'beast'

away. If it was the blood-sucking variety that inflates to sausage size in seconds I was not prepared to research the matter.

Hours passed. Pretty tired and very thirsty I laboured on, expecting at every turn to see a bridge. From North Tamerton to Boyton Bridge (almost due south) the distance is just over three 'crow-miles'. Not knowing my speed I could not judge my arrival time at Boyton Bridge - my first objective.

The visual pleasure gained while negotiating the river was a precious experience. It is fortunate that the less pleasant times quickly fade. Several hours of the haul were expressed by a single word in the log-book - 'hell'.

It had been six hours since my communication with the man who knew Mr Hobbs when I detected a movement between the trees. Some yards downstream a

fisherman was working his way up towards me, casting his fly between the stones, seeking a trout in the deeper 'puddles'. Sometime before I shouted my apology for spoiling the fishing, the laid-back angler told me he '... could hear an occasional rumbling, then it would be quiet for a few minutes ... sounded like some prehistoric monster.' Bill Dinner then saw between the trees the white triangle of *Epic*'s flat bow. He wandered up and, for one who had had his world desecrated, greeted me kindly. "... I was about to stop fishing anyway ... have never seen anything like it in my life.'

Bill, a Boyton man, was as surprised as I was relieved at our meeting. He told me boats had not been in the

'Cowboys'. This painting was inspired by a bovine encounter on the Tamar in the gloaming (see last page). It appears in *Red Admiral*



vicinity since the Bude canal had closed. Bill, whose great, great-grandfather had been a wharfinger at Boyton, brought good tidings — I would shortly reach a long pool that would lead to Boyton Bridge, just a few hundred yards away. Then better news — he would shortly be driving to The Countryman, a hostelry a mere three and a bit miles away where evening meals were available. He would give me a lift if I wished. Fortunately the car would travel a good deal quicker than the half mile per hour I had managed on the river, which was as well, for we had only forty-five minutes to reach the pub before last food orders were called.

Half an hour later I had pulled *Epic* up onto a grassy bank in a field to the left and downstream from a mundane iron bridge. The flat structure, less picturesque than the usual stone, arched variety, was a most welcome sight for me at the time. The sandwiches consumed at North Tamerton were a distant memory. In no time I was being whisked 'foodwards'. Major refuelling was

required and a large steak played the leading role in my gastronomic fantasy. After freshening up (I took a towel and toothbrush to the pub) I pulled my Norwegian jumper over a rather grubby shirt and settled upon a barstool. Perched, pint in hand and with the knowledge that my medium rump, claimed at the nick of nine o'clock, was on the griddle, I was in paradise.

David went on to complete his voyaging, surviving swarms of flies, barbed wire barriers, relentless rain, feet worn raw by flip-flops, man-made dams or weirs, unwelcoming landowners, bolshie fishermen, rapids and rocks. *Epic* was holed by a rock at one point, necessitating a trip home to collect resin and glassfibre to effect a repair. With a final hair-raising 'slide' down the walls of a fish ladder at Gunnislake Dam, David reached his destination of Morwellham to complete his Epic circumnavigation of Cornwall.

(Connecting paragraphs written by Jennifer Heney)

Coda:

David Weston's last words in *Red Admiral* are,
'I wish fair weather to shoestring wanderers. Think
small: cheers'.

Whether he thought 'small' himself at any time during his Cornwall voyaging is a moot point. David is highly individual in his approach to sailing, painting and life, too, I should think. He is not alone. There are others out there who don't recognise distinctions between 'big' and 'small'. For instance, AJ Mackinnon (*Jack de Crow*) and Alastair Humphreys (*The Doorstep Mile, Microadventures*). Humphreys supplies us with a wealth of snappy one-liners; the first to come to my mind is, '... the best adventures can be summarised in a sentence and planned on the back of a receipt from your book and map shop.'

Once, on his way to deliver a talk in the Netherlands, he persuaded the taxi driver to stop and accompany him in stripping down to his underpants and jumping from a

bridge into a canal to join the local children in the water. He stresses that the taxi driver could not stop laughing afterwards. Very important.

AJ Mackinnon — another Mirror sailor — famously took a trip from North Shropshire to the coast in *Jack de Crow* then decided to keep on going to London by canal, before raising his personal bar again and crossing the Channel, ultimately to reach the Black Sea. It comes as no surprise to learn that David Weston has had overseas adventures too, touched on in *Red Admiral*.

Although these three appear to be very different people there is a common thread to their adventuring that includes impulsiveness shading into recklessness, obedience to the prompting of their irrational inner selves and the continual asking of questions: what are 'good ideas' as opposed to 'bad ideas', really? And why do we see some of them as essential to our own deep fulfilment? And why do the wild ones unintentionally inspire others along the way, drawing their help, good wishes and support, like a magnetic field?

If you were to draw a Venn diagram representing these three, their circles would overlap and reveal a shared area of mysterious but quite commonly felt motivation. Colour it red. Red Admiral red.

To my delight, Humphreys quotes WH Murray the Scots mountaineer in one of his book epigraphs: 'Concerning all acts of initiative and creation there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too.'

Murray then quotes a couplet by John Martin Anster (1793-1867), probably from his translation of *Faust*:

'Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.'

There's something of Faust's imagination and riskiness in all of us. KM

'I pushed my little voyager home round the one-way system and parked her on the lawn behind a clump of marguerites...'



CLAM GIRL ~ Thin Water Dinghy



© Simon Lewandowski

by Hugh Horton, DCA #823

CLAM GIRL WAS DESIGNED FOR THE CEDAR KEYS' extreme shallows — with less than five foot tidal range — and small area. The dozen miles on the Gulf of Mexico north to the mouth of the Suwannee River includes the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges. Over the years, from questions about my boats, non-sailors my age have seemed interested enough to learn to sail — if I had a boat for them. So, the CLAM GIRL design's ostensible purpose was a teaching skiff for adults.

Active adults can learn almost as quickly as kids, if they're learning in boats which fit them as children fit in eight foot prams. Think Optimist Dinghies. Adults, too, need to feel and be comfortable with the effects of their mass. Ten foot four inch by 54 inch CLAM GIRL fits two big adults, and is stable enough to stand in and reef. Like an Opti, her rig is simple and efficient, and she's light enough for one person to pull ashore. Leeboards are for our shallows.

However, in the five dozen daysails since fall of 2018, I've not introduced anyone to sailing. Passengers and crew have been friends and family, mostly sailors.

Like my sailing canoe, BUFFLEHEAD, the Clam Girl design is for slithering and scraping through oyster bars, and bashing into the chop of wind-against-tide in the Main Channel. Sailboats for Cedar Key must be rugged and weatherly on thin water, and the lighter the better for beaching and handling ashore.

Before I drew and modeled Clam Girl in 2013, I sailed Bufflehead for a decade. Most of my boating since the 1980s had been in a kayak or sailing canoe, seated with a back rest. By 2012, I was ready for a boat to stand up in, to stretch, and twist and turn, as I'd done before double-bladed paddling got me.

Clam Girl's an open dinghy. She is unobstructed inside — no thwarts and no trunks for boards. She has a flat bottom, taking a slight curve at the transoms. Side bench

(Left to Right) Bill Ling, Ida Little and Hugh Horton. Ida Little is the author of *Beachcruising and Coastal Camping*

supports are angled for a broader sole, 36 inches wide at the mast box, 41 inches at the leeboards, and 22 inches at the transom. If one were inspired, after brailing her boom to the mast and piling her gear out of the way on side benches, you could samba eight feet, from one end to the other.

Some of the design's details, from her rig to her Kevlar inside bottom, came from our sailing canoes. The sole is thick Kevlar without a second epoxy fill coat. It's meant to be scuffed and abused, becoming a useful, somewhat nonskid surface. Happily, its unique quality of great tensile strength counters point loading on the outside bottom.

Cedar Key encourages 'journey sailing', and Clam Girl gives it. Experiences during the ride — to us 78-year oldsters — are as important as the destination. Ultimate speed doesn't matter. A nine knot multihull can steal two thirds of a three knotter's journey time.

Since 2014 Meade Gougeon (*WEST epoxy*) had seen and handled the Clam Girl model. In November 2016

Great Egret at Shell Mound, 'the home ramp'



he met naval architect JF Bedard, and was impressed. Meade gently suggested JF could help me with Clam Girl.

In November 2017, JF and mechanical engineer Simon Lewandowski came to Cedar Key with their computers to digitize the design. Simon would engineer and build Jan Gougeon's cone clutch suggestion for leeboard mounts.

February 1st, 2018, I drove eighty miles south to JF's to pick up the plywood panels his computer-directed router had cut.

Although I've built small and big boats, starting with my dad 65 years ago, this is the first one using nylon zip ties (*i.e. 'stitch and glue'*). Karen and I did it. Bravo to zip ties which quickly give the shape of your boat! But, it is a sailboat with sailboats' ratios of time and money for structure and function. If we'd been lucky, this could have been a third of the time and cost, and if I'd not had contradictory and arbitrary opinions about time-consuming finishing, frequently just making dust.



'Easy drops'. Even with the tiny snap shackle, the one on the right is about half the weight of the 1st one. The corrugated cover is Teflon tube with carbon braid threaded through it.

I had thought we might have her done enough — clamped, lashed, and cobbled together — to sail in early May in the 'Cedar Key Small Boat Meet.' No. During the 'Meet,' though, Bill Ling and I aligned and tacked-in Simon's cones through the hull, for the corresponding cones to be fastened to the leeboards.

Late May's rains didn't help. On the upper, screened porch, I made rig bits and pored over scores of hooks, cleats, and styles of line.

Meanwhile, the teak gunwale job refused to be rushed. Six10* epoxy's static mixer tip let me work solo, unhurriedly through June, in near 90s F with mid-70s dew points. After the teak was on I hardened the cones to the seat brace structure with carbon and Kevlar.

Alternating with rain, I moved her in and out from under the twelve foot high concrete slab, finishing the mast step and tube, partner-deck, and below seat leeboard braces.

Karen painted the port side with water-based samples. Later a friend gave us precisely tinted, best industrial oil

*WEST SYSTEM® Six10 is a two-part, pre-thickened epoxy adhesive. It is a 'point & shoot epoxy', ideal for stitch & glue boat building and fiberglass repairs.



Part of the Long Cabbage Islands in the Lower Suwannee NWR

base paint, and Karen painted the whole hull.

The first week of September, a gust of rain came so heavily, blowing sideways through and under the concrete, it soaked everything. The epoxy batch I'd just mixed was relegated straight to the freezer. The next day in only slanting rain, I flicked ice from the cup of epoxy and the glue thawed in a few minutes. In an hour the mast step structure was finally stuck in.

September 10th 2018, Simon drove up from St Pete, bringing male carbon cones to bolt to the finished leeboards. Bill Ling drove from the Atlantic coast.

The 13th was mostly sunny, upper 80s, thunderheads to the east, a southwesterly four to eight knots. We plopped Clam Girl into the Gulf at the Shell Mound in the Lower Suwannee NWR. Within fifty yards from the ramp, Simon and I grinned as we ran over oyster shells, leeboards crunching and pivoting up, the aluminum rudder blade clanking and banging a sweet tune. Simon pulled the leeboards' handles and the boards went down as we'd imagined. We tacked away, smiling, maybe smirking.

Another twenty yards and she accelerated with the breeze. I heard forward a soft 'white noise' of rushing water — my mind exploded, my head screaming inside. 'NO!'

'Where's the slapping rattle on her bottom, with her bow knuckle clear of the water!? Is her bow knuckle under?' Instant despair to aggrieved dismay, for at least a minute or two as I thought through what had happened.

The giddy afternoon the year before, watching JF and Simon work their magic software, I'd meant to check displacement compared to my lofting and the model — but I hadn't. Her computer design waterline of 450 pounds had nagged me, but not enough. I'd meant to mention to JF and Simon to add three quarters of an inch more rocker, but I hadn't.





Then, a couple months later, in February 2018, I made another mistake, losing a half inch of rocker when Karen and I had zip-tied. The computer's panel cutting wanted the inside corners of bottom and sides to have met point to point, rather than the bottom fitting within the sides.



During the first long tack after the awful white noise, Simon and I balanced so he could hang out to starboard to observe. The bow knuckle was submerged. The knuckle, and transom at the center of the bottom, were at the right height, so the problem was lack of rocker. As we sailed I asked Simon about adding a foam false bottom to gain displacement. In moments he explained a method of cutting foam with a hot wire he'd used for small airplane wings.

By mid October I'd made full length guides for each side from the stem knuckle to the transom's bottom center, adding two inches of rocker. October 20th, Bill Ling helped Simon and me slide the four and a half foot hot wire along the upside down length of Clam Girl, gliding through polystyrene foam we had glued to her the day before.



Autumn 2020



October 22nd at the Shell Mound, Ling, Simon and I carefully — to not damage the bare foam — lifted her off the trailer, carried her into the water and softly set her in the Gulf. Bill Ling and I sailed carefully, too, to avoid oyster gouges. 'Slap, slap, rattle, slap,' with a clean stern wake. Whew. Yippee skippy!

Now she has an even more oyster-resistant underside of two 'Cedar Key bottoms,' with foam between them, including a repeat of the layers of extra glass. A Cedar Key bottom adds about five pounds to normal weight. Double that plus the foam, 3 mm ply, and the teak rails, and she's substantially overweight. I'm glad I lofted the hot wire guides to include the extra three eighths inch of the foam's full, two inch thickness.

We carry three paddles: a 51-inch, three-quarter pound beavertail; a five and a half foot, two pound beavertail with a toughened blade for shoving on the bottom; and a six foot two inch, two pound stand-up bent shaft. No oars. Once, though, before lunch, heading straight up wind on flat water into strong current too, I'd have kissed proper oars if I'd had them.

A friend gave us a nearly new Minn Kota trolling motor, 45 pound thrust. After getting a big battery, we tried it once for fifteen minutes. Effective, quiet and too inconvenient.

We've begun mocking up a tent's support structure. The idea is to dally a night or two in the saltings between conventional lodgings, up or down coast. In the summer, the tides and daylight allow a full day's sail between them. Winter days and awkward tides beg for a tent. *HH*

This page, from top left: ghosting in a 3k zephyr; JF Bedard at Cedar Key Meet; ditto with Marian Buszko on tiller, note boom clearance; top right, roseate spoonbills; below, showing full sail, Hugh Horton on board



page 49

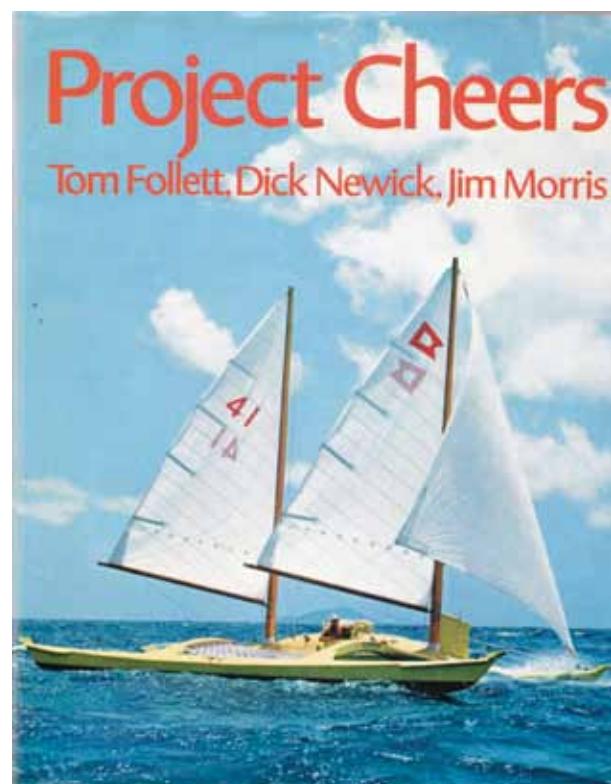
Proas: A Solution Defined The Question

THINK THAT IT IS CORRECT TO QUESTION the proa-shunt pictures in DC 245, but it is really good to see people playing with these fascinating craft. They are not for the faint-hearted and they set many design challenges for those who would experiment with them.

