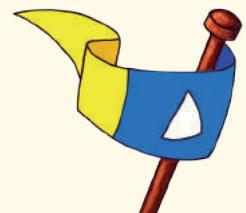


Dinghy Cruising

The Quarterly Journal Of The Dinghy Cruising Association



Winter 2020 | Bulletin N° 248



- Pigeonneau's Viking Voyage
- Listening to New Members
- The H-Class Dinghy
- HIRTA
- Toward the Remotest Isles
- Introduction to Vlogging

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(*dinghysolent* forum has ended, due to Yahoo's decline, and reincarnated as 'South' on our main dinghy cruising forum)

forum.dinghycruising.org.uk
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.

DCA UK Annual Subscription: £30 to receive a paper or a pdf journal Overseas: £35 to receive a paper journal, £30 for a pdf

Use the online application form on our website: dinghycruising.org.uk

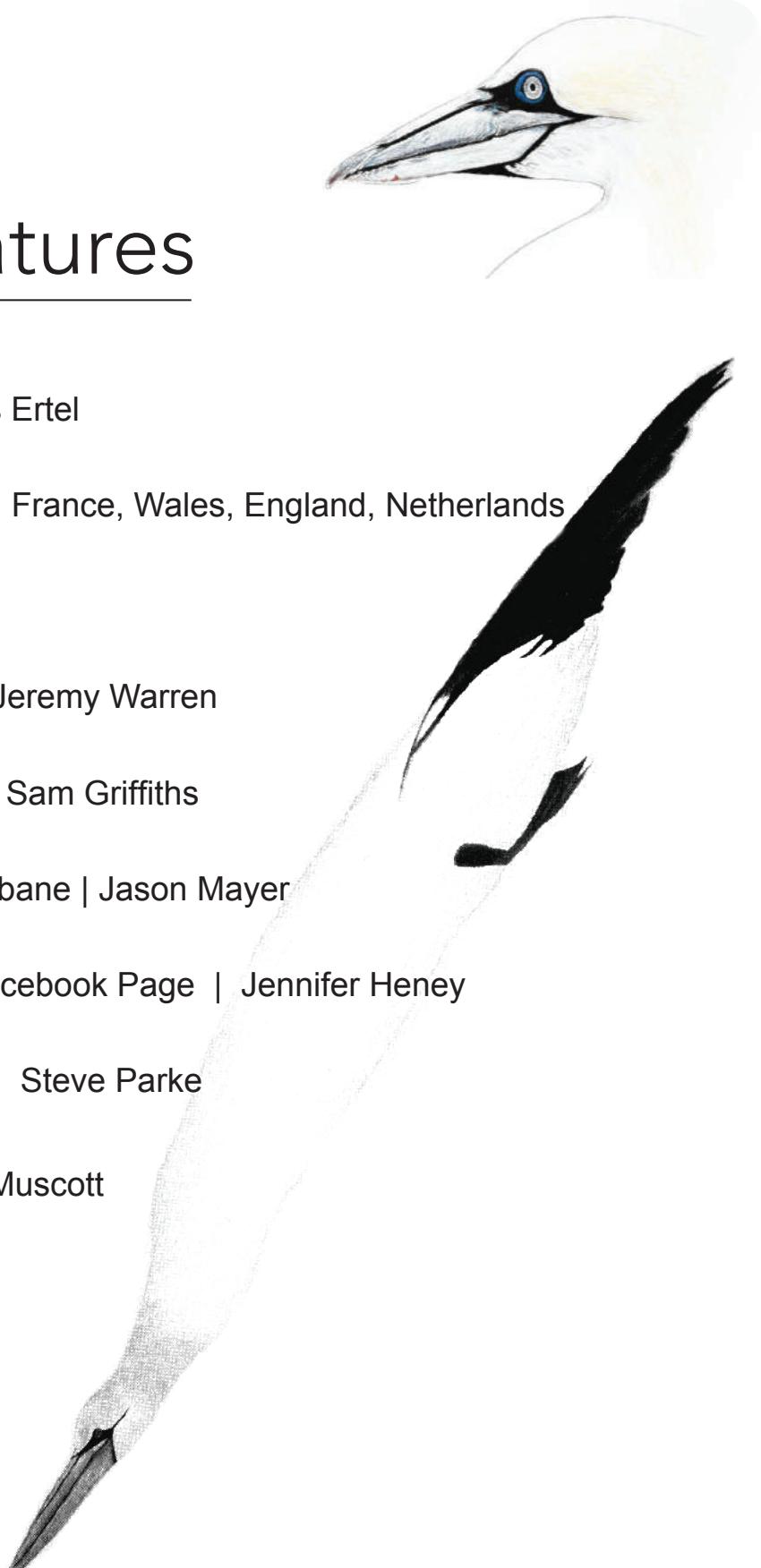
Or contact Tony Nield, New Membership Secretary (*above left*)

Cover Picture:

Across the Atlantic in Hugh Horton's yard, Cedar Key, Florida, Karen relaxes with DC228, after helping to stitch and epoxy CLAM GIRL's hull and then paint the finished boat. She is now showing how much space there is inside, with leeboards used in preference to a daggerboard or centreboard. The leeboard handles can be seen clearly—Ed

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Northern Gannets — *Morus Bassanus* —
the largest species of the gannet family,
Sulidae



Editor's Letter

Keith Muscott

MY FIRST JOB IN THIS ISSUE is to supply the last line of John Owen's cruise account in DC247. It was cruelly sequestered from his last paragraph when I wasn't looking... You'll find it on page 17, too, but here it is now: '...she should be clear for bailing. Then we went home! *JO*'. There, that wasn't so bad, was it?

As you can see on pages 8, 9 and 10, there has been a healthy increase in membership since the last issue of *DC*. Jennifer's new application form on the Website made it easier for them to apply, but it also encouraged applicants to write more expansively about their sailing background — and themselves. This has led to some diverting 'Listening to New Members' columns and it can produce a good article, too — see Markus Ertel's history of the historically important German H-Class cruising and racing dinghy, on page 13.

A problem with my selecting two or three new arrivals to feature in each journal is that a multitude of deserving others are bound to feel that they have been passed over (or perhaps they heave a collective sigh of relief...). One of the many absentees is Robin Morris. The reason he springs to mind is that he has a blog, which you will enjoy: <http://picomicroyacht.blogspot.com/2020/> He is a member of a sailing club in Chichester Harbour and he has owned and cruised yachts — presently a New Classic 700. So far, so conventional. However, his main sailing interest is cruising in PicoMicroYacht, a converted Laser Pico: 'In this dinghy I have rowed and sailed from the source of the Thames to Fowey (with a few bits missing, it has taken many years!); round the Isle of Wight, across Ireland and across the English Channel (in 2012, before it was banned)'.

That sounds much more to our taste. Perhaps at some point a log of his might appear in these pages.

I can see that this recent influx of new people contains a wide range and depth of talent, so I now appeal to them to offer their services to the Association if they perceive a need, or even if they simply feel that they have interests or abilities which may be of help to us in ways that they — or we — haven't yet thought of. We are at present short of a Public Relations Officer, for a start. Unfortunately, there are only a very few people working at the beating heart of things in the DCA, and for the future health of the Association more members need to become involved.

It is usual to publish all the various sailing area programmes



photo: JH

for the year in the Spring issue. No one can forecast what we will be faced with by then, but it is likely that the very concept of 'a rally' might have to change, as well as the numbers attending them. Pop-up rallies are proving to be one way forward. There is now a section for each of our sailing areas on the Forum for members to thrash out ideas, or discussions could take place via Zoom or simply by email or over the phone. The aim should be for each area to frame some kind of declaration of intent, 'programme' might not be the right word, that I can relay to everyone in *DC249* this Spring.

Robin Somes's new book *Nova — The History of the Nova Espero* is now available from his website shop.robinsomes.co.uk. *Smiths at Sea* and *October Potter* are also available, all in e-book or print editions, and DCA members can claim a 15% discount for these and any other of his 'Smith-related' products. (See page 88 for details)

In the Correspondence pages one of the Pomeranian group, Manfred Jacob, conveys his elation the day after he'd sailed his dinghy close to the mighty *Peking* as she returned home at last to Hamburg. At the same time John Griffiths, #3237, sent me a link to a film that I'd seen in the past but lost contact with. It was shot by Captain Irving Johnson in 1929, when he was on board the *Peking* as a young greenhorn struggling to learn the German names for every rope and shackle to avoid the captain's wrath (and his dog's). The ship went through the worst North Sea gale for decades, then rounded the Horn later... Absolutely riveting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tuTKhqWZso>

.....
Season's best to all our members, old and new, and good sailing in 2021, whatever comes our way—*Ed*

DESTITUTUS VENTIS REMOS ADHIBE

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

All material for DC249 – 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.

Dinghy Cruising Association AGM 2021

For the first time ever, our next AGM will be taking place online, giving you the chance to take part from the comfort of your own home. So fire up your laptops, get Zoom installed and get ready to take part. The meeting will take place via Zoom on **Saturday 13th February at 6pm GMT**. There is a limit of 100 participants, so you will need to register early to be sure of taking part.

To register go to the AGM page in the Members Section of the website and complete the Registration form. There is space on the form for you to propose a topic for the Agenda or nominate someone for a place on the Committee if you wish. Currently there is a vacancy for a Public Relations Officer.



All registered participants will be sent an email prior to the event with a link to access the meeting. General guidance on the use of Zoom will also be provided. The final Agenda and all DCA Officer's reports will be downloadable from the web page, two weeks before the meeting.

After a short break, at 7.30pm GMT there will be a presentation by John Welsford, one of our foremost small craft designers, all the way from Auckland, New Zealand. This will also be via Zoom, but will require a separate login. If there is sufficient interest, we will be able to accommodate a higher number of people listening to the talk. There is a separate registration form for the talk on the AGM web page.

North West Regional Planning Meeting

Saturday, 6th February 2021

11 a.m.

For the first time ever in 2021, the North West Regional Planning Meeting will be conducted remotely by Zoom (what a novelty!). Sadly, no pies will be provided, but you are encouraged to prepare your own and have to hand a glass of your favourite brew.

For the benefit of new members, this is a meeting we hold annually early in the season in order to plan the rally programme for the NW Region (loosely meaning the Irish Sea coast and inland waters of NW England, N Wales and parts of Scotland). This is largely a social gathering and all are welcome.

The format of the meeting is yet to be determined, but will be informal. We will discuss the prospects for rallying, and possibly devise a programme, according to the perceived likely development of the pandemic. Opinions, ideas and suggestions from everyone will be welcome. Then, hopefully, there will be presentations from members. If you have a presentation you would like to give — a talk or slides through screen-sharing — this would be very welcome. Please get in touch.

In order to join in, all you need is internet access. Anyone wishing to join in should send me an email (nearer the time) then I will send you an html link which will give you access to the meeting. (Obviously you will need audio capability, and a microphone if you want to contribute to discussion.)

John Hughes, North West Regional Secretary

jmxhughes@phonecoop.coop

0151 632 0178

North East Regional Planning

There will be no formal get together in reality or online for the North East Region. Consultation will be carried out by email, so do look out for a message from me in the New Year and be ready to share your ideas and suggestions for rallies in both Scotland and the North East of England.

Bill Haylock, North East Regional Secretary

billhaylock@phonecoop.coop

EAST, SOUTH and SOUTH WEST Regions did not send details of their planning arrangements in time for this Journal. Please check the DCA website regional rally pages and the DCA Forum for future announcements.

Website Update, Jennifer Heney

So much work has now been done on the DCA Website that I hope members who do not usually think to visit it will find time to look around. There are a couple of particular things to mention. The first of these is the availability of a form which members can use to update their personal information, e.g., email address, postal address, phone number or details of boat ownership. It was clear when I put the membership lists together for the members section that many people have a different boat from the one they put on their joining form, perhaps many years ago. So if you would like to update this information you can now do so on a simple form on the Renew/Update page.

Some 40 members have taken advantage of the downloadable membership lists. It seems our newer members are often keen to discover others who may live or sail near them. You may remember that the lists are on a password protected web page and this system has worked well. I felt that I was taking the security of the information sufficiently seriously when one of our new members acknowledged receipt of the password with "Bleedin 'ell, what a code! Must be into MI6 as well!"

So I shall continue with the system in place for now. I have been changing the password once a week, so this does mean that you need to ask again if you want a copy of an updated list. I have just uploaded new versions with all the members who have signed up this autumn included.

While on the subject of data privacy, we were reminded by a new member that we should have a Data Privacy Policy on our website and ideally a system for members to opt into sharing their information with others. We have until recently relied on the general permission given on past application forms that members agree to share their details with other members. So we do now have a declared Data Privacy Policy online.

You can find it as a link on the About page along with the Association rules under Legal Stuff. It is also flagged up on the Joining page before a prospective member applies. All applicants are now invited to opt in to sharing their full details with the DCA Committee members managing their membership and limited information – email, approximate location, boat and sailing area – with other DCA members. Obviously the choice to opt out is available. If any longer-standing members wish to opt in or out of any data sharing, they too can do so on the Website on the main Members Section page. We hope these actions have made us more fully compliant with British GDPR laws.

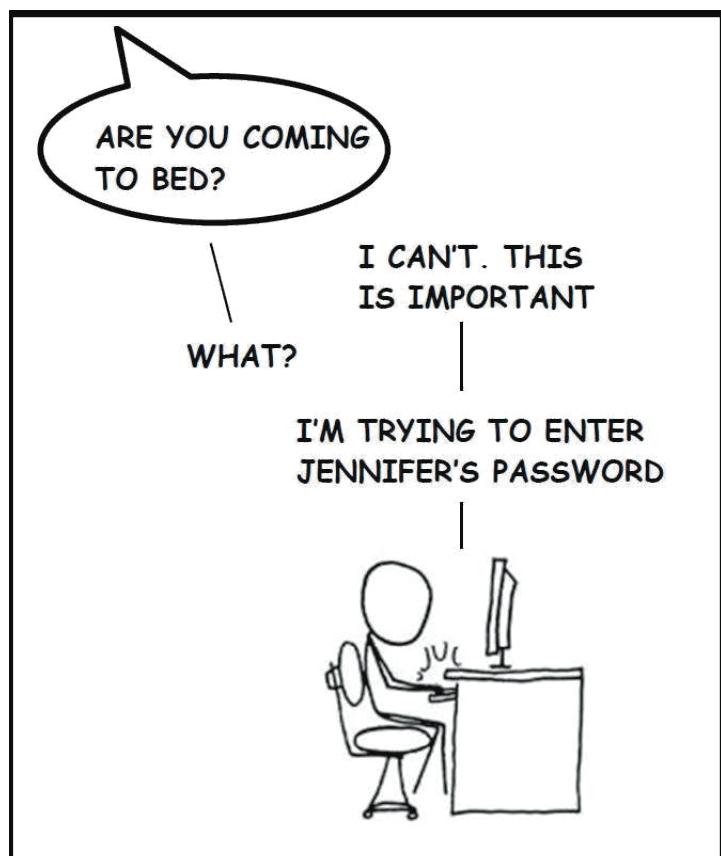
Other new developments include the ability to view the contents page of every Journal that has been published from 2010 to 2019. You will find them on the Archive page under 'Journal'. If, after viewing the contents of a Journal, you would like to read it in full, you can fill in a request form on the Journal page and I will email you a pdf copy. Please don't ask for more than three at once! If you do request two or three, I will send you a link to a Dropbox folder, from which you can download them. You do not need a Dropbox account to do this, so ignore any boxes asking you to sign in or sign up. If you do want to see lots of back copies however, it is still best to buy the CD that is available from the DCA shop.

There is also a new web page about the ROAMER and REBELL boats designed by Eric Coleman, one of the founding members of the DCA. The plans for these boats have been available from the DCA since they were donated to us after Eric's death. They are currently being renovated and pdf copies made, so there will soon be an order form on the website which you can use to order printed or digital copies.

If any of you have suggestions for new content on the website – anything from Good Reads to new Boat Reviews or Cruising advice – please do get in touch with me:

WebsiteEditor@dinghycruising.org.uk.

Jennifer Heney



The DCA Lending Library

The first reference to the DCA Library was in 1955 when the Journal mentioned that one Admiralty chart of the Isle of Wight was available for borrowing. Postage was 6d each way, paid by the borrower. For two decades there were no more than 19 books in the library; all but two were pilot books and tidal stream atlases. In the next two decades the library increased, reaching 425 books by 1991, including 92 pilot books. A decade later in 2000, library usage was first quantified. By then the books had reached 600. Borrowing peaked with 300+ items borrowed per year; 6 items per week. About half of these were back copies of the Journal but now that back copies are available on CD or the website, this no longer occurs.

In 2017/18 many of the older books were returned to members or disposed of in other ways as it was clear they would not be read again. So the current library has just 150 books on the shelf. Members may borrow these postage free and they can also request the Librarian to obtain any book they require and he will endeavour to obtain it through the secondhand book market. That gives members access to an online stock of some 10,000 sailing related books! The early enthusiasm for charts and pilot books seems to have been replaced by a desire for journey / adventure / struggle against adversity books. So why not dip into the DCA Library and see what

you can find? You can download the Library catalogue from the website at:

www.dinghycruising.org.uk/dca-library

To borrow something from the Library, send the title and author of the book you would like to read to librarian@dinghycruising.org.uk together with your name, address, membership number and email address.

Postage is free both ways. The books will be posted with a return, postage-paid envelope included. The books may be retained nominally for a month but in practice until someone else wants them.

The Library has two full sets of DCA Bulletins and Journals, so you can borrow a back copy if you wish. However you can purchase a CD-ROM for £10 from the DCA Shop which contains copies of the Journal from No 1 to 234. That is from the first one in 1955 to summer 2017. There is a combined index of all articles, grouped roughly by subject. Each index entry contains a direct link to the relevant Journal. Searching by author, title or word is easy. If you do not have a CD player but do have a good broadband connection, it is possible to download the contents of the CD from a Dropbox link which can be sent to you as an alternative to posting a CD. The download is likely to take about an hour. To obtain pdf copies of more recent Journals, please visit the Archive page on the website and send a request for the copies you want.

Do You Have Something For the Journal?

1. Write the text without spending time on unusual fonts or complicated formatting. All that will go when I drop it into InDesign, when it will look like other articles you've seen in the journal — that's the idea, to have a house style. Otherwise it becomes a patchwork quilt. Complicated formatting could bring problems, too, if it is imported along with the words.
2. Don't embed your photographs in a WORD doc (or in any other word processor). This will lower their resolution to a level that is fine for viewing but inadequate for printing. Don't send a pdf of your article, either, in an attempt to be a control freak. Pdfs are not set in stone; it will not stop me from editing your text when it is necessary.
3. Avoid simply typing your article into an email, which encourages sending what is really only a draft (*see point #4*) and may cause formatting problems as well. The ideal is for me to receive a simple text file attached to an email, with jpgs attached to following emails. The words and pics are the only things of importance. If in doubt contact me by email — or phone / letter. 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.
4. Send photographs attached to a succession of emails as jpg files in as high a resolution as you can (one at a time if need be), preferably not less than 2MB in

size. This simple procedure is absolutely fine and foolproof. 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.

5. 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.
6. 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 (OCR). 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 the bulletin editor in days of old, but never as typical submissions — typescript was always the norm.

Editor, Dinghy Cruising

Welcome to our 84 New Members and 8 Returning Members

David Morton, Membership Secretary

3756	Francis Marshall, fitzroy5@me.com	Gull dinghy	Exe Estuary
3757	David Jenner, davidjenner2011@gmail.com	Drascombe Dabber	Essex, Rutland, Broads
3758	Rex Brunton, rwbrunton@gmail.com	Phoenix 3, building Pathfinder 17	New Zealand S. Island
3759	Matt Goss, matteagoss@gmail.com	Building a Welsford Navigator	Plymouth Sound
3760	Richard Hilley, richardhilley@hotmail.co.uk	Tideway 12 GRP Gunter rigged	South East England
3761	Phil Whieldon, philwhieldon@gmail.com	Orkney Coastliner 14	North East Scotland
3762	John Nejady, johnnejady@gmail.com	Enterprise	North East Coast
3763	Patrick McGowan, patrickmcgowan@btinternet.com	Paul Gartside #130 12' clinker dinghy	Ullswater, Wales Coast
3764	Michael Foote, foote874@btinternet.com	Mirror	Cotswold Water Park
3765	Bruce Robinson, eb.robinson@btinternet.com	Wayfarer (club boat)	Felixstowe, East Coast
3766	Guy Dagger, guydagger@gmail.com	Mirror	River Rother
3767	William Cuthbert, broomhurst@outlook.com	Tideway 12	Chichester Harbour
3768	Trevor Peacock, minicountryman@hotmail.com	Laser	Ardingly Reservoir
3769	Phillip Pemberton, Phillippemberton@btopenworld.com	Wayfarer World	Chew Valley Lake
3770	David Staniforth, davestanis58@yahoo.co.uk	N/K	Telford SC
3771	Bruno Dewaele, brunodewaele9@gmail.com	Cornish Crabber Coble	Fowey, Cornwall
3772	Anders Nordby, jervnord@gmail.com	17' "KNS-boat"	S.E. Norway lakes
3773	Markus Ertel, markus@ertel.at	H-Jolle 6.2m wooden dinghy	Inland lakes Austria, S. Germany, Italy
3774	Stephen Gale, cool_gales@hotmail.com	Wanderer	South West England
3775	Lloyd Kirton, lloyd_kirton@hotmail.com	No boat at the moment	South East England
3776	Allan Porter, ap@mapron.plus.com	Gull Mk. 2	West Midlands
3777	Chris Harnan, chrisharnan@yahoo.co.uk	Building a Vivier Ebihen 18	South East England
3778	Geoff Burton, geoff.b@sky.com	Restoring a Mirror dinghy	South East England
3779	Douglas Young, douglasyoung1977@googlemail.com	Wayfarer Mk2	Cotswold Water Park
3780	Keith Dalton, Evention244488@aol.com	Wayfarer	East Coast, Solent
3781	Jordan Less'ard-Springett, jordan80100@gmail.com	Mirror dinghy	R. Avon, South West
3782	Chris Forrest, cforrest@yahoo.co.uk	Bay Raider Expedition Hobie TI	South Coast of England Florida
3783	Simon Phillips, Simon2.phillips@uwe.ac.uk	Drascombe Dabber	South Wales
3784	Tom Gallon, tragallon@gmail.com	No boat at the moment	South East England
3785	Stewart Histed, stewarthisted@btconnect.com	No boat at the moment	East of England
3786	River Bower, riverbower@yahoo.com	1974 Sunfish	California lakes & coast
3787	David Fyfe, dwfyfe@doctors.org.uk	Northeaster Dory	Morecambe Bay, Lakes
3788	Robert Ellis-Paul, rob_ellispaul@hotmail.co.uk	Shipmate Dayboat	Lake District, Broads
3789	Oliver Tagg, Oliver_tagg@hotmail.co.uk	GP14	Wash, Thames, local lakes
3790	Mark O'Toole, bloxalamo@yahoo.co.uk	Club GP14s	South Staffs SC
3791	Peter Wilson, peterwilson766@yahoo.co.uk	No boat at the moment	Broads, Essex
3792	Tim Wybrow, timwybrow@googlemail.com	Drascombe Lugger	Ullswater
3793	Toby Cubitt, tsc25@cantab.net	Thinking of getting a Mirror	South East England
3794	Rob Cowley, arcowl840@gmail.com	Drascombe	Kielder Water
3795	Steven Vogt, stevenski@wp.pl	Building a Vivier Morbic 12	Poland

3796	Samuel Fieldhouse, sfieldhouse@me.com	GP14 and a 28' sloop	Chichester, Solent
3797	Edmund Cadden, edmundcadden48@gmail.com	Leisure 17, Mirror, 2 canoes	Ireland
3798	Philip Leftley, p.leftley@btinternet.com	Hawk 20	Broads, Norfolk Coast
3799	Stuart Lloyd, stuartlloyd1@gmail.com	Swallow Bayraider Expedition	Plymouth Sound
3800	Albertine Offringa, nzcockie@gmail.com	Pooduck skiff - 12' lugsail	Friesland
3801	Barry Hitchcock, barryspoons@hotmail.com	15' open boat with outboard	Thames, W. Scotland
3802	Nicholas Locke, Nickwales15@outlook.com	Wanderer	Essex
3803	Stuart Blakemore, stuart.jb@hotmail.co.uk	Shipmate dayboat, GP14, Firefly	Birmingham, W. Wales
3804	Piers Tuggey, pierstuggey@yahoo.co.uk	Falmouth Bass Boat	South Wales
3805	James Minter, jaminter44@gmail.com	Miracle	East of England
3806	Robin Morris, robin.morris@kcl.ac.uk	A converted Laser Pico	Chichester, South Coast
3807	Frank Somers, frank_m_somers@hotmail.com	Planning to get a 15' dinghy	Fareham, Solent
3808	John Scovell, Scovellj@gmail.com	12'6" Lytham Pilot	N. Ireland Coast & Loughs
3809	Robert Burnett, robert.m.burnett49@gmail.com	Wanderer	Otley S.C., W. Yorks
3810	Julien Slade, Julienclsblade@hotmail.co.uk	No boat at the moment	South East England
3811	Kevin Keenan, Kkeenan91@aol.com	No boat at the moment	Firth of Clyde
3812	Neil Bowes, neilbowes34@gmail.com	Seafarer 465, Tinker Tramp	Ullswater, Coniston
3813	David Purves, davidpurves100@hotmail.com	Atlantic 37 Motor cruiser	Belgium, France, Holland
3814	Matt Hutchison, mhutchison210@gmail.com	Mirror dinghy	East Midlands
3815	Niek Verhoeff, niek.verhoeff@gmail.com	4.5m one-off wooden sloop	The Netherlands
3816	Simeon Davies, simeon.davies@gmail.com	Laser	S. Wales, Mediterranean
3817	James Carson, Jamesallyncarson@gmail.com	No boat at the moment	California
3818	Geoffrey Croudace, geoff_croudace@yahoo.co.uk	Stornoway 12, Swift 18	Cotswold WP, Solent
3819	Ross Patterson, pattersonross3@gmail.com	Mirror, Macwester 26	Shustoke, Bristol Channel
3820	Chris Seddon, caseddon0@gmail.com	No boat at the moment	Severn Estuary
3821	Malcolm McDonald, malcmcd@hotmail.com	Mirror, Drascombe Scaith	South Coast of England
3822	Robert Davies, rob davies@cantab.net	Pacer	Reading, Chichester, Lakes
3823	Ben Hays, benjaminalberthays@gmail.com	Building a Stornoway 12	USA West Coast
3824	Roger Gibbons, shallowford@mail.com	10'4" lugsail dinghy	River Dart
3825	Andrew Whitehouse, aemdoubleu@gmail.com	No boat at the moment	Medway
3826	David Evans, dca@fatshark.co.uk	No boat at the moment	Scotland West Coast
3827	Jo Musson, jomusson@icloud.com	Soling, RS100, Laser 4000	South Wales
3828	Malcolm Hazleton, malcolmhazleton@gmail.com	Tinker Tramp, 2 kayaks	Medway
3829	Brian Mayer, Briansji@outlook.com	Annapolis Wherry rowing boat	San Juan Islands, USA
3830	Dave Kelly, dkellygb+dca@pm.me	Wanderer 537	Cotswold Water Park
3831	David Perks, perks.dw@gmail.com	18ft 'Couta Boat' replica	Brisbane, Australia
3832	David Strong, strongd@mymts.net	CL 16 sloop-rigged dinghy	Manitoba, Canada
3833	Selina Sanderson, selina.sanderson8@gmail.com	Wayfarer	E. & S.E. England
3834	Rob Weavers, rob_weavers@hotmail.co.uk	Bosun	River Thames
3835	Marc Lien, Marclien@gmail.com	Nesting Eastport Pram, also building a Morbic 12	South East England
3836	Phil Reed, Philreed70@yahoo.com	Potter 19, Sanibel 18, Com-pac 16	USA and Canada
3837	Jasper Graham-Jones, jasper.graham-jones@plymouth.ac.uk	Swift 18	Looe Bay, S.W. Coast
3838	Ian Lewis, go.events@outlook.com	Club boats	Wigan, River Mersey
3839	Stephen Barrett, steve@roxby.biz	Mirror	Humberside

We also welcome back the following members

3396 Paul Surita, surita@btinternet.com	Mirror	Chichester, Solent
3240 Enya Conway, enya13@btinternet.com	Mirror and Byte	Portsmouth, Chichester
3496 Richard Denby, Denbyr@me.com	Tideway 12	South West England
3465 Lucas Sluimer, ruigtwatersport@outlook.com	Valk (Falcon)	The Netherlands
2989 Christopher Daniels, christopherdaniels43@gmail.com	No boat at the moment	South West England
3305 John Soady, drunclej@yahoo.co.uk	Silhouette, Achilles 24	N.E. Coast, Broads
3481 Andrew Wilson, andyjwilson58@gmail.com	Iain Oughtred Ness Boat	Cleddau estuary
1867 John Lunt, jnjlunt@hotmail.co.uk	Otter dinghy	N.West, Wales, Scotland

Roger Barnes, President

It is pleasing to welcome such a wide range of new members to the Association. The Dinghy Cruising Association was born sixty-five years ago, with the mission to provide a way that people cruising small dinghies in British waters could meet together and share ideas, techniques and experiences. Our rally programme remains focused on the United Kingdom, but we have long had a presence in Ireland, continental Europe and the rest of the world, which is reflected in the new applicants who have joined us in the last three months.

It is our hope to organise more rallies outside the UK, (once the present pandemic is under control), but for our more distant members, the focus of the Association is inevitably not the opportunity for physical meetings with other members afforded by the rally programme, but the opportunity to share the experience of other members in the Journal, and increasingly by electronic means. This is why we have members across the world. During this quarter we welcome a number of new members from the USA and two from the Antipodes.

We continue to develop the Journal, with the aim that it should become one of the best sailing magazines in the world, if it isn't already. There has also been a total revision of the website so that it can become a better resource for the membership, as well as a way of advertising the Association to potential members.

As the world changes the Association needs to evolve. But we aim always to remain true to our founding traditions. We are, as we always have been, simply a group of people who enjoy uncompetitive cruising in dinghies. The Association is unpretentious, with few airs and graces, but a deep well of experience and good will.

Not everyone who joins stays with us for a long period, but I hope that while you are with us you will find it enriching and stimulating. If you have questions or need help with any problems with sailing your boat, there are people here who can help you. And one day perhaps I will see your sails approaching on the horizon and have the chance to meet you. Or perhaps I will correspond with you in the future. In the meantime, I wish you good reading of this journal, and good sailing! *Roger Barnes*



Boats outside the Skellig Hangar, Douarnenez, 25th October 2020, by Roger Barnes

Listening to New Members ...5

Chris Forrest #3782

I am about to take possession of a Bay Raider Expedition, which will live on a mooring in West Bay, Bridport for the summer. There's no sailing club here — but I'm in the Pilot Gig Club! I also have a Hobie TI in Florida where I've travelled for the last 5 years to attempt the Everglades Challenge, a dinghy cruise within a race.

I grew up in Harwich sailing with Dad — Enterprises, Kestrels and a Westerly Nimrod

We did a lot of sailing through CCSC Weymouth when the children were small: Oppie, Topper, Mirror, Lasers, our beloved Wayfarer, a Dart 18 and briefly a Magnum 21 Trimaran.

I've crewed on Weymouth SC's Squibs a few times this decade but I find race courses claustrophobic.

Did precursors to RYA part 2s back in the '70s.

This century I've done the RYA First Aid, Powerboat and Rescue Boat courses — but forgotten them now!

How did you hear about the DCA?

Positively through Roger's YouTube channel. Negatively (if you want the truth) through glancing references in blogs, etc. characterising it as a disappointingly low-energy bunch of old duffers!

Do you have any questions or comments?

I love the Facebook Page and feel I ought to join the DCA as opposed to just lurking, enjoying free content.

I don't expect to do many DCA cruises. (I'm on the waiting list for the English Raid.)

So I'm paying £30 for a quarterly magazine but that's fine. I pay about the same for *Classic Boat* most of which is, 'a bit too J-class' and *Watercraft*, much of which is, 'a bit too epoxy and lathes'.

By the way, if you discounted the digital magazine subscription that would probably have tripped me into it. *Keith*

Editor: Hmm... 'a disappointingly low-energy bunch of old duffers...' Are you sure they meant *us*? Duffers drown, don't they? We've certainly learned how to relax at sea and off it, a necessary virtue. But most of us have something else to offer as well — there's just the one old duffer who sorts out all of the Journal, stopping short only at the printer's door; and there's one differette I know quite well who has taken on the Website while juggling a load of other stuff. But in a way you're right, we would benefit from an injection of talent and energy from (relatively) young whippersnappers and scallywags such as yourself.

Anyway, what impressed me was your obvious enthusiasm (despite the studied blasé outlook), wide sailing background, nice choice of boats and a disguised scorn for tearing around the buoys in an attempt to vanish up your own transom drain. All that impressed me, as I say, but the real reason I've published your letter of application is that it had me laughing out loud... And I'm quite sure you've come to the right place. Welcome aboard! *Keith*



(Above) Bay Raider Expedition



(Left) Hobie Tandem Island paddle/sailer



(Below) Bridport Pilot Gig Club

Patrick McGowan #3763 ...*6*

'I am considering fitting a jib and mizzen sails to *Maggie May* and would welcome advice from anyone who has done something similar...'

These words were in Patrick's DCA application, and Jenny read them out to me.

Paul Gartside's 'Design #130' is not well known, as he drew it back in 2001 for Sylva Bay Shipyard School, Gabriola Island, British Columbia.

Apart from the daggerboard, #130 is a perfect Swallows and Amazons lugger, I think you'll agree. Clinker-built the old way, copper nails clenched on roves, planks meeting the apron and keel tightly with no caulking, just hard work and subtle skill to make everything fit. She has just enough of a modern touch in the three sail battens and the central sheet take-off. Paul Gartside agrees about the daggerboard, but that's what the school wanted.

Patrick has made a beautiful job of #130 by all accounts and has I believe upgraded the timber spec to mahogany planking from red cedar. #130 has become *Maggie May* in his hands. I paused when I thought of him changing her from a lugger to a yawl, and wrote:

'At 68 sq.ft the balance lugsail is just 1 sq.ft less than the full Mirror rig of 69, so I wonder why you wish to change things. A 12ft yawl is uncommon, and there are reasons for this. Two masts on a short boat length will incur considerable wind interference from the mainmast on the mizzen. Then you'll need to fashion a bowsprit to keep the jib out of the way of the lugsail and move the CE forward to balance the mizzen. After that you will probably find that she is overcanvassed with the lugsail main, which will lead to more expense, either for a new sail or for a visit to a sailmaker to reduce the area of this



one. She looks so perfect as she is, unlike the one seen above. Why not keep her and find a 16ft yawl? There is one advertised in DC247 at this moment. You may find that the added complication doesn't suit you, or you'll end up thinking a yawl is perfect, so you could then advertise your '130' in our journal!

Patrick answered:

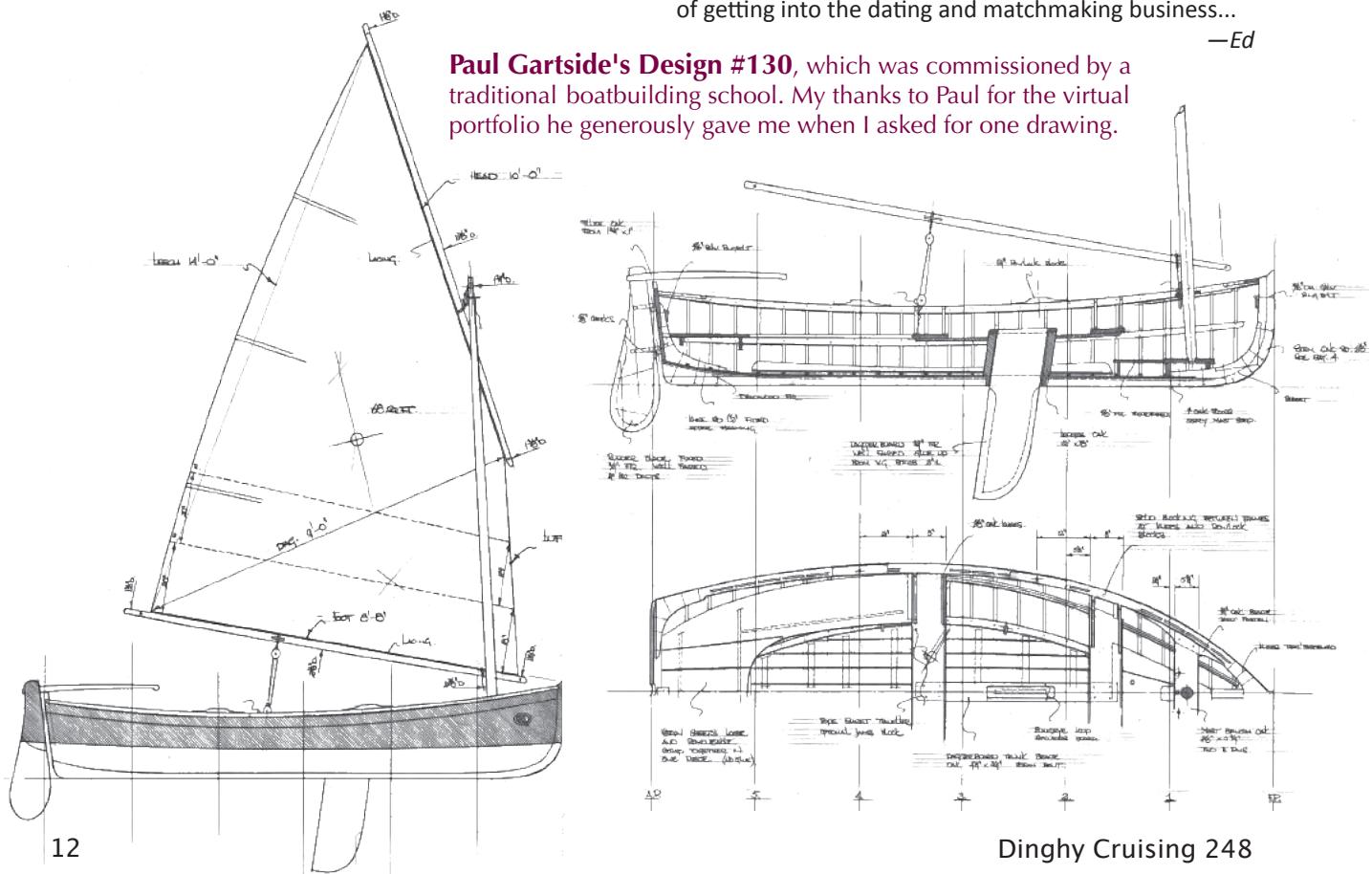
'Thanks for your comments re: *Maggie May*, my 12-foot clinker. I built her over 22 months and enjoyed almost every minute of it, so I do not intend to sell her. My two big sons, who are in their 30s, would seriously contest such an idea. So, as I'm outweighed and outnumbered, no contest. The modifications required to add a jib and mizzen won't cause me too much hassle and all the fittings can be removed if required.

I would however welcome details of any relevant mizzen rigs. I have never sailed a yawl so this is going to be interesting. Please send me details of the yawl for sale and possibly a copy of #247.

I sent both, and Patrick and one of his sons drove up the M6 to see Bernard Harman's Sussex Cob, *Jay*. As far as I know, all parties are now happy, but especially Bernard, who was fretting about finding a good owner for his beloved *Jay*. And me... well, I'm seriously thinking of getting into the dating and matchmaking business...

-Ed

Paul Gartside's Design #130, which was commissioned by a traditional boatbuilding school. My thanks to Paul for the virtual portfolio he generously gave me when I asked for one drawing.



15-sqm touring dinghy (H-class dinghy) by Markus Ertel

New DCA Member #3773 ...

THE HISTORY OF THE 15-SQUARE METRE touring dinghy is also the history of touring and cruising sailors in Germany, inseparably linked by the former German Sailors' Federation.

Founded in 1912, the German Sailors' Federation was primarily dedicated to touring and cruising. At that time the German Sailing Association (D.S.Vb.) was mainly dedicated to the yachts and dinghies sailed by the racing elite. On 16th July 1921 the German Sailors' Federation (D.S.B.) decided to create a 15-square-metre federal touring dinghy and awarded it the sailing insignia »H«. Two years later the building regulations were published.

Building regulations, 1923

Only ballastless dinghies were permitted as federal touring dinghies. Double boats, outrigger boats and similar constructions, as well as hollow bottom forms, pram bows, ballast, leeboards, daggerboards, and twin rudders were all forbidden.

On the other hand, rotating masts on pins that were held in mast jaws in a tabernacle which stretched down to the keelson and was bolted to it, were mandatory. The measured sail area was limited to a maximum of 15 square metres. The length was limited to a maximum of 6.20 metres (20 feet 4 inches) and the greatest width above deck, excluding rubbing strakes, was defined as at least 1.70 metres (5 feet 7 inches).

There were minimum deck widths fore and aft as well

The lakes of central Europe may seem like an unlikely breeding ground for high-performance dinghies. The waters are often cold, the winds often light and fluky, and in its early decades the development of the sport lagged behind that of the English-speaking countries. But by the 1930s, the sailors of Germany, Austria and Switzerland were creating dinghies that were probably the fastest and most sophisticated racing boats of their era, and they influenced dinghy design across the world.

The most popular of the classic lake dinghies of Central Europe is a *wanderjolle* or cruising dinghy. The pages of old German dinghy books are full of dinghy cruising; of pics of boom tents, tables hanging off centreboard cases, and dinghies moored to the shore overnight.

The most popular of the *wanderjolle* classes is the H-Jolle, a development class that is about as big as a Flying Dutchman (6.20m) but with class rules that mandated much more beam (a minimum of 1.70m overall and 1.50 m at the waterline) and weight (minimum of 190kg).

The rig is still generous; a measured sail area of 15m² on a 7.5m mast is dramatically increased by the roach and the massive overlap of the genoa.

In its early years the class followed two strands. The H-Jolle sailors who braved the rougher waters of the northern seas developed solid oak boats that weighed 500 kg. The boats that sailed the light winds of the inland lakes dropped the full battens from the sail and the wooden headsail luff spars in the quest for light weight.

In its heyday before WW2 there were 800 H-Jolles in Germany, making it the most popular class of its era.

Markus Ertel tells us more...

Cribbed and adapted from 'SailCraftblog'

as a minimum waterline width, in addition to a lowest freeboard of 40 centimetres (15.75 inches) and the freeboard at the stem of at least 52 centimetres (20.5 inches). Side decks of at least 15 centimetres (5.9 inches) were also specified.

Further specifications concerned the thickness of planks, stem, transom, frames and floor stringers as well as deck, floor, and more. The equipment specified included anchors, anchor chain, hawser, boat hooks, two oars with rowlocks, a towing line, a bucket on a rope, an oil drum, a life ring and sufficient rescue material.

Due to the great success of the 15-sqm Federal touring H-class dinghy, the German Sailors' Association (D.S.Vb.) also adopted a slimmer 15-sqm inland cruising dinghy, more of a regatta boat than a touring dinghy. It was launched on Sailors' Day in Munich in 1925, and awarded the sailing insignia »F«. In 1933, when the National Socialists seized power in Germany, all German sailing associations were put on an equal footing. The D.S.B. was forced into liquidation and the sailing association was also dissolved. In





the new German Sailors' Association (D.S.V.) the registered H- and F-class dinghies were counted first. As there were more H-class dinghies in the D.S.B. than F-class dinghies in the D.S.V.b., the F-class dinghy sailors had to have their boats re-measured and registered and also had to sew an »H« into the sail.

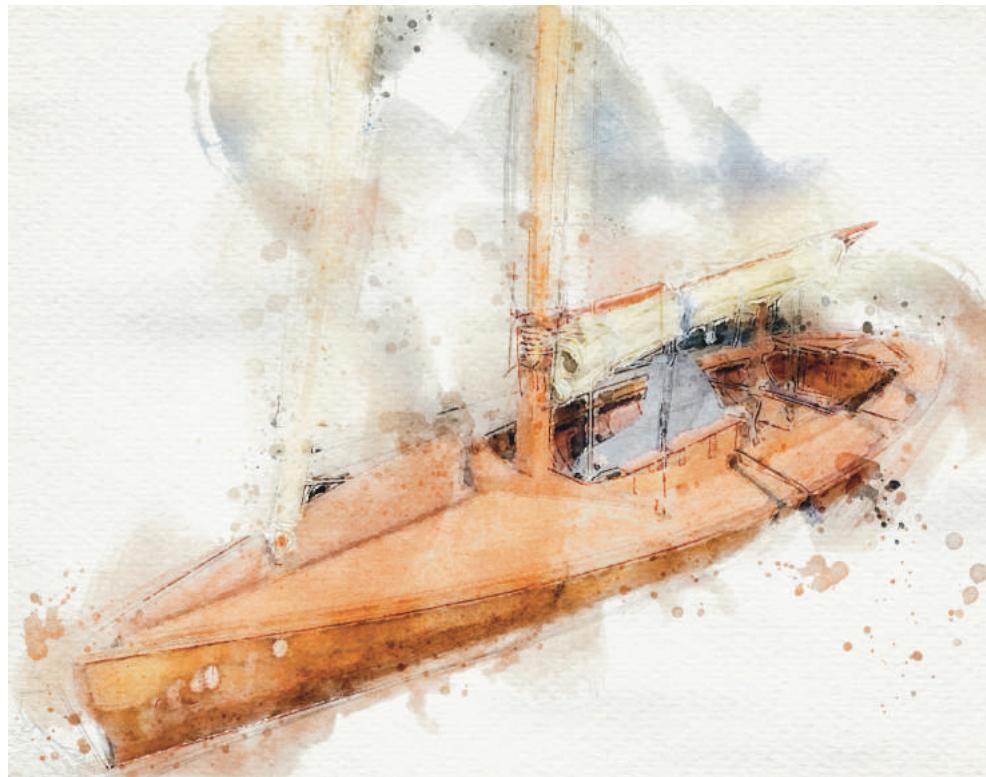
Additionally, slightly different building regulations were adopted. The spatial rectangle of the H-class dinghies, which had to be measured, was applied to all new builds after 1933 and thus ensured a more stable floating attitude, which was of particular benefit to the fans of dinghy cruising. As a result, the 15-square-metre touring dinghy (H-class dinghy) became the most popular German sailing class of that time.

A dinghy had been created that was equally suitable for family use, touring and regatta sailing and was solidly built to guarantee a long life of hard work. The status as a one-design was maintained and the unification of the »H« and »F« dinghy fleet resulted in enthusiastic and widespread boat building. By the beginning of the war, around 800 new builds had been counted, and after the end of the World War

the development continued just as rapidly. No well-known designer could by-pass the H-class dinghy and with every new development, whether by Adolf Harms, Willy Lehmann, Carl Martens, Anton Miglitsch, Günther Brandt, Rudolph Gärsch, Kurt Grunewald, Theo Ernst or his son Manfred, Reinhard Drewitz, Herman Dannhus, Ricus Van de Staad or, most recently, Franz Kalb, the character of the touring boat was eroded and the H-class dinghy was increasingly built for regattas instead of cruising. Over the decades, the dinghy had to adapt to the latest developments in boat building. However, many of the former limits are still in place today: maximum length 6.20 metres, minimum width 1.70 metres, 15 square metres of measured sail area, 7.50 metres mast height above deck, 190 kilograms of measured minimum weight and a prescribed waterline width of at least 1.50 metres.

Reliable, affordable, popular

Thanks to its robust construction and simple operation, the 15-square metre touring dinghy has long been a reliable, inexpensive and therefore popular partner in adventure. The simple rig and gunter sailplan were another great advantage of the 15 sqm dinghy. Sailing it involves only the tiller, mainsheet and jib sheet, otherwise the cockpit is clean, empty and tidy, the halyard cleats for peak and throat on the mast are occupied. She always remained a national German class,



despite there being some H-class dinghies in Austria and Switzerland. The international breakthrough was denied her.

The many classic H-class dinghies that are still preserved today, some of which are very well maintained,



The modern H-Class, now built in carbon with a flatter hull, is rated faster than the Flying Dutchman. *Photograph from the class website*

are mostly gunter rigged (until the 1960s), usually have a wooden forestay and often a long-battened sail typical of the class at that time. In Southern Germany, however, the forestay, called a 'Holzbein' (wooden leg), was soon thrown overboard, and there the mainsails are usually battenless. Everything else is too heavy for the light winds that prevail in the more southern sailing grounds. However, a sustainable spread of the class has never occurred beyond the Rhine-Main line. In addition, the sailing regatta elite turned away from the cruising dinghy from the mid-1950s and switched to new boats like the International Flying Dutchman, among others.

The descendants of the 15-sqm dinghy

At the beginning of the 1960s building activity stagnated and as a result the building regulations were revised to reduce the total weight. At the beginning of the 1970s the hulls were finally built in GRP, and as building activity suddenly boomed, the H-class dinghy might have become the 'one-design' in the West, as people naturally liked such large fleets. On the other hand, the advocates of the class also realised that they would be holding on to a dinghy that might be obsolete again in a few years. They did well not to become a one-design class, because with form-glued plywood construction, it was suddenly possible to build wide and light.

This is how the H-class dinghy came into being in West Germany, as we still see it in regattas to some extent today: A 190 kilogram and 2.15 metre wide modern planing dinghy, with double bottom, aluminium rigging, trapeze (since 1979), spinnaker (which was already sailed at regattas before the war), furling jib and everything

that is fashionable in modern dinghy sailing today (as long as it fits into the class regulations). The only changes were in the plan; the last, and current plan was drawn in 1989/90.

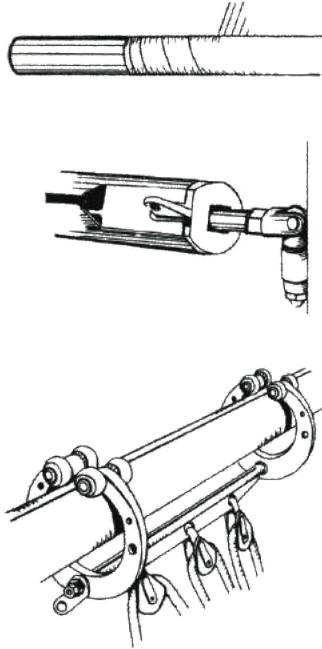
Also in the former GDR (East Germany) the H-class dinghies were built in solid wood for a long time. But in the GDR there were other problems in the 1970s and 1980s. There, in order to survive as a national class, they took the path of a one-design class. At the end of the 1960s, they decided on a 1.90 metres wide plan (MBP plan), drawn by the designer Manfred Ernst (Berlin), equipped without a spinnaker sock, but sailed with a trapeze — much earlier in the class as a whole than in the West — and which was clearly superior to the West German GRP version of the 1970s, built by the then Krefeld Kother shipyard, based on a Grunewald plan.

Today the H-class dinghy is a regatta bullet costing over 30,000 euros (27,727 pounds), weighing around 200 kilograms and measuring 2.18 metres in width, often with a draught of 1.9 metres due to the NACA A-profiled narrow centreboard and 23 square metres of sail area. Mast, main boom, hull and appendages are laminated from carbon fibre, and the range of trim lines is so huge that it makes you dizzy. A trapeze and a 36 square metres spinnaker are standard equipment. The double floor precludes any storage space in the bilge and cruising equipment is hard to store. Incoming waves run unhindered over the side deck into the cockpit — its time as a travelling dinghy is over.

The Polish OMEGA Class

The Omega is still the most used boat for school sailing holidays and sailing schools in Poland. The beginnings of the Polish class were hidden for a long time and have been researched and documented, mainly by Michael Krieg. Juliusz Sieradzki designed a dinghy in 1940/41 which followed the rules of the H-class dinghy. His cousin Paweł Sieradzki brought the construction plans of the German 15-square-metre touring dinghy (H-class dinghy) from Berlin after the war and also built dinghies in the H-class.

A long dispute between the cousins and also a court case with a boat manufacturer were the result. In the 1950s the Polish H-class was finally renamed 'Omega'. In June 1953 there was even an international competition in Olsztyn (Allenstein) in Poland, where sailors from the



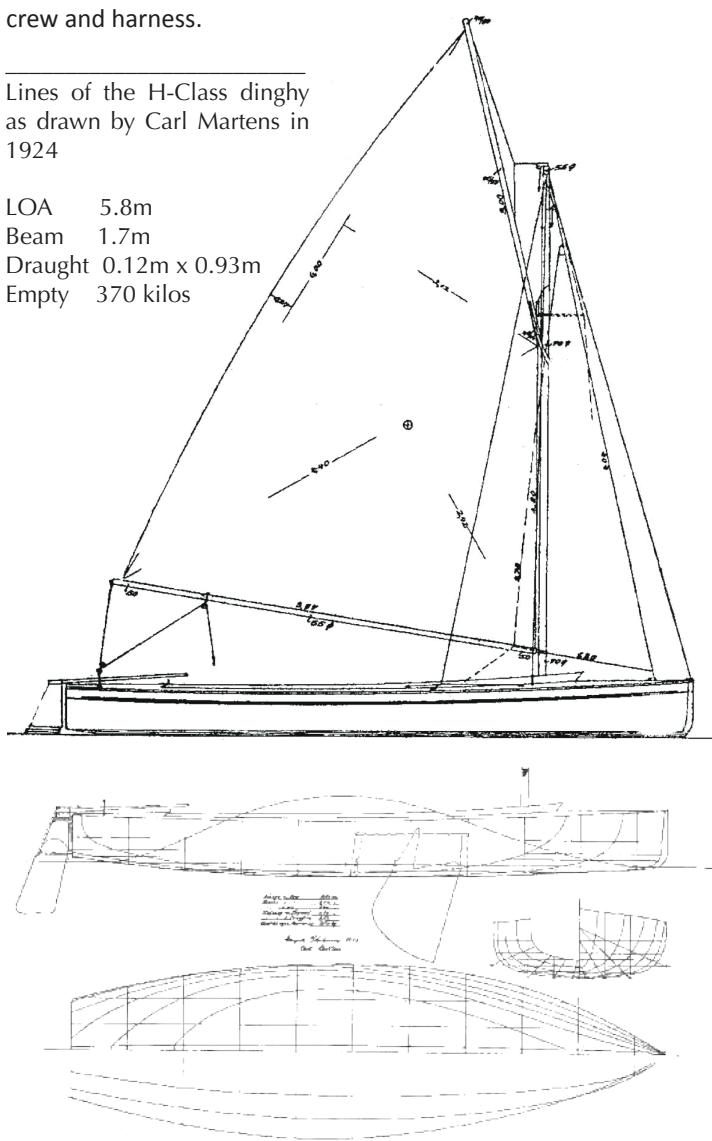
Roller reefing carried by some H-Class boats

GDR and Hungary competed in different classes, including the (Polish) 'H' dinghy class. The Omega dinghy became the dominant class in Poland in the national 'H' class over the next few years. At the end of the 1950s the national Omega flotilla officially numbered almost 500.