To a great extent they bear only a passing resemblance to the original highly-developed Polynesian craft, which in the western world are sometimes referred to as Pacific proas by carrying their float/outrigger to windward.



When Dick Newick designed the most famous 40ft proa *Cheers* for the Observer Transatlantic Singlehanded Race he placed the float to leeward and the Atlantic proa was born. Basically, Atlantic proas are a trimaran with one float discarded and to sail them safely means always keeping that float downwind of the main hull to avoid capsizing. *Cheers* actually began with both hulls the same size, so was 'nearly' a catamaran. The bigger the proa, the greater the danger of it getting the wrong way around and this means that conventional tacking is not really possible.



by Paul Constantine

For most proa sailors their design begins with *Cheers* as described in the excellent book *Project Cheers*. Mine is the 1969 version, but if you have not read it there is a treat in store for you. As with many outstanding innovations, it is difficult to imagine how radical this craft was when Newick first ventured to construct it. For most sailors, it was a solution that defined a question that the conservative sailing world had not even conceived, prior to seeing it. It is so legendary that many clone constructors have been blinded to its design difficulties that are clearly described in the book. It did capsize and it did not really have sufficient buoyancy in the bows.

It was purpose-built for the race, which involved long distances without changing tack – rather like the original Polynesians – so to make a sizeable craft for coastal cruising may be to use it for a purpose for which it was not intended. Dinghy proas need not be included in this outline, but their sailors may find the following hull features of another proa of interest. I am not including the crab claw sail here.

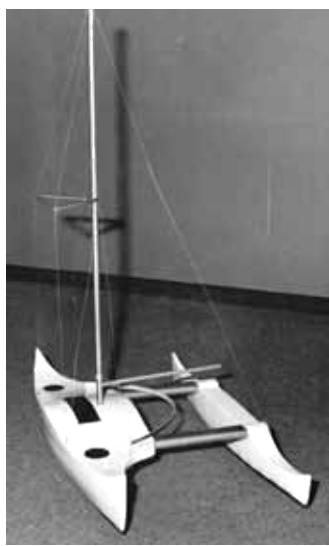
Many years ago, I was involved with a 35ft proa constructed for the Round Britain Race that was designed by Morris Arthur. It was a foam-sandwich craft. Morris addressed the problems highlighted by the first design in ways that can be seen in the model and in the proa itself.

- **Self-righting** He offset the single mast to the lee side of the main hull. This allowed an aerodynamic buoyancy-float to be secured at the crosstrees to stop inversion. The crosstrees in turn were supported by shrouds to windward which is a problem if the mast(s) is/are stepped on the keel of the craft.

- **The Sails** The main was a conventional Bermudan sail, but the boom was secured to a semi-circular track acting as boom downhaul and mainsheet, keeping control for sailing in both directions. The sliding car's movement could be controlled and this endless traveller control line was the effective mainsheet. The craft had a single genoa in one direction, so it was a sloop, but was cutter-rig going the other way. Shunting this was hard work if dropping and hoisting sails had to be done frequently, but little problem if sailing long courses in open-sea conditions – as intended.

- **Buoyancy** The ends of the craft had 'stacked buoyancy' to totally avoid burying when in big waves. The deck was scalloped between the cockpit and the bows to reduce windage.

- **Steering** The boat had a daggerboard at each end. The aft board was lowered and had a rudder on its rear side, with a tiller that reached the cockpit projecting from its top. In the shunting process the lowered board was raised, locking its rudder and the opposite board was dropped. Once again, this was quite a bit of work if it had to be done frequently. It also made the boat a deep-draught craft if steering was required, losing



one of the advantages of conventional multihulls in coastal/shallow water. *Cheers* also eventually used this system, which may also be used for balancing the wetted surface area, fore and aft. Polynesians used boards to control course and balance in this way.

The boat sailed well. The first impression on boarding was that it was very short, as the bows were only about 17ft away and large fairings protected the crew.

The most important requirement was to avoid

capsize, so to test this ability it was forcibly capsized in the river at Norwich by securing the hull to one bank and pulling the masthead down with a crane on the opposite bank. The trial was successful in that the boat did float about level once the safety flotation was in the water. One crewman can be seen on the elevated float. The craft was very stable and difficult to haul down, but this was on flat water. The location of the hatches (cockpit) on the main hull were critically placed. They were intended to be at just about capsized water level. In a seaway, waves would splash water into the main hull and slowly begin to sink it, to a point where the boat would flip upright, due to the weight of the float exercising an increasing righting moment as its angle from the vertical increased. Water could then be bailed from the unsinkable main hull. It was not possible to test this in the river, and fortunately the craft successfully sailed all the way around Britain without needing to test it for real.

Probably the greatest challenge when sailing was running. It was not a good idea to be sailing by-the-lee when a sudden wind shift might gybe the main. When changing direction towards a running course it was sometimes necessary to establish the exact wind direction as close as possible to ensure that a correct, safe angle to the wind could be maintained. The boat always sailed on the starboard tack, which was an advantage in right-of-way situations.

The proa was named *Anglia Pipedream* as many of the people associated with it were linked to Anglia television. The process of shunting was quite straightforward, but involved much work, lowering and raising boards and resetting sails. Apart from this work, strangely, it went almost unnoticed when sailing with sea-room. Your concentration was on the job in hand and by twisting and turning, hauling, securing and checking, you just naturally ended up facing the other way in the cockpit as the boat began to move that way. It went very smoothly and tacking in a normal boat is a much more noticeable manoeuvre. *Project Cheers* has an annotated diagram of the process, on page 148.

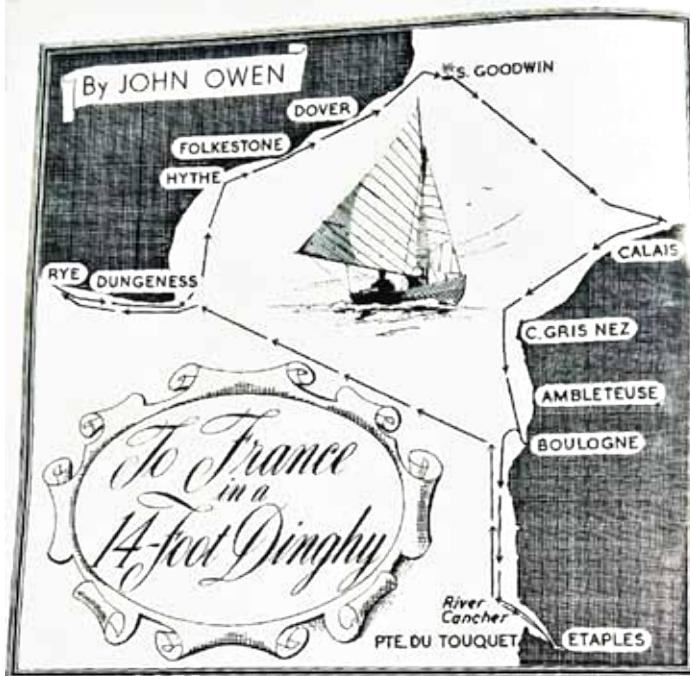
When entering harbour, the headsails were dispensed



with and the boat could be handled under main alone, using the traveller controls on the mainsheet car. On a reach the crew had very fine adjustment and ultimate control using the main, when it was set abeam, that could make the boat go forward or backwards by pulling it only a foot or so back and forth. I recall that on entering Lowestoft, a whole crowd of people were on a long pontoon for which we were gently heading. They watched our progress towards them with delight, until at a given moment, they all suddenly perceived that we were going to crash into them and as one they all raised their hands to cushion the shock and fend us off. Our approach towards them was not intended to cause them anxiety, as we were judging distance and speed. Simultaneously, at the very moment when their hands came up, we pulled the main forwards almost imperceptibly, stopping the boat, which even reversed slightly. They all stood with hands out, with slightly embarrassed smiles on their faces at this trick.

Cheers was once displayed in The Exeter Maritime museum, but went to France then the USA. *Anglia Pipedream* was displayed at World of Boats in Cardiff and pictures can be found on the internet. PC





To France in a 14-foot Dinghy, Summer 1951 by John Owen

SPINDRIFT IS A 14FT. MAHOGANY, CLINKER-BUILT SAILING DINGHY, built by Gamble of Lyndhurst to a design by Mr. Cowell. She is to my mind nearly the ideal of the cruising dinghy. Her beam is 5ft. 6ins. and this, coupled with flat floors, makes her as stiff as a church and roomy withal. Her rig is gunter mainsail and jib, comprising 120 sq. ft. of sail. She could carry a very much greater area in sheltered water with ease, but for sea work her rig seems adequate. She has the old-fashioned long boom which, keeping the sail area low, enables her to carry sail well. The low sail area combined with a large rudder and straight keel makes her exceptionally safe and dry when running heavily, and enables one to steer a straight course when the more orthodox boat might have to gybe to leeward.

When cruising, all surplus gear was put at either end of the boat at night, and after bailing we spread our sleeping bags on top of our oilskins on the floor boards. For an awning we used the boat cover spread over the spars, which were topped up with the halyards.

We, that is my mate Christopher and I, cleared Rye harbour at 04.30 on the morning of Monday, 25th June, bound — well, wheresoever the wind might blow us — but really determined to find our way to France. Once outside it came down thick and, in order to avoid any fishing boats and other shipping, we made our way close inshore and coasted towards Dungeness with a favourable southerly air. We were so close that occasionally our rudder touched. Even so, it being low water, we often had a job to see the shore. Around 5 o'clock the flood hustled us up eastward, and we were off the Ness by 8 o'clock.

We had exchanged views on the weather with the crew of a London coaster that was anchored no more

than three cables from the Ness beach. The general idea seemed to be that the midday sun would burn up the fog, but in order to make sure of the weather report I landed on the east beach, where the fishing-boats are drawn out, and consulted the local talent. They told me that fog patches on the English coast and light variable winds were what we might expect, and then one of them asked me where we were bound, and I told him I hoped to go over the other side. Whereat he replied, 'Over the water in that!' and I must say that from the top of the steep beach where I was, *Spindrift* did look tiny as Christopher held her off the beach with the oars.

We decided that since the risk of coastal fog remained we would not attempt a crossing for the present, but would carry on to Folkestone instead, and there think again. I laid a straight course from Dungeness to Folkestone as the visibility improved, but after a while it came down thick again and so we made our way inshore, coming up with the beach by the Martello Towers to the west of Hythe. Now these towers are backed by ranges and on this day the noise of firing was really alarming and consequently we stood off the shore, but nevertheless two shots, which we concluded must have been aimed as they fell in the same place, ricocheted off the water within half a cable of the boat, scaring us not a little. However, we reached Folkestone at 5.30 p.m. That evening our preparations for bed were followed with huge delight by numerous holidaymakers and, since the harbour had now dried out, we were unable to remove the boat from their inquisitive gaze.



Martello Tower 'west of Hythe' (Dymchurch), being 'improved'

Folkestone in one respect is a very poor refuge for vessels of delicate structure, by reason of the swell that runs into the harbour when north-easterly or easterly winds are blowing, bouncing on the bottom in the most alarming fashion all vessels that lie within at half-tide. This fact was brought home to me next morning when I woke at 03.30 to attend to our own mooring and saw



a motor lugger near us being jolted about on its legs by the very slight swell then running. She would give a heave and then her keel would be brought up against the sandy bottom with a jerk, and it did not need much imagination to see what it would be like in bad weather in that harbour.

At 04.30 we were close-hauled on the port tack, on a course that enabled us to fetch Dover. This NE wind was what the man on the wireless calls moderate, and, coming dead off the shore as it did, kicked up a nasty little short sea which made us very wet. However, sustained as we were by our prop and stay — Horlicks tablets — we contrived to enjoy the sail and get the best out of the boat. We arrived off the east entrance of Dover by 06.30, which meant that we averaged 3 knots, which was not bad for a heavily loaded dinghy in the short, stopping sea then running.

When sailing round Dover harbour that early morning trying to select a berth, the only living thing that met our gaze was a mongrel dog running along the beach. We fully experienced that sense of superiority which early risers are said to have. We finally brought up opposite the Customs house and Harbour Authority, to the north of the yacht anchorage, and there made a very wet breakfast.

After having dried all our gear on the beach, making it look like a Chinese laundry, filled our thermoses, eaten, stocked up with various small items, studied the weather reports and slept, we left for Calais at 12 noon, with a light NW wind. This little breeze left us outside the harbour, where we wallowed about in the swirl stirred up by the flooding tide. What this place must be like in bad weather is horrible to contemplate.



But to return to our plight, we were being borne to the NNE at famous rate, which would have been all very well if we had wanted to go that way. I had relied on the little northerly winds to get us outside the Goodwins, but the little northerly winds would not play. It looked as though our destination was to be Ramsgate. Dover was lost to view in the haze, and just as we were beginning to become discouraged the fates allowed us a gentle zephyr from the northwest which fitfully blew us towards the South Goodwin light vessel, which I made our immediate objective.

To assist the fitful breeze we took half-hour spells at the oars, quite enough in the heat of a really hot day and against that tide. We passed over the South Sand; sometimes the breeze fell away and we had to rely entirely on the oars, sometimes we were blown along quite merrily, but it seemed a long, long time before the lightship got any nearer. There it was, poised motionless in the haze, apparently suspended above the glassy sea, and far away as it seemed, we were determined to reach it; and reach it we did, eventually, still rowing against that sluicing flood.

The lightship men threw a line attached to a lifebuoy, which floated rapidly towards us. Thankfully we grasped the line and were pulled to the gangway. The crew were kindness itself. They made us an excellent strong brew of tea and revealed to us the mysteries of a lightship, and it was with some feeling of regret that we left them at five o'clock that afternoon, our fitful north-wester having settled down to a nice steady little breeze.

We left the lightship at tide turn and as it became dusk the wind veered NNE, which meant that we had a lee tide and could do nothing except try to make as much footing as we could across the tide, without worrying about the distance we were set to the south-westward.

Our landfall was Gris Nez light on the starboard bow, which we sighted at 10.15 high off the horizon, and at about that time the flood began to take us up towards Calais. My chart, as I discovered later, although marked 'corrected up to March, 1949' was inaccurate as to the position and number of buoys off the entrance to Calais.

We experienced some anxiety as to our distance off and as to our position in general, and from what I can see now it seems that we were much closer in than I thought we were. It was an extremely dark night and we were unable to see the shore. However at 2 in the morning we were sailing between the piers of Calais; at 2.30 we had brought up to anchor in the tidal basin, and by 3 we were turned in, having tied the lantern to the forestay.

When we awoke we were faced with the dismal prospect of a smelly harbour and apparently no town, but after breakfast and a square-up I sculled *Spindrift* over to an English yawl lying at a buoy in the basin. Her skipper told us that it was a quite a long walk through the flattened ruins of the old town to that part of the



Calais, 1950

town that still existed, but once there, it was not so bad.

We made the boat fast to a small trader and went ashore. After walking a long way we came to the town, where we bought bread, jam, butter, biscuits and fruit and had a first-class meal in a rather dubious café. We returned to the boat, rested and slept for a while, and left Calais at 3.30, an hour before the ebb, bound for Boulogne. We had one reef down, as a moderate north-easter was blowing, and we had a splendid run down to Boulogne in bright sunshine, past Blanc Nez and Gris Nez, which certainly lived up to their names.

In retrospect I think that this was probably the pleasantest day's sail we had. The sun shone, the wind blew and the shore looked delightful, and I was rather sorry to see the digue (*embankment*) at Boulogne loom up, as I knew that as a harbour it was not exactly ideal for a dinghy. At home I had often thought it would be fun to visit Ambleteuse, between Gris Nez and Boulogne, where the chart marks a little inlet. But on this occasion, as we were carrying the ebb to the south, I did not relish spending hours of the night on the sand waiting for the flood, when what we needed most was a good night's sleep.