The Omega, built according to the rules of the national »H« class, is still very popular as a training boat, and was built in large numbers by state shipyards, clubs, but also individually. Until the end of the 1960s the boats were mostly built in wood, after that mainly in plastic. The class seemed to have no future, but in the early 1980s it was reactivated and in 1983 the Omega class association was founded. The lighter regatta version, compared with the purely recreational or standard version, is sailed with a spinnaker and a three-man crew and harness.

Lines of the H-Class dinghy as drawn by Carl Martens in 1924

LOA 5.8m
Beam 1.7m
Draught 0.12m x 0.93m
Empty 370 kilos



(Right) Racing machine H-Class dinghy
© Heinz-Joachim Richter



Cruising dinghy for a modest adventure

The classic 15 square metre touring dinghies still impress with their tanks under the raised side decks. The fixed forestay spar, which keeps the mast vertical even under pressure, provides an aerodynamically favourable leading edge and above all makes mast dropping easier. The breakwater and coaming deserve their name, and there is also plenty of space in the bow, the stern and under the floorboards. In harbour, the yard offers a long pole for the tent, and the cockpit, which is comfortably free of running rigging, accommodates two people. At night, the waves splash gently against the wooden planks and make it easier to fall asleep. It is no wonder that the class association's yearly organised hiking trip through the Swedish archipelago or the Danish South Seas is mainly for these elderly, ± 450 kilograms, wooden boats. **ME**



Correspondence



From Brian McClellan: Potters Over the Years

Congratulations Keith, on another fine issue.

I must say I like the new feel of the journal, it really is quite 'up market'!

I particularly enjoyed the piece about the Smith Brothers and friends. As you know, I sailed my West Wight Potter 'A' Type *Water Mouse* for 23 years. I bought her in 1978 and sold her in 2001; happy days.

My boat had a detachable cabin top, although I never removed it. At the Bristol Festival of the Sea in May 1996 she had a large notice on deck (made by the Secretary of the WWP Association) proclaiming *Water Mouse* to be the oldest surviving West Wight Potter in the world, No.3. Subsequently on removing a bracket at the foot of the mast inside the cabin (the bracket was positioned between the Stamped P and 3 on the mast step) I found a number 5. Shame, horror and dismay as I found that I no longer owned the oldest WWP. Even worse I had to cough this knowledge to the WWP Association Secretary Bob Lomas. Bob was also Founder, Chairman, Treasurer and Newsletter Publisher (all at once).

I remember when I fitted a mizzen mast and bumkin Bob said that my calculations for mast height and bumkin length were correct. I did not have the heart to tell him that the mast height was dictated by the luff length of the old storm sail I was using and the bumkin was simply a pick-axe handle.

Incidentally, regarding the picture of the new Potters lined up on the quay: it must have been taken 1970 onwards. Production changed from wood to fibreglass in 1970. Price for a 'sailaway' Potter was then £315. Apparently the backwards slope of the cabin front could not be replicated in fibreglass.

I have a copy of 'October Potter' — at least I have a photocopied version taken from one I borrowed for that purpose years ago.

Best wishes to you and Jenny,
Brian

From One Who Wishes to Remain Anonymous: *Espero Nova*

Dear Keith

You and I obviously think along some of the same lines when it comes to boats. I was very glad to see the extensive piece by Robin Somes about the Smiths, etc., in DC247 and the related material about Charles Violet and *Nova Espero*. Lots of great photographs, which I hadn't seen before.

I knew *The Wind Calls The Tune* from years ago but not Charles Violet's book or Stanley's *The Smiths at Sea*, both of which in their very different ways I found fascinating. I too have bought the republished pamphlet by Stanley about his extraordinary trip to Sweden in the WW Potter. What a man!

The work of the postwar voyagers, whose main

ventures were in the 1950s, is being revisited. Their exploits preceded the much more public journeys of Francis Chichester, Robin Knox-Johnson, Alec Rose, et al. There's a real break in the 1960s when big media comes along.

The people I'm interested in were more private, and while well known in yachting circles they were not household names: Adlard Coles, Humphrey Barton, the Hiscocks, the Smiths and Charles Violet, the Pyes, Smeetons, Edward Allcard, Ann Davison, Roger Ellam and Colin Mudie (their boat *Sopranino*, like *Nova Espero*, was really a glorified dinghy). As it happens my Dad bought all their books when they came out, and from a young age they were my staple sailing reading. Re-reading them now I am hugely impressed by their resourcefulness and courage.

Looking forward to reading the rest of the new issue.

From Mark Darley: A Sense of an Ending

Dear Keith,

On my return to California after a summer cruising in Devon, I was delighted to discover both my Summer and Autumn editions of *Dinghy Cruising* waiting for me. Today it rained in Northern California for the first time since about April, so what did I do? I sat down and read both issues cover to cover. What a pleasure!

However I was left right on the lip of a wave when I came to the end of page 55 of the Autumn issue mid-sentence as John Owen and his crew, Christopher, were bearing away for the home leg from Boulogne to Dungeness just before nightfall.....do I have to wait for the next issue to see if they survived, or could you send me a pdf version with the conclusion of the article? Or is this to ensure that I renew my DCA membership to get the rest of it in the next issue...?

Either way I am perfectly happy to pay the increased overseas membership for the cost of shipping this great magazine to California....and some.

Best Regards, and thanks for your hard work editing,
Mark

PS. I was very interested to see the Waterlust canoe story as I have just acquired one to explore the US West Coast esteros. Drake's Estero next week I hope. (Wooden Swallow Bayraider 20 in the UK)

§ The single missing line is in red: '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**

Many apologies. The pdf copy was intact, plus Jenny placed a correction on the website news page. Not much consolation, so many thanks for the kind words, Mark!

—Ed

From Mike Hinsley: New Hulls For Old

Hi Keith,

Recycling an old GRP Trailer Sailer: to cheer up Steve Bradwell on the disposal of old GRP hulls. My son Paul is in the middle of converting the hull of a SEASAFE DANDY (a craft I had never heard of before!) into a camping trailer 'Pod'.

Progress is well advanced with the removal of the concrete keels and opening up the transom for easy access. The cabin has been gutted and the old bits of wood cut out and the interior refinished. I look forward to seeing the finished product.

One less GRP hull for landfill!

Mike Hinsley.

From Hugh Horton: Dinghy Cruising 247

Hi Keith & Jenny,

Not just because of that too-cute-by-half boat from Florida, it seems the journals keep getting better and better:

Page 9. A daysail with crew and 'up to eight guests', aboard *Bloodhound* sounds delightful. Would like to see a sample menu for a week, too. Can one specify wines?

Page 12. The Morgan Giles-designed 18ft GRP Classic Thames Estuary Design's hull is gorgeous.

Page 19. Sirius image. Lovely touch.

Page 50. Dick Newick was a good friend of Meade Gougeon, and somehow Newick's collection of the Patrick O'Brian Aubrey-Maturin series wound up with Meade, and later Janet thought I should have them. Now they're here up on the shelf. My first set went years ago to my son Bard in Seattle, who read them 3 times. Newick and I corresponded, too.

Page 56. Ashley's Knots. Exceptional. How can one live without it? Bought mine in the '70s.

Page 59. Chris Waite's, 'Sorry to be a bearer of bad tidings... '. When people have asked me about sprit rigs I reply they're apparently fine on Thames Barges. Sort of echoes my opinion about lateens, 'Good for huge dhows with big crews.'

Page 65. John Harris offered to build Bufflehead kits, but he'd have needed to pin down many topics I left open to choice for the buyer. And the Bufflehead shape is not conducive to stitch and glue, anyway. Wanderlust came later.

Page 76 & 77. Books I wish were here.

And I could go on and on. JF Bedard got his copy of 247 and had wondered why there seemed a sudden increase in interest about CLAM GIRL.

Tropical rain here. Hope your weather is better.

Hugh

From Franke Paske: News of Hard Times being Overcome

Greetings Keith,

This letter is a long time coming, but at last!

I decided to go ashore a couple of years ago as my health was falling off and I couldn't lift myself out of my small punt that I had built so I withdrew from the noble DCA and bought an old van that I put about \$3000 into so my partner and I could go up the lake and have picnics (good times).

Then on Thanksgiving Eve of 2019 lightning struck. I awoke with something bothering my eye. I went to the wash room to check it out and the life began to seep out of my body and my legs turned to rubber as I sank to the floor. Fortunately my partner was home that night and she called the EMTs, when they came they enlightened me that I'd had a stroke.

So it took out the right side of my body. Most felt I would never walk again. Well, I spent three months in the hospital, and 2 and ½ of that time I spent in and out of dream states, which was really wild. Not to belabor the point it's now a year later and I have most of my senses back. I still can't drive but I'm working on it.

All the while I have been away from the DCA I have been receiving your beautiful publication. I really love that magazine; it has shown me more of the European continent than I could have seen by visiting it. I have savored the mariner's life with every issue, but I haven't paid for it. So if you could look through your records and see how many issues it's been and let me know I will be more than happy to send you payment for them. Oh, and remind me how to pay for them across the pond.

Frank Paske #3431, Reno, Nevada, USA

§ You have been paying for it, Frank. I have a confession to make. When you told me you wished to resign from the DCA you had almost a year's sub to run. I said we should discuss it again when it ran out. It is still running and I believe your agreement with PayPal will ensure that it continues to do so. I always knew how much pleasure you got from the DCA and I think I would have taken steps to ensure that you still received the journal anyway. It's great to hear from you again. I always enjoyed our online chin-wags. Long may they continue. Keith

From John Holness: Books Review in DC247

Re: 'Reliable information on traditional boats and ships before photography came of age around 1880 is hard to come by...' Page 76, DC247

— Perhaps Len Wingfield isn't aware of the drawings and paintings by E.W.Cooke (Edward William Cooke, 1811 to 1880). They include a lot of various craft below the size of collier brigs: barges, hatchboats, cobles, watermen's skiffs, etc.

He published a book '50 Plates of Shipping and Craft' which is a good source of information for marine historians. It was reproduced in facsimile some years ago but I didn't think that the standard of reproduction was very good.

Regards

John



(Go here to see Captain Irving Johnson's remarkable film of the Peking in action, 1929:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tuTKhqWZso>)

Dear Raiders,

Yesterday (Monday, September 7th) the four-masted barque PEKING came home to Hamburg harbour.

We sailed to see her from my nearby home harbour in Hamburg-Blankenese, on the River Elbe. We were sailing in the dinghy *Woge*, built in 1922, among the crowded welcoming fleet and took some good pictures. My friend Tommy Löwe published his photos in *Floatmagazin*.

You can see us on the title page of *Hamburger Abendblatt!* The white sails of the little white-hulled sailing dinghy *Woge* can be seen in front of the big PEKING (above).

Manfred Jacob

The PEKING, classed as a 'Flying P-Liner', was built by Blohm & Voss, Steinwerder, Hamburg, and launched in 1911, intended for the Cape Horn nitrate trade and wheat trade. Her maiden voyage was to Valparaiso. She was interned in Chile when World War I broke out and later given to Italy in 1920 as part of war reparations. In 1923 she was sold back to the original owners, the Laeisz brothers, who kept her as a Cape Horner in the nitrate trade until the Panama Canal made her uneconomical.

In 1932 she was retired and sold to Shaftesbury Homes in the UK. She was towed to Greenhithe, renamed *Arethusa II* and kept close to the *Arethusa I*. In 1933 she was moved to a permanent mooring at Upnor on the Medway, and became a children's home & training school. She was requisitioned as HMS PEKIN by the Royal Navy in World War II.

In 1974 she crossed the Atlantic to New York and was again named the PEKING for the South Street Seaport Museum,

On Tuesday September 8th **Manfred Jacob** posted this photograph with the email below it to Wojciech Baginski's 'Raid Pomerania' group, which comprises 38 small boat sailors across northern Europe, including me and the DCA's Baltic Division — of very fond memory. This was a red-letter day for Hamburg: the PEKING returned home.

Manfred and two friends can be seen (*left*) in the small white dinghy with the white sail near the stern of the huge four-master—*Ed*

New York City. After forty years there, plans were drawn up to scrap her, but in 2012 an offer was made to return the ship to Hamburg as a gift, if an endowment could be raised in Germany to ensure that she would be preserved. In November 2015 she was bought by the *Maritim Foundation* for \$100, with the intention of making her part of the German Port Museum / *Deutsches Hafenmuseum* at *Schuppen 52* in Hamburg. €120 million of federal funds were promised.

She spent the winter of 2016/2017 in Caddell dry Dock, Staten Island. On July 19th 2017 she left for Europe once more, on the deck of the heavy-lift ship *Combi Dock III*, arriving at Brunsbüttel on July 30 2017. Many handier vessels have taken a lot longer to cross the Atlantic.

On August 2, 2017, she was transferred to Peters Werft at Wewelsfleth for a thorough three-year refurbishment costing €38 million. Two years were spent in dry dock, and work continued with repainting and re-laying the teak decks after she was refloated on September 7 2018. Exactly two years later she was transferred to the German Port Museum at Hamburg.

(Below)

PEKING lying at Peters Werft, Wewelsfleth, 2019

Sparred length: 377 ft 6 in (115.06 m)

Beam: 45 ft 7 in (13.89 m) **Draft:** 16 ft (4.9 m)

Sail plan: 44,132 sq ft (4,100.0 m²) **Displ.** 3,150 tonnes



From David Chatterley: Standing Lug with Boom

Hello Keith,

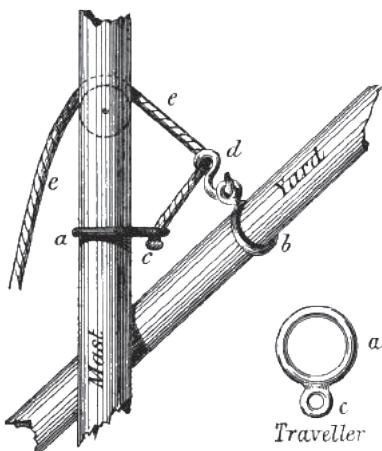
Before he passed away, Cliff Laycock gave me his reprint of the 1895 edition of *Dixon Kemp's Manual of Yacht and Boat Sailing*.

Thumbing through this mighty tome, actually looking for something else, I came across chapter XIV, which begins with a description of a type of centreboard dinghy sailed on the Mersey. This had a standing lug mainsail with boom, and so suffered from the same problem as Steve Parke (*Bulletin* 246), but for which those clever Victorians had come up with an ingeniously simple solution: the end of the halyard, after passing through the sheave in the mast, was knotted to the traveller or parrel loop, as in my own arrangement. The important difference being that the hook used to engage the strop on the yard was threaded loose on the halyard between the sheave and the traveller. Thus, when the sail was raised the hook would slide down the halyard and sit on the traveller, but when the sail was lowered, the slackening of the halyard allowed the yard to be pulled away from the mast and thus lowered to the deck. A further advantage pointed out by the writer was that the yard could still be lowered if the traveller jammed.

Thanks for a great magazine: doubly important in this grim period when we can't meet personally.

David Chatterley 1267

§ ...and here is the numbered drawing from Dixon Kemp, with his own explanatory notes (not as good as David's, but they are connected to the drawing!)—Ed



The mast traveller is arranged as follows:

An eye is welded on the traveller (c/a), the halyard (e) is rove through the sheave hole in the mast, and then through the hook (d) and the eye in the traveller (a). A knot, (c) is then made in the end of the halyard. (b) is an eye strop on the yard. The part of the halyard between (e) and (c) is usually covered with leather.

This arrangement has been adopted to facilitate the lowering of the sail. If the traveller jams, the sail will still lower by the halyard running through the eye of the hook.

From Per Storgaard: The Greenland Paddle

Dear Keith,

Reading the autumn edition of *Dinghy Cruising*, I saw that you were looking for a new paddle for your kayak.

You clearly had a specific paddle in mind, so perhaps this will not interest you very much — all the same, have you ever considered giving a Greenland paddle a try? I hadn't, till the Italian wooden spoon-bladed paddle I had been using since the 1980s needed replacing last year.

Unable to find the same make, I looked around for other wooden paddles and came across the Greenland paddle. I had seen them in use when posted to Nuuk (Greenland) for a while 20 years ago, so I decided to try one, and I really have become a fan.

It's of course just my subjective impression; however, to me it feels as though I maintain much the same speed with less effort, and also, that the blade cuts more silently into the water, which I find very satisfying. I should hasten to add, that I am by no means an expert paddler — I mainly paddle when the sailing season ends in October and carry on a bit into what most people here consider the skiing season, i.e. till ice settles on the fjord. With layers of wool and a dry suit I find little afternoon kayaking excursions a nice way to end the season afloat, but I have never gone on overnight kayaking trips.

I enjoyed your articles about paddling on Bassenthwaite lake; I really have been appreciating the literary references in them, be it when writing about the Lake or about the Kraken — very stimulating!

Anyway, I just wanted to suggest having a look at a Greenland paddle...perhaps as your spare paddle (stows very easily, given its oar-like shape)...and to thank you for a fantastic magazine...journal...a literary panacea for these challenging times.

Had my son take a few photos of the paddle in question yesterday, prior to setting off on a little trip before sunset, just to give you an idea what it looks like.

With kind regards,

Per Storgaard (#3656)

Norway

(...and see next page—Ed)



§ After reading Per's email I found a little more information about this design of paddle, and the entertaining characters who demonstrate them online. Some seem to have escaped from novels written by Jack London!

There is reasonable agreement on how to measure yourself to obtain the right length and dimensions, but enough difference of opinion to keep me interested in trying to pin it all down. I wondered if the back of the blade is differently shaped from the face on any of them, or do they have to be identical.

I like the idea of it creating less fuss through the water for two reasons: the usual broad blades put too much water up aloft, and in an open cockpit like ours you get a soaking and the bilge water builds up over a long trip, requiring baling. Second, I have had to give up feathering blades because of arthritis in my wrist, so a smaller blade being pushed forward through the air on its recovery stroke should reduce drag and so makes sense. (The length of a Greenland blade reminds me of seagoing oars, long with narrow blades.)

Finally, I think the simpler shape will encourage me to experiment by making my own. The usual wooden paddle is an intricate labour of love to get right so you end with a family heirloom if all goes well. But life is short...the Greenland Paddle is less complex and no doubt faster to make.

The Grey Owl paddle I was asking for has to have all the specifications in the Wanted ad, as I already have one like that and Jennifer keeps looking at it... I have ordered one new but we have to wait for a delivery from Canada, expected just before Christmas. Even if I get along all right with a Greenland Paddle, I don't think I'll be giving up the Sirocco for good — it is a thing of beauty!

Then I received this email from Per in reply, and I felt that I should share it:

Dear Keith

Regarding the design of Greenland paddles, there seems to have been a number of different styles, if not actually traditions, in different parts of Greenland. As a landmass completely without a single growing tree, paddle oars were made of pieces of drift wood...I may be wrong, but I seem to remember someone in Nuuk telling me that timber drifted with the currents from Northern Norway and Siberia to be washed up on the east coast of Greenland...on the west coast it would have been from Canada, I suppose.

Probably the eskimos shaped their paddles to make the best use of the particular piece of timber at hand. The paddles I have seen have all been quite slender, and, as you mentioned, not unlike like sea-going oars.

Apparently, though, some early samples found had more of a spoon shape, or so I have been told. The more commonly used Greenland paddle is slightly convex on both sides, much like the shape of a traditional rowing oar, though you do also get racing paddles, where one side is kept flat or even slightly concave. I have never tried those, and apparently they require a certain level of experience and skill, so they are probably not for me anyway. The idea of a curved sculling oar is interesting, I must admit. When sculling my Drascombe Lugger, I have sometimes wished that I could produce a bit more propulsion, especially when wind and currents start

interfering. In the kayak, however, I am very happy with my double convex blade...if you cut into the water with the blade slightly slanted, and let the blade dig fully into the water before you pull with the arm on the submerged side, and push with the other, paddling with a Greenland paddle is remarkably silent and smooth. Since the Greenland paddles tend to be somewhat shorter than traditional spooned paddles, they are generally lighter, and, as I mentioned yesterday, appear to require much less effort.

You might like to have a look at someone demonstrating how to use the Greenland paddle. This Danish fellow demonstrates how to paddle silently, and how to avoid wobbling the blade through the water, keeping the blade at a slight angle to the direction of the pull (frankly, once you have one in your hands, these things come quite naturally). Even if you don't understand his instructions (all in Danish) you may still find it interesting to study his technique:

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=mW_Wiak2QrQ

I think it would be relatively easy to make a Greenland paddle yourself, if you have a good piece of timber without too many knots. This American makes one in just two hours:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk8lsC-rBSU>

On most of the English language websites I have come across they seem quite expensive, around £200, which is almost twice the price of the ones I have seen on Scandinavian language (Danish and Norwegian) websites. You have probably found a few yourself, but I found a UK dealer selling the brand I am currently using, if not the exact model that I use (mine has a slight hump for the thumb to rest on, which these don't seem to have): <https://www.chillcheater.com/>



From Keith Muscott to the RYA: Dinghy Cruising

To Loretta Spridgeon-Connor, RYA Communications Manager, and Michelle Gent, RYA Programmes Manager. October 9th, 2020.

Dear Loretta and Michelle,

I hope all is well with you and the RYA.

I don't receive the RYA magazine now, as the DCA copy is quite rightly sent to our new National Secretary, Brian Chislett. Accordingly, Brian sent me a two-page scan from your Autumn issue, of your 'On The Water' section, which contains details of your 'Dinghy Cruising Trails' initiative.

Obviously, I can't help but be impressed by, and greatly in favour of, the RYA espousing the cause of cruising in open dinghies. I recollect from our last email exchange back in January that there are a staggering 82 small boat clubs affiliated to the RYA which express a preference for cruising over racing. You were kind enough to circulate copies of our journal to some of them when I sent them to you. Neither can I help but endorse your choice of Ullswater and Chichester Harbour as the first prospective venues in your downloadable *Dinghy Cruising Trails*, #*DinghyTrails*. Our DCA area groups visit both frequently. They have been two of our most popular rally venues for a great many years.

As you will know, over the last few years many sailors have been influenced in their dinghy cruising tastes and choices by the long series of videos produced and fronted by our President, Roger Barnes, who has become a familiar face and voice to them, with his regular articles in the yachting press, his personal addresses to associations, including your own Boat Shows, and his onscreen presence on YouTube, etc.

Likewise, our vastly improved website, dinghycruising.org.uk, now has a wealth of helpful material for dinghy cruisers, from technical articles to cruise accounts. We also received a more-than-honourable mention in a sailing bestseller of the past year, too — *The Sea Takes No Prisoners*, by Peter Clutterbuck, who was an award-winning member of the DCA at the age of 16.

You will, I hope, have noticed ongoing improvement in our journal too, which you receive from me as the editor, four times a year. All of these factors, combined to a greater or lesser degree, have resulted in a rise in our membership. A majority of these members, new and old, are also RYA members, and as they are aware of the quality of what we offer they might be mystified, as I am, to find the RYA pushing dinghy cruising with not a word spent on mentioning the DCA. Even a modest advertisement in the RYA magazine to help your readers to find us easily and see what we are offering would be most helpful, as well as being a goodwill gesture: the DCA has been an affiliated RYA member for longer than I remember — and I joined in 1986. Not only that, but no-one is so big that they do not welcome a little appreciative advertising, and your '*Dinghy Cruising Trails*' venture is bound to be reviewed at some point in *Dinghy Cruising*.

Best wishes,

Keith Muscott,

Editor, *Dinghy Cruising*, Dinghy Cruising Association

From Loretta Spridgeon to Keith Muscott: Dinghy Cruising in the RYA

Thanks for getting in touch Keith – always good to hear from you. As you will have gathered from my out-of-office reply, I'm now on annual leave. However I have read your email and am keen to see how we can work together.

To get the ball rolling in my absence, I will reach out to my colleagues Stuart Carruthers (Cruising Manager) and Deborah Cornick (Magazine Editor) to explore what opportunities are available.

I hope you are keeping well, too.

All the best, Loretta (October 10th)

From Keith Muscott to Loretta Spridgeon

Hello Loretta,

Always good to hear from you too. And yes, we are keeping well here in Anglesey, despite being encircled by locked-down areas, Bangor being the most recent in today's news. As a university town it was always vulnerable.

I saw by the automated message when I sent my email that I would probably have to wait until the 19th for your response, so I really appreciate your immediate and reassuring reply, sent during your annual leave — thank you so much for your kind consideration, and especially for opening up the discussion to Stuart and Deborah while you are still away from work.

I intend to respond in kind to your initiative and ask all 15 of our officers, which includes our area organisers, to come up with a few bright ideas which would yield results without causing you all too much trouble. But I might wait until I see what opportunities the RYA senior staff can offer us before pestering you with these.

Incidentally, the present quarterly tranche of new members — now 80 and still rising, a week or so before the Winter journal is wrapped up — includes a number of senior RYA instructors past and present, as well as RYA members. It sort of enhances the feeling that we are all in this together!

Best wishes to you all,
Keith (October 10th)

From Loretta Spridgeon to Keith Muscott & Reply

Hi Keith,

Quick follow-up – I've spoken today with our Cruising Manager and he has some ideas on how we can collaborate further. Stuart will be in touch in due course. Stay safe and I'll look forward to catching up when I'm back from annual leave – travel corridors permitting!

All the best,
Loretta (October 10th)

.....

Hi Loretta.

It sounds very promising, and we look forward to hearing more in due course. Thanks again for taking your time to facilitate this. I look forward to hearing from Stuart. Enjoy the rest of your holiday!

All the best,
Keith (October 10th)

(And there the conversation stopped. I await the publication of the next RYA Magazine with interest—Ed)

From Tom Edom: Canoes and Barbecues

Dear Keith,

At first I didn't take much interest in Hugh Horton's CLAM GIRL (DC 247, p 47). American waters, shallow and warm, boat to suit — of tangential interest.