We made Boulogne by 8.30 p.m., but as it was dead low water and no wind finding its way over the towering piers, we had to row to our berth in the tidal basin above the fishing boats, which we did not reach until 9.30. We chose this berth as it is most convenient for the town and more entertaining, if more smelly, than lying in the Basin Loubet, where yachts and other pleasure craft sometimes lie against the pile quay. We made fast to a fishing boat that was out of commission and which was

'The towering piers' of Boulogne, 1950



connected by a mass of moored small boats to a lighter which comprises the fishing quay.

If we had thought that Calais was smelly, it was obvious that we were unfamiliar with this particular corner of Boulogne harbour. The richness of this low water smell was indescribable, the water was pitch black and bubbled horribly, each bubble apparently releasing the odour in question. To add to our troubles it looked like rain, and here it must be said that it was not without a twinge of envy that we looked at the large white British gaff cutter and a motor yacht lying at a buoy near us, with their soft, warm bunks and hot food. However there was nothing wrong that a drink would not cure and so, after rigging our awning, we hurried to the town to have one. Returning sometime later feeling rather better, we turned in and spent a reasonable night, although the damp seemed to have got into the small of my back and was a trifle troublesome.

We left Boulogne without much sorrow next morning at 11.00 to take what was left of the ebb to Etaples. A very light breeze from the N.E. helped us gently along, and as a contrast to our boisterous sail from Calais we had an extremely restful trip. We were able to dry and thoroughly air all our gear, write up the log and generally laze about. The coast scenery was by no means as magnificent as that we had seen the day before, but it was strong and intriguing in its own way. Towards the Canche, great sand mountains, the lower slopes of which are covered in trees, backed the dunes. The country had a barren and deserted aspect, and in most places the barbed wire still covered the beach and in some places rusty guns were still in the emplacements.

We entered the Canche at 3 p.m. and decided to run up the river to have a look at the fishing port of Etaples and then beat back with the ebb to the little yacht anchorage of the *Cercle Nautique de La Touquet* near the mouth of the river to starboard as you enter, sheltered by an enormous sandbar. The entrance of this river is rather tricky for strangers, and it is not particularly well buoyed. The banks change continuously and the only safe way in, if you draw more than a few inches, is to follow the fishing boats. We were in luck running up the Canche as the fleet of gaily painted, bluff-bowed wooden trawlers was leaving for sea after having been in port for the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. They presented a splendid sight as they puffed out to sea, their enormous crews busying themselves about the deck. I have on a previous occasion seen over fifty of these fine vessels enter the Canche and go up to Etaples, where they lie in tiers at the quay. Etaples is not much of a port for a yacht that cannot sit comfortably on the bottom, but it is a pleasant little place and worth a visit. We would have lain there on this occasion had it not been for the fact that the Le Touquet boat anchorage was a good deal more convenient for us as we had no power to get to sea.

We moored the boat at the anchorage, which also dries out, and betook our none too elegant selves to Le Touquet, where we had a reasonably priced meal in a restaurant that was *pas trop chic*. After purchasing



La Baie de le Canche

supplies and walking around, we returned to the anchorage and spent a fairly comfortable night among the sand dunes, although the sand hoppers troubled the mate.

We wanted to make an early start next morning as the mate had to get home and as I was anxious to make the crossing in daylight, it was proposed that we should rise at 4 a.m. and take the ebb out of the river. I personally wanted to explore the estuaries of the Authie, and the Somme, but the mate had to go, so home we went, and, incidentally, had the sail of our lives. The estuaries will have to wait till next time.

I awoke at 3.30 and, on looking out from my sleeping bag, was disappointed to see the anchorage shrouded in thick fog - so thick that I could not see the boat, near as she was. It was obviously no good trying to find our way out of the river under those conditions, so I quickly withdrew my head from the cold, damp morning air into the flap of my sleeping bag and slept till 4:30, when I woke the mate. After lightening the boat of everything, we dragged her over the mud to the water's edge.

She was certainly no light weight on a cold morning, with an empty stomach and a mild hangover.

The fog had lifted a bit inshore and, as we went to sea, we were able to take a good look at the banks of the Canche, all uncovered by the ebb. By



5.30 we were at sea and as it came down thick again we made our way inshore.

We tried to make progress to the north with a light air from the north-east and with the last of the fair tide, of which we would expect 3½ more hours. We got nearly as far as Hardelot Plage before the tide turned, and as events proved, we should have anchored out the foul tide, instead of which we took a very long board off the shore, thinking to go straight across to England as the fog had lifted. But the wind was light and the threat of fog remained, and I was unwilling to make a crossing while there was the slightest suspicion of fog. A steamer could run down such a boat as ours without even being conscious of the fact.

All day, while we fought the ebb, the visibility improved and by middle day, shortly before the flood began to take us to the north, the wind freshened from the N.E. It was my plan, when it was evident that the wind meant to stay where it was, to get well to windward, so that instead of having to sail on a bowline across the open sea to Rye, which would be both tiring and probably extremely wet, we would be able to make a broad reach of it from off Boulogne to Dungeness.

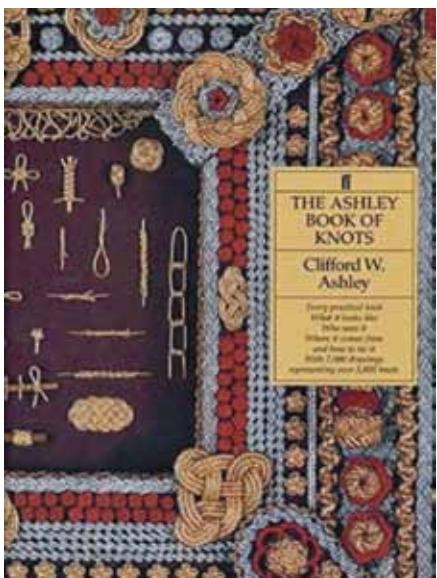
With the still freshening north-easter we had an exhilarating beat towards Boulogne with the fair tide. Late in the afternoon we took in two reefs and pulled up the plate slightly, as with full sail we were driving her too hard for the shape of the seas.

When off Boulogne at 5 p.m. I was in two minds whether to take advantage of the fresh to moderate north-easter and weather-going tide and to go home, or whether to shelter in Boulogne till it moderated a trifle. We decided to shove her across, and so we bore up for Dungeness. As I was anxious to be through the traffic lanes before dark we had the sail down and shook the reefs out, hoisted it again, put all our gear on the weather side and took the lee floor boards out, so that she should be clear for bailing. Then we went home! *JO*

(Below) Sadly no one can find a photograph of *Spindrift* but here is one of John Owen sailing off Camber in 2014. He is on his last boat, *Herself*. He 'swallowed the anchor' last year, aged 91



THE ASHLEY BOOK OF KNOTS



Hardcover or Paperback: 620 pages
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First published in 1944, and reprinted many times since then, the latest reissue of this magnificent book contains, for the first time, fully illustrated details of all minor amendments and corrections that have come to light over the years. These have been collected and collated by Geoffrey Budworth with the help of other members of the International Guild of Knot Tyers.

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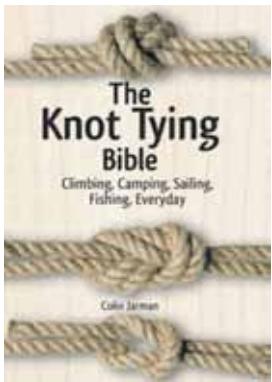
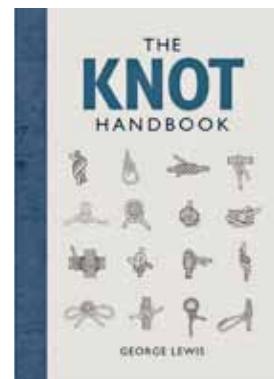
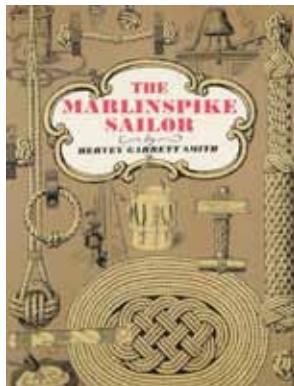
by Tony Nield

ADMIT IT: I AM A 'KNOT NERD'. Ever since the age of 12, when in the scout hut loft I found a copy of *Brown's Knots and Splices*, by Captain J. Netherclift Jutsum (1940 price 2/-), I have been fascinated by knots. Why do some knots work and others do not? Or should that be, do knot?

Over the years I have acquired books by famous knotters like Geoffrey Budworth, Cyrus L. Day, Des Pawson and Tom Bowling and I discovered the grandly titled 'The International Guild of Knot Tyers.' Eventually I came across the mighty encyclopedia of knots and splices that is *The Ashley Book of Knots*.

In effect it was the lifetime's work of Clifford W. Ashley, an American artist who took 11 years to write and illustrate the 620 pages. He made 7000 drawings of the 3800 knots and splices he describes. More than that he wrote an entertaining narrative about who uses them and where. Although it was published in 1944 it feels as though it dates from 1844 as so much of it relates to the age of sail. However, it is not only maritime uses of knots he describes but many used in land-based occupations in the days before plastic cable ties and sticky tape. A time when every boy scout carried a piece of string in his pocket. As Spike Milligan put it in a poem, 'String is a wonderful thing; rope is thicker, but string is quicker.'

This book is more a reference work than a sit down and read cover-to-cover kind of book, but it is quite entertaining to dip into. I can recommend it if you are interested in ornamental knotting work, or you want to make your own baggywrinkle or euphroe, or just a natty lanyard for your sailing knife. Be prepared to pay around £25 for a second hand copy. You may find one on request from the local library as I did, before I was given a copy of my own for Christmas. **AN**

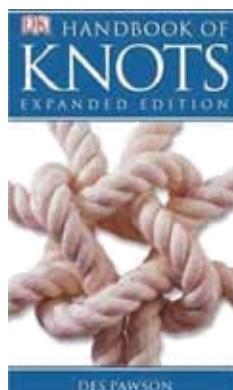
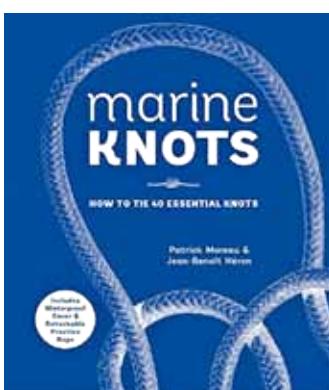


Animated Knots by Grog –

— used to come on a CD, and it was easy to take snapshots of the hard ones and print the tricky bits. Now that we're in a post-CD age (I've been told) they can only be found wriggling happily online:

<https://www.animatedknots.com>

— but still highly recommended... **—Ed**



Wrecks: An Ugly Threat

by Steve Bradwell

(who also took this photograph)



A RECENT EPISODE OF BBC1'S *Countryfile* featured Chichester harbour. Apparently oyster numbers are down by about 80% in the harbour. It is thought this may be due to contamination by tiny shards of fibreglass found in the water. It seems to me that at least part of this must come from the numerous wrecks of abandoned boats around the various harbours. There was an article in Practical Boat Owner magazine recently on the growing problem of abandoned boats in this country and around the world. Apparently it costs around £2,300 to scrap a 23ft GRP boat in the UK (£100 per ft).

Currently that cost falls to the last owner who may have paid very little for the boat in the first place. With thousands of boats built in the 1960s and 70s coming to the end of their lives, combined with an apparent decline in interest in sailing with young people, which may be reflected in the average age of DCA members, the problem is set to get worse.

The PBO article highlighted two areas where there is a problem with boats being dumped. One was Northam Bridge, Southampton. The other was Southsea beach, by which they meant the Eastney Lake side, inside Langstone Harbour. There are also numerous wrecks in other parts of Langstone harbour and the north end of Portsmouth

Harbour, boats which have broken from their mooring and been washed up on the foreshore or abandoned to the mud. Although I have seen fewer wrecks left to rot in Chichester Harbour, all three harbours are linked by the tide, of course.

Ironically there is a growing issue in Germany with wind turbine blades which have come to the end of their life and are apparently now banned from going to landfill. There are a few ways GRP could be recycled, ground up and used in the manufacture of things like bath tubs or railway sleepers, or mixed with asphalt to make roads.

Currently in the UK there is no recycling, and scrap GRP is chopped up and does go to landfill. One of the few places around the UK that is set up to scrap an old GRP boat is at Pounds Yard, Tipner Lake, at the northern end of Portsmouth harbour.

One suggested solution to the growing problem could be an additional tax on new boat sales or a new owner's registration fee, part of which goes to pay for eventual scrapping. Or an additional levy on boat insurance. *SB*

SMALL CRUSTACEANS CAN FRAGMENT MICROPLASTICS into pieces smaller than a cell within 96 hours, a study has shown. Harmful effects of plastic might increase as particle size decreases. Environmental scientists at University College Cork (UCC) in Ireland studying the 2cm-long amphipod *Gammarus duebeni* found that microplastic beads were not only ingested but were also fragmented incredibly quickly into nanoplastics. Because these fragments are small enough to pass through cell walls, it is thought they are likely to be potentially more damaging to wildlife than microplastics of up to 5mm in size.

Dr Alicia Mateos-Cárdenas, the lead author of the research published in *Scientific Reports*, said that her findings were 'completely unexpected'.

The study showed that microbeads were broken down by the crustaceans into nanoplastics that measured less than one

micron, or one thousandth of a millimetre. The research has wider implications because this crustacean is one of more than 200 *Gammarus* species found globally in rivers, estuaries and oceans.

'This definitely adds an extra layer to our understanding of the fate of plastics in the environment,' said Mateos-Cárdenas. 'Once plastics reach rivers and oceans, we don't really know what happens to them. If animals are ingesting and fragmenting them, the problem is amplified.'

This means nanoplastics could accumulate further up the food chain, potentially in humans, while toxic chemicals might cling to the surface of them.

Edited from The Guardian online, 30.07.20

Keith Muscott

Spritsails: A Brief Forum Discussion

Jason Mayer:

I've just finished building my first cruising dinghy (sort of a strange cross between Sabot and Mirror). I really liked Roger Barnes's boomless lug rig but the balance wasn't quite right for my boat so I moved the sail backwards a little by making a boomless sprit rig that sits aft of the mast (*see below*). Balance is now perfect. What is the best way to reef a sprit rig? I've read about scandalising the sail but that seems quite complex and not quick to do on the run. I have a brailing line near the top of the sail that allows me to brail the sprit spar vertical against the mast and that leaves a small triangle of sail at the bottom but would that be effective? The luff of the sail is laced all the way down the mast. I'd love to get some help from someone on this, please.



John Lidstone:

I once had a spritsail with a similar, short, sprit like yours. The short sprit allows you to have a second attachment for it lower down on the mast. So you can lower the sail and tie in the reef at the foot of the sail in the usual way. I had an open hook which attached to an eye screwed to the front of the mast but if you have a second halyard and parrel beads you could lower the sprit more easily.

I had no success with the brailing line because it left too much cloth flapping around at the top of the mast, creating too much windage.

Chris Waite:

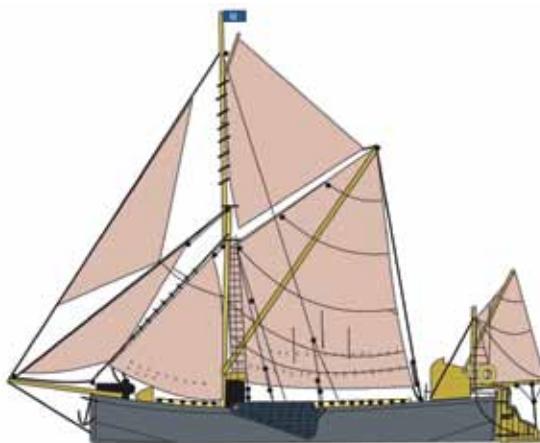
I've been trying not to say anything rude about the sprit rig for some weeks — but it would not be my choice for a dinghy

1. Reefing

The luff needs to be laced to the mast, the 'snotter'

(strop holding the lower end of the sprit) needs to run up and down the mast; these two are irreconcilable. You would need to be able to undo the snotter and fix it lower down every time you reefed and the reverse when shaking the reef out. Or you could have a second one and transfer between the two.

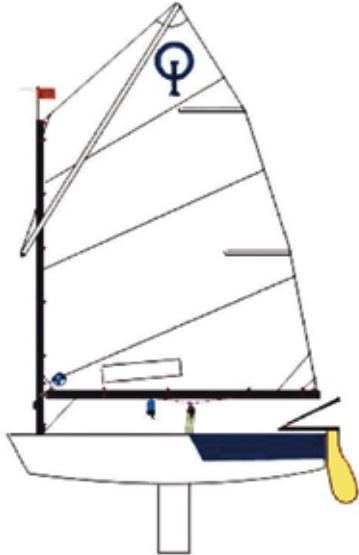
Until you get to something as large as a Thames barge, which has other sails to take in and a standing sprit with reefing that raises the foot of the sail (to go over the haystacks they used to carry, for instance) —



(Above) Thames Barge under full sail

(Below) *Edith May* under topsail and jib only, mainsail and mizzen furled and brailed up





— Or as small and limited as an Optimist dinghy (*above*) where they simply unrig the sprit, leaving a triangular remnant, with the peak (topmost point of the sail) trailing/flogging around next to it. Which brings me to my next point....

2. Boomless Sprit Sails

As the wind becomes stronger it is important to be able to flatten the sail as much as possible. The Optimist has a boom and this holds the clew (back lower corner) of the sail out under tension, keeping it flat. Boomless sails tend to fold up into a seriously badly behaved bag, just when you need them to be flat as a board and to me, the sprit is the worst for this. Very unnerving.

Which brings me to my next point....

3. Brails

The image (*below left*) is of a Thames barge trying to brail its mainsail in a blow and you can see that the sail has a mind of its own. Unless you have achieved something that I never did with a brail I had: once brailed up, if there is any wind, it gets into the top of the brailed sail and causes it to flog.

Sorry to be the bearer of bad tidings, but the sprit is not the sail for me. Not on a dinghy.



(*Above right*) Reefable rig offered for the Optimist, that allows the boom to be tilted up and reconnected to a reefing eye. There is also atrysail offered for Oppy sailors, the leech of which stretches from masthead to clew, so halving the sail area (approximately)

Tom Hart:

The boomless spritsail for open boats had some influential and knowledgeable admirers, including Phil Bolger and Pete Culler.

Among the advantages are that it can be used on an unstayed rig, achieving tensions by use of the snotter acting against the mast, which can be short for the sail area as it's an essentially rectangular sail. Snotter tension is key to good performance and, as shown by Michael Storer with modern lug rigs, this can be cheaply achieved with non-stretch rope and pulleys. Tension can be easily varied. Geometry of the sheet lead to each quarter is also crucial to good setting to windward, just as with a jib.

The sail can be easily stowed, with its yard, against the mast by wrapping and the bundle can be taken over a shoulder to and from the unstayed boat. Such furling also clears the cockpit and it can be furled, unfurled and deployed very quickly, which can be useful.

Additionally, it allows the setting of a topsail, a glorious and valuable addition in light winds, particularly downwind. It can also be used on two masts, in an uncomplicated setup, spreading sail area along the boat and, with a free-flying jib, permitting sail combinations like a schooner. So, well set up, when a low, stayless rig is desirable or the cockpit needs to be kept clear, I think it is well worth considering.

I think it's important to note that most things are a trade-off. Booms are very useful in improving the performance of sails, but if the open boat is used for carrying cattle, say, or even DCA members, they may get in the way in certain situations.

And modern materials allow tensions that dramatically reduce sagging and hence can transform a rig. I have crewed in two spritsail open boats in recent years, one a topsail ketch. Neither was particularly well set up — for example one (a replica) had a sprit too thin to take an increased compressive load without bending and also was sheeted to the centreline. This led to unsatisfactory performance, but due to the set-up not the rig *per se*.



(*Above*) Spritsail dinghy on Padma River, Bangladesh, carrying a sheep and other items. All spars are bamboo, and there appears to be a spare mast (& sail?) on board

Sailing and Pedalling Through the Kleinseenplatte

by Clemens Wergin

Stock photograph

"The waterways of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern cover a vast area of more than 2,000 lakes connected by canals and rivers, and surrounded by forest. Like many parts of Germany, this is one largely enjoyed by locals. I'd heard about it from some Berlin residents who told me it was a favourite summer getaway. Not that the mental picture they had conjured was entirely accurate. Before setting off I blithely told people: 'It's like the Norfolk Broads.' In the marina I started to realise how inadequate a description that was. This is a universe of waterlands, encompassing dozens of towns, hundreds of villages and, for many inhabitants, a whole way of life..."

Kevin Rushby, travel-writing in theguardian.com.

I WAS IN LUCK WHEN I ARRIVED at the small Marina of Priepert in the Northern German region of Mecklenburg. When I drove my car to the waterfront two guys who came by kayak were eating lunch on the lawn. After they finished they helped getting my CLC WATERLUST canoe from the top of my car, which is too heavy to be taken down by only one person.

I chose Priepert as a starting point because it sits somewhere in the middle of the series of interconnected lakes that are commonly referred to as die Kleinseenplatte in German – as opposed to the bigger lakes like Müritz and Plauener See to the northwest. Together they form the biggest surface of interconnected lakes in central Europe, carved into the landscape by the glaciers of the last ice age. (See map on page 64)

Exploring the numerous lakes, a two-hour drive north of Berlin was actually a default option; I had looked forward to taking part in the Venice Lagoon Raid for years and had blocked a week in June for it. Then



that the connecting lock only operated three times a day, the last one at 4 pm. So I raced with the Hobie Drive against time, up the Havel and then along part of Großer Labussee to get to the lock. I barely made it, but there was no sign of any activity at the lock. So I called it a day and headed for the Campsite Zwenzower Ufer for the night. Passing this lock that seemed to be inactive I had seen a trolley for portaging. I would figure out the next day if it was feasible to go further up north.

The campsite proved to be well equipped for accommodating canoeists, with a small beach to land on and an adjacent lawn to put up a tent. In the coming days I would discover that most campsites were similarly welcoming to small boat cruisers. Most of the time I would pull my Waterlust up a little beach or occasionally I would leave it moored to a dock.



The next day I figured that to go further north I'd not only have to use the portage trolley – which I didn't feel entirely comfortable about, with a fully loaded boat, but after that I would also have to take out the mast and therefore detach the mainsail to pass under a bridge which was indicated to be only 3 metres high. I decided that was too much of a hassle and headed back to Priepert to explore other approaches to this vast expanse of lakes. This time I sailed over the Großer Labussee before entering the Havel again.

Sailing Woblitzsee proved uneventful this time and I decided to check out the little harbour of Wesenberg, a cosy little village. Then I hurried on by Hobie drive towards Drewensee where I wanted to try a fisherman's place for lunch that I had spotted the day before.

Landing my canoe at the little restaurant, which has a place to haul out kayaks, I had the only accident of the whole trip. While pulling up the rudder I hadn't noticed that the downhaul line was stuck. I pulled up the boat on the lawn and the rudder touched ground. The pressure made the line guide break off the tiller head. Curses were muttered and I reprimanded myself for not being more attentive. But I discovered that the downhaul still



COVID-19 came along, the Raid was cancelled and here I was, desperately in need of taking some time off for sailing. With international travel still uncertain I settled for a region close by our home in Berlin. And while I had planned to take my Welsford Navigator to Venice, the Waterlust seemed the better choice for the German lakes, because I expected to be able to sail only part of the voyage and to use the built-in Hobie Mirage Drive as an alternative propulsion to navigate the many channels between lakes.

The first day offered exactly those constantly changing conditions. From Priepert I headed up north, to explore a series of lakes that are forbidden to motor boats and attract mostly people with kayaks and canoes. I enjoyed a nice and easy downwind ride over Großer Priepertsee to the adjacent Wangnitzsee. From there I took down the sails and cycled with the Hobie drive up the river Havel, touching Drewensee on the way. At the end of the long Havel channel that connects to Woblitzsee I encountered the first lock at Wesenberg at the entrance to Woblitzsee.

My map book displayed a red warning that the lake can be dangerous in high winds. And indeed, it was an exhilarating downwind ride with top speeds of up to 6 knots. That's when the Waterlust starts planing and you feel you might lose control at any moment. After that little bit of excitement I turned in for a late lunch at a small Imbiss* at Camping Havelberge with a small dock. Relaxing with a herring roll I finally had some time to admire the blue sky dotted with little clouds that gave all the scenery a tremendous amount of depth and looked almost artificial.

Carrying on via the Havel towards Großer Labussee I was conflicted about staying the night at a campsite there – or carrying on via Useriner See. The map said

* Imbiss — small café, or snack bar



kind of worked, albeit with more friction, so the trip was not in danger.

The fisherman's place had a lot of smoked fish, local and imported, and different side dishes of potato salads which made for a simple and tasty lunch.

Afterwards I decided against exploring Drewensee in order to get further along. Favourable winds made it easy to pass Prieper again and proceed further south along Ellbogensee, after which I passed through another lock at Strasen. I had decided to stay the night somewhere in the south of Großer Pälitzsee. Still with wind from aft I passed the nature campsite to check out two wild camping sites further south, indicated on the map. I only found one of them, which, being in the woods right at the lake shore, didn't seem to be a good fit to accommodate the mast of the Waterlust. So I tacked all the way back to the nature campsite and tied the boat to the dock there. The picturesque place was built on the slopes of a hill with different terraces for the tents.

I enjoyed the evening sun on the little beach. Every now and then the regulars of the campsite would come down to the water, attach their gowns to little hooks on wooden boards and go swimming naked. Nudist culture is strong in the former communist Eastern part of Germany. Some campsites in the area are especially marked as nudist camps, but even at regular ones like this one it is normal to see people go for a swim in the nude. A sight you get very quickly accustomed to, travelling the lakes in Brandenburg and Mecklenburg.

The next day I tacked back north and then turned east into Kleiner Pälitzsee. There I faced a choice. Turning south towards Rheinsberg with its beautiful castle at the lake, or heading to the northwest versus Mirow. I chose the latter, passed through Canower See and the lock behind it, after which I turned into another Fisherman's place for lunch.

Crossing over Labussee to windward proved to be quite a challenge. The wind had freshened up and with 80 square feet of sail shared between main and mizzen the tippy sailing canoe tends to get overpowered easily.



But that's also when the boat is most thrilling to sail, when you are hiking right out and need to be super vigilant not to capsize. In gusts I touched between 4 to 5 knots to windward.

I have two reef points in the mainsail, which I didn't use all week. Mainly because winds around these small lakes can be very fickle. You can go from almost no wind to almost too much in a few minutes, so once you decide it is time to reef you might already be into the next calm.

Next I passed the lock of Diemitz. It is one of the most frequented in the whole region, because it is the main choke point between the smaller lakes and the big Müritz, the second largest lake in Germany. Fortunately, with kayaks and canoes you are allowed to skip the long lines of waiting motor boats and go up front, where you can slip in between the big guys once the lock has been filled. Beware the house boats, though, which are often steered by inexperienced first-timers who sometimes struggle to navigate the narrow locks.

From there I sailed further west, crossing Vilzsee towards the forest campsite at Zethner See. That was the only campsite of the trip that wasn't directly attached to the shore. I left the canoe on the little beach, crossed the street and hiked up a little trail to pitch my tent.

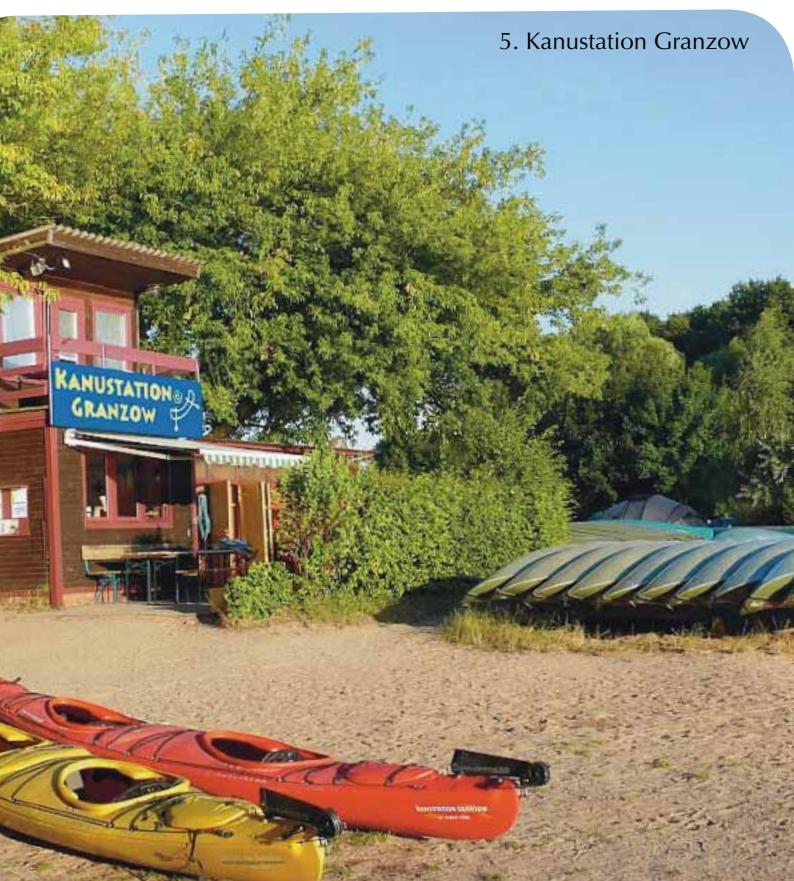
The next day I went off the beaten track north to Schwarzer See in another area closed off to motor boats. And I was surprised to see that the water was anything



but black, as the name would indicate. Instead the lake sported a beautiful turquoise colour. The further north I tacked, the more the wind freshened up and I had some problems tacking through a narrow passage in the northwest corner of the lake when I turned back. That's usually when things get dicey with the Waterlust, when you fight for every metre of tacking in a narrow passage, because on the one hand you need the long daggerboard to be entirely down to get the best angle to windward. On the other hand, capsizes usually happen when you run aground hiked out, because the swift change in the balance of the boat is too much to counterbalance. This time I got lucky and didn't touch the ground. I tacked my way back through Zethner See and Vilzsee then headed north via Mössensee and Zotzensee, with the wind at my back and consistently hitting 4 to 5 knots, which made for a thrilling ride.

I took down the sails to cycle up the channel northwards. At the end you have the choice to either head northwest towards the Müritz, or to head north via Mirow which I did. The little city is really pretty, especially the castle with its little garden island, which is well worth a visit. North of Mirower See you get once more into kayak country, where the use of motors is only allowed to the locals living there. If you have a light kayak or canoe and are willing to portage some distance you can attempt a loop to the north which then heads west, connects via portage to the Müritz and then takes you back south versus the Kleine Müritz. I knew that portage wasn't an option for me and I wasn't interested in the big lake and the long connecting channel back anyway, so I decided to go as far towards the portage point as possible and then turn back. This gave me the chance to stay two nights at the canoe station in Granzow which sports a really nice and comparatively big beach and a small campsite only for tents.

The next day I headed north via Großer Kotzower



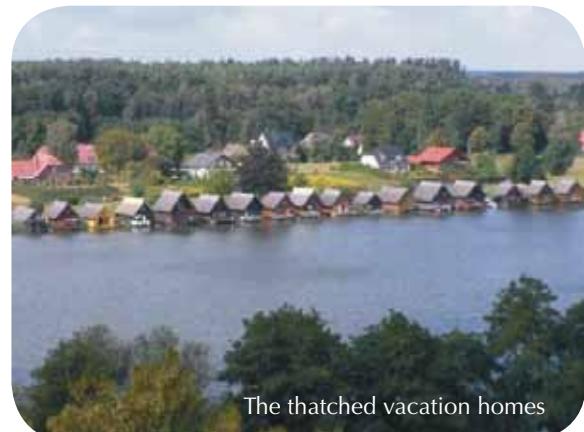
5. Kanustation Granzow



See and Leppinsee. These are areas where sailing boats rarely travel because of the narrow and winding passages. But I found that the areas closed off to motor travel and most adapted for canoes are also the prettiest. The connecting channels between Leppinsee and Woterfitzsee and then to Caarpsee were covered by trees. I was basically gliding through a forest avoiding the occasional branches that threatened to entangle my mainmast. An utterly peaceful and otherworldly experience. In Caarpsee I anchored off, went for a swim and had a frugal lunch in the boat before turning back towards Granzow.