Then, through a completely random route I came across his name again, through Jamie Clay (boatbuilder) enthusing about his canoe design BUFFLEHEAD. I remembered that name from the Clam Girl article and the connection was made. So I did a search on 'Bufflehead, Hugh Horton'. This led me to a Swiss website for an amateur sailing canoe promoter/builder named Axel Schmid who hosts a section for Hugh Horton's essays here. He is the same Axel who appears in a Frisian report in *Dinghy Cruising*. If you look at the right hand tab on the website, 'Trip Reports' (may be in German) you will find Axel's own account of the Frisian trip.

Anyway, since you are a canoeist of sorts yourself, I thought you might be interested. And since you are the Ed, I thought you might be interested in Hugh Horton's (or Axel Schmid's) word-smithing.

But maybe you knew all that anyway! (*Yep, but worth repeating —Ed*)

Changing the subject, Joe and Joy Murphy, (Wanderer *Dulcie*), Chris Waite (*Polly Wee*) and I (schooner *Lapwing*) had a partly-organised meet-up last Sunday, September 20th, on a high spring tide and an occasionally brisk NE wind. Cobnor to Dell Quay, looking for a beach. Backtrack from Dell Quay to find a beach on the N shore.

Joe's birthday barbecue, prosecco toasts, all with physical distancing and antibacterial wipes. Good company, no particular excitements, except the migration of thousands of sand hoppers and sea lice away from the incoming tide and then back across the wrack line when the tide receded.

But how did they know to go back. Can they gauge the passing of time? Pic attached taken by Joy Murphy. I haven't asked her permission.

Best, Tom



Lapwing and *Polywee* ahead, on Chichester Lake, taken by Joy Murphy



(Below & above) Tom's very special *Lapwing*, ex-*Seadog*: a half-scale replica of a traditional double-ender, the Tancock Whaler of Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia.
A history of these boats appears in a lengthy article in *Dinghy Cruising* 233, Spring 2017.



Great Escapes: Autumn 2020



La belle France

Charente-Maritime, 19-22 August 2020,
Report by David Priestley

Attended:

Miles Dent, *Water Rat*, George Whisstock Cutter
David Priestley, *Valentine IV*, Cornish Coble

In company with friends from the VAP (*Voile-Aviron dans les Pertuis*):

Daniel Macouoin, *Beau-Merle*, Kanoketo-plus
Yves Grossett-Grange, *Chico-Mendes*, Skellig
Vincent Lorilleux & Serge Chollet, *Muddy*, Beetle Cat
JIBI, *Takka*, Goat Island Skiff
Jean-Pierre, *l'Insoumise*, Gazelle des Sable
Les Arlots, *Caredig*, Ness Yole

There I met up with the other VAP crews who had launched on the River Seudre, and Miles who had torn himself away from his umpteenth beer. Other boats were present also – I think around 23 in all – and after a chaotic hour or so whilst people were found moorings, we were treated to a wonderful round of aperitifs, followed by a very generous aperitif-dinatoire, comprising enormous quantities of oysters, mussels, salads, cakes and every colour of wine possible. The local club members worked heroically to look after us all and as an extremely hot day turned into a beautiful warm and dramatic sunset on the beach we all turned in, tired and very sweaty, but feeling thoroughly spoiled and mellow. Several people camped nearby. Miles, JIBI and I accepted the offer of sleeping in the loft of the clubhouse. Big mistake! Almost certainly the most uncomfortable night of our lives! Hey ho...



The Fleet moored at Bourcefranc le Chapus

FOllowing the sad but inevitable and correct decision by Miles to cancel plans for another Charente-Maritime rally due to the Covid crisis, this mini-rally was centred around an annual social event run by another sailing club (Les Lasses Marennaises) on the evening of Wednesday 19 August. Miles is a member but it was my first time there. Les Lasses Marennaises are a group of people known more for their passion for building and renovating small boats than for sailing.

Miles launched at his home of St Savinien on the River Charente – his separate report of his launch and return is appended. Niky was sadly unable to come, so on Wednesday 19th I launched solo from La Rochelle, roughly at the same time as Vincent and Serge from the VAP base of Port Neuf (opposite the marina at Minimes), around 07.30, just as daylight appeared. The first two hours were fine, despite persistent rain, but then the wind – forecast to be strong enough to counter the ebbing spring tide – died and both boats really struggled to make way. Visibility was poor and I lost sight of *Muddy*.

I motor-sailed the last couple of miles up to and around the Ile d'Aix, having taken 5 hours (it would normally take me 2 and a half hours or so). I was hove-to south of Ile d'Aix for lunch and at rest when Miles telephoned to say he was sitting in a bar in the port of Boyardville on Ile d'Oleron, with Millie his grand-daughter and Jerome his son-in-law! I didn't know whether to swear in English or French – I think I did both, but by then I was tired and so carried on down the coast, past Fouras and l'Ile Madame, where yet again the wind died, to arrive at the impressive clubhouse of the Lasses Marennaises base at Bourcefranc le Chapus by 17.30. I sailed about 23 miles.

The following morning, 20 August, after a breakfast kindly offered by the club, Miles and I set off, followed by the VAP boats, through a spectacular sunrise, round the gorgeous bay and past the pretty little port of le Chapus, with the small but handsome Fort Louvois, a 17th century fort, named after Louis XIV's war minister and designed by the prolific Vauban. Then under the road bridge to Ile d'Oleron and south around all the oyster beds and tricky rock formations towards the Marennes road bridge and the River Seudre. This was proper sailing!

The weather was gorgeous and the wind stayed on the beam all the way down. Miles and I waited for the

Aperitifs Dinatoires with les Lasses Marennaise

VAP boats to arrive, then we all anchored for coffee, lunch and a long rest waiting for the tide to turn to help us up the River Seudre. Suitably fed, watered and rested, we all set off for the bridge and the run up the Seudre. Just before the bridge the wind died again. I was totally becalmed, though others seemed to find some breeze.

I eventually got moving again and entered the river. The wind stayed fluky all the way, so it was hard work tacking up and down the flow – and some motoring. Eventually we made the entrance to the little creek – the Chenal de Pelard – which leads up to the beautifully and appropriately named Port Paradis. As soon as we entered the creek we found a favourable breeze and were able to sail slowly up in convoy.

This creek is a really gorgeous place to sail. Just as I remembered it from two years ago, the quiet, the variety of bird life just metres away, such a contrast from the huge marina at Minimes where I normally launch. Miles knows these waters really well; his good friend Jean-Luc owns a splendid cabane at the head of the creek where he was to kindly host us all for the overnight stay, just as he did two years ago on the DCA rally organised by Miles.



Once we were all moored up and tents erected, we were (again) hot and sweaty but coped by having a pleasant aperitif sitting outside the cabane, followed, after rain arrived, by a convivial supper inside. It was Jean-Pierre's birthday so lots of glasses clinked and a hearty (rather than tuneful) rendition of 'Joyeux Anniversaire' rounded the evening off nicely before people turned in for the night. 16/17 miles had been sailed.

The next morning, 21 August, we breakfasted in the cabane. It was my birthday so another – even less tuneful – rendition of 'Joyeux Anniversaire' mixed with a sort of 'Happy Birthday' punctuated this early part of our day. Then – with a truly wonderful sunrise behind – we set off one by one for the return sail down to the River Seudre. Miles set off a while before the rest, because – as his separate report will show – he had a very long day ahead of him to get back home. And, dear readers, it is at this point that I should alert you to the following few lines which, as you will see, shows something of the best and yet something of the worst of me! Why don't I just tell you what happened...

I was the first of the remaining boats to cast off from Jean-Luc's cabane for the run back down the creek. I set off slowly under motor... and instead of turning sharp left to go down the creek I carried straight on, into what turned out to be little more than a ditch! By then of course I was round a bend and out of sight of the others. I was also stuck fast on a sandbank. No amount of pushing, pulling or cursing could shift us off the bottom. I gave up and sat down and apologised to my boat for my stupidity. After a mercifully short while a nice man in a van came past and offered to go back to the cabane and ask Jean-Luc to tow me off with his 4x4. Duly done, with Jean-Luc barely able to conceal his hilarity, though sufficiently capable to be able to take photos of me paddling *Valentine IV* back to deeper water!

Suitable chastened I was then able to sail most of



The fleet tied up at Port Paradis

the way down the creek. I could see the sails of the others way ahead of me as they rounded the numerous bends and so I had plenty of time to reflect and to try to work out just how I could have been so stupid. Got nowhere with that so once back into the River Seudre I had another really hard beat back up to the Marennes bridge, with Vincent and Serge just visible far ahead of me. Most of the other VAP friends took their boats out of the water at a little fishing slip opposite the entrance to the Chanel de Pelard so only *Muddy* and *Valentine IV* were heading back up the coast towards la Rochelle.

Once through the bridge we had the wind on our beam and we flew around the oyster beds and north towards the Oleron bridge. I overtook Vincent and Serge and left them quickly a long way behind (interesting how very differently our boats behave at various points of wind). Once under the bridge I weaved my way between the many oyster and mussel beds then back up the coast, with the wind increasing steadily, to the entrance of the channel to Fouras Sud where I was going to spend the night. I never saw *Muddy* again that day – they had decided to keep going all the way back to la Rochelle.

And so to my second piece of bad decision-making: I had several hours to kill before being able to get into the port so, instead of carrying on over to Ile d'Aix to pick up a mooring, or anchoring in the bay, I hove-to for lunch and a long rest. Before I knew it I was being swept by the incoming tide past the port entrance and onto the huge sand bank that Miles warned us about two years ago but I had forgotten his advice. Suitably stuck, I tried to row away from it but the wind and tide were too strong and I contented myself with making sure I drifted away from the wooden pilings of the fishing 'carelets' and onto a mooring buoy. As I was tying up a couple of guys from the port office turned up on the beach, having witnessed my comedy act, and said they would return with a RIB and tow me in. As I arrived in the port under tow, several of the guys from the Cercle Nautique de Fouras, the local club who had made us so incredibly welcome two years ago, were there to greet me. Just as with Jean-Luc at the start of my day, they could scarcely conceal their laughter, but gave me a couple of welcome beers to cool down and I spent a very pleasant afternoon with them all. I was glad that I'd decided to break the journey home. The wind had continued to strengthen and I later heard of several boats needing help that afternoon north of Ile d'Aix. They generously gave me the keys to their clubhouse to shower and spend the night. Around 26 miles had been sailed that day.

As I relaxed with them the man from the port office came over and warned me about the forecast for the next day – a F4/5 south of Ile d'Aix but a F5/6 beyond with gusts of 24/25 knots and a 3-metre swell. I decided not to go out but to take a train or bus back to fetch my car and trailer. A wonderful couple from the CNF offered to drive me to la Rochelle so the next morning they duly came to take me back there – such kindness, again! I spent a lazy day at Minimes before driving back to Fouras to bring the boat home.

So, there you have it; a deliciously mixed day for me. Crass stupidity to start and end the day, but faultless navigation and sailing in between! Make of it what you will; I've been trying to work it out since but with no success. I can only hazard that it was my birthday and I was subjected by some sort of temporary insanity linked to a sudden subconscious reminder of my advancing years and mortality. Otherwise a really enjoyable few days; not always easy sailing but lots to learn as ever.*DP*

From Miles Dent:

My 18 year-old trailer has been showing its age recently and is in need of a major overhaul, so I borrowed a trailer from a friend and transferred *The Water Rat* to it. It's a 4-wheel braked trailer that's much bigger than I need. I took it to the local garage to check the tyre pressures and found one of the wheels too hot to touch – it seems the brake was locked on. The mechanic at the garage looked at it and said, 'Don't go far with this trailer!' Pointing out one or two other defects at the same time.

Unfortunately this all coincided with the planned VAP cruise. With the limited amount of sailing that we have managed this year I didn't want to miss this. The only solution was to launch *The Water Rat* in St. Savinien just 'down the road' from my house and motor down the River Charente to the sea – about 26 Nm!

HW on Wednesday 19th August was at 0600 at the coast but two hours later at St. Savinien. I had launched and prepared the boat the night before with the mast lowered in crutches, so we were able to go through the St. Savinien lock as soon as it opened at 0800. My 14 year-old granddaughter Millie, my son-in-law Jérôme and I prepared ourselves for the long, tedious slog down the river which was made worse by the grey, rainy morning.

As the current increased, the GPS showed up to 9 knots and by 1100 we had reached Rochefort. After the last of the low bridges we were able to raise the mast and, soon after, the sails. With a breeze from the SW we motor-sailed past Fort Lupin and Port des Barques and eventually, as it stopped raining and the sky cleared, we were able to cut the motor what a relief! With a good SW wind we sailed past the starboard-hand buoys of Mouclière, Fontenelles and Sablière and on towards the Ile d'Aix.

Jérôme has to have an ice cream every day when he is on holiday so we went into Boyardville on the Ile d'Oléron at about 1500 and found the best 'artisanal' ice creams in town. Then back out again past the green buoy La Perrotine and close-hauled S towards Julian and Chantier Rabeau – the HQ of Les Lasses Marenaises. About 44Nm for the day – but only 18 sailed. Here we met David and the other five VAP boats which had arrived from a variety of starting points. My wife and daughter arrived by car and we had a super evening with dinner spread out on long tables on the beach. While my crew left for home and comfortable beds I spent a hot, uncomfortable night in the Chantier Rabeau sail loft!

The next morning, after a generous breakfast provided by 'Les Lasses', David and I set off against a S/SW breeze

tacking S through the Ile d'Oléron bridge. We were the first away so I spent an hour or two tacking backwards and forwards waiting for the other five boats to catch up. The plan was to beach somewhere for lunch but in the end we anchored in the middle of the Coureau d'Oléron for lunch and a rest and to wait for the tide to turn and help us up the Seudre. After a gentle afternoon's sailing we arrived at Jean-Luc's cabane at Port Paradis. There was a huge spring tide so the chenal was full and overflowing out onto the marshes. The paths and even the pontoons were under water and the cabane almost flooded. 16Nm for the day – all sailed.

The next day, Friday 21st., I had to try to get back to St. Savinien, a distance of over 50Nm so an early start. HW at the coast was at 0715 but at Port Paradis the tide was still rising when I left at 0800. The tide was so high I had to remove my trousers to get to the boat. There was virtually no wind so I set off under motor. It took me just over an hour to get to the Marennes/La Tremblade bridge and at that moment the SW wind started up again. Cutting the motor I sailed straight across the Banc Bourgeois and its oyster beds (something I don't usually do, but had been told by some of 'Les Lasses' that it was OK for small boats until half tide). Then through the Ile d'Oléron bridge as the wind strengthened to a good force 4 with quite a swell coming in from the sea. I thought about reefing and probably should have done, but carried on towards the Ile d'Aix. When the moment came to gybe, to alter course towards the Charente, I planned it carefully and managed it without mishap – though it wasn't the most elegant of manoeuvres! I got to Port des Barques at 1300 – 17Nm sailed in less than four hours. LW was at 1320 but the tide would continue to race out for another 90 minutes or so. I started the motor and motor-sailed against the continuing ebb past Fort Lupin.

In a straight section, with no moored boats, I set the helm impeder and lowered the mainsail, detached the boom and gaff from the mast and made all tidy. The staysail was still pulling until the river turned south when it was rolled up and the mast lowered just before Soubise. Then the long slog through Rochefort and Tonnay-Charente all the way to St. Savinien. I arrived at the lock at 1745, just 15 minutes before the lock keeper goes off duty. He let me through and I moored on the public pontoon in St. Savinien and walked home.

51Nm in 10 hoursPhew !!

A note about outboard motors

I know there are many DCA members (and some VAP members) who frown on the infernal combustion engine in sail and oar boats but many, possibly most of us, have to fit our sailing in between other commitments such as work and family. We have deadlines to meet at the end of a daysail or a cruise – my motor sometimes helps me to do that. Many of the slipways in our area are only useable for an hour or two either side of HW. If you 'miss your tide' (enough water on the slipway) you are stuck for another 8 hours or so when it will probably be the middle of the night.

I find I use the motor less and less these days but would not be without it. In an emergency or a sudden weather change it would enable me to get to a place of safety much more quickly than sails or oars.

On this 3-day cruise I motored further than I sailed but if I had had a serviceable trailer I would have taken the boat by car to the coast and back and probably not used the motor at all. Which causes more pollution – my car towing a heavy trailer or my 3.5hp motor ?

Photograph below: The Water Rat leaving Port Paradis — a huge spring tide is flooding the surrounding marshes.





Approaching the northwest coast of Puffin Island

AFTER MOVING TO LLANFAIRFECHAN two years ago I have ventured out into Conwy Bay a number of times with my Drascombe Dabber #342 *Marjorie* but, apart from a very successful Menai Straits DCA Rally last year, I have not had her on the water for more than an hour or so at a time. When the local sailing club set the date of 23rd August for an informal sail around Puffin Island, a 10-mile round trip sea passage, the opportunity had arisen to test her and I in more challenging conditions.

The Dabber is a relatively new boat to me and I am still in the process of getting to know her and setting her up in the way I would like. She was purchased back in 2017 as a replacement for the 1958 Tideway I had been sailing out of Saltfleet Haven in Lincolnshire and on the Norfolk Broads. For our impending move to North Wales I felt I needed something drier in a seaway, with less maintenance, more robust for beaching on shingle and with more space for camping. The Dabber seemed to fit the bill.

I have made a number of modifications so far, including extending and beefing up the pintles so the rudder can be raised without falling off when beaching. This has been tested on several occasions and has proved successful. The rudder is partially effective when in the up position so it works to get the boat away from shallow water, then is easily dropped to its down position with the release of the uphaul line, falling under its own weight to its correct position.

With a lifetime of sailing Norfolk River Cruisers I am used to having an easily raised and lowered mast. For low bridges and quick rigging and derigging I have made a hinge in *Marjorie's* mast which works in the

Wales 

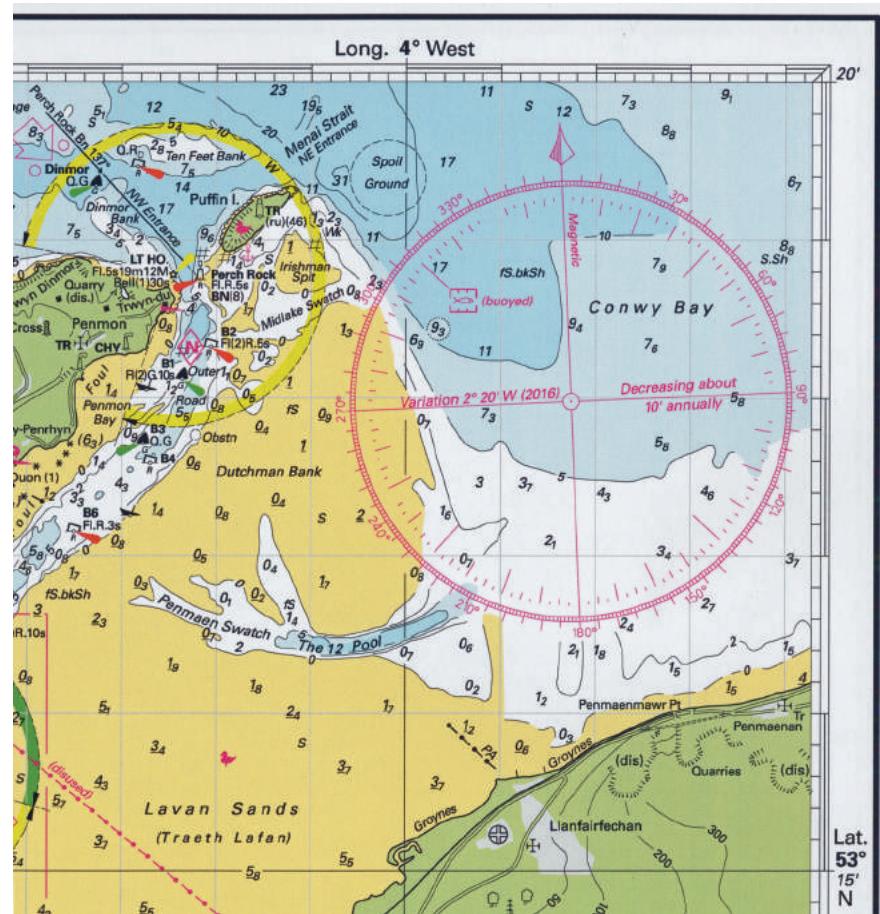
Dabber Around Puffin Island by Nick Vowles

same way as a tabernacle with the mast lowered and raised using a tackle on the forestay. The mast is still stepped on the keel so no modifications were required to the hull. My first few outings in relatively light winds showed no problems with the set up, but what I needed were some strong winds and bigger seas to really see if it would hold up.

During the Menai Strait Rally last year I found I sailed *Marjorie* more like a keel boat than a dinghy. For me, no hiking out over the rail meant no need for a tiller extension. In fact the tiller extension so annoyed me that I lashed it in the straight out position, effectively making the tiller 50cm longer which I found very comfortable. I laminated a new one from ash with a curve in its length so it would clear an outboard motor if I was carrying one. I was a bit unsure to begin with after several Dabber owners extolled the virtues of having a tiller extension on their boats, so was pleasantly surprised on my first

From Llanfairfechan to Puffin Island

© Imray, from Chart 2700.4





Heading into confused seas after rounding Puffin Island

few trips about how satisfactory the longer extensionless version worked. It was yet to be tested in a blow, though.

So back to the sailing. The weather was forecast to be F4-6 WSW, increasing as the afternoon progressed, with low cloud, intermittent rain and a temperature of 12°C. Suffice to say the algorithms which generate the XC weather forecast were not selling me the prospect of being at sea for a few hours. A trip down to the front to ‘have a look’ led to peer support (pressure?). The knowledge there would be a power boat following the cruise persuaded me to give it a go. If I didn’t like it out there then I would return to the slip with hopefully no harm done. If something went wrong, we all had VHF and could hopefully save the lifeboat a trip out by utilising our friendly powerboating escort for a tow.

I set off with only a reefed main up, which proved to be plenty of sail for the outward passage to Puffin. The sea was lively but *Marjorie* and I were still within our comfort zones. We were sailing on a reach with just a little spray coming aboard, no need to spill wind and time to look about at the beautiful Welsh scenery. We closed the Anglesey coast in preparation to pass between Trywn Du lighthouse and Perch Rock, which marks the safe passage between Anglesey and the southwestern tip of a reef protruding out from Puffin.

Marjorie showing more of her bottom than she ought as a gust hits. All off-boat photographs by Sam Beaumont of Wild Valley Productions

The land mass of Anglesey sheltered us from the breeze and I now felt a bit undercanvassed. A sudden realisation that there may be some tide against us through the sound brought a sharp look at the watch. The current turns to flow south, which would have been against us, 45 minutes before local high water. It was half an hour before high. A brief vision of sitting stationary in the middle of the Sound with several score holiday makers wondering why I wasn’t moving, looking on from the Anglesey shore, was not realised as we continued to making headway at an estimated 2 knots towards and then through the Sound.

I had been warned about ‘dangerous standing waves’ on the north side of the sound which, if I noticed ‘in time’ I should avoid by turning around. I couldn’t see anything which struck me as ‘dangerous’ so I made the decision to press on. I did not encounter the aforementioned standing waves but I did note the considerable increase in wave height on this side of Penmon Point, and, no longer under the shelter of the Anglesey coast, the wind returned.

I now encountered another dilemma. The north coast of Puffin Island runs South West to North East. To set a course parallel to this would mean the increasingly large waves would be hitting my stern quarter whilst we were sailing on an almost dead run, putting us at an increased risk of broaching. Do I risk it to make the shorter passage, or do I carry on north into the waves and wind until I can turn so the waves are dead astern and I can clear the end of Puffin? Another vision struck me, this time of *Marjorie* being smashed against the iron bound coast of Puffin with the razorbills and gulls laughing at me trying to call for help on my VHF while scrambling onto a guano-covered ledge. This made up my mind to plug on into the wind and waves.

We held our course for what seemed like an age before bearing away so the waves were dead astern. Two things became clear, very quickly. The first was that we were now going a lot faster, with *Marjorie* flying down the face of the waves and requiring quite hard and quick rudder





Heading back after rounding the island, the Great Orme in the distance

movements to keep her straight. The second was that we had not gone far enough and to carry on that course would have meant certain death and my previous vision coming true (well, maybe). I waited for another wave to pass under us then headed back up to a close reach.

I was patient enough so that the next time I bore away I could see our course was well clear of the island. I started to relax and enjoy the excitement of the ride. I think this was the first time I marvelled at how well *Marjorie* was handling the seas and I am sure I contributed to the screams and cries of the sea birds as *Marjorie* took off down the face of some of the larger waves. With pilotage done I knew I had to just hold our course and keep the boat upright. Controlling *Marjorie* became more akin to sailing a smaller planing dinghy with the tiller requiring more vigorous movements and my weight seeming to have far more influence on the balance of the boat than usual. At no point though was I fearful of broaching. The waves were regular and long enough, and travelling fast enough that we didn't nose dive into the ones in front, and we kept up enough speed so that I always felt in control.

My friendly local sailor had also informed me there is a reef on the East side of Puffin which can throw up

some nasty confused seas in strong winds and that it is best to continue east a while before heading South back to Llanfairfechan. This presented yet another dilemma. With the wind freshening and from the southwest, the more east we went, the more beating we would need to do into a worsening sea state. I was already

feeling a little fatigued and the thought of holding on to *Marjorie* and on to my concentration while fighting against wind and waves for longer than I needed, brought a further vision of disaster, rescue and lots of head shaking and shame. The counter vision was of a short period of vigorous bobbing up and down while traversing the reef. As you can probably guess I took the more direct route over the reef.

It didn't look much as I approached it. There didn't seem to be much difference between the appearance of the sea in front of us compared to the sea around and behind so I assumed the conditions were not bad enough to create the treacherous seas I had been warned about. However I had underestimated the size of the reef and the effect on the seas. The waves were steepening and increasing in height. *Marjorie* and I were still coping and sailing on a fine reach directly towards Llanfairfechan. I wedged myself into the boat with one foot on the corner of the centreboard case and one on the opposite side bench. The occasional wave would crash onto *Marjorie*'s hull, throwing spray half way up the sail. These were only a few though and although I could see some water in the bilges, I was not currently concerned about the volume.

With gritted teeth and many tensed muscles I

On the home straight with the Sailing Club in the distance, but too far up to windward





Beating back to the slipway

confidently held our course. We were still sailing in the direction we wanted to go, making progress and not taking on too much water so I felt relatively safe. It was then that the power boat supporting the cruise made its first appearance. Keeping a good distance they shouted and signalled over. 'Are you OK?'

'I think so,' I shouted back, 'It's a bit wavy!'

The helm of the power boat nodded and sped off.

The wave pattern started becoming more regular as we sailed out of the reef, with a relatively flat section of sea followed by two or three steeper, occasionally breaking waves. The wind was strong enough for us to head up into these waves, bearing away down their backs. This process, when timed corrected, massively reduced the impact the wave had on our course and dryness. Badly timed, the waves would smash against the hull sending spray up and over the boat, knocking us off the wind and down to leeward.

The wind seemed to be increasing further, and although the waves started reducing in size as I closed the Welsh mainland coast, their tops were breaking and I was having to regularly spill wind from the reefed main as the gusts overpowered us and threatened to dip the leeward gunnel.