Just before arriving at the campsite I passed a line of traditional-looking vacation homes. Wooden houses built on platforms over the water and covered with thatched roofs. A woman sitting on the terrace of her home called out to me and was completely taken by the beauty of the Waterlust canoe. She was so enthusiastic that I told her that I'd land at the beach of the campsite if she wanted to have a better look. She came running over with her husband and we had a nice talk about the Waterlust, which is designed by Chesapeake Light Craft in Annapolis in the US, but which is also sold as a kit at Berger Boote in Berlin (and by Fyne Boat kits in the UK). That's one of the nice things when you travel with a traditional-looking boat: you get a lot of smiles, compliments and interest. There is something about wooden boats which triggers good vibes in people.

After the second night in Granzow I broke camp and headed back towards Mirow. I struggled with the lack of wind on Mirower See on that sunny day. I traced my way back further south to Vilzsee where I turned to the



The thatched vacation homes

northeast right before the lock of Diemitz. There is a loop which is very popular with the kayak crowd there, with a portage at Fleether Mühle. I knew from previous bike tours that the portage point with the Restaurant is highly frequented and I hoped to find some people who would help me carry the boat over the road to the other side. And indeed, after lunch I managed to find enough helpers for the portage. Rätzsee is again closed to motor traffic and when the lake bends south to the channel for Gobenowsee you find a nudist campsite with people without tan lines paddling along naked on their S-UPs.

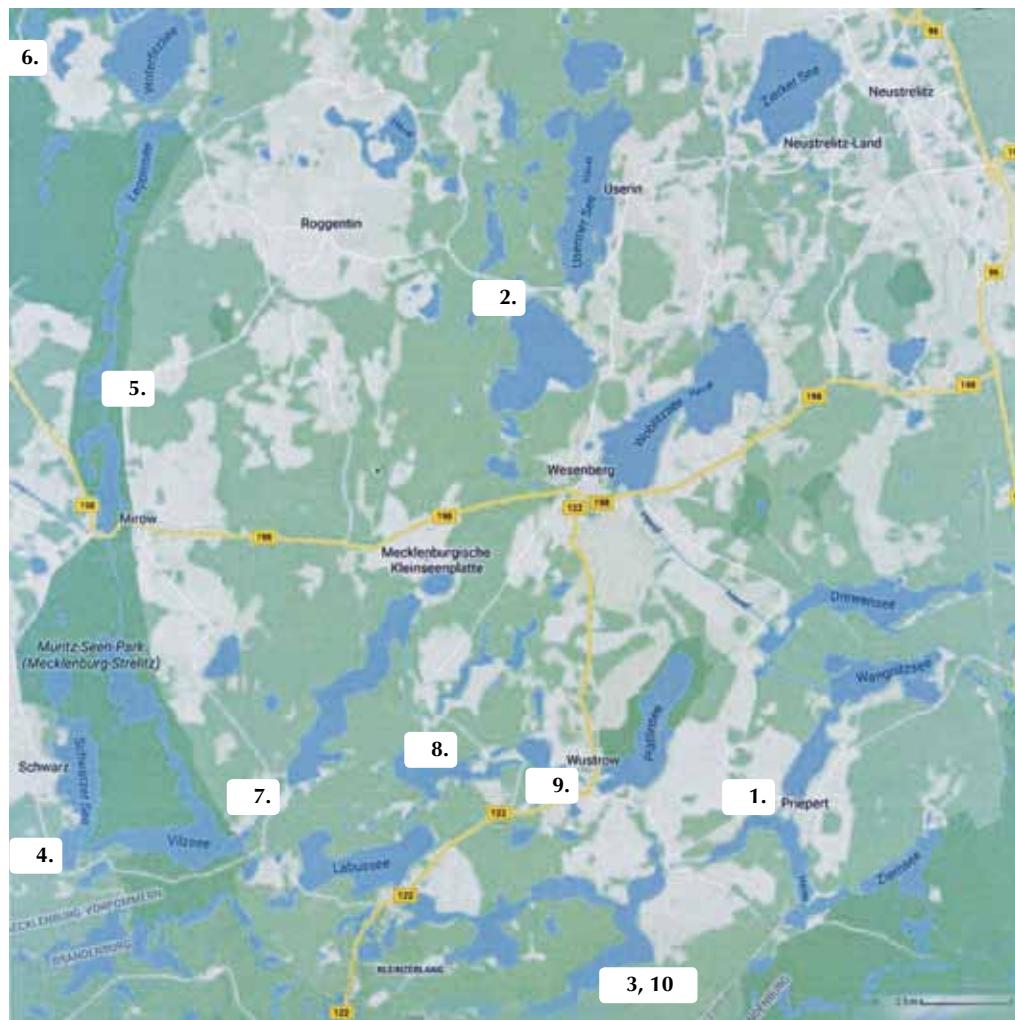
The Drosedower Bek, which connects Rätzsee and Gobenowsee, and the connecting channel further south between Gobenowsee and Labussee, were among the most wild and beautiful places I travelled that week, with fallen trees reaching far into the water, which are cut only when they stop boats from passing. I stayed the night at another beautiful campsite at Gobenowsee where I encountered a lot of fellow cruisers who came by canoe or the traditional folding kayaks, which are still very popular in the region.

The next day I got lost due to a navigation error. I made it a point this week to not check with the navigator app on my phone but to travel by analog map only. With the result that I took the wrong exit from Gobenowsee to the east instead to the south. I walked the boat under a bridge only 3 metres high and sailed across Klenzsee into the eastern arm of the lake, which I mistook for the way across Labussee to the lock of Canow. Only, of course, that there was no lock. Fortunately, I found a fellow kayaker who helped me realize were I actually was.



and that I had to work my way back under the bridge to Gobenowsee to find the right exit for the south. Entering Labussee then for real, I again had to battle strong headwinds which made for a thrilling ride even if I sailed at the edge of what was advisable; it would have been better to reef this time.

After lunch at the fisherman's place at Canow, which I had visited already some days earlier, I passed the lock, sailed the little and the big Pälitzsee and stayed the night again at the natural campsite on the shore of the Großer Pälitzsee. That was in striking distance of my departure point at the marina of Priepert for the next day, where I had started out a week ago. The good people of the marina helped me lift the canoe on top of the car and I headed back to Berlin a happy camper. **CW**



Key to Map:

1. Prieper – Clemens' starting point
 2. First night at campsite Zwenzower Ufer on the shores of Großer Labussee
 3. Second night at Naturcamping by the Großer Pälitzsee
 4. Third night at the forest campsite at Zethner See
 5. Fourth and fifth nights at the Canoe Station at Granzow
 6. Caarpsee – lunch stop on day 5
 7. Fleether Mühle – the portage point on day 6
 8. Sixth night at the campsite on the shores of Gobenowsee
 9. Eastern arm of Klenzsee – an unintended diversion!
 10. Final night back at Naturcamping by the Großer Pälitzsee

Map & Key by Jennifer Heney

A Closer Look at the WATERLUST

I have had the Waterlust canoe for three years now. After the prototypes had been built in the CLC shop in Annapolis I was probably the first private person to finish building one. The Waterlust is a combination of traditional lapstrake looks — reminiscent of the sailing canoes developed in the UK in the second half of the 19th century — combined with modern features like a monocoque structure enforced by epoxy filleting, and a well just forward of the board slot to take a Hobie drive for secondary propulsion.

The Waterlust is a little over-canvassed, like many CLC boats, which are designed for the protected waters of the Chesapeake Bay. The balance lug sails enhance the traditional looks of the boat, but they are also tremendously practical. Hoisting them up or taking them down is a matter of seconds, which was very welcome under the varying conditions of the lakes and channels. And they sail closer to the wind than people might imagine, helped by the deep daggerboard that CLC's Dillon Majoros has designed for this boat. The mizzen gives the boat a nicely balanced feeling under sail and I came to appreciate it as a safety feature, too. When sheeted in it acts like a weather vane to keep the boat to windward when you need a break or want to manipulate the mainsail.

All in all, I found the Waterlust to be the perfect hybrid for the voyage, offering good sailing performance on the one hand, but also a more than decent performance under Hobie Mirage Drive. You can comfortably sustain a cruising speed around 2 to 3 knots over extended periods of time and get to around 3 to 5 if you push it further. And the Waterlust lives up to CLC's designation as an expedition canoe. I had no problem packing everything I needed for a week into the forward compartment, which is much bigger than you'd think from the outside. *CW*

Please note that the photograph below, and the previous shot of Clemens sailing *Hanuna* three pages back, were taken on other expeditions. Clemens sailed solo this time of course, but I wanted a couple of shots of *Hanuna* under sail, and he obliged by sending these.

If you visit clcboats.com (Chesapeake Light Craft) you will easily locate Waterlust and immediately be linked to an excellent WoodenBoat review and the boat's lines.

In the summer of 2016 CLC partnered with the filmmaking team *Waterlust* to design and build a pair of 17-foot sailing canoes. They then embarked on a 1,000-mile expedition down the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) in the finished canoes, from Norfolk to their home base in Miami, Florida—*Ed*



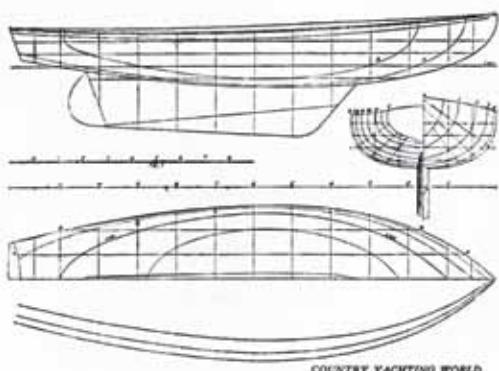
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Model:
Waterlust Sailing Canoe

Length:	Hull Weight:	Beam:	Max Payload:	Rowing Draft:	Sailing Draft:	Sail Area:
17' 0"	115 lbs.	36 in.	400 lbs.	4"	32"	80 sq ft.

The Smith Brothers, *Nova Espero* and the Solent Waters

by Robin Somes



Lines and Sail Plan of NOVA ESPERO, one of the smallest boats to cross the Atlantic — twice. For later voyages it sprouted a mizzen and a proper cabin with a coachroof, not an upturned dinghy lashed in place. (See page 69)

LOA 20ft LWL 16ft Beam 6ft 3 ins Draught 2ft 10 ins

SOME MEMBERS MAY WELL RECALL the story of the Smith brothers, Stan and Colin, and their crossing of the Atlantic in the 20-foot *Nova Espero* in 1949. 71 years on, their journey, and the light-hearted book Stan later wrote about it, *Smiths at Sea*, still hold a fascination for many, as one of the classic small craft voyages. There is even an 11.2% ABV ale brewed in the USA called Nova Espero, made by Great Barn Brewery of New Hope, Pennsylvania, named in honour of the Smiths' boat and her journeys.

Many members will also be familiar with the Solent waters, and the quiet, muddy little Ashlett Creek, at the southern end of Southampton Water, by the village of Fawley. However, not so many will know the history of the Smith family, or realise the connection between the Smith brothers and Ashlett Creek. To explore that, we first need to look much further back. Stan and Colin's grandfather (my great-grandfather) was Theo Osborn Smith; boatbuilder, designer and inventor. Born in Oxford, Theo and his brother Harry worked for over 15 years on the Thames at Port Meadow, building super-fast racing yawls for the well-heeled young men of Oxford University Sailing Club. Serious innovators, one of their most important developments was the planing hull — a full 30 years before Uffa Fox's 'invention' of it. Their yawls were so fast they soon achieved notoriety, and were banned from racing in a number of competitions around the country, as they were considered to hold an unfair advantage.

Towards the end of the 19th century, Theo and Harry's business partnership dissolved, and Harry moved to Burnham-on-Crouch in Essex, where he took over the Burnham Yacht Building Company, and forged a highly successful business as a designer and naval architect. Burnham was, and still is, as much a focus for yachting as Oxford and the Solent had been, so his skills were greatly valued. One of his great designs was the 22-foot Royal Corinthian One Design; of the 17 originally built, 16 are still in existence today, 10 in racing condition.

Nova Espero at sea, with upturned tender as a coachroof



While Harry was a confident and accomplished businessman, Theo was not. Brilliantly talented, as much an engineer as a designer and builder, he was without doubt happiest when building and inventing, and rather resented what he saw as the unreasonable demands of his clients. Remaining in Oxford, he marketed his invention of a folding boat, to be used as a lifeboat, in collaboration with the well-established firm of Salter Brothers. After that arrangement ended, Theo and his family (he was by then married, with 5 children) left Oxford around 1901. He initially took over as manager of Hythe shipyard, then in late 1903, he and the family moved into the Mill House at Ashlett Creek, which stood on what is now the car park at Ashlett Mill, and rented the mill building to use as his workshop.

There, he quietly built up his rather idiosyncratic business as a boatbuilder and inventor, and introduced his two sons, Stanley and Erle, to the trade. One lasting reminder of Theo's time in the Mill was a large bricked-up hole in the end wall; on completing a commissioned boat in the building, they discovered it was too large to be shifted out through the doorway, so permission had to be sought from Mr Drummond, the owner, to knock a large enough hole in the wall to get the boat out. As well as boats, he also ran a cycle manufacturing and repair business, and even helped Edwin Rowland Moon to construct and test his prototype aeroplanes, *Moonbeam I* and *II*, in 1909.



Colourised image of Ashlett Mill and the Mill House, in the early 20th century; image thought to be by Edward Mudge. Photograph courtesy of Jennifer Nicholls.

Eventually, the family left Ashlett in 1911, and moved to Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, where Theo carried on his business for the remaining years of his life. Returning to his designing and building roots, he was responsible for building 11 of the 13 Yarmouth One Design boats, and designing the West Wight Scow. He died in May 1924.



Theo Somes (Stan Smith's cousin), Stan and Charles Violet; Yarmouth, IoW, early 1950s. Photographer unknown

Theo's eldest son, Stanley, worked as a shipwright in the Royal Navy shipyard at Invergordon during the Great War, marrying a local woman, Jean Ross, in 1917. Their eldest son, Stanley Theo Smith, was born in Invergordon in October 1918. After the family's return to the Isle of Wight at the end of the war, two further children were born, Jeanette in 1919, and Colin in 1921. Stanley Smith senior took over his father's boatbuilding business, Theo Smith & Son, after his death, and continued it until his retirement. He was also a well-known member of the RNLI, and coxswain of Yarmouth lifeboat from 1944 until 1952.

Both Stanley junior and Colin joined their father's business, until interrupted by the outbreak of war in 1939. They then joined the RAF, and were stationed in India and Burma as pilots. At the end of the war, both brothers remained in India for a while, their original plan being to renovate a leaky dhow and sail it home to England. That plan, and probably the dhow too, foundered, and so they found themselves returning by more conventional means, to a weary, ruined and austere homeland.

A motor launch under construction by Theo Smith, inside Ashlett Mill, around 1909. Photograph courtesy of Jennifer Nicholls.





Theo Osborn Smith in *Shangani*, Oxford Canoe Yawl, c.1894

Motivated by the desire to improve their lot, in 1947 they had the idea of starting a peace colony, and decided that Canada would be the best venue. Their first attempt involved a 15-ton, 45-ft gaff cutter, *Cerise*, which they had bought with their demob payments. *Cerise* proved so unseaworthy that they got no further than Plymouth, so they put her up for sale, and set about planning the venture better, drawing up a manifesto, and seeking financial backing and other willing participants. The official language of the colony would be Esperanto. They would strive for peace, religious, racial and sexual equality, and everyone would work together for the common good. Their manifesto drew heavily on Thomas Paine's 'Rights of Man', and their nationwide advertisements called for people willing to join them in their venture.

Their own role in the colony was to be boatbuilders, and they reasoned that the best way to convince others of their competence might be to build a small boat and sail it across the Atlantic. To that end, in 1949 they set off on board the *Aquitania* for Halifax, Nova Scotia, near which they planned to found the colony. Their budget for the entire escapade, including accommodation, food, tools, materials for building the boat and fitting her out, and supplies for the journey, was £500. Their workshop for

the three to four months it took them to build her was a damp cellar, with no windows or installed lighting, under a disused chapel. Thus, *Nova Espero* (Esperanto for 'New Hope'), was born, and their journey from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia to Dartmouth, Devon, is told in the much-loved *Smiths at Sea*.

As Stan's introduction to the book puts it:

'To a sane man the North Atlantic does not seem to be a place for small boats. However, it calls, and some of us wake up somewhere in the middle. This is a story of what can happen. I include the pictures to prove it.'

The *Nova Espero* is 16 feet waterline length; she is 20 feet over all, 6 feet 3 inches beam, and draws 2 feet 10 inches. She is a gunter-lug

rigged sloop, has an ordinary open cockpit, but, in order to make her seaworthy, we built a 7-foot pram dinghy and lashed it upside down over this with inch and a half manila rope to form a cabin. When all the stores, water and equipment were aboard, we had a space 6 feet long by 4 feet wide in which to live; our headroom was about 3 feet 6 inches.

She was designed by my brother and me on board the *Aquitania* as we sailed out to Canada in February, 1949, was built by us in Halifax, and, as soon as she was completed, we sailed from Dartmouth, Canada, to Dartmouth, England, without trials, owing to lack of capital. Also, through the same lack, we sailed without a proper sea-anchor, without a chronometer, without a log, without oil-bags, without oilskins, but not without hope!'

Their crossing took 42 days, and was not without incident. They had expected their arrival in England to be a low-key event, attended at best by a few relatives and friends. Instead they arrived to find themselves national heroes, and the repercussions of that frenzied welcome home interrupted their joint plans.

Colin Smith married in 1950, and chose a more settled existence, working as a yacht designer, draughtsman, tutor and lecturer. He lived for many years in Ashlett Road in Fawley, and was one of the founder members of Ashlett Sailing Club, along with John and Pam Smedley, Bill Burchett and others. Later, he moved back to the Isle of Wight, where he lived a long and productive retirement, as a prolific artist and keen sailor. He also frequently gave lectures on the *Nova Espero* voyage. In the 2010s



(Left) Crowds gathered in Yarmouth for the return of the Smith brothers after their Atlantic crossing, August 1949.
Photograph courtesy of Jennifer Nicholls.



Stan and Colin Smith (right) at a London reception in their honour, 1949, with Viscount Hall, First Lord of the Admiralty. Photograph courtesy of Jennifer Nicholls.

he collaborated with the renowned naval architect and designer Colin Mudie, sailing author and local landowner Maldwin Drummond, and others on the incredibly ambitious UK Flagship project, to build a 650-foot sail training ship, as a floating university and a testbed for new, green technologies. Colin continued sailing his beloved *Kittiwake*, which he had designed and built himself, into his 90s. He passed away early in 2018, aged 96.

Stan's friend Charles Violet (c.1913–2007), a schoolteacher from Worcester, attempted a single-handed Atlantic crossing with *Nova Espero* in 1950, again from Nova Scotia. This almost ended tragically, when he was badly burned in an accident refuelling his paraffin cooking stove, 500 miles out. He managed to return to port, from where he and the *Nova Espero* were shipped

back to Liverpool. He and Stan then completed an east-west Atlantic crossing in *Nova Espero* in 1951, going via the Azores, across to Nova Scotia, then on to New York. This journey is recounted in *The Wind Calls The Tune* (1952). One purpose of the voyage, which started at the site of the Festival of Britain, was to take samples of the best of British innovation to exhibit in the USA.

Violet then carried out his own trip in *Nova Espero*, single-handed, through the rivers and canals of France, around the Mediterranean, and back to the UK. This story is told in Violet's book *Solitary Journey*, published in 1954.

In 1955, Stan too married and began family life, though hardly less adventurous and inventive, on the Isle of Wight, again as a boat designer and builder, concentrating on the classic West Wight Potter, a 14-foot trailer-sailer. The Potter is still in production today, under licence in the USA, in 15-foot and 19-foot versions. There are (according to Wikipedia), over 2,600 in existence, and they have a cult following and a reputation as an extremely versatile and robust small craft.

After the end of his marriage in 1965, Stan made a perilous solo journey across the North Sea and Kattegat to Sweden in a West Wight Potter, to deliver it to a customer. Overtaken by a terrible storm, he was shipwrecked at Hvide Sande on the coast of Denmark, and almost perished. After his recovery in hospital, he found the Potter was largely undamaged. Once patched up, he was able to continue his journey to deliver the boat to Sweden. The story of this journey was told by Stan in a small booklet called *October Potter*, published in 1967.

Shortly afterwards, he moved to Denmark, married again (to the nurse who had treated him in hospital), and worked in the boatyard in Hvide Sande. One of the projects he was working on up until his death was a concrete-hulled boat, in which he



(Left) Stan (left back) and Colin Smith with *Nova Espero* on display at the *Daily Express* in Fleet Street, 1949. The paper had exclusive rights to their story. Photograph courtesy of Jennifer Nicholls

planned to sail to Australia to visit his elder children, who were by then living there. This ambition was sadly never realised; he died in Ringkøbing, Denmark, in October 1980, aged 62.

As for *Nova Espero*, I have heard various stories, but never conclusively worked out her final destination. Charles Violet bought out Stan's share in her in the late 1950s, and from that point on, all is hearsay. Someone said she went through a chain of different owners, finally being bought by someone who knew nothing about sailing, and she sank on his first voyage. From another source, I heard that she was destroyed in a fire at a boat yard... somewhere. Sometime.

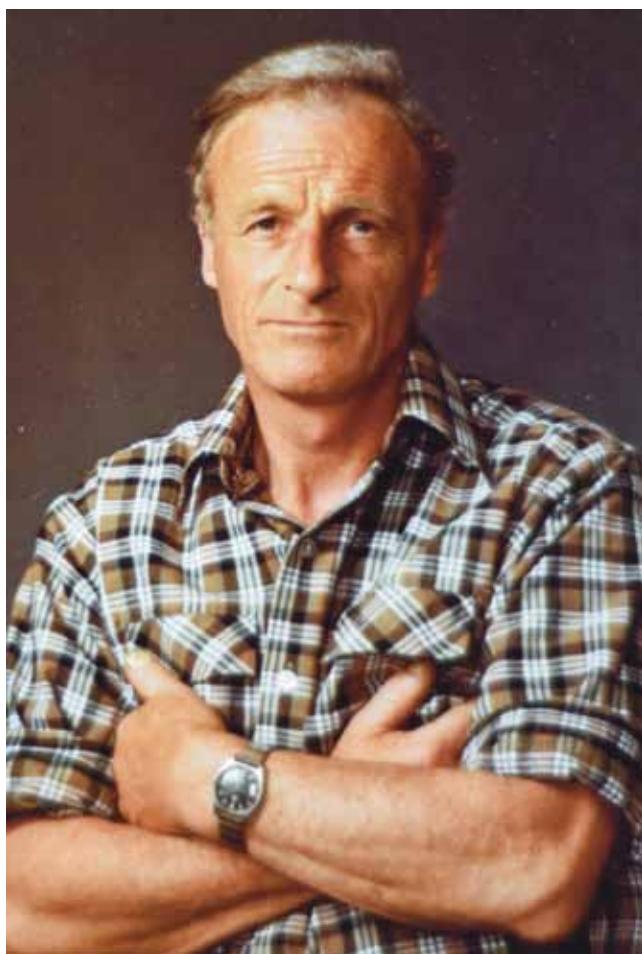
No-one seems to know for sure. Charles himself settled down, eventually moving to Wales in the 1970s, where he had a smallholding, and a boat named *Nova Espero II* in the harbour at Fishguard. He passed away in 2007, aged 94.

In 2009, the local and national newspapers once again



celebrated the Smith brothers' 1949 Atlantic crossing, on its 60th anniversary. The continuing success of the West Wight Potter, and the allure of the first *Nova Espero* voyage, now 71 years ago, have earned the brothers an enduring reputation.

Without doubt, they both left a legacy of inspiration to yachtsmen and boat designers alike. Their family connections also form part of the rich history of Ashlett Creek, Yarmouth and the Solent waters, the Thames at Oxford, and Burnham-on-Crouch. Hopefully this, too, will continue to be remembered. **RS**



Stan Smith's books *Smiths at Sea* and *October Potter* can be bought online, in e-book and print editions, from shop.robinomes.co.uk

Members of the Dinghy Cruising Association can get a 15% discount on purchases from the online shop – just enter the code **DCA-DISC-15** into the 'Promotional code or gift card' box on the 'View Cart' page, then click 'Apply'.

Sign up to my mailing list to receive news of more upcoming publications:

shop.robinomes.co.uk/mail.html

Videos of the arrival of *Nova Espero* after her Atlantic crossing can be seen on YouTube, while copies of *The Wind Calls The Tune*, by Stan Smith and Charles Violet, can often be found secondhand on eBay and elsewhere.

© Robin Somes, 2020

(Top) West Wight Potters lined up on the quay at Yarmouth in the 1960s. Photograph courtesy of Jennifer Nicholls.

(Left) Stan Smith in Hvide Sande, Denmark, late 1970s. Photograph courtesy of Jennifer Nicholls.

Memories recalled in later years by Colin Smith in Interview ~

After the war I got demobbed first, or just a little before my brother Stan. I went back to Saunders Roe for a while and went up in the mould loft in the drawing office and did things of that sort.

Then Stan and I went out to Canada. We'd done our RAF flying training out there but we didn't go right inland where we'd done the training, we went over to Nova Scotia where we built the little boat, *Nova Espero* – Esperanto for 'New Hope' — and sailed it back to the UK. It was intended to be a two-way trip. Nobody knew us when we went there so we thought we'd make ourselves known by doing a double crossing. That was the intention.

She was a half-decked boat, twenty feet long. We designed it on the way across on the *Aquitania*. We'd get down in our cabin and get the lines out and work on it. I'd been doing design work, drawing work, down at Saunders Roe. Stan had as well. We both chipped in on this one. She was a tough little boat, clinker-built and 800 pounds of cast-iron ballast on the keel underneath. The lines were all drawn by the time we got to Canada.

We only took around three months to build the boat in Nova Scotia. We went over in March and sailed early in July 1949. We didn't know how anyone else had done long trips, or prepared for them beforehand, so we decided ourselves what we needed and that was it. Sponsorship? We'd never heard of that. We worked it

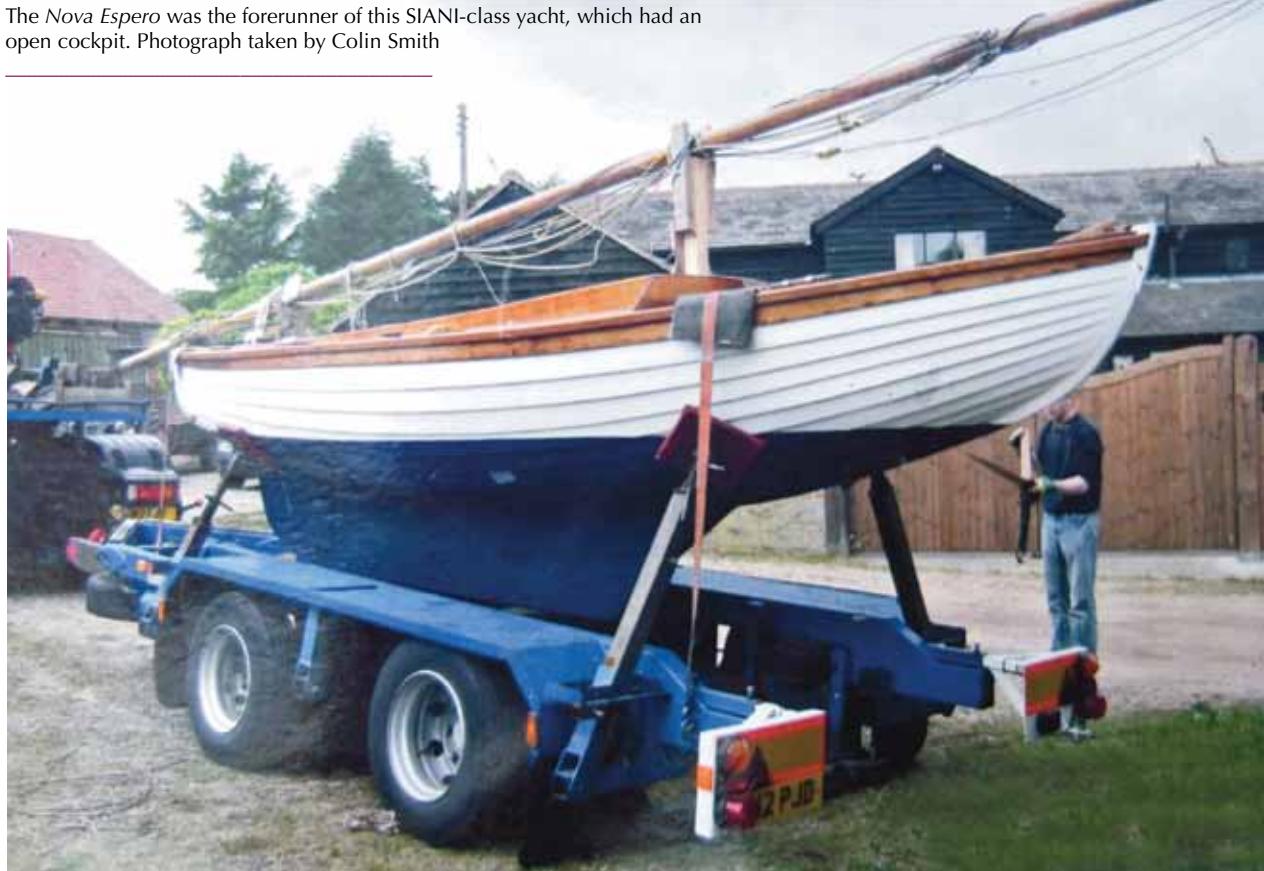
out and had lockers along the side of the boat under the side decks and tried to figure out what we'd need and got loads of ships biscuits, far more than we needed, and lots of tinned stuff and powdered milk and lots of sugar. Couldn't do without that! We had twenty-eight gallons of water in a galvanised tank we had made with a tap in one corner. It was stowed just aft of the mast, up forward in the cabin. We had no bunks. We had sleeping bags, laid out on the cabin floor. We were wet most of the time.

We sailed in July through August. We had some nasty weather at times, too. We took a little portable radio to use to get time checks and weather checks. Didn't get a peep out of it from the time we left, so we dropped it over the side and that was that. We had a sextant, not an aircraft sextant, a proper little yacht sextant, and an aircraft compass which wasn't actually mounted in the boat at all. We used to carry it around with us, you know.

We were concerned when the weather got really nasty, and it did at times, too. We had a little primus stove, a little loose primus stove we used to hold between our knees, and a little pressure cooker. We used that a lot. We didn't do too badly, you know.

Afterwards, mostly it was going up to this 'do' up in London, then another 'do' and all that sort of thing, which we just hadn't expected of course; all that sort of nonsense. There was one firm that wanted to put the boat into production, but we didn't go along with it, as we were too busy. We intended going back to Canada to set up in business over there but it didn't come off. I came back to this country, met my wife and got married and that was that. CS

The *Nova Espero* was the forerunner of this SIANI-class yacht, which had an open cockpit. Photograph taken by Colin Smith



Nova Espero

The Boat, *by Charles Violet*



The *Nova Espero* was designed by Stanley Smith and his brother Colin in June 1949 as a small ocean cruiser. She was built in an underground basement of an old chapel at Halifax, Nova Scotia, and measures 15 feet 11 inches on the waterline, and 20 feet in overall length. The beam is 6 feet 3 inches, and the draught 2 feet 10 inches. Her tonnage is slightly over one. No inside ballast is carried, but she has a long fin keel with an 800-pound iron casting along the bottom.