As the slipway came into sight I noticed we were to leeward of it. The leeway created by the wave action and *Marjorie* heeling had been more than I had accounted for and we needed to make our way upwind. I hardened up us much as I could but saw I would still not make the slipway. OK, I thought, tack sooner rather than later. But tacking did not happen. Thwarted by the wind, waves, and my tiredness. I made two attempts before making the decision to gybe round instead. We needed to get on the other tack. The boomless reefed main gybed without incident and I headed back up onto the other tack. We were making slow progress up wind but also slightly away from the shoreline. It felt very counter-intuitive to be sailing away from the shore after such a passage and it was my first real experience of wind and sea state compromising the ability of a boat to sail to windward. I thought I had gone far enough and attempted to tack again, just once this time before gybing round.

Back on the shorebound tack after a minute or so I could see I had not gone far enough and initiated another gybe round onto the other tack, again taking me upwind but away from the shore. For the first time

in the cruise the VHF sparked up. It was shore support asking the power boat if they wanted to come off the water before me. I think they thought I was just having a play rather than desperately trying to gain room to windward. I radioed in my intentions and they replied with 'Right you are, stay safe!'

The next time we gybed round I could see we had plenty of room to get to the slip. As we got closer to the shoreline the waves dissipated and the shelter of the shoreline reduced the windspeed. A few metres from the slip I detached the mainsail from the sheet and let fly, raised the centreboard and rudder, and drifted into the arms of four waiting fellow sailors to big smiles and cheers!

So the mast didn't snap and the tiller worked really well. I learned a shed load of things about the boat, myself and sailing in marginal conditions. I have since installed a downhaul tackle to increase luff tension to hopefully improve windward performance and will get another row of reef points put in the main over the winter.

Many thanks to Sam Beaumont from Wild Valley Productions, who took most of the beautiful pictures of *Marjorie* and I sailing, and to all at Llanfairfechan Sailing Club who helped organise and support the cruise. Apparently the round-Puffin Cruise used to be an annual event and is planned again for 2021 (global catastrophes permitting). Feel free to contact me if you would like to join us. NV

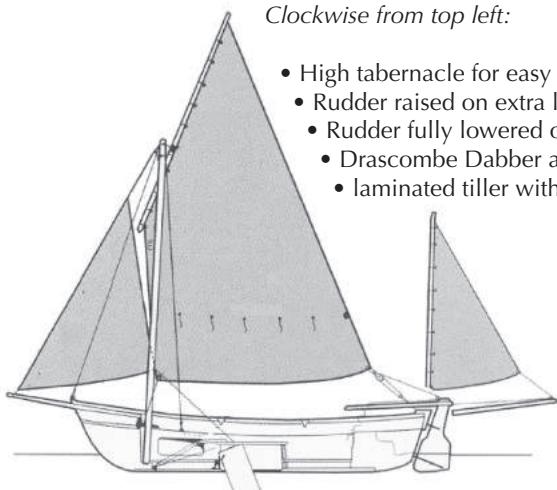


Nick's high tabernacle, or mast hinge, which he has fitted to make stepping and lowering the mast easier — an idea picked up from sailing Norfolk river cruisers. More ideas on the next page, as described in Nick's text



Clockwise from top left:

- High tabernacle for easy raising/lowering
- Rudder raised on extra long pintles
- Rudder fully lowered on long pintles
- Drascombe Dabber as supplied
- laminated tiller without an extension



Retirement Cruise, Conwy River by Colin Holt

Sunday, Monday, Tuesday,
19-21 July, 2020
Colin & Sue Holt, Cornish Cormorant *Frances*

WHEN I RETIRED IN MID-JULY, Sue asked what I fancied doing to celebrate. 'A cruise would be nice,' I suggested. Her eyes lit up as she imagined relaxing on deck...fine dining with the captain...shops...entertainment... and time to relax and watch the world go by. Well, that wasn't quite what I had in mind but I promised that we would make time to relax and watch the world go by.

So, we packed the car with all our cruising gear and towed our Cornish Cormorant *Frances* just over the three miles to our local slipway on the Conwy River. I must say it was a struggle to fit everything in the car for this three-day 'luxury' cruise...fine dining....cocktails...sun lounger and of course the entertainment!

OK, so this is not an account of daring passage making, high seas and of seamanship but a few lazy days enjoying the simplicity of life aboard a 12-foot dinghy in beautiful surroundings.

The relaxed and unrushed approach certainly kicked in from the start as we took an age trying to stow all the additional luxury items and victuals required for the three-day trip. Unfortunately, this caused us to miss the tide and our chance to get out in Conwy Bay!

The fresh northerly breeze was kicking up quite a chop against the strengthening ebb, the sky was dark and it was starting to rain as we eventually left the slip. Not quite what we had in mind, in fact I have to say it was pretty unpleasant for July. I reminded Sue as the sky darkened and we took an occasional wave over the bow that the weather was forecast to improve.

Strong northerly wind against tide conditions are not much fun in Conwy, so with the aim of relaxing and watching the world go by, we dropped sail and scraped under the bridges to find some

(Right) access to the river downstream of the bridges. The launch slip can be seen. The old bridge is slightly above and to the left of the 'new' one. Colin can be seen relaxing during this cruise on page 16 in DC247...



shelter. We picked up a vacant mooring tucked under the old quay south of the bridges. Nicely sheltered, we peeled off our oilskins, washed down the salty cockpit and partially set up the tent as a wind break...oh and put the kettle on.

The weather did start to improve and by late afternoon the sun appeared and made life aboard much more pleasant. We relaxed, brewed tea and watched the world go by: swans, cygnets, egrets, oyster catchers, cormorants, herons and many more that we didn't recognise. I also caught up on a couple of DCA journals; now this really was starting to feel like retirement!

A fine dining experience was prepared and washed down with supermarket finest ale while the wind dropped and the fluffy white clouds were reflected in the now glassy water. A heron fished for his supper on the nearby sandbank and the swans took an evening cruise up river; a perfect end to the day.

After a quiet night afloat, a leisurely breakfast and lots of cups of tea, we prepared *Frances* to sail up river. It was cool and grey again and the stiff northerly had returned. We tucked in a reef as we were in no hurry and set sail an hour before local high water. With wind and tide in harmony we were making very good progress. We made use of high tide by sailing over the banks to take some



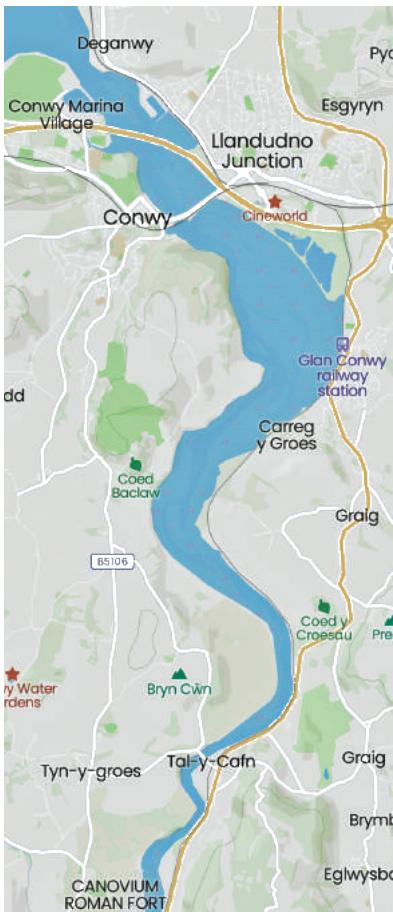
photos of Llansanffraid Glan Conwy, where we live. In fact, we could see our house on the hillside for most of the time we were afloat!

As we meandered up the winding river, the views of Snowdonia opened up and provided a beautiful back drop. Before we knew it, we were slipping under the overhead cables just before reaching Tal Y Cafn Road Bridge. Unfortunately, this was to be the limit of our navigation as we cannot easily lower our mast afloat. We reminisced about the Ferry Hotel where Sue once worked and where we used to go in our tender for afternoon teas and the odd pint in their riverside garden. Sadly, it is now a small upmarket riverside housing development!

The tide had turned and we began the beat back, still reefed. It was very pleasant sailing and we made good progress with only an occasional wetting. The heavily laden Cormorant with low freeboard can be a very wet boat at sea and in wind over tide conditions, but her ample decks keep most of it out of the bilges. In fresher conditions it becomes necessary to sit up on the side decks and the factory-fitted toe strap reminds you that she truly is a dinghy.

The weather improved as the day wore on, although the breeze remained fairly fresh. We were back at the bridges in no time and decided to overnight in the same place as it was still blustery and choppy in the estuary.

With the cockpit washed down and tent partially set, we settled down to another relaxing evening afloat. A mix of fresh and tinned ingredients was leisurely transformed into another fine dining experience. Again, washed down with some other supermarket's finest ales. Once again the sun obliged, the winds eased and the water became glassy. The wildlife carried on around us and we just sat and relaxed some more.... this really is a retirement cruise!



The hardest part of the evening routine is the transition from day to night with two on board. With both floorboards raised to create a good size sleeping platform there is nowhere else to go! It is also necessary to store a fair bit of kit under the bed which of course becomes inaccessible. Routine helps but it really needs thinking through and takes a lot longer than you would think.



The alarm woke us on Tuesday morning after another quiet and comfortable night afloat. We had a cuppa and readied *Frances* to sail. We returned under the bridges at half tide and tied up to a pontoon under Bodlondeb to have a leisurely brunch afloat. Several inquisitive people came out to us for a chat and asked, 'Are you sleeping onboard?' The DCA burgee fluttered in the breeze!

With plenty of water now in the estuary, we were able to use the eddies to our advantage and clear 'the narrows' into Conwy Bay. We enjoyed the best sailing of the weekend in the cool northerly breeze, tacking up the 'North Deep' towards the end of the Great Orme and back under full sail and calmer seas.

With *Frances* back on her trailer by late afternoon, we reflected over a final cuppa on what had been a very enjoyable and relaxing few days in our own back yard. The fact that we didn't set foot ashore for the duration of our cruise is testament to how comfortable life aboard a 12-foot dinghy really can be.

Perhaps an 'alternative' retirement cruise? However, sometimes all we need are the simple pleasures in life, time to relax and watch the world go by....I know which type of cruising I prefer! CH

(Top) Approaching Tal y Cafn Bridge, end of navigation for dinghies with raised masts. But not kayaks...

(Left) Map of the River Conwy from mouth to Tal y Cafn
(Below) Panorama of the River from the estuary (on the right), past the Castle and bridges and on to Llansanffraid Glan Conwy, which overlooks the wide pool in the river

Sailing on the Ardudwy Coast

by Dave Burnall

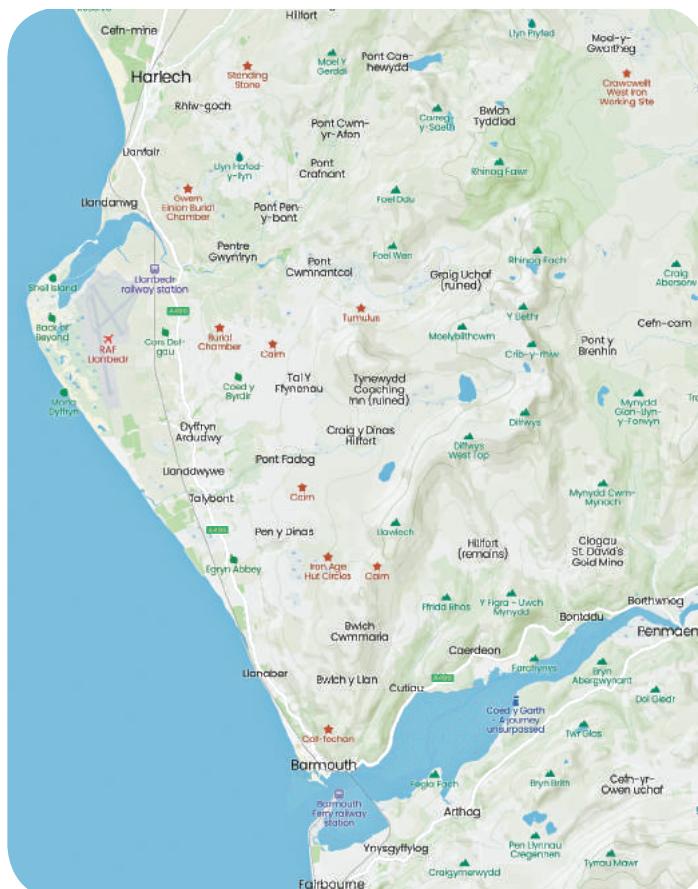
TOWARDS MID-SEPTEMBER THE TIDES were nicely positioned for morning and evening, so with a good forecast of Northerly 3 to 4 going round to sou-sou-west in the afternoon I decided on a trip to Barmouth and back, from Pensarn, Harlech.

There is always a certain thrill getting to the boat on its mooring as dawn breaks, especially on the river, where it was very still. As the tide was ebbing I allowed the boat to drift quietly downstream with the occasional oar stroke so as not to disturb the peace.

Out in the bay there was a nice gentle breeze from the north, and Harlech Castle was back lit by the rising sun. I pointed the boat about 500m offshore from Ynys Mochras point (Shell Island) to avoid the shallows there and settled down to coffee and my usual muesli breakfast.

Sailing around the point I kept offshore for about half a mile and then headed closer in to take the inner passage of Sarn Padrig (St. Patrick's Causeway). Sarn Padrig dries at low water springs and goes some 15 miles out towards Ynys Enlli (Bardsey Island) and has a very soulful bell buoy on the end of it.

Barmouth & north to Harlech. (Right) Harlech Castle at dawn



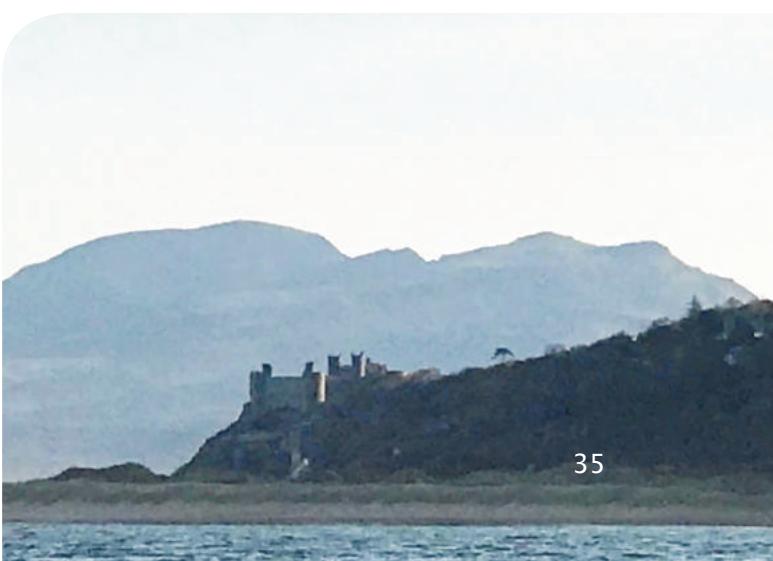
I was making fair progress now with the following breeze on a calm sea. However I could see patches of calm further ahead and thought the wind might be changing early, but sailing down past the sand dunes had been a delight in the early morning light and I was happy.

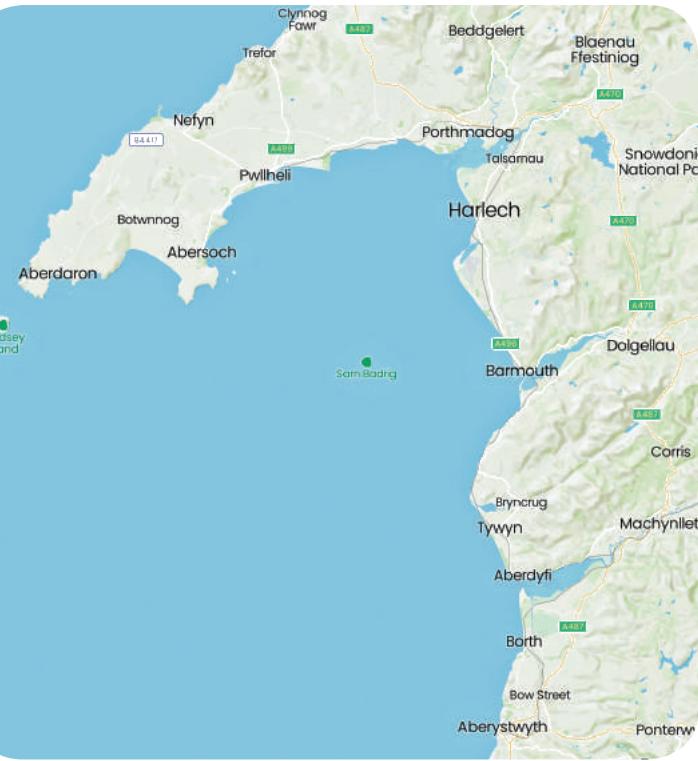
About level with Talybont, where the Afon Ysgethin forces its way through the dunes, my progress slowed to almost nothing and for an hour or so I tried to use what wind there was to make distance, and eventually decided that at low water I would turn homeward with the flood; which I did.

But as is the nature of these things, instead of the wind coming back from the south it came from the north, so a beat back up the coast ensued, but with only a F2 to 3 it was very pleasant.

Quite often on this coast I can see the bottom at about 10 to 20 ft but not today because of the strong winds we had been having, which had stirred up all the silt and the rivers had brought lots of sediment down following the heavy rains.

Safely through the inner passage and over the Mochras shoal the wind picked up a bit, and as I was in no rush (I needed to give my wife Chris some peace at home!) I sailed off into the bay formed by Pen Llyn, from Abersoch, past Pwllheli and Porthmadog to Pensarn, all





sheltered by Sarn Padrig. This area is part of Cantre'r Gwaelod, 'the lost land' of the Mabinogion tales.

The whole of this area is full of history, with burial chambers, hill forts, Welsh and Norman Castles, Drovers' roads, old coach roads over the hills, slate and manganese mining and much shipbuilding around Barmouth and Porthmadog. Plus, of course, the gold mines beside the Mawddach.

Awakening from my daydreams I headed into the narrow Artro entrance, with the wind and tide in my favour, but once inside the wind died and I took to the oars again, peacefully back up to the mooring near the head of navigation.

A really great day in a beautiful area, which I am so lucky to live in. **DB**

My Boat:

A Devon Yawl hull, bought cheaply as it had a rather large 4ft hole on the water line. All the fittings were there, but no mizzen.

(Left) Bardsey, Porthmadog, Harlech and Aberystwyth. L-R

Patched up, with a mizzen fashioned from a Laser sail and a windsurfer carbon mast, which I put well aft, so I added a bumpkin.

I added a sleeping platform under the foredeck and some storage space under the thwart, plus a lazarette in the stern.

Reefing points were sewn into the main, for jiffy reefing, rather than roller reefing.

There are still things to do, but it is very nice to sail, and very steady for an old man!

I also have a canoe, rigged to sail with outriggers, which is great for car topping and sailing on the Menai Straits or Cleddau rivers of Pembrokeshire.



Moored below Criccieth Castle

Places to launch:

Pensarn, -3.00 Dover, where there is a slip belonging to the Llanbedr and Pensarn Yacht club, a small friendly family club, or a bigger slip at **Ynys Mochras campsite**. You can sail inside the lagoon here for about 2 hours either side of HW, or row /paddle for longer.

Porthmadog, -3.00 Dover. Has a good public slip — see the Harbourmaster—or there is a friendly dinghy sailing club down past all the boat yards.

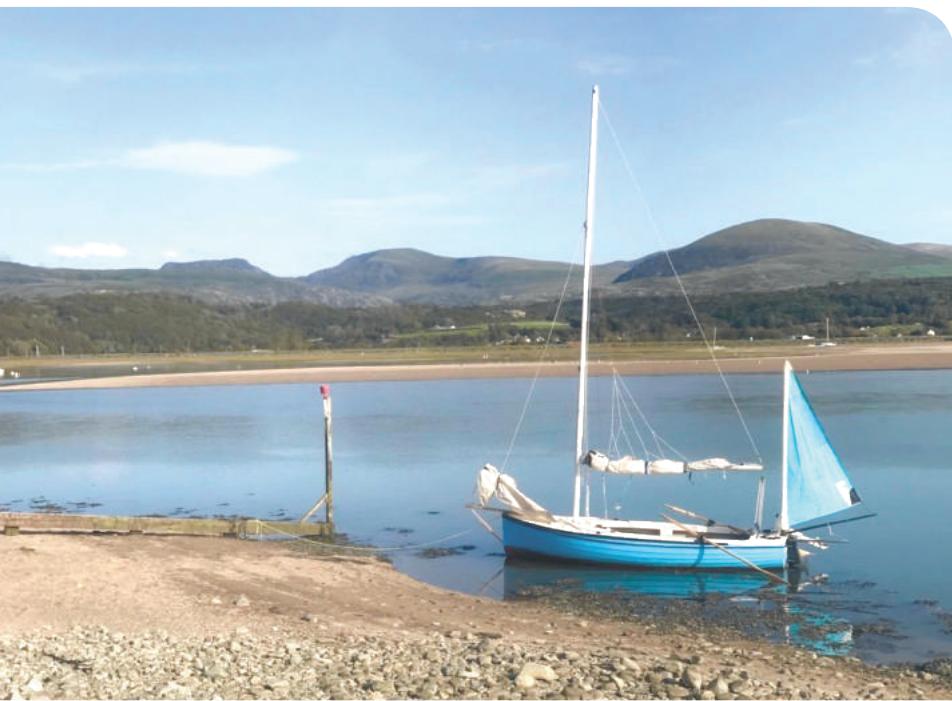
Criccieth has a small slip, but the RNLI boat has priority.

Pwllheli, -3.10 Dover. Has several good slips (*and a large extensively developed yacht club—Ed*)

Barmouth, -3.00 Dover. Has a good slip, plus the very friendly **Merioneth Yacht Club**, which hosts the Three Peaks Yacht Race annually.

Further information:

The Artro can be navigated (under the railway bridge) in a small boat to its tidal limit close to Llanbedr. In a field here are two standing stones which





mark the head of ancient navigation and the start of the old track around the North of the Rhinog hills to Trawsfynedd, Bala and beyond. In old times the Artro and Dysynni rivers further south were preferred to the larger Mawddach and Glaslyn rivers, because the bars were smaller and the entrances more distinct. But on Spring tides the current is too fast for my engine, about 6 knots.

The Glaslyn and Dwryd estuaries (Porthmadog) provide an extensive sailing area for small boats in sheltered tidal waters. Small boats can navigate up the Dwryd as far as Maentwrog on Spring tides, just be careful going under the road bridge. Along the banks you will see several old slate quays, accessible on different tides. These were used to load flat-bottomed boats, with the slates from higher up the valley. They then transported the slates down to Ynys Cyngar south of Borth y Guest for loading onto the boats which delivered the slates all over the world.

The Ballast bank outside Porthmadog is made from stones from all over, which had been used as ballast in returning boats.

The DCA hold a meet at Llechollwyn, Ynys, opposite

Portmeirion. At least one member has stayed the night beside Ynys Gifftan and had a meal in 'The Ship Aground' at Talsarnau — with some interest getting back to the boat!

The Mawddach provides good sailing for small boats up to Penmaenpool on the tide, and small boats can navigate up to the old bridge at Llanelltyd. Some quite big boats were built up here.

The Merioneth Yacht club used to hold an annual dinghy race up through the railway bridge (when it swung open), but sadly now it is welded shut, so mast height is limited.

Tidal streams in the bay are slight, increasing near St Tudwals off Abersoch, but are strong in the mouths of the estuaries, The Artro is short and sharp, the Mawddach and Glaslyn can be hairy with wind over tide on springs, but at other times very pleasant.

Language:

There are two official languages in Wales, Cymraeg (Welsh) and English (Saesneg) and this area has a large population of Welsh speakers, so you will hear Cymraeg spoken on the street, in shops and in pubs. This is not rude, it is their first language., if you take an interest in the culture, history and landscape, you will be well received.



Cei Balast - Ballast Bank - Lewis's Island: outside Porthmadog Harbour.
(below)



Ships calling to pick up loads of slate, often local vessels known as the 'Western Ocean Yachts' because they were so well-built, would be 'in ballast' when they arrived, and dumped it here. In its day, the Bank was the domain of the Lewis brothers, who had on it a crane, a cottage for the operator, and an 'tramroad' to cope with incoming stone and shingle. They also had a 'grid-iron' dock, on which boats could dry out and have their bottoms scrubbed. As well as the interesting geology, older locals have said that exotic plants often bloom here—Ed

photo by Ron Fisher

A 24-Hour Adventure

by Dave Burnsnall

Friday 22nd Oct 2020

HW 20.40 / 5.64.

Wind forecast 3 to 4, possibly 5 NE

A month after the trip along the North Wales coast in his Devon Yawl, Dave was out again; this time in his sailing canoe, with a like-minded DCA friend for company

TWAS ONE OF THE BIGGEST SPRING TIDES OF 2020, but at an awkward hour for this time of year (dark early), so Robin White and I decided to take our open canoes with sails out for a trip. Much easier to land and get back home if things go wrong!

We launched off Llandanwg beach (another advantage of open boats) at half-ebb, in the morning, and sailed south for a while in the shelter of the sand dunes, then turned and landed for a short snack break and stretch.



Robin White, dunes and Harlech Castle behind

Then off to Porthmadog Bar on a close reach, with sunshine an added bonus. We both just scraped over the bar, with lee boards up, at dead low water, and found just enough depth beyond to sail tight on the wind up to Ynys Cyngar (Powder House Island) which we tucked in behind for some more food and to wait for more depth of water.

At this point we hadn't decided where to stay for the night, just a vague, 'perhaps get to the old slate quay above the bridge'.

So we headed on up the Dwryd, turning southeast opposite Garreg Coch, heading for the slight dip in the



Ynys Gifftan, Llechollwyn, (Porthmadog at the end of The Cob)



Robin White's sailing canoe, off Borth y Gest
(below) Portmeirion at night, with fireworks

hill of Ynys (Llanfihangel y Traethau, known as 'Ynys'). Then, as Portmeirion was almost visible, heading NNE. At this point we were still having to keep in the channel with lots of sandbanks still showing at 3 hrs before HW and the sun setting.

Past the cut through to Ynys, and then past Portmeirion with its lights ablaze, hugging the shore now, then we could just see Ynys Gifftan in the gloom,



Winter 2020, page 63



Dave Bursnall's boat, a Mad River Expedition carbon hull, waiting for the tide at Powder House Island
(Top right) Landing on Ynys Gifftan

ESE of us. We made the decision to go there for the night. Straight across and torches on to spot a possible landing place. We followed the small cliffs around to the south, close in where there is some depth of water.

Right on the southern tip of the island is a perfect HW harbour.

Quickly out, boats tied up, firewood collected and stoves on, we sat on a nice ledge above HW mark and out of the wind — with a lovely fire on the ledge below. The boats were drawn up closer as the tide came in.

Just as we were starting to eat, the fire floated away! We had forgotten to allow for the bigger tide than the morning one; but luckily it was not high enough to get to us on the upper ledge.