In the design a fairly full fore section was aimed at in order to help carry the water supply* forward of the living space, and to lift the boat quickly when bucking the last sharp curl of a big sea. An easy, rather flat run under water was designed to give the boat a seagull-like sit 'on' instead of 'in' the water and to allow her to plane forward on white water.

A long fin keel, not too deep, with the weight of iron distributed along a considerable length was designed to give additional longitudinal strength, to ease the violence when pitching, to provide a long plane of lateral resistance in order to reduce any tendency towards restless wavering off course, and to bring down to a minimum the work of the helmsman. Clincher ('clinker') construction was adopted because of its great strength for weight, the lands representing an unbroken series of stringers. It also provides a partial interruption to the swish of water in the bilge and, very important, curbs the persistent film of water which runs up over a smooth topside, catches in the breeze and rains down upon all on deck.

During her first transatlantic voyage the *Nova Espero* had no cabin, merely a dinghy upturned over the cockpit

(Left below) The improved *Nova Espero*, now a yawl, portrayed on the dustjacket of Charles Violet's *Solitary Journey*, as offered by D. Van Nostrand of New York in 1954. Stromboli smokes in the background. This description was adapted from Appendix II of that book

to form a shelter (*see the photograph on page 69, which also shows the ropes that held it in position*), but for her second ocean voyage the cabin was constructed, with three main purposes in mind: reserve buoyancy, comfort with utility, and strength. It was built up from the topsides, and the timbers extended correspondingly. The step down to the foredeck was about 9 inches deep and kept nearly all green water and spray from coming aft, except, of course, when punching into short, steep seas.

Two bunks were built in and the coamings round the cockpit were heightened on the second voyage, being on average 5 inches from the deck. Other ideas incorporated in the design were watertight bulkheads fore and aft and, rather unusually, a tiller under cover of the deck to lessen the chances of exposure. Lockers along the sides were provided to allow a fairly clear space in which to live, to reduce a little the violence of a small boat's rolling and to minimise the risk of the man below getting thrown disastrously from one side to the other.

For her second voyage the *Nova Espero* was altered from sloop to yawl rig. The mainmast was short (18 feet) and stubby, and it was stepped in a tabernacle on the cabin deck, reinforced by a big seven-eighths-inch bonded-ply frame, which carries the weight down beyond the turn of the bilge. The mast was stepped on deck because if by some sudden strain the shrouds parted, it could be regained in one whole piece, not leaving a section below decks as usually happens when a mast is stepped on the keelson. It also gave extra cabin space.

The sail area is 200 square feet, and the mainsail is sliding gunter to allow quick dowsing of weight aloft and to lessen the risk of losing the mast if rolled over in big seas. All standing rigging is designed to be spliced exactly the same lengths to allow a quick interchange if necessity arises, and all halliards and sheets are of one standard size for the same reason.

The sails were made of strong Egyptian cotton with the seams on the main and mizzen running up and down, so that a tear in a panel would only go from seam to seam instead of right across the sail as would happen with horizontal seams. The luff wires were stainless steel. There was only a single deep reef, for, after all, when the wind increases at sea a small boat must not dally with half measures. Battens hamper the rapid handling of a sail, so these were eliminated. A high foot for the foresail was provided to avoid the danger of the sail being burst by a heavy sea.

The rigging was kept as simple as possible with sheaves and pulleys large enough for the ropes to slip through easily. The halliards led to jam cleats aft of the cabin-top, and the main and jib could be lowered in a matter of seconds from the cockpit—very useful in

* 28 gallons in a galvanised tank when crossing the Atlantic,

but Charles carried two 10-litre wicker-covered bottles in the Med

squalls!

For *Nova Espero*'s third voyage the boat was not altered in any way for single-handed sailing. She was given a hasty coat of paint and there was an addition to the equipment, namely a 4 horsepower Seagull 102 Plus model, fitted with a 3 to 1 reduction gear, which turned a large four-bladed propeller. I never had a moment's worry with it.

When alone at sea it greatly helps the daily mileage if the boat can be made to sail herself while eating or sleeping. Our boat will sail by herself with the wind forward of the beam under mizzen, main and jib with the tiller lashed to suit the strength of wind. However, with jib and mizzen only she will sail herself with the wind abeam or forward of the beam, and the tiller free, adjusting the course by slightly freeing or tightening the mizzen sheet. Once I made the *Nova* steer herself with the wind on the quarter, using the spinnaker instead of jib, no mainsail and the mizzen fairly loose. The wind was very steady on this occasion, which is perhaps why I was never able to repeat the performance.

When the boat was sailing herself I got plenty of sleep during the day and kept awake (or tried to!) during the night. When it was a case of having to steer and keep on course the routine was different. I would keep at the tiller as long as possible, getting food and hot drinks by steering with my foot while I was grabbing about in the food locker just inside the cabin. Gybes and unexpected tacks were not unknown during these manoeuvres!

A day and a night was as much as I could take, and when the first light of day came again and the boat could be seen I would, if the wind was dead astern, turn the boat into it and heave-to with the jib aweather, the main and mizzen hard in, and tiller free, then sleep for an

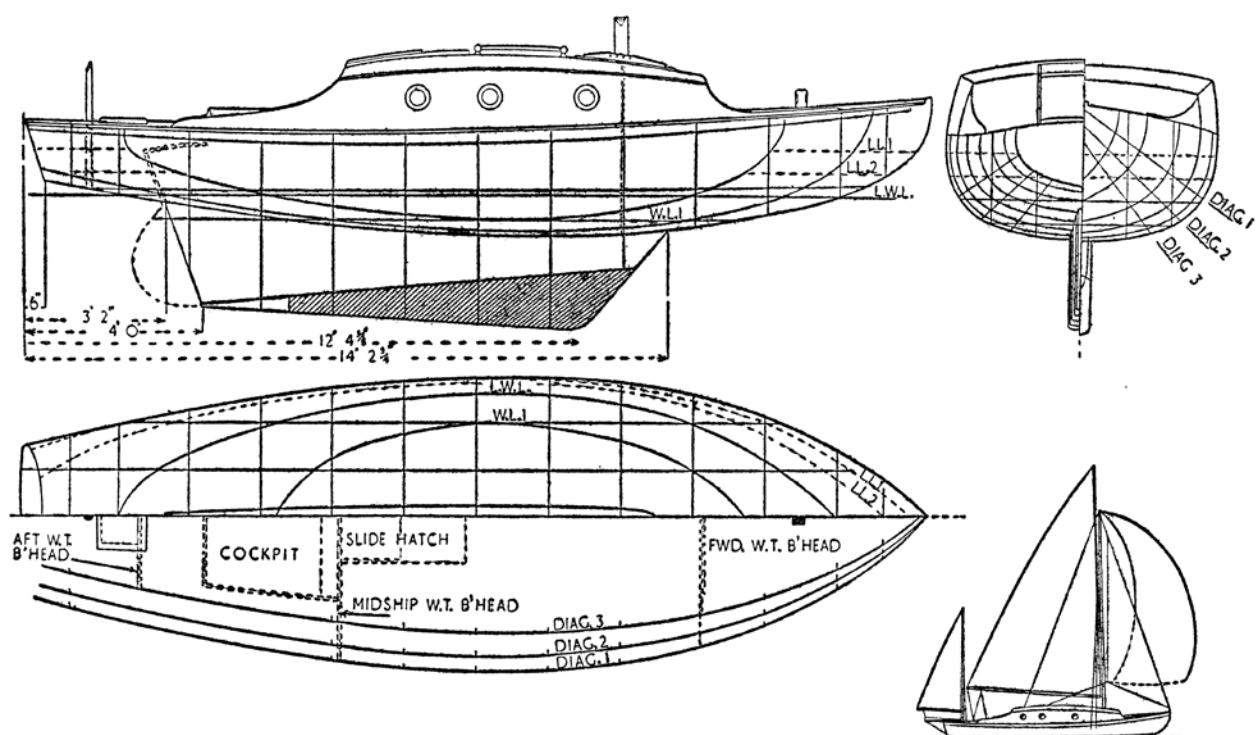
hour or two—delightful! If the wind was on the quarter then I would make her sail herself as near to my course as possible, though at times she's been as much as 60 degrees off course while I rested.

Night is the time when things can become eerie, especially when the wind begins to rise and howl in the rigging, and sudden breaking crests alongside make you jump. Then you begin to wonder whether you should tuck in a reef, or whether you are being a sissy. Long before morning comes you have come to the conclusion you are just a silly fool and when you get back home you will stay there for ever. But, oh, let the night be gentle, and the wind a cool caress, with the stars above like yellow diamonds on dark blue velvet, then all earthly things seem to vanish and you gently glide through a timeless dimensionless universe, conscious only that you are on the brink of understanding its profound mystery. (You never do!)

Making a landfall single-handed has a charm all of its own, and is very exciting, though I fear it has much to do with a swelling ego.

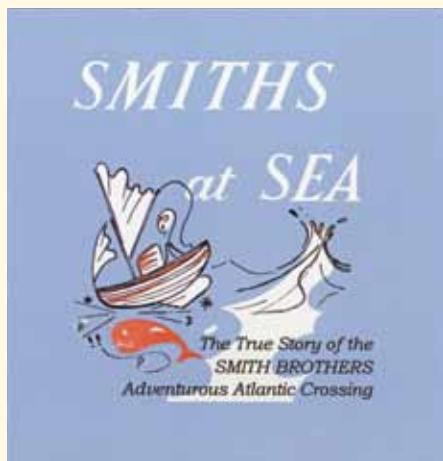
The enemies of pleasurable sailing, cold, rain, unmanageable winds and ill-health, do terrible things to the morale, and I've always found it pays to set sail when the weather seems set fine, and I am feeling well physically. At sea I always did things the easiest possible way. For instance, when reefing I would lower the mainsail completely and tie in the reef sitting down, and did not attempt to do it partially lowered and raving about like a mad thing.

Whenever I left the cockpit and whenever I remembered I tied a rope round my waist, the other end of which was made fast to the foot of the mast. The fear of falling overboard is often present when alone. CV



Book Reviews by Keith Muscott

(1) *Smiths at Sea, The True Story of the Smith Brothers' Adventurous Atlantic Crossing*, by Stanley T Smith



Paperback: 50 pages. £6.50

e-book: £3.50

Published by Robin Somes, 2006 & 2008

Buy online: shop.robinsomes.co.uk

ISBN: 1-904690-43-2

Product Dimensions: 7.6 x 0.4 x 7.1 cm

Originally published May 1951 by Robert Ross & Co Ltd, in association with George G Harrap & Co Ltd.

Original text, the Foreword, and illustrations are reproduced with the kind permission of Colin Smith.

15% discount for DCA members — see page 70

I discovered Robin Somes's website and online shop when my interest in Stanley Smith, his brother Colin, Charles Violet and *Nova Espero* had been kindled by questions asked online in Facebook about Charles' book *Solitary Journey* (1954). I wondered whether *Smiths at Sea* (1951) was still available. I found two 'pre-loved' copies via Amazon, one for £117.50 and another — a snip (!) — at £65.50, offered by the expected bookselling jackals. In the 1950s it sold new for four shillings.

I had much better luck with Charles Violet's book, and also Stanley Smith and Charles's *The Wind Calls The Tune*, about *Nova Espero*'s second Transat. Then my search led me to Robin's website and shop. Robin is a nephew of Stanley and Colin Smith, and all credit to him for his efforts in keeping his uncles' work and reputations alive.

His article on pages 66 to 70 supplies sufficient information about their Atlantic crossing in 1949, so I will focus on the totally unexpected approach and presentation of *Smiths at Sea*, which is really couched in

the genre of children's bedtime stories, together with deceptively simple cartoons that make it more like a child's graphic tale. It appeared two years after the brothers' adventure, and it is as though Stanley has had enough of the ballyhoo and exaggerated gravitas, and is determined to produce something short and lighthearted 'for all the family'. And it works.

The cartoon figures are like musical notes — or tadpoles — with bendy stems and simple faces drawn at the other end. The jokes are childlike, but an adult telling the story will read between the lines: Colin fell overboard at one point, which elicits a cartoon with two panic-stricken faces, hair standing on end, and a big, evil-looking wave extending tendrils of foam towards the victim. The text beneath reads, 'One day my brother deserted his post... but I soon recaptured him.'

A succession of serious episodes is treated in the same way, with broad humour and understatement. The example below is titled 'Cooking', and the text above it says, 'The confined space and continual motion of the boat, which often threw us violently from one side to the other, ceased to annoy us.'



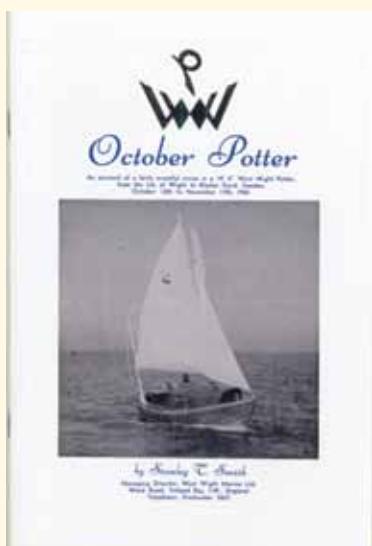
And their reaction back home to 'the awesome welcome', with crowds and a mayoress pontificating down a microphone:



Their widespread popularity in 1949 made this book a big seller, but it became an established classic over the years that saw more voyages of *Nova Espero*, followed by the emergence of Stanley's West Wight Potter, which is still being built today — these reaffirmed the legend.

Robin Somes: '...surely two such modest and self-effacing men would tremble at the suggestion, but legendary they were...' KM

(2) *October Potter* by Stanley T Smith



Printed Booklet: 28 pages. £6.10

e-book: £3.50

Published by Robin Somes, 2006 & 2008

Buy online: shop.robinsomes.co.uk

ISBN: 978-1-8380136-1-5

Product Dimensions: 21.5 x 0.6 x 14 cm

Originally published in 1967 for Stanley T. Smith by Lightbowns Ltd., Ryde, Isle of Wight. This 2020 print edition contains a number of previously unseen photos (courtesy of Jennifer Nicholls), a biography of Stan Smith, and a page of advice for Potter owners.

15% discount for DCA members — see page 70

I was lucky to contact Robin Somes soon after he'd used his coronavirus lockdown period to carry out a job he'd been promising himself for ages — revising and reprinting this booklet of Stanley Smith's, featuring his story of the dramatic West Wight Potter delivery he undertook in 1965 — *October Potter*. Stanley's original *October Potter* has not been printed for years, and the only way to access this remarkable story has been to download it from a website. Now Robin is offering this and *Smiths at Sea* at attractive prices.

A Swedish friend of Stanley's, a tanker captain, ordered a West Wight Potter from him in Winter 1964/5. Stanley had been nursing the idea of an ambitious cruise in the summer, so he struck a bargain with the purchaser for him to accept the boat on arrival in Sweden — after Stanley had sailed it there.

Six months of planning followed, but the hope of sailing in June was stymied by pressure of work. When he was finally ready to leave, a long spell of easterly winds kept him in port — there was no point in trying to work continuously to windward in a chubby, light 14-footer. The pre-war British Seagull motor would not have done the job either.