Later we moved up onto grass to sleep, with views across the water of lights twinkling, but no moon to show the outlines of the hills.

Next morning after a leisurely breakfast in bed, we packed and left our idyllic spot to circumnavigate the



(Above) High Water camp on Ynys Gifftan

island. Going up the east side, it is very shallow and there is a water pipe laid across the salttings which floats occasionally. There is one house on the island, not lived in but not derelict either.

Then after rounding the north end, we went down past Portmeirion, waving to the residents, and back straight across to Borth y Gest, with plenty of water at HW. Down channel we cut across to Harlech before reaching the Porthmadog bar.

Keeping fairly close to the beach for some shelter as the wind had increased a bit, we finally landed at Llandanwg again, at about the same time we had left the day before.

What a great little end-of season adventure, with a very good friend from many trips on the sea.

If you are interested in our open boats, then please visit the Open Canoe Sailing Group OCSG who have a website and FB presence. The website has some descriptions of members' boats and trips people have made.

Ynys is 'Island' in Welsh. Many of them these days are not islands as such, because the land around them has been reclaimed, or estuaries have silted up. **DB**

Traeth Bach

by Keith Muscott

September 18th —21st
Llechollwyn Farm Campsite
Dwyryd Estuary
Gwynedd

See the map at the head of the last cruise report, on p.38

Attended:

Colin Bell	Light plywood rowing dinghy
Mike Bell	Inflatable, <i>Puffin II</i>
George Bell	" " " "
Jennifer Heney	Gumotex Thaya Kayak, <i>Zeffiretti</i>
Keith Muscott	" " " "

THERE WAS SOME DCA INTEREST in attending Traeth Bach despite the ongoing emergency, as it is only a small site of about a dozen pitches that are well spread out — and they were open for business. We spent too long deliberating before deciding to book through the North Wales online camping agency. Big mistake. After waiting in vain for confirmation, I phoned the farmhouse to find they were booked solid.

A long time after that, on the day before the rally weekend in fact, we decided to drive down from Anglesey — under 1½ hours on the road — and meet DCA boats on the water for a daysail, then return home.

As a matter of courtesy I phoned the farmhouse to ask if we could use a parking space by the water. I was told that one wet pitch had been withdrawn from use to avoid tyre damage, but had been inspected that morning and was now dry. And vacant. We booked it from Friday night to Monday morning, and so, much to my surprise, I found that I was now attending my own cancelled rally.

The weather settled down for a good run of sunny days, but there was a brisk northeasterly which became somewhat stuck in a groove; on the first full day it was blowing a healthy F4 gusting 5 straight down the estuary. It created an interesting sea as it blew over the rising Spring tide, which was further complicated by the widely separated twin courses of the river, full and moving fast.



We went walking, well wrapped up. Very invigorating. Apart from us, there were three generations of the Bell family attending, so no big DCA presence but none the worse for that, we had a great time.

Sunday was more settled, but there was still a strong breeze. The usual routine at Llech is to launch two hours before HW and sail through until two hours after — then get off fast before you're sailing on sand.



There are photographs in back issues of the journal that show DCA boats neaped, with their crews standing around chatting idly waiting for the water to return. The

Bell family managed an early start, but we were a little late due to my instincts being rusty after a long period away from the estuary.

The boisterous tide threatened

(Top right) the northerly branch of the river runs close in past Portmeirion (Middle) This is what it looks like passing by at High Water

(Left) The southerly branch is evident here, though slightly masked by the receding tide. Both run close to their respective shores.



to overturn Colin, under oars in his small skiff, so he returned to shore a little earlier than planned, though he'd had an enjoyable time. Mike and George got around the estuary under outboard in *Puffin II*.

We found that *Zeffy* was as stable as ever in the lumpy water. We crossed the estuary to take a close look at Portmeirion village for old time's sake, then turned our attention to Ynys Gifftan, the island that Dave Bursnall and Robin White were to camp on about a month after our visit.

This meant that we were stemming the river and the outgoing tide, which was starting to accelerate. Not forgetting the wind in our faces. It was an interesting stretch, and it took a lot of effort, but we got to the island eventually. Colin was watching us through binoculars, and thought we were stationary at times; in *Zeffy*, the water rushing past made us feel that we were doing about 15k over the ground all the way there...

We are always impressed by the liveliness and manoeuvrability of this little 14ft inflatable kayak. It got us there all right, but the idea of circumnavigating the island had to be put aside. As we approached the precise spot where Dave and Robin were to camp, we started to catch the bottom with our paddles, so we knew we had



St Michael's Island Church on the Sands — Ynys Llanfihangel y Traethau. First built on a tidal island in the 12th century. Richard Hughes was once a Churchwarden and is buried here

Taken by Keith Muscott

Colin, Mike and George Bell on their shared pitch. They departed the following morning, Monday, but we felt that we had to launch again in the sunshine and calmer wind conditions to feel that we had experienced the weekend to the full. Once more, we failed to launch a full two hours before HW, but we made excellent progress into Porthmadog Bay.

It was edifying to find a restless mix of waves and currents off Ynys Cyngar — Powder House island, which is a point now, not an island. This is the outcome of the tide turning in Porthmadog Bay and meeting the same ebb draining down the Dwryd river estuary, plus the complication of the river courses once again. We kept close into the shore and inspected the lovely little sandy beaches, backed by rock faces and thick woodland, that open up one after another as you progress along the headland until a view of Porthmadog Cob opens up.

As well as the beaches, there suddenly appeared an idyllic cottage perched above the sea, with a miniature cove and a big rock slab stretching over the water. (See photograph top left next page.)

Around the corner, the Cob pointed the way into Porthmadog town. This is an embankment that carries the road, the Ffestiniog railway, and the Wales Coast



(Above) Porthmadog Cob, mid-20th century, stock photo

less than half an hour to reach the shore. That leg was covered pretty quickly.

Walking the traeth late that afternoon was a magical experience. The water had sculpted the sand everywhere we looked. The river currents and the tidal flow had formed ripples, dimples and hatched lines that changed dramatically every few yards, catching the dipping sun.

After dinner, we spent a very pleasant evening with



Looking down the estuary after the retreating sea, past Porthmadog, far right

Taken by Jennifer Heney



Path. It was built in 1811 to drain the salt marshes and quicksands of the Afon Glaslyn, for agricultural use. It was not wholly successful but the hinterland is now a paradise for bird watchers. In 1832 a narrow gauge railway was built along it to connect the slate quarries of Blaenau Ffestiniog with Porthmadog Harbour, which ensured the rapid growth of the town. The bay in front of the Cob is known as Traeth Mawr, 'Big Sands', as opposed to Traeth Bach, 'Small Sands' over which we sail in the Dwryd estuary.

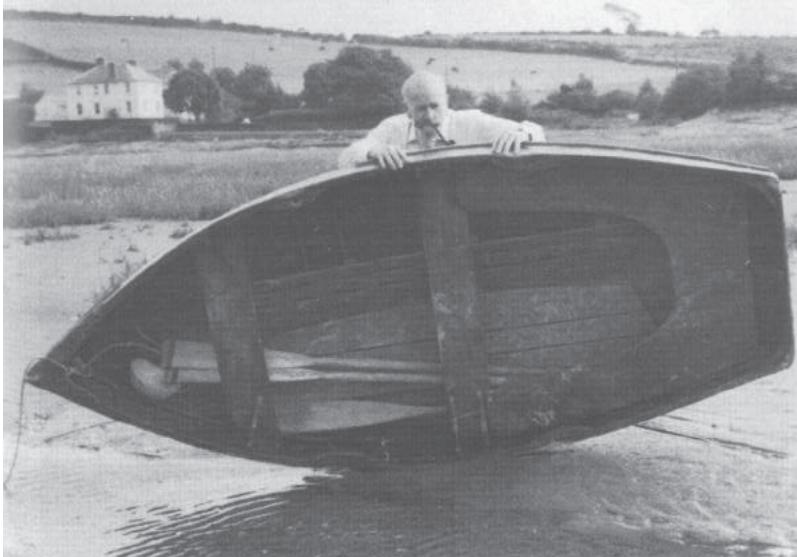
In the mediaeval collection of Welsh myths and legends that form the *Mabinogion*, the earliest collection of prose stories in British literature, Traeth Mawr is the place where two warring sides agreed to settle their conflict with a duel between Pryderi, from the South, and Gwydion, the old maker of mischief, from the North. Gwydion had started the dispute in the first place but he won the duel with the help of his magical powers. Pryderi was buried near Maentwrog.

We moved further out on our way back, listening to the muttering of running water and seabirds, not the clash of arms, but the tidal swirl was still to be felt strongly out there in the middle of the estuary.

The plan was, once again, to round Ynys Gifftan before heading back. And again, as we approached it, the rushing tide outpaced us and we soon 'found the ground' with our paddles on the central long mound of sand that lies in the middle between the two river courses. In the photograph (*bottom right*), the tide is moving smartly past from left to right. We got out of the kayak and towed her in until I felt the bottom falling away as I located the inshore branch of the river on the Llechollwyn side. Then we climbed back in and paddled hard for the shore.

We landed at 1400hrs close to the car, which we had packed and brought down ready for leaving. At precisely 1420hrs the sandbanks were exposed everywhere and moving any distance afloat would have been impossible.

On the shore just to the right of this photograph stands the house Môr Edrin (*see photo above right*) the home of the author Richard Hughes from 1947 until his death. It had belonged to the architect Clough Williams-Ellis, who built Portmeirion between 1925 and 1975. He rented the house to Hughes and his wife at first, then later sold it to them. Hughes had already written a bestselling novel *A High Wind in Jamaica* (1929) and other work including *In Hazard* (1939), about a ship



The author Richard Hughes, 'The Welsh Tolstoy', in his later years, with a rowing skiff on the sands of Traeth Bach. The tufts of the saltmarsh lie behind, and his house, Môr Edrin, can be seen above the shoreline.

caught in a Caribbean hurricane, which was also an allegory of the dangerous international situation at the time. He is praised as a writer for his striking ideas and for presenting children realistically, so getting away from the Victorian tradition that reduced them emotionally or presented them as small adults. He also expertly blended fact and fiction, like Tolstoy or Solzhenitzyn.

Hughes was a very keen sailor and raced a pilot cutter as well as dinghies. He taught his children to sail on Traeth Bach, very 'hands-off' unless he saw that they urgently needed help. He would follow them around in a second boat. (His creed was close to Ransome's, 'If not duffers, won't drown').

In 1947 when he, his wife — the painter Frances Bazley — and their children moved in, the house was without electricity or mains drainage. A grass track led to it. He rowed over to Porthmadog once a week to buy groceries. When his children were older they helped by doing the same. Probably they used the boat you see here, among others.

Over time the intellectual big names of the mid-twentieth century visited the Hughes family here, and also some well-known celebrities, like Mick Jagger and Marianne Faithfull. The house is now a ten-bedroom holiday let.

This venue may have its constraints for boats, but it always offers a varied and enjoyable experience, set in the ancient heartland of Wales. We will attend again next year. **KM**



North West Derwent Water

Sunday 27th September to Monday 5th October,
Brian McClellan

Attended:

Colin Firth & Melissa Coleman
Mathew & Liz Cunningham home-built *La'alzin*
Brian & Kate McClellan Lune Longboat ketch *Anwen*
~ much modified by David Chatterley
Bill Jones & Lucy Bate (non-sailing) Torch dinghy *Thrift*
Frank & Margaret Dearden Tideway *Grace*
Also staying in a Marina apartment for the weekend.
David & Margaret Spensley Core 17 Mk III *Skye*
Staying in Portinscale

Sunday 27th September:

Colin and Melissa, Mathew and Liz on the water

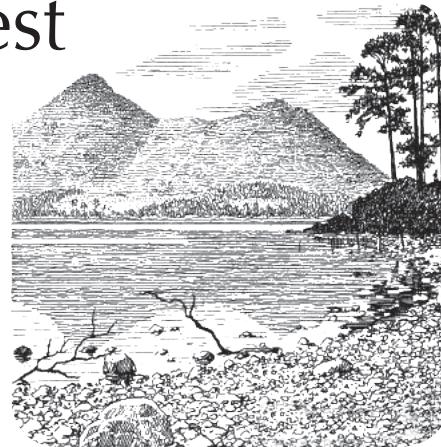
Monday 28th September:

Brian and Kate arrive with *Anwen* at Derwent Water Marina to take up residence in one of the apartments. Of course it's chucking it down.

Matthew and Liz in *La'alzin*



Kath, Brian, Lucy and Bill



Tuesday 1st October:

A lovely day. Colin arrived at the marina spot on time to assist rigging and launching *Anwen*. We set off for a sail, first motoring away from the marina using my brand new top of the range Torqeedo Travel 1103 electric motor. First time in use.



The breeze was a very light southerly but, being lazy, and the boat sailing so well under jib and mizzen, we did not hoist the mainsail. Blue sky, socially distanced on a large open boat, chatting away, what more could you ask for? No other sails in sight. It was after 5 pm before we headed back. My first sail since November 2019 when I sailed with Colin Bell on *Puffin*.

Wednesday 2nd October:

A foul day, lashing rain and the hills totally clagged in. Sailing? Not likely. Kate and I thought to go to the Windermere Boat Museum but on checking with the Keswick Tourist Office they told us that the museum was closed to the public for the day. We found out later that it was closed for filming *The Antiques Road Show*.

We had our evening meal at The Farmers Arms in Portinscale. Very cheerful, pleasant and a good meal.

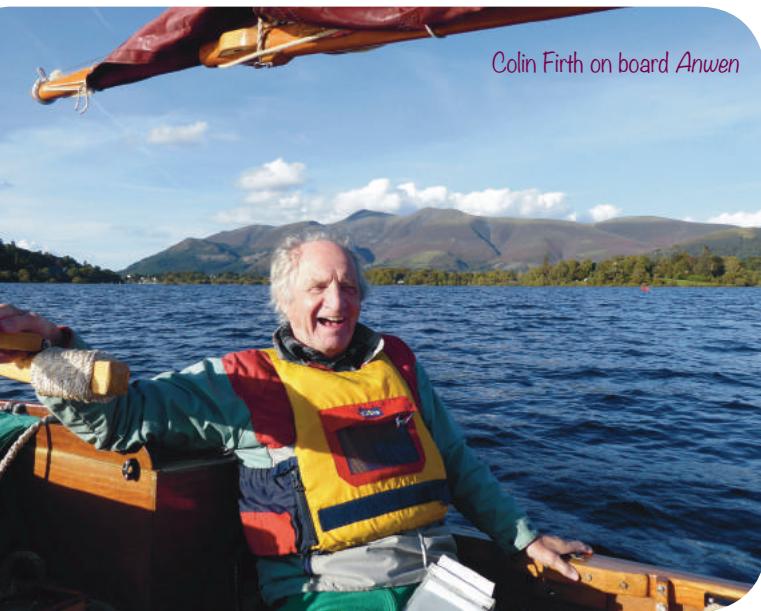
Thursday 3rd October:

A fine morning with broken cloud and a light WNW breeze. Colin sailing with me again. On the way out we met a local couple, the Robinsons, in their sea kayaks and had a long chat with them. They were out celebrating



Melissa
Coleman

their 35th wedding anniversary. The morning was a bit technical as we fiddled with the rig and practised heaving-to, etc. Breeze filled in and with all sail set we had some fine sailing. Off Myrtle Bay a trip ferry approached us very close then swung broadside on to allow a boatload of passengers to take photographs of us and wave. Well, as we were the only sailing craft on the lake we became stars of the show. A cracking day. On the way back we stowed the sails and tried the motor again. At 5 mph on the motor tiller GPS speed indicator the battery state dial told us that we still had 8 hours running time at that speed. Tying up at the jetty I told Colin that I would just nip up to the apartment to see Kate about the chance of a brew. Before I reached the end of the jetty there she was with mugs of tea and slices of flapjack, what a lass.



Colin Firth on board Anwen

Friday 4th October:

Kate sailed with me today and Colin with Bill. Lucy went off for a walk and met us later in Otterfield Bay for lunch. A cracking sail and then we beached the boats in the bay. Within minutes of our landing Lucy arrived. We usually have a large group of us on the beach here rather than 5 socially distancing. On the way back, just past the Lingholme Isles we started to furl the jib when the inhaul stuck. The line had jumped off the drum and jammed fast. This meant a trip to the foredeck and a stretch out along the thankfully sturdy bowsprit to free the jam.

Another day with only our sails on the lake. Once tied up, a couple who had been watching us come in said that they were impressed by how well she sailed downwind with just the mizzen up. Of course I had to cough that we had the electric motor on. However on chatting with them they told us that they had owned a Fisher 25 which some years ago they kept here on Derwent Water. I remember seeing it. They were downsizing and very interested in the DCA, potential members perhaps. The team was complete as the Deardens and the Spensleys had arrived.

Saturday 5th October:

A foul day again. No sailing, just a wet walk to Keswick for Kate and I. In the evening we joined David, Margaret and Colin for a meal at the Farmer's. Very sociable and, thanks to the current situation, well-spaced. We had, of course, booked our tables nearly a week before.

Sunday 6th October:

A fine day again. We had very heavy rain overnight and the jetty was underwater. Only a few inches, but the lake water level was well up, which would make pulling out later in the day that much easier.

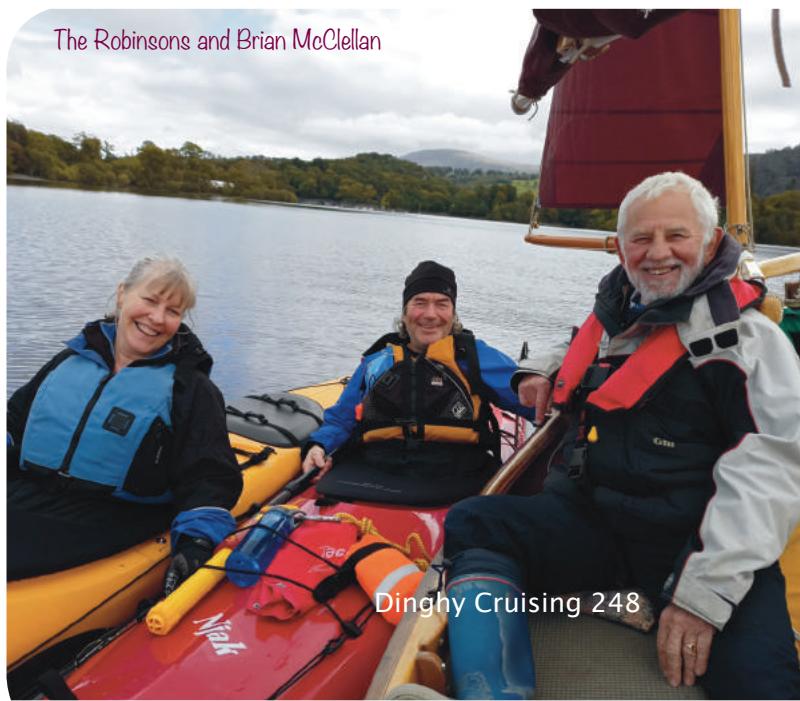
David and Margaret were out on the water still making adjustments to their new boat. The rest of us just pottering. Colin sailed with me and we did not stay out too long as I was anxious to pull out and get the mast down before the weather changed. Pulling out was a doddle and we soon had the mast down. Frank and Margaret sailed in and said that they were going round to Nichol End Marina to join Bill and Lucy for a coffee. I released Colin from his contract of sterling service and he walked round to join them. The weather stayed fine making packing up almost a pleasure.

Monday 7th October:

A wet morning with heavy cloud. A dash, as we had to be out of the apartment by 9.30. The drill is to arrive later and depart earlier than usual to allow for deep Covid cleaning of the rooms.

It was great to have a period of near normality. **BM**

The Robinsons and Brian McClellan



Dinghy Cruising 248

South Coast

Oxey Lake rally (Lymington) 12th - 13th September,
by Steve Bradwell

Attended:

Alan Moulton
Jamie and William Scott
Steve Bradwell.

Deben Lugger *Eydis*
Wayfarer. *Josh*
Enterprise



THIS RALLY FROM THE PRE-COVID LIST got off to a shaky start when first the host and then the stand-in host were forced to pull out due to work commitments. I had been due to work but had taken leave for this weekend so committed myself on the forum, despite a bit of sailing overload, having recently got back from a week on my trailer sailer. My spirits lifted when Alan posted that he was also going; the weather looked promising too, after what had been an unsettled period.

Enterprise, Wayfarer and Deben Lugger



As it was, three boats set out, all from Warsash. While Alan and I live by the sea and had shorter drives to launch our boats, Jamie and Will were travelling down from the London suburbs and launched on Friday evening, overnighting on their boat at Ashlett Creek in order to make use of the morning ebb tide. This would

be useful, despite a neap tide, as we would be beating into the forecast Westerly wind.

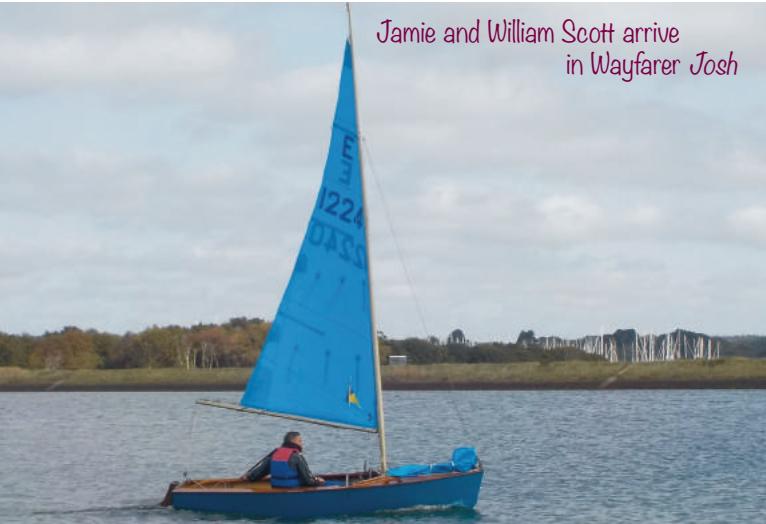
Alan had just arrived at Warsash hard as I sailed out into the Hamble River. Sailing with a single-reefed main and jib I wanted to get as far as I could before the tide turned against me. Resisting the temptation to stop *en route* to Oxey Lake I made steady progress into the fresh breeze, staying close to the mainland shore. Alan later reported that he had made long tacks out into the Solent on his way west and had experienced choppy conditions. Staying inshore I seemed to have avoided the worst of this.

Past Beaulieu and with the tide slack I hove-to in order to shake out the reef in my mainsail to maintain speed, the wind having dropped. About an hour later I put the reef in again as the wind speed increased. Progress was good but by the time I reached the approach to Lymington I was ready for a break and with too little water to enter Oxey Lake I decided to anchor off to the sheltered west side of Long Reach, the main channel into the town.

Alan Moulton in *Eydis*, his Deben Lugger



Jamie and William Scott arrive
in Wayfarer *Josh*



Oxey Lake is made up of a series of concrete sea walls just to the west of Lymington. They separate the sea from the marshes beyond which once had a thriving salt industry. Having arrived and anchored in the shelter of an east-facing wall I was pleasantly surprised to get a phone call from Jamie who was nearby and checking my location.

Steve Bradwell in his Enterprise



Having left Ashlett Creek Jamie and son Will had sailed west, passing Oxey Lake and Hurst Point to sail out into Christchurch Bay before returning for the rally. Good going and proof of the capability of a Wayfarer with a capable crew.

Alan was next to arrive in his impressive new boat which looked great. He like me had found the beat upwind tiring but with all three boats safely anchored and with boat tents up we were ready for an evening meal. This year no walk to the pub, we all ate onboard.

Next day was sunny with slightly less wind and still

from the west which made for a much easier return. Jamie wanted to meet up with a friend at Newtown Creek so he and Will left first while Alan and I followed a short time later.

With very little water at Shalfleet Quay Jamie and Will did not stay long but Alan and I stayed long enough at the harbour entrance for the tide to turn to help us along for a relaxed run home and time to enjoy the scenery. Just to liven up the sailing a bit I carried on to Cowes in order to have a fast broad reach back to Southampton Water and our start point. **SB**



Jamie and William Scott consider their position

Dorestad Raid 2020,

by Hubert Bakker

WITH SO MANY DINGHY CRUISING EVENTS cancelled it was a relief that the 2020 Dorestad Raid (9-13 September) was held at all. Due to Covid-19 the format was different this time. The Dorestad committee had taken a fresh look at the logistics and arranged to use the sailing school of stalwart supporters Hannah and Leo Versloot as a base camp for day sailing trips into Friesland.

The comfortable accommodation and Hannah's cooking made social distancing and other restrictions more than bearable. We would normally have a UK contingent as well, but they cancelled because of Covid-19. Some of the UK raiders are now building smaller boats to sail singlehanded in the next Dorestad Raid.

Sixteen boats arrived, ranging from a twelve-foot dinghy to Drascombe Coasters, and including cruising dinghies and raid boats.

Covid-19 inspired a few personnel changes: Dirk Branbergen sailed his Drascombe Coaster solo, sometimes crewed by Gerben-Jan Sytsema. Dirk's regular sailing buddy Joop sailed solo in *Her Majesty Cornelie*, a skiff with a rather quirky rig and a mind of her own. *Her Majesty* seemed to have the upper hand when sailing, but Joop was the boss when rowing.

Joost Engelen squeezed his entire family into his Goat Island Skiff. And still they were very fast.

One of the newcomers was Cockie with her newly bought Pooduck Skiff.

Koos Winnips, the founding father of the Raid Extreme, was also new to the event. Koos brought his Artemis sailing canoe and was among the fastest boats with the famed *Wuptem* of Hans and Margreet Arends and the Goat Island Skiff of the Engelen family (aka 'the Goat Angels').

Wednesday 9th september

Most crews launched at the Heeg Marina and rowed towards Leo and Hannah's island just outside the sailors' paradise of Heeg. The island is home to a small harbour, the sailing school founded by Leo and Hannah and MS *In Dubio*, the travelling hotel for the Dorestad Raid in previous years.

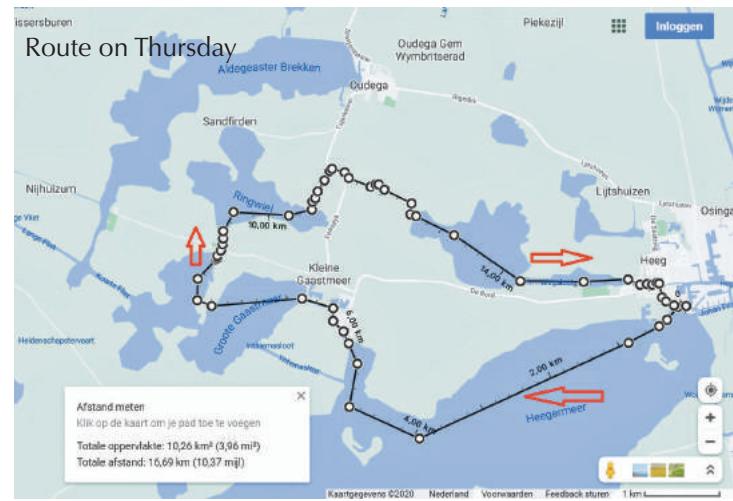
Some crews arrived under their own steam, like Hans and Willem from nearby Sneek with their Herreshoff 12.5.