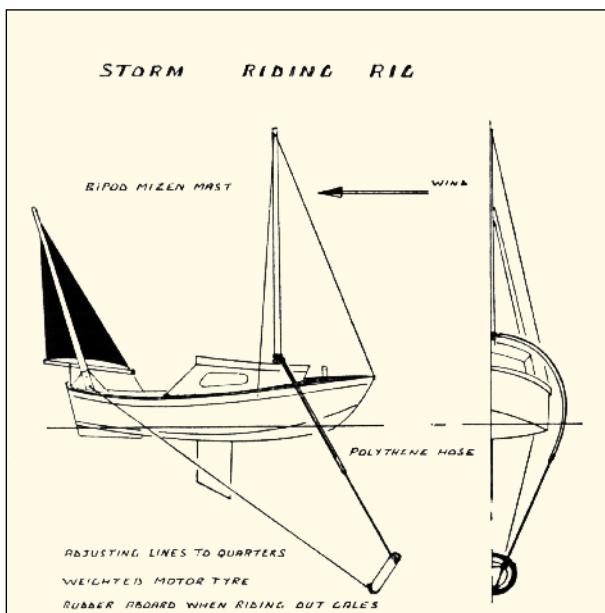
He made a start on October 12th, but got properly under way only when he left Cowes on the 14th in a promising breeze. Then the English Channel and the North Sea delivered harsh reminders, one after another, of why they have such a reputation for bad weather in autumn. His centrefold map of his progress has the wind strength noted above each leg, starting with F3-5, which then builds erratically.

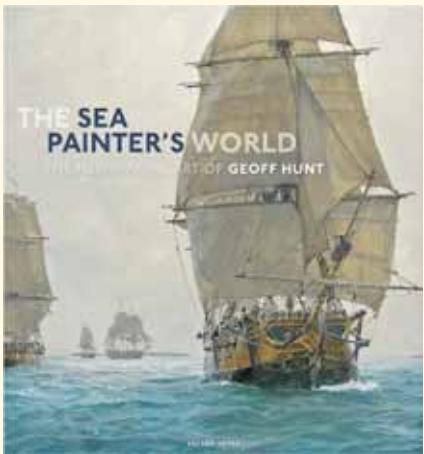
When he reached the latitude of northern Denmark, a F8-9 was threatening so he tried desperately to claw to windward to give himself sea-room, a doomed effort that led quickly to him deploying his sea anchor and drifting helplessly towards the lethal lee shore. As he closed with it a Norwegian fisherman, Peder Sorensen, risked his boat *Tyrola* in violent waves and shoal waters to catch Smith's floating 'Ulstron' towing line, which immediately ripped the samson post out of the Potter's foredeck.

Stanley Smith's stark and harrowing narrative bears no resemblance at all to the lighthearted *Smiths at Sea*. For the first time he felt that his life was truly in danger, as the wind rose and the odds stacked up against him with grim inevitability.

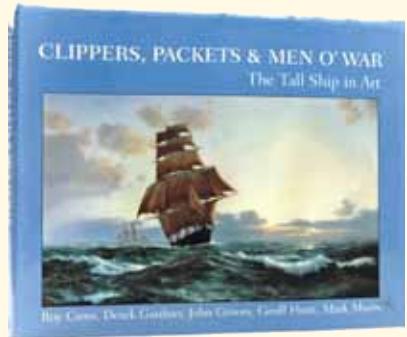
This is not a story with a single climax. Having negotiated Denmark, he took the repaired Potter by road to Struer on the Limfjord, declining the wintry challenge of the last 40 miles of Danish storm shore to Thyborøn. Then he crossed the Kattegat to Sweden, with the tanker captain owner as crew. This became a second prolonged ordeal, 60 miles of freezing conditions, crashing through short seas, with 6mm of black ice on the foredeck. And in their stressful departure they had forgotten to pick up the food they had bought, so the distance was covered with only an uncooked salty smoked sausage and a small bottle of lager for sustenance.

This is a short book but a memorable one. If I ever had doubts about Stanley Smith's seamanship or physical durability (I hadn't), then the fact that he set these sail and sea anchor arrangements solo in a rising gale would have banished them forever (*see below*). **KM**

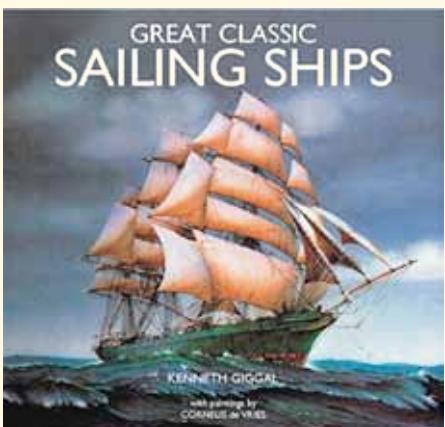




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 Product Dimensions: 28.7 x 1.6 x 24 cm



Hardcover: 128 pages
 Publisher: Bounty; Reprint edition (25 Feb. 2013)
 ISBN-10: 0753724340
 ISBN-13: 978-0753724347
 Product Dimensions: 29.1 x 1.6 x 27.4 cm

Books Review by Len Wingfield

The Sea Painter's World by Geoff Hunt
Clippers, Packets & Men o' War by Roy Cross,
 Derek Gardener, John Groves, Geoff Hunt &
 Mark Myers

Great Classic Sailing Ships by Kenneth Giggal
 (Author) and Cornelis de Vries (Painter)

RELIABLE INFORMATION ON TRADITIONAL BOATS AND SHIPS before photography came of age around 1880 is hard to come by. Builder's drawings are sometimes available for large and important ships but not for open boats and the smaller trading ships. These smaller craft were often painted on commission by journeyman painters, who were untrained in perspective so their paintings showed the ship's side view only, but with the rigging details drawn in correct detail. The prolific Reuben Chapelle charged as little as five shillings (25p) for his ship portraits supplied in frame! They were often carried out between the vessel arriving in port and sailing away again. It was not unknown for owners to require important features such as leeboards to be left out to make a sailing barge appear as a deep-hulled vessel of much greater value.

At the other end of the scale were the marine paintings by great artists such as Turner and Constable. Although such works were of undoubtedly visual quality they were not necessarily accurate, the subject might be dramatised for visual effect. (Constable had his early works rejected by the Royal Academy because they were too realistic!) Turner's famous *The Fighting Temeraire* (as seen on the new £20 notes) is a good example of deliberate distortion. The great Turner certainly knew his boats and how to draw them. It has been claimed that he went to sea in a storm lashed to the ship's mast to see the true visual effect. He spent a season on the Thames sketching in an open boat, and was based at Margate for some years. But the *Temeraire*'s masts and rigging were drawn considerably undersize, to emphasise the pathos of the once great ship being towed away to the breakers yard by a smoky little tug. The problem with these great paintings is to know whether accuracy was deliberately ignored.

Technical accuracy in ship paintings could be said to date from the paintings of Willem Van de Velde the Younger. With his father he was employed by the great Admiral Van Tromp to record his battle (and victory) against the English fleet. For this they sat sketching in a ship's boat while the two fleets hammered each other to bits. Van de Velde subsequently moved to England, setting a high standard for our marine art. Subsequently fine informative paintings were produced by leading artists such as John Sell Cotman, Anthony Fielding, William Stanfield,

Geoff Hunt in his boat,
 Alum Bay, Isle of Wight





The Fighting Temeraire, by Joseph Mallord William Turner, 1838

Richard Bonington, John Joy, Thomas Robins, any number of Dutch painters and of course James Carmichael, who, as we have seen in Dinghy Cruising 231 produced the most reliable paintings of the famous Grace Darling rescue. More recent eminent marine painters include Thomas Sumerscales and William Wyllie, but they were well into the photographic era.

Reliable modern sources of information are the works of specialist marine painters and illustrators like those whose paintings are reproduced on book covers such as the Patrick O'Brien's Jack Aubrey series and Forester's Hornblower series. Most of these artists have been professionally trained, many have impressive sea-going experience and some are marine historians of note. Many of their works are of museum quality, and the readers of their books can be extremely critical of technical and historic detail.

When leading marine artist and historian Geoff Hunt was 'volunteered' into making a reliable painting of the *Mary*

Rose for the charity, he found that only 40% of that famous ship had been recovered, and that all contemporary paintings and drawings of it appeared to be wildly unreliable. A naive and flamboyant coloured drawing of the *Mary Rose* by Anthony Anthony, Henry VIII's Master of Ordnance, had been dismissed as hopelessly inaccurate.

However when old documents were studied, and extrapolation made from what was known of old boatbuilding practice the surviving timbers,

it was found that Anthony Anthony's drawing was surprisingly accurate. Anthony Anthony also drew the whole of Henry VIII's fleet in a similar manner.

From the study of the old correspondence it emerged that extra decks and guns had been added to an originally seaworthy ship, overriding all the experts' advice, and the *Mary Rose* became a disaster waiting to happen. One of Hunt's drawings tellingly shows the *Mary Rose*'s surviving timbers overlaying his reconstruction drawing of the whole ship.

One of Hunt's paintings is *The Heavyweight Punch* which shows the situation at the start of the Battle of Trafalgar, when Collingwood's column famously sailed in to break the French and Spanish line. The advancing English ships were shown dangerously crowded together, and I first thought this was artistic licence for dramatic effect. However, I later read that study of the ship's logs recorded that some of the ships were in fact close enough for bowsprits to overlap sterns. They were taking a calculated risk. (As is well known, Nelson's overall battle tactics were a calculated risk.)

The emphasis of these modern paintings is of course on ships, not boats, but many boats are shown as incidental features. It appears that although balance lug and sprit rigs were popular, 'modern' gaffers similar to DCA open boats (but larger) appeared at an early date.

LW



(Left)
The Privateer's Revenge,
by Geoff Hunt

Sea Marks 33

Ray Sand Channel by Patrick Arnold



(Above) Buxey Beacon from the south



(Above) Mid-Ray Buoy, marking the west end of the ridge

BETWEEN THE RIVERS CROUCH AND BLACKWATER in East Essex there lies an area of low-lying land mostly one time saltmarsh now defended from the sea by embankments. This land is part of the Dengie Hundred ('den' as in dent and 'gie' as the seventh letter).

To the east of the embankments there are saltings and a broad area of level sand known as the Ray Sand corrupted locally to 'the Raisin' (cousin to the sultana).

The Ray Sand is covered by every flood tide to a depth of about 10 feet. Further to the east of the Ray Sand lies the Buxey Sands which go dry on every ebb tide.

Between the Ray Sand and the Buxey there was once a channel known as the Ray Sand Channel. This channel is shown on the chart of William Heather published about 1798 as a wide waterway open to navigation at all times. As one travels north the Ray Sands merge into Saint Peter's Flats overlooked by Saint Peter's chapel built about 640 AD from materials salvaged from a local Roman fort.

Of interest on Heather's chart is the large sand bank called the Knoll. The unstable nature of the sands of the Thames estuary is revealed by the chart published in 1903 taken from East Coast rivers by Messum. This chart shows that the Knoll Sand had in a century been reduced to a shadow of its former self and the Bachelor had grown. The Ray Sand Channel was then still navigable at all times.



(Left)

Detail from William Heather's chart, c.1798, showing Ray Sand channel as a navigable route and the large sand bank The Knoll ('Knowl')

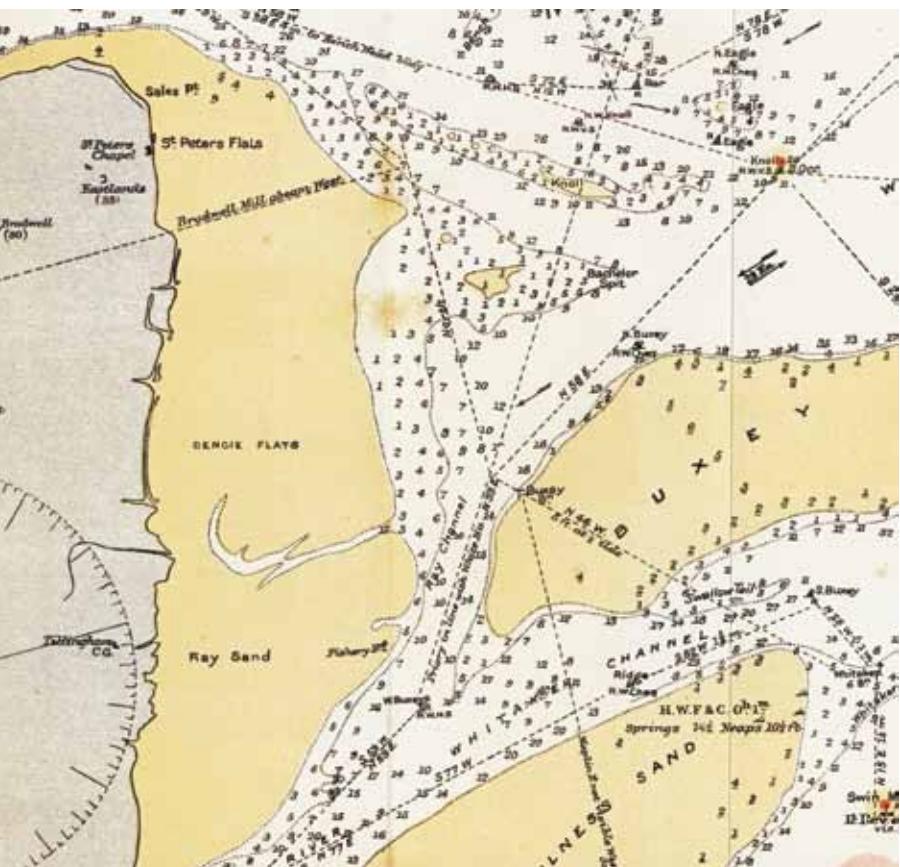
The chart of 1973 shows that the Ray Sand Channel had silted up and navigation was no longer possible at all states of the tide.

On my last voyage (2017) to the Buxey Beacon from Burnham I found on the site of the Channel a long ridge of sand and shells, having the flexibility of the average motorway.

The western end of the ridge is marked by the Ray Middle Buoy and any passage should be made about high

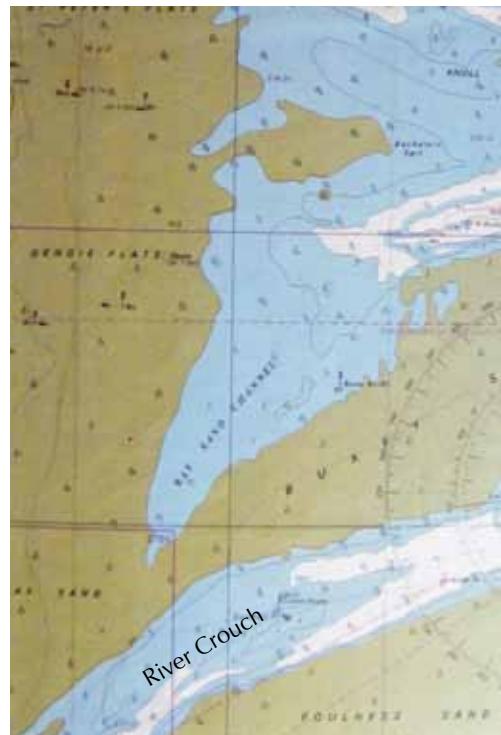
water to the west of the buoy. Vessels drawing less than 5ft can sail over any part of the Sands an hour either side of high water.

A critical observation of the charts leads one to surmise that one day the entrance to the River Crouch will silt up, especially as thousands of tons of sand are now in suspension, the result of maintaining a channel to the new quays at Shellhaven which lie upstream from Canvey Island. PA



(Left) Chart of the sands from *East Coast Rivers*, by S.V.S.C. Messum, Lieut., R.N. (1903)

(Below) Admiralty Chart 1973



(Left) Long sand and shell reef along the run of the original channel



All images in this article were supplied by Patrick except the detail from Messum's chart, which I scanned from the book
(KM)

The information and charting on this site are worth looking at:

www.crossingthethamesestuary.com

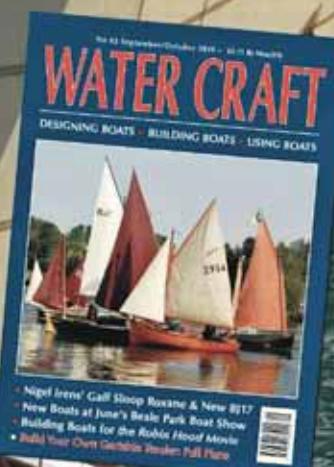
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