Dirk Branbergen singlehandedly sailed his Drascombe over from Workum, enjoying the downwind ride across the Fluessen and the Heegermeer.

Thursday 10th September

No wind! Joost called a skippers' briefing to discuss the map and route which he had sent using WhatsApp.

The clear maps and directions helped to keep the briefing short. After the briefing we headed to the Heegermeer. Very slowly we made our way to the Grote Gaastmeer, where we had lunch.



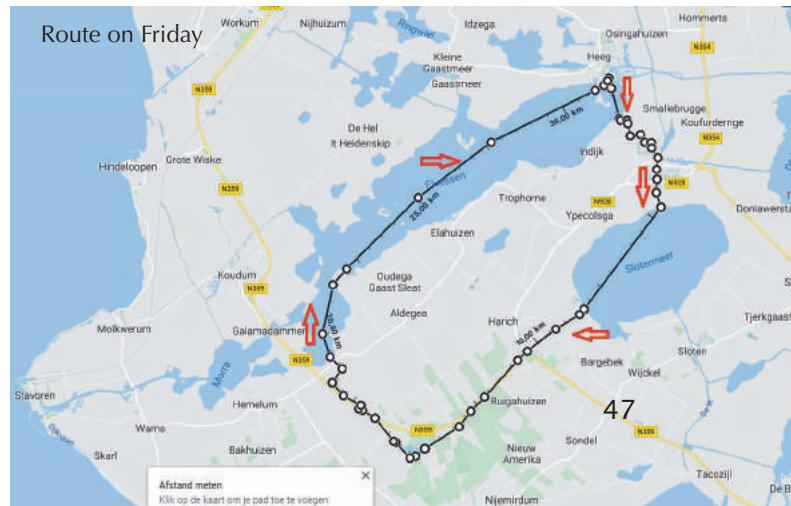
Dirk and Gerben-Jan encountering another low bridge

Photograph by Sara Pleyte



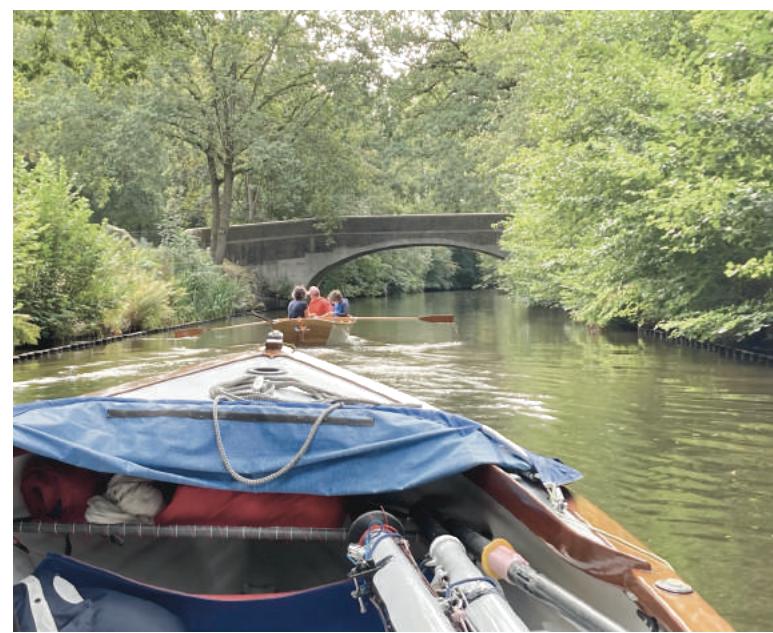
After lunch the bigger boats returned to base because they would not fit under the bridges encountered during our afternoon expedition. The smaller boats drifted into the Ringwiel and paddled through the backwaters back to the town of Heeg.

Klarie and I enjoyed the trip through the backwaters. These were lined with reeds on both sides so you could only see what was immediately in front or behind you.





Lunch in downtown Balk
Photo Klarie Bakker



Wuptem and the Goat Angels rowing up the river Luts
Photograph by Hans Arends

the far end of the Fluessen. As we were rowing along, Janko and Gerben-Jan remained true to the motto of 'Natuurlijk Varen' and used their oars to great effect to get ahead of us.

Each time we encountered another low bridge for the farmers we had to duck our heads to stay in one piece. We steered through the middle of the canal to avoid getting stuck. Finally we rowed into Heeg and then on to the island.

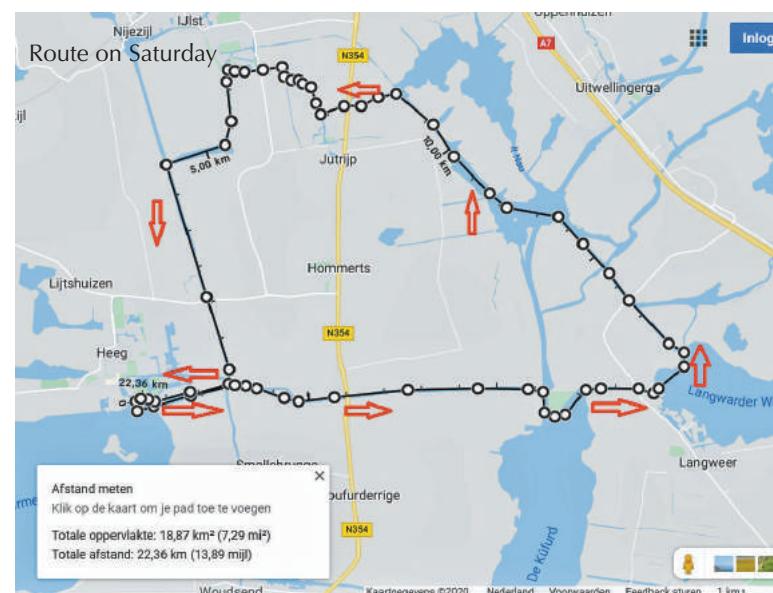
At 17km it was a short but nice trip to start the new Raid.

Friday 11th September

Wind! We sailed in a W F2 on a broad reach along the Jeltesleat to Woudsend. Some crews short-tacked up the winding canal through Woudsend but most chose to lower their rigs and row to the Slotermeer.

On the lake we hoisted sail and enjoyed beating in a W3 into the town of Balk. There we had lunch in our boats at the town quay.

Afterwards part of the fleet opted for the longer trip and rowed upstream on the river Luts for 10km towards



They rowed, paddled, towed and poled their Caledonian Yawl *Mousa* and soon disappeared in the distance.

Our own rowing effort was rewarded with a long downwind run of 1.5 hours across the length of the Fluessen and the length of the Heegermeer.

Total distance: 32km.

After dinner, Douwe gave a talk about his passion for the Frisian Elfstedentocht both as a long-serving steward for the skating event as well as sailing the same route with Lieuwe and his wing-masted *Amice* in June 2020.

Arrival of *Her Majesty Cornelia* with her remarkable rig. Photo by Onno van Sandick

Saturday 12th September

More wind! W4 increasing to W5 with strong gusts. On *Hatseflats* we put in the first reef.

After a fast run along the Jeltesleat we crossed the windy Prinses Margrietkanaal and reached the Langweerde Wielen. By this time the fleet was well spread out. As usual the *Wuptem* was far out in front, followed by Klarie and myself on *Hatseflats* and the Goat Angels. We reached the Swarte Brekken just south of the town of Sneek and moored along a jetty for lunch.

One by one the others began to arrive. Cockie found it hard going on basically the maiden trip of her Pooduck Skiff. The bendy mast made it impossible to flatten the lugsail.

Joop also could not sufficiently depower his rig and arrived at the lunch spot assisted by Henk and Fransje Wels. As the wind increased, Cockie prudently decided to drop the rig and row towards IJlst.

After lunch we put in the second reef and rowed hard against wind and current.

The conditions were testing for the solo sailors.

Joop and *Her Majesty Cornelia* were first escorted to safety by the *Wuptem* on pedal power and afterwards by Henk and Fransje Wels with their Drascombe Coaster.



Wuptem pulling Joop and *Her Majesty Cornelia* out of trouble. Photograph by Anneke van der Geest

Several other boats also needed some TLC from Henk and Fransje to stay out of trouble. Once we passed the outskirts of IJlst it was plain sailing all the way back to Heeg.

Fortunately there was no damage apart from some slightly bruised egos.

Total distance: 29km.



After dinner it was time for an open air 'soirée' with tall tales and a 'hum-along' with singing by Willem and accompanied by Hubert on trombone. The highlight of the evening was the workshop for building reed-boats given by Sybren and young Leo Engelen.

Sunday 13th September

Six boats went out for a short trip to conclude the 2020 Dorestad Raid. It was a SW F4 gusting to 5-6 so on *Hatseflats* we stuck with our two reefs of the previous day.

We rowed through Heeg towards the Idzegasterpoel and enjoyed ourselves crossing the little lake on a screaming reach. We reached back towards the Weisleat and then entered the much smaller Rintjepoel and the even smaller Palsepoel.

As Klarie and I rowed up the muddy canal to the Skutelpoel, the odours of country life wafted into our noses. On the left bank we saw pigs rooting in the mud, watched by ponies and horses on the right bank.

After all this rusticity we rowed across the tiny Skutelpoel, turned into another narrow and shallow canal and returned to the Idzegaster Poel. From there we headed back to Leo and Hannah's island and had lunch with Koos. Both Onno and Gerben-Jan had sailed the Artemis sailing canoe. Suffice it to say that both enjoyed it but only Onno stayed dry.

Too soon we had to say goodbye to our hosts and sailing friends. It had been a thoroughly enjoyable long weekend. HB

(Below) Willem and Hubert rehearsing for the soirée
Photograph: Sara Pleyte



(Left) Too brisk for the maiden voyage of Cockie's Pooduck Skiff (a Joel White design: 12ft 10ins lugger)
Photograph by Joost Engelen

Raid (Not Very) Extreme, 2020,

by Hubert Bakker



Bert and Ton launching the big catamaran, *Feng Shui*
Photograph by Koos Winnips

WITH COVID-19 IT WAS A LOTTERY HOW many sailors would attend the Raid Extreme 2020. The requirement for social distancing meant that our German friends from Bremen could not bring their big 6-person canoe. Two sailors from the UK found the risks too big. We were pleasantly surprised that French boat builder Emmanuel Conrath and 5 friends decided to come over to the Netherlands to sail with us.

As they were preparing for their trip, some of them found themselves in an 'orange zone' which required them to self-isolate in a yellow zone for 10 days before they could travel to the Netherlands. This sadly put an end to a promising new development. Emmanuel, Yves, Gerard, Marco, Benoit and William, we hope to see you next year.

So for the first time, we had an exclusive Dutch event with a gaggle of 8 boats:

Wim and Joke with the 'wet bicycle' cat
Koos with his Artemis sailing canoe
Bert and Ton with a big catamaran
Hubert and Klarie with our Norwegian pram
Onno and Anneke with a Caledonian Yawl
Hans and Margreet with a two-master rowing/sailing sloop
Ben and Yvonne with the Vivier-designed Jewell
Joost with the Storer-designed Viola canoe

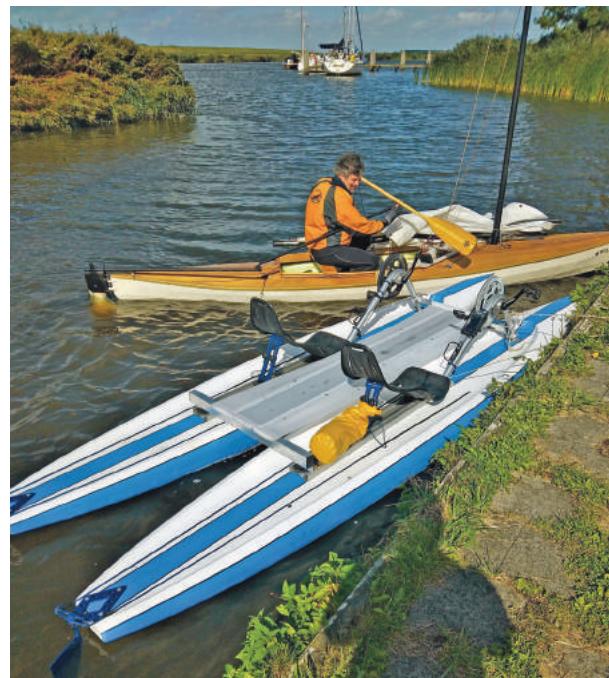
Friday

Most sailors and their boats travelled by car and trailer. It was sunny blowing W F4. After lunch Hans and Margreet, Joost, Hubert and Klarie took their boats for a spin round the Schoenerbult island in the middle of the Lauwersmeer. Ben and Yvonne and friends Herman and Eliane arrived a later with their Vivier-designed Jewell.

We had a nice meal on the terrace of Iterij bij de Mune in Anjum.

Saturday

We started at 0900 hours in a W F4. The plan was to stop at Ezumazijl and continue to Dokkumer Nieuwe



The 'wet bicycle' catamaran, used by Wim and Joke,
photograph by Joke Ton

Zijlen to meet Onno and Anneke. It was enjoyable sailing with a bit of sunshine and a bit of cloud. Hans and Margreet headed the fleet with the very quick *Wuptem*.

Then Bert and Ton overtook them with their big cat *Feng Shui*, occasionally reaching 19 knots.

While we were admiring the spectacle the fleet was hit by a rain squall just as we were heading towards Ezumazijl. We lowered the sails and started rowing in the canal. The rain stopped just as soon as it had started.



After admiring the picturesque lock at Ezumazijl we found that the wind was increasing and put in a reef.

As we continued on a broad reach down the Dokkumer Diep our little fleet was met by Onno and Anneke in their Caledonian Yawl *Gjoa*.

Together we sailed on towards Dokkumer Nieuwe Zijlen and moored at the Marrekrite site near Kollumeroord for lunch.

Bert and Ton arrived a little later, having made numerous sorties to the Lauwersmeer to kill the time. They produced a gas stove and heated up tins of 'Erwtensoep' (pea soup) which is proper winter food. You know it is cooked properly if you can make your spoon stand in the soup without falling over (the spoon, that is).

Anyway the hot soup was really welcome since the wind was piping up again. It was now blowing a good W5 so we decided to return to Oostmahorn. Most boats put in an extra reef.

In the channel to the Lauwersmeer we needed to tack a few times. Once on the main lake the waves were building but we were safe sticking to the windward shore. By 1600 hours we were all back at Oostmahorn including Wim and Joke on their Wet Bicycle. At the prize-giving newcomers Ben and Yvonne and Herman and Eliane were awarded with the Motivation award.

The endurance trophy went to cyclists Wim and Joke who were knackered after pedalling 30km. The main trophy went to grandmasters Hans and Margreet who would have won flat out had there been a race.

They would have won the innovation trophy as well for accidentally inventing the Saensche Snippersjips by driving over packets of crisps with their van.



'*Dejeuner a l'herbe*': a minimalist re-enactment of Édouard Manet's original. Cleverly achieved by removing a shirt and eating a can of Erwtensoep — pea soup.

Photograph: Joke Ton

Sunday

After breakfast at the Omaha club house, Ben and Yvonne sailed back to Zoutkamp with Herman and Eliane.

Hans and Margreet headed off to Lauwersoog and a trip to the isle of Schiermonnikoog off the coast.

Onno and Anneke took *Gjoa* back to Dokkumer Nieuwe Zijlen.

Koos, Hubert and Klarie sailed round the Schoenerbult island with a lunch stop at 'Gin and tonic' island. It was a relaxed trip with NW4 and not many waves.

Round trip: 19km

Next year:

In 2021 we want to bring the competition back so that we can have a proper Raid Extreme. More information on <https://raidextreme.wixsite.com/raidextreme>



(Left) Hans and Margreet, the deserving winners, photograph by Klarie Bakker

...and their brilliant invention, *Saensche Snippersjips*:



Winter
2020

HIRTA

'In time and with water, everything changes'

—Leonardo da Vinci

PART I

by Keith Muscott & Màrtainn MacGilleMhàrtainn

IN THE AFTERNOON OF MAY 29TH, 1697, they caught the tide and pulled away from Easaigh, the island in the turbulent Sound of Harris where they had boarded the boat. A gentle southeasterly over the port quarter filled the sail and sent them westward.

Although the minister was visiting Hirta on church business entrusted to him by MacLeod of Harris himself, the boat was hired locally, not specially provided. MacLeod may have suggested the crew, who were more stalwart clansmen than they were sailors, but there was no *sgiober*, no skipper, a lack that almost proved fatal.

The Episcopalian minister of Harris, John Campbell, would have been known to the crew, but the younger man with him, who exuded an air of confidence, even authority, had a less public face. He might have been familiar as a 'governor' who had gained an MA at Edinburgh University in 1681. He was the most gifted of three brothers, possibly the son of a minister in view of his obviously excellent early education. This precocious young man had been engaged as a family tutor by the MacDonald and MacLeod chiefs at different times. He liked to style himself a gentleman, perhaps one owning a little land, and his elder brother John was the tacksman at Flodigarry, so his family enjoyed a respectable standing in the eyes of two of the major clans.

Pleasantries were interrupted even before they had left the bay when Mr Campbell was suddenly startled by the loudness and 'whiteness' of waves breaking on the rocks. Such a sudden swell in the Sound, he said, foretold a storm. The crew laughed and said that in summer it suggested the onset of a heat wave. There was a show of hands and Campbell was voted down. Two leagues further along their course, six sea miles, and they were close to the shores of the island of Pabbay, on which breakers were falling more violently. The Vikings would

have said, '...the white-hooded women are dancing on the sands.' This time it unsettled the two passengers and crew alike. A second vote was taken and 'a motion for our return' was carried. Alas, natural forces in this world do not respect the deliberations of men, learned or incompetent, and to their indignation they found that wind and ebb tide had combined to prevent their reversing along their track. Another chinwag ended in a vote for proceeding as intended on the westerly course, as they would surely reach their destination before wave or storm could rise sufficiently to trouble them... or so they thought.

'But our fond imagination was not seconded with a good Event, as will appear...'

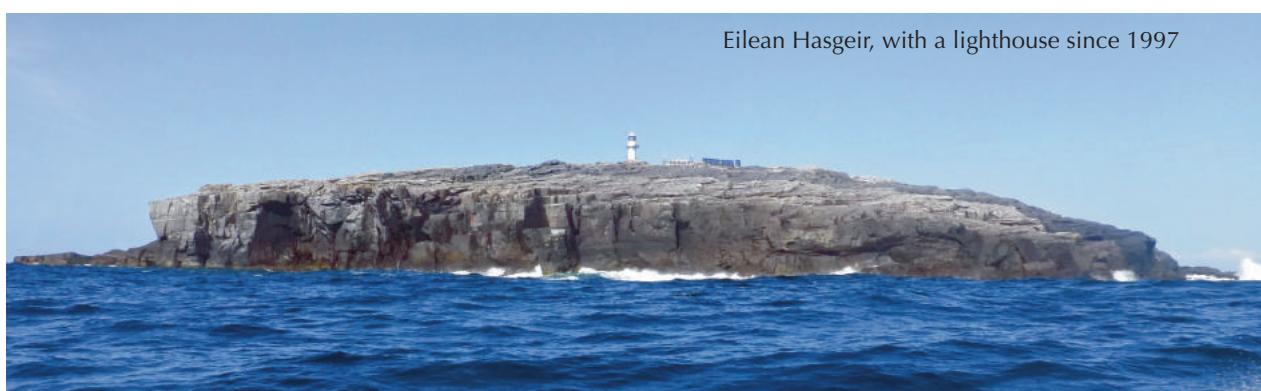
They had scarcely sailed a league further — three nautical miles — when the wind swung into the southwest and increased. Probably they had just cleared Pabbay to the northwest and were able to look southwest down Caolas Shialaigh to see the Hasgeir Islands over 15 sea miles away from them; they lie just below the latitude of Hirta. The reason for holding another vote, which decided in favour of heading for these 'Hawsker Rocks', may have sprung from the Siolaigh Islands being dead ahead in their path, with a vanishing chance of avoiding them. Men with an urgent problem facing them sometimes switch their focus to remoter possibilities.

It was not a good choice. 'Hasgeir' translates as 'Wild Skerry'. There is no anchorage or protection to be found on Eilean Hasgeir, the bigger of the two, and its neighbour Hasgeir Eagach resembles huge overlapping gravestones lying at an angle in the sea. Access to the former is daunting even in a calm. There are a number of rock arches with a high cliff on the northern end and shoals lying close to the north and south. The vegetation is confined to that which can resist continual salt spray.

Our travellers failed to reach this inviting haven, though they rowed hard against wind and tide and 'consumed the Night in this vain Expectation'. Unknown to them, they were carried north by the wind and flooding tide in the darkness — opposite to their heading.

The two Gentlemen on board had been fearful of this happening. They knew they must not stray north of their westerly track to the islands, which lay about 45 miles due West of the Sound of Harris. It had all seemed so simple. Campbell's younger assistant had the compass, which he used proudly as a symbol of his enthusiasm

Eilean Hasgeir, with a lighthouse since 1997



for 'natural science'. His passion had brought him to the attention of Edinburgh intellectuals and, through Sir Robert Sibbald, to the inner circles of the Royal Society, which had been endorsed by Charles II with a Royal Charter in 1662. But on this occasion the revered compass was spurned in favour of more natural direction finders.

The morning of May 30th found them utterly astray in the Atlantic, with the '... Crew extremely fatigued and discouraged without sight of land for Sixteen Hours'.

Time for decisive action. They took another vote.

'By this time we were so far advanced in the Ocean, that after a second Motion for our return, it was found impracticable, especially since we could not promise to fetch any Point of Scotland; this obliged us to make the best of our way for St Kilda, though labouring under the Disadvantages of Wind and Tide.'

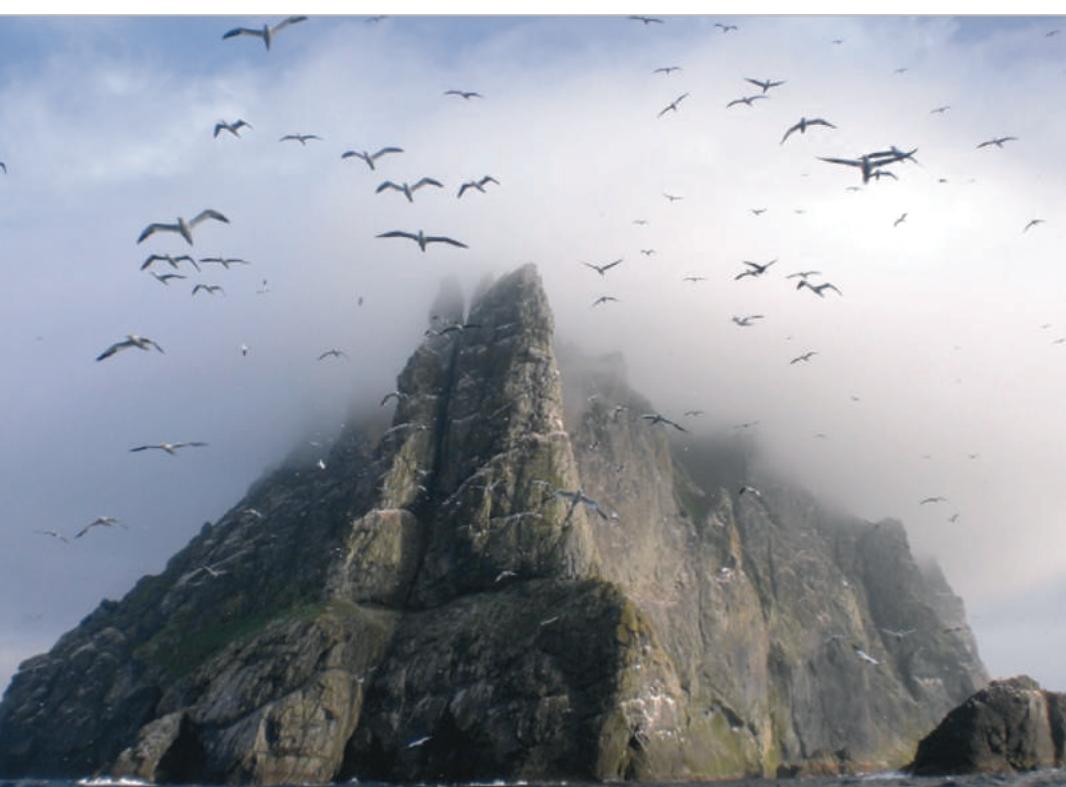
Their salvation came from an unexpected quarter. One of the exhausted crew suddenly noticed, '...several of the Tribes of the Fowls of St Kilda flying, holding their Course Southerly of us, which was a Demonstration we had lost our Course, by the Violence of the Flood and Wind both concurring to carry us Northerly, though we steered by our Compass right West. Experience shewing that every Tribe of Fowls bends their Course to their respective Quarters, though out of sight of the Isle, this appeared clearly in our gradual Advances; and their motion being compared did exactly quadrate with our Compass. While we were in this state we discovered the

Isle Borera, near Three Leagues North of St Kilda, which was then about Four Leagues to the South of us; this was a joyful sight, and gave new Vigour to our men, who being refreshed with Victuals, lowering mast and sail, rowed to a Miracle'.

They had taken the precaution of laying down ample supplies of *usquebaugh* in the boat, which would have been far stronger than strictly regulated modern whiskies. As a last resort they had with them three times distilled, weapons-grade Aquavitae, or 'brandy', which they now gave freely to the men as they pulled on the oars. The '...borrowed Spirits so far wasted their own, that upon our Arrival at Borera, there was scarce one of them able to manage cable or Anchor: we put in under the Hollow of an extraordinary high Rock, to the North of this Isle, which was all covered with a prodigious Number of Solan Geese hatching in their Nests.'

This was Stac an Armin, towering above them for 627 feet / 191 metres, its renowned gannetry in breeding mode with an associated feeding frenzy in full flow as they arrived. This impasse was more distasteful than dangerous: ' ... the Heavens were darkened by their flying over our Heads, their Excrements were in such quantity, that they gave a tincture to the sea, and at the same time sullied our boat and clothes...'

The tireless young field worker was not fazed by this. 'Two of them confirmed the truth of what has been



(This page) The sights that greeted them on their approach to Boreray
Photograph top right © Paul Constantine



Boreray in the background, with Stac an Armin. The 'hollow' where Martin's boat 'put in' may be to the left of the breaking sea. Armin is the highest sea stack in the UK and today hosts 12,000+ pairs of gannets

frequently reported of their stealing from one another Grass wherewith to make their Nests, by affording us the following very agreeable Diversion, and it was thus: One of them finding his Neighbour's Nest without the Fowl, lays hold on the Opportunity, and steals from it as much Grass as he could conveniently carry off, taking his flight towards the Ocean; from thence he presently returns, as if he had made a foreign Purchase, but it does not pass for such. For the Owner had discovered the Fact, before the Thief had got out of sight, and too nimble for his Cunning, waits his Return, all armed with Fury, and engages him desperately; this bloody Battle was fought above our Heads, and proved fatal to the Thief, who fell dead so near our Boat, that our Men took him up, and presently dressed and eat him; which they reckoned as an Omen of good Success in the Voyage.'

This is one of the few occasions when he ascribes human thought patterns to wildlife; he is mainly refreshingly factual and unsentimental, not anthropomorphic, and despite being religious he rarely gives teleological explanations of natural behaviour.

Apart from appreciating the welcome entertainment and change in diet, the crew were too worn out to leave their temporary anchorage, however risky it was to be there, and they floated underneath the nest site taking their ease but worrying about vicious currents and

Martin Martin is also known for his early description of Scotch Whisky:

'Their plenty of Corn was such as dispos'd the Natives to brew several sorts of Liquors, as: common Usquebaugh; another called Trestarig, *id est* Aquavite, three times distill'd, which is strong and hot; a third sort is four times distill'd, and this by the Natives is call'd Usquebaugh-baul, which at first taste affects all the members of the Body: two spoonfuls of this last Liquor is a sufficient Dose; and if any Man exceed this, it would presently stop his breath and endanger his Life. The Trestarig and Usqubaugh-baul are both made of oats.'

enduring the steady patter of defecation from countless birds, among the biggest in Northern Europe, each adult weighing up to 6 ½ lbs (3 kilos), with a wingspan of up to 6 ½ feet (2 metres).

The advice given by present-day sea-kayakers to those who paddle beneath ganntries is, 'Wear a hat — Don't look up — Keep your mouth shut'. There is no indication that our heroes in 1697 had so much as a tarpaulin with them for protection. They enjoyed the display though, then divided most of what was left of the food and water and tried to rest sufficiently to tackle the long row to Hirta the next day, May 31st.

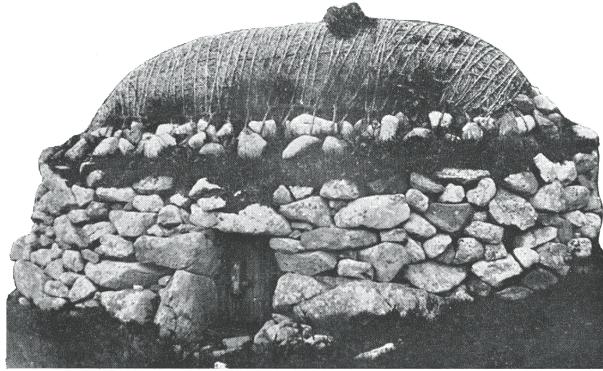
'We proposed being at St Kilda the next Day, but our expectation was frustrated by a violent storm, which almost drove us to the ocean; where we incurred no small Risque, being in no ways fitted for it; our Men laid aside all Hopes of Life, possessed with the belief that all this Misfortune proceeded from the Imposter Roderick (of whom hereafter) who they believed had employed the Devil to raise this extraordinary Storm against Mr Campbell who was to counteract him...'

Violent localised changes in the weather are a feature of our northern Atlantic waters, and the occupants of the boat would have been expecting this had they much sea-going experience. They all were in fear of their lives at various times over the first three days of this expedition. Also noteworthy is the crew's quick lapse into superstitious beliefs and supernatural fears, to be seen later in the St Kildans in a more pronounced form. Fortunately, '... it pleased God to command a calm the Day following, which was the First of June, and then we rowed to St Kilda'.

So the outward trip ended happily enough, though it had been a bad few days for onboard democracy. They all had yet to learn that decision-making by vote is no way to run a ship.

Imperfectly cleansed with salt water after being slathered in guano, John Campbell and Màrtainn MacGilleMhàrtainn — his name was anglicised to 'Martin Martin' — were carried ashore on the shoulders of pairs of Hirta islanders who smelt no better than they, as they had been up on the rocks snaring and dressing birds when they saw the boat coming. Martin had arrived inauspiciously in the place he hoped would make his name, but the welcome he received was genuine.

Unfortunately, his account of this three-week visit, which he published as a book soon after, would, for over two hundred years, burden the remote St Kildan community with a reputation that attracted far less happy results. His journal, first published separately the following year, was afterwards never out of print for 100 years when it became the last chapter in his 1703 full collection: *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland*.



'Cleit' #102, ex-black house with wooden lock

When Martin Martin visited in 1697 the villagers lived in small 'black houses' that were much the same as those found elsewhere in the Hebrides. They were grouped together closely, not arranged as a linear street (see below). Smoke from the turf fire in the middle of the floor found its way out by the door as much as by the inadequate hole in the roof above it. Everything was covered in soot. The double-thickness walls insulated the house, and quietened the howling of gales. Light was provided by a *clach shoule*, a hollow stone filled with fulmar oil, with a pinch of peat as a wick. It was difficult to avoid items hanging up in the ceiling, such as gannet stomachs used as containers for fulmar oil, or '*giben*', their mixture of oils that was used as a general food additive and a panacea for most ills. In the winter they shared the houses with their cattle. The cleit shown above has a wooden door lock, which means that it was probably one of the improved black houses, early 19th century. By the end of the century it was noticed by visitors that cleats and byres had locks, as well as houses, to thwart 'petty pilfering of dried birds, hay, feed, etc.'

Martin Martin, John Campbell and their crew may have been housed in a slightly bigger black house than most. We know that Rachel, wife of Lord Erskine of Grange, was banished to Hirta by her husband from 1734 to 1742, and was hospitably treated by the villagers. They accommodated her in a black house measuring 20 feet by 10. They were not all built to the same pattern.

The Steward appointed to oversee Hirta's affairs at this time was Alexander MacLeod, who farmed on Pabbay, where he held the lease or 'tack' of Baile na Cille. He also leased land on Skye. In mid-June he would sail to Hirta in his *Bìrlinn* to collect rents in kind to take back to his chief. His father and grandfather had also been Stewards of Hirta and had held the same tack, so there had been a long period of close association between Hirta and the island of Pabbay. He visited the islands only once a year (biannually in later years), but 'The Steward's Deputy' or Ground Officer was a native of Hirta, ordered to remain there and uphold MacLeod interests while his superior was absent.

The Ground Officer was given a few acres of pasture and other perks as payment, such as an omer of barley (4 litres) from each family, and the privilege of being first and last in the island boat as

it came and went among the lesser isles and rocks. Each June the Steward would bring eye-catching presents for his deputy, to publicly confirm his favoured position.

In 1697 the deputy was Donald MacGillcomb. Originally, the holder of this post had been elected solely by the villagers but by this time he was wholly the Steward's man. The deputy paid dearly for his status, though, as he had to take in hand the reception of the Steward on Hirta once or twice a year at his own expense.

The villagers still expected 'their' man to argue their case strongly when they had a grievance, but such occasions had become a pantomime with the Steward simulating bad temper when his deputy presented their demands, eventually pretending to beat him about the head with a cudgel when he repeated them, often a little too enthusiastically.

Nearly two hundred years later the village 'parliament' was photographed in the street, stage-managed with the 'people's nominee' — the Steward's deputy — identified as their properly elected spokesman. This reflected the photographer's belief that democratic representation emerged naturally in 'primitive' societies.

The Steward's conveyance from Rodel, Pabbay or Ensay (Easaigh) to Hirta was a big boat that really qualified as a 'Galley' rather than a '*Bìrlinn*' as it deployed more than 18 oars. Its Norse kinship was evident in the banks of oars and the long, straked hull lying low under a square sail. It was already there and beached in Village Bay when Campbell and Martin arrived. It was one of the last island vessels to fly a woollen sail, and details have come down to us: it was cut from 'white plaid'.

The Islanders had a poor reputation as seamen throughout their recorded occupation of Hirta, but were famed for their physical strength and agility. They had hauled out the Steward's *Bìrlinn*, men and women acting in unison as directed by a 'Cryer', over a flat weed-covered rock they used as a slip, and up past the tide line. The eternal problem of landing on Hirta is that Village Bay offers the only safe option, but is open to large and sudden swells in easterlies, so the choice of vessel must either be big enough to anchor off and ride the waves or small enough to be hauled quickly above the tide line as she grounds. Martin's hired boat was the latter.

'Principal Square in the Capital of St Kilda'. What appear to be streams of water are flows from the tubs of women 'waulking the cloth'. Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, 1812



Harvesting the fulmar on Stac An Armin, over a 10 to 20 day period in summer. The time for young gannets — 'gugas' — was October.

The Steward had his 'retinue' with him, which comprised convalescents, the most poverty-stricken of the clan and his own servants. This retinue could number anywhere between 40 and 60 from year to year. This tradition of 'sorning' had originated in the mists of time and was part of a matrix of complex mediaeval obligations, tied in with religion, old pagan superstitions and the patriarchal clan system. It had been discouraged by the Privy Council in 1616 with the Statutes of Iona, but here it was on Hirta 80 years later. They were entertained and cared for at the St Kildans' expense until their departure in mid-August. There may have been great distance and violent seas between the islanders and their chiefs in Harris and at Dunvegan, which made it impossible for them to impose regular feudal clan duties, but the cost of the Steward's visit would have gone a long way to restore the balance in their favour.

In later years the Steward made two visits per year to collect rents in kind — feathers and oil from fulmars,

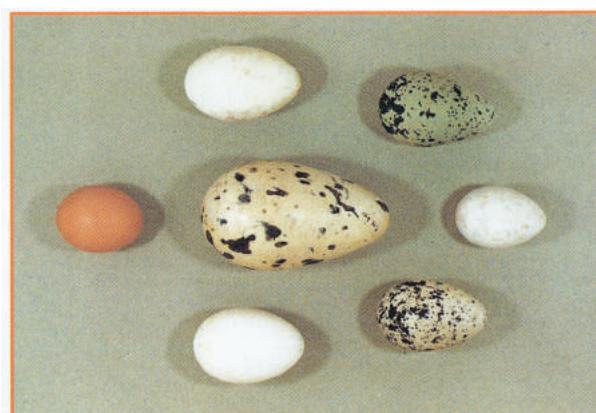


wool from the sheep, bales of tweed and woven clothes. The primitive Soay sheep provided the softest wool in the Hebrides and it was mixed in with other wool.

If the islanders had a serious charge to bring against the Steward for unfair practice, the Deputy or Ground Officer was also their envoy, approaching MacLeod himself. The whole boat's crew accompanied him to ensure that he represented the facts fairly.

He had to make his entry '...very submissively, taking off his Bonnet at a great distance when he appeared in MackLeod's Presence, bowing his Head and Hand low near to the ground, his Retinue doing the like behind him one after another, making as it were a Chain.'

This 'non-commissioned' officer joined in the welcome on the beach, then Martin, Campbell and their crew were escorted to a lodging that had been prepared for them. According to custom the Steward's Deputy summoned the people to agree on daily supplies



Eggs taken for food on St Kilda, clockwise from left centre: brown domestic hen's egg (medium) for comparison, gannet, guillemot, puffin, razorbill, fulmar. Centre: great auk. There were others, too.



Possibly the best known image: The village 'parliament', 1885, outside house #9. The men were highly amused when they heard the name, and adopted it. They discussed day-to-day business: the weather, the seastate, the jobs that needed to be done.

Front right is Donald Ferguson, about to be appointed as the Steward's Deputy or Ground Officer. Third from the left, with red whiskers, is Donald MacDonald, who was chosen with two others to represent the islanders before the Napier Commission in 1883. This was a six-man Commission formed to look into 'The condition of the crofters and cottars in the highlands and Islands of Scotland.'

Of the ten pairs of feet in view out of thirteen, five are bare.

for the visitors: 'Bread, Butter, Cheese, Mutton, Fowls, Eggs, Fire and all, which was to be given in at our Lodging twice every day... each family paying their quota proportionably to their Lands: I remember the allowance for each Man per diem, beside a barley cake, was eighteen of the eggs laid by the fowl called by them 'Lavy' (*Guillemot*), the eggs of this bird being preferred above all others on the island, and a greater number of the lesser eggs. We had the curiosity after Three Weeks Residence to make a calculation of the Number of eggs bestowed upon those of our boat and the Steward's galley; the whole amounted to Sixteen Thousand eggs: the inhabitants were thrice our number and must consume a number of Eggs and Fowls in proportion.'

Martin's crew gorged themselves on this protein-rich diet after the brief privation of their voyage out, and soon paid dearly for it. The natives were used to



eating eggs, often straight from the nest, but strangers frequently suffered stomach cramps and flatulence: 'The Eggs are found to be of an astringent and windy Quality to Strangers, but, it seems, are not so to the Inhabitants...

Our men upon their Arrival eating greedily of them became costive (*constipated*) and feverish. Some had the Hemorrhoid Veins swelled;

Mr Campbell and I were at no small trouble before we could restore them to their ordinary temper; we ordered a Glister (*poultice*) for them made of the Roots of Sedges, fresh butter, and Salt, which, being administered, had its wished-for effect; the Inhabitants reckoned this an extraordinary Performance, being it seems, the first of the kind they had ever heard of.'



Three generations of Hirta women, probably from the same family. Note the lace circlets, denoting married status, and the best clothes brought out for the photographer — and the bare feet. In winter their lower legs would be clothed in tubes of skin and feathers peeled off gannet necks, drawn on, head end down, as stockings. The bags, to hold turf, birds or feathers, have been laid aside while they oblige the photographer. c. 1880



The village boat.

This photograph was taken at least 200 years after Martin visited, but their boat is similar to the one described by him. It is 25ft long (note the sternpost, seen at the extreme left of the shot, suggesting a double-ended hull). A tough, seagoing open vessel built by James G Marr, Leith, for £43.2.6. It is about to take sheep to Dun, or round to Soay.

A M Cockburn, 1927

Normal allopathic medicine back then required a thorough knowledge of herbs and natural materials, so some of Martin's outlandish remedies (not this one) have a whiff of witchery to modern noses.

At least in this instance on Hirta he didn't reach for a scalpel nor look for leeches, for which his crew might have been relieved. Martin had been fascinated from youth by curative preparations and procedures, and after his West Highland adventures he entered Leiden University in 1710 and graduated as MD, practising briefly in London afterwards until his death in Knightsbridge on October 9th, 1718.

If Màrtainn MacGilleMhàrtainn had been as keen a sailor as he was a naturalist we would not have to struggle to piece together details of the small boat that took them to Hirta.

There is virtually no description of it in his account. The boat was no lightweight, because the islanders carried

the crew out of it through knee-deep water without trying to drag it close to shore. They guided it in past the rocks at the foot of Oiseval by poling the boat away from them, a skill they had developed through frequent use of bird snares on 14ft poles. On the other hand, the crew lowered the mast and sail and yard before rowing to Boreray, so the sailing rig was dinghy weight and probably raised without stays or runners.

When reflecting on the total number on board the 'Bìrlinn' and in his smaller vessel, Martin says that 'the inhabitants were thrice our number', and he had already confirmed the native population to be 180. Sixty visitors, then, were shared unequally between the bìrlinn and their boat. But how many bìrlinn oarsmen and how many in the 'retinue'? Martin's open boat becomes smaller by the minute, and the occupants must, perforce, rise in our opinion for making the outward journey at all: he was obviously right in his judgement: '...we incurred no small Risque, being in no ways fitted for it (*the Ocean*)'.

On a fine day they accompanied a bird-culling party to Stac an Armin, '...but we found it very hazardous; the waves from under our boat rebounding from off the Rock and mounting over our Heads, we durst not venture to land, though men with ropes were sent before us; we

The Parliament at rest outside house #5, looking more natural sitting than when standing in two lines to create an effect. The jumbles of stone between the houses are in fact old black houses, retained for use as byres.

A M Cockburn, 1927



(Below) Mrs Ann Gillies, née Ferguson, b.1866, daughter of Donald Ferguson, senior St Kildan in his day



When Martin Martin visited, there were ponies on Hirta to carry panniers and saddle bags that were filled with turf, seaweed, seabirds, and feathers. The reason given by the men for phasing them out was that their grazing cut down what was available for the sheep, despite the fact that the sheep grazed mainly in areas too difficult for ponies. Which left the haulage work to the women. They married in their early teens and soon showed the effects of their hard lives.

thought it indeed hazard enough to be near this Rock; the wind blowing fresh, we had much difficulty reaching St Kilda again.' He gives a slightly more detailed description of the islanders' boat than he does for his own:

'There is one boat, sixteen cubits long (24ft / 7.32 metres), which serves the whole Commonwealth. It is very curiously divided into Apartments proportionable to their Lands and Rocks; every individual has his space distinguished to a Hair's Breadth, which his Neighbour cannot encroach so much as to lay an egg upon it.

Every Partner in Summer provides a large Turf to cover his Space of the Boat, thereby defending it from the Violence of the Sun, which (in its Meridian Height) reflects most vehemently from the Sea and Rock, upon which the Boat lies. At the drawing it up, both Sexes are employed in pulling a long rope at the Fore-end; they are determined in uniting their strength by the Cryer, who is therefore excepted from his share of the Labour...'

Dividing the boat into segments like this is only partially reminiscent of Norse practice: they used the equal distance between the frames to size what they called 'rooms', which were spaces for individual oarsmen. The rowers sat on similar-sized boxes in which they kept their personal possessions. They were all equal spaces, though, not sized differently to reflect the status and 'wealth' of the occupant. Despite these differences, that must have affected the performance of the Hirta oarsmen, this quaint social stratification continued for well over a century. The same insistence on everyone's contribution being calculated in proportion to their holdings was to be found in the 'patchwork quilt' sails of their boats, that were stitched up out of irregular oblong woollen shapes of different sizes:

'... they have a single, awkward, heavy ship's boat of maybe 2 or 3 tons burthen, and she comes under the consideration of the assembled people. She rows with three oars a side and has a square mainsail of a most curiously varied fabric of wool, made by themselves, and serves them in fine weather to go to Borera in.' (Charles

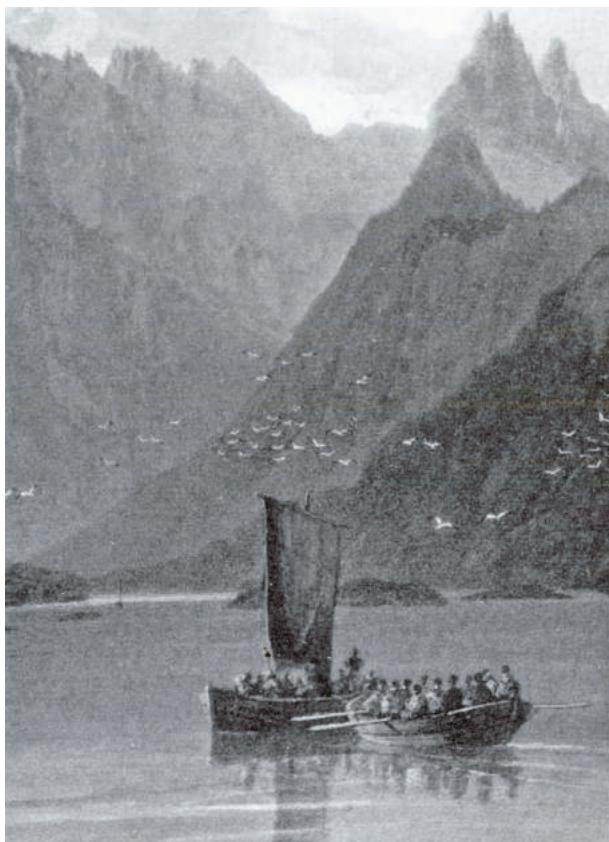
Clayton Atkinson, 1831) That observation was made 134 years after Martin's visit. Nothing had changed.

Standard practice in that 1831 boat was for twelve crew to embark, with six rowing and the other six standing by to relieve them when required. The rowing thwarts crossed the full beam of the boat.

The boat Martin Martin saw and described in 1697 was lost in 1703, when all the men took it to Boreray in mid-March. The boat was tied up but the warp broke, marooning them until the end of May, when the Steward made his annual visit and brought them back.

They spent several years without any boat, and a replacement was provided only in 1712 — for £8.2.9, as mentioned in the rental records. This boat was in use at the time of the smallpox epidemic in 1727, and would have been the one that took two parties to Boreray and Stac an Armin, where they were stranded after the village was struck down by the pestilence and no crew was available to bring them back. Possibly that one was not maintained properly afterwards due to lack of manpower; in any event it had to be replaced in 1735, when the rents were given up that year to buy a boat.

At some point in the 1740s another one must have been acquired, but by 1758 there was one boat only, and that must have been in poor condition: they had been worried about it being blown about and wrecked on shore by winter storms, so they had filled it with earth



A view of Hirta with two boats and gannets, by an unknown artist. This may or may not have something to do with Martin Martin. The boats pictured are typical of the 17th century, but are too large for either of them to be the one in which he travelled to Hirta. If any reader can source this image, please let me know about it —KM

and stones up to the gunwales until Spring. It was used in October 6th the following year to take nineteen men out to Boreray. The weather deteriorated after ten of them were landed. The other nine stayed, bouncing around in the boat for three days while they were tucked under the lee of a rock. When the storm showed no sign of abating they took a reckless gamble and set off for Village Bay. Three men were washed away and drowned, six made it to the shore, and the boat was destroyed. Presumably the ten on Boreray made themselves comfortable and waited once again for the Steward's galley to arrive in 1760.

The Hirta residents tended to be poor sailors and even worse rowers; over the years several outsiders commented on the St Kilda boat being peculiarly subject to casualties. It seems cavalier to dismiss all Hirtans over two and a half centuries like this, but it is a recurring theme in their history. A boat was essential for them to distribute sheep around their meagre island pastures and collect harvested birds from sheer rock faces like those on Stac Lee. The birds were strung together by the climbers and gatherers and dropped into the water below, to be picked up by the boat crew – the 'casting-point' was often too high to risk aiming at the vessel.

If the weather was really bad, the birds might be washed away before they were collected. Misjudgement of tidal changes when distracted by the harvesting going well sometimes ended badly, too. After the birds were taken back to Village Bay they were reclaimed by their owners, which mystified Martin, as he thought they might be divided equally, share and share alike. The hunters cut their own mark into the birds' feet so they could easily claim them. However, if any harvest provided a real glut of birds that made this cutting of signs tedious and unnecessary they were indeed shared out equally, back on the shore at Village Bay.

An annual hunting occasion that produced a high yield always meant a more equitable division of the haul on what would become a day of celebration (see photograph of Fulmar harvest, page 57). Stockpiling the birds, and bringing them from the boat and the more accessible cliffs was the job of women and children; it was considered degrading for the men to take any part in it. They had already dealt with the manly part: strangling or stunning the fulmars before they could vomit oil over them, a defence mechanism well-known to all climbers



of big sea stacks. The foetid oil was a valuable resource, for their own use and for barter.

The lot system they used to share the spoils was overseen by two respected elders — aged 'wise men' — to ensure that it all was done fairly. The birds were first divided into two heaps, the best birds and the second-best. Then they were divided into as many lots as there were family households in the community, with two best birds put in each pile by one man, followed by two lesser quality birds from the other. The process was continued until no birds were left in the pile. Then each portion was decided by drawing lots, so there could be no partiality. Martin writes that the use of lots to avoid disputation, together with the swearing of oaths while touching a crucifix, '...do mightily contribute to their Peace and Quiet, keeping everyone within his proper bounds.'

They rarely launched their boats to go fishing, even though the surrounding waters were teeming with marine life. They chose to take fish by rod and line from the rocks, using parboiled limpets as bait or the flesh of the 'bowger' ('Buigire' — Puffin), or sometimes loading big hooks with both. Fish was part of their diet, as were seals, but very much secondary to the 'fowls' with their eggs and rich, oily flesh.

One of Martin's more amusing interventions during his visit was his abolition of the 'Fire-Penny Tax'. There was only one steel and tinder-box on Hirta, and its owner never failed to take it along to the lengthier bird collections, usually on the far outliers. He exacted three eggs or one of the smaller birds from each man for his services when fire was needed.

Hirta being volcanic in origin, Martin had found places where crystals had formed, particularly in a sand layer under the rocks of the landing place, which had to be shattered to find them. The largest pieces of crystal were up to four inches long, two in diameter and each one 'sexangular', as he put it. I wonder whether rock science was sufficiently advanced back then for him to know that these phenocrysts were formed when the matrix was hot and still liquid, able to take perfect crystalline shapes as it cooled, free from adjacent pressures. He probably didn't, as he refers to the crystals 'growing' under the rocks, as simple crystals can be grown anywhere creating saturated solutions at high temperature which are then allowed to cool. But he did show the astonished islanders





how to strike sparks from these with the blades of their knives — and so ended one man's monopoly.

Martin Martin was just 28 when he visited Hirta, and he brought the passion and energy of a young man to everything he did there. The year before he made this trip, Hirta was visited by a boatful of ruffians who conned the people out of a couple of cows by giving them a handful of worthless copper coins in exchange, and then they were intent on violating some of the women. It had been difficult to get rid of them. Martin ascended the cliff on Oiseval in company with some of the men, and showed them how easy it was to hurl large stones down on the landing place, where they exploded like grenades. The Hirtans took the advice to heart and also vowed never to let more than six come ashore at one time in future.

Not having a personal fortune, Martin tended to rely on hitching a ride with others when he needed to travel. In the case of Hirta the trip was all business, as he saw it was his moral duty to support John Campbell in exposing 'Roderick the Imposter', the false prophet who had imposed himself as a possibly half-crazy shaman on the people. Martin had the support of the MacLeod chief himself in this. As a strict Presbyterian, he even looked askance at John Campbell himself, an Episcopalian, whose beliefs encompassed a panoply of bishops. 'I am uncertain as to the parson of Harries', he said.

Martin completed an incredible amount of work in the three short weeks they were there. He was aware that previous accounts of Hirta, the best-known by Dean Monro, were second- or third-hand, not based on personal experience, and not written by someone who was brought up to speak 'Irish' as he usually called his mother tongue, or had the advantage of being close to the clan chiefs in Skye and Harris — the latter being the laird of Hirta too. So his first aim was to learn all he could about the 'outmost isle' and its people, then go there and see it first-hand — for his own education and advancement, and for that of others.

Second, he was committed to supplying Sir Robert Sibbald and, through him, Dr Hans Sloane, Secretary of the Royal Society in London, with his 'observations' of the Western Isles, including Hirta, and the 'Curiosities of Art and Nature' that he would collect and forward to London, to eventually become museum pieces; it is possible that he started to collect seriously as early as

The graveyard, displaying their best stonework
by Paul Constantine

1680. His documented true stories of the strange and exciting facts of life in wild Scotland were also presented.

He regarded Hans Sloane as '...one of the greatest Virtuosoes of the royall Society'. Both Sibbald and Sloane were medical doctors as well as scientists and collectors, and they recognised a promising young kindred spirit in Martin. They may have inspired him to take up medicine himself. At the very least they saw him as a tireless researcher and field worker with the ability to contribute papers to the Society. By 1695 he was sending them material that would be the foundation of his big work, *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*. Hans Sloane placed everything Martin brought to London in a collection that became one of the three basic elements of the British Museum on its foundation in 1753.

I had at first written here that the Hebridean materials could be seen in their entirety at the British Museum, but present events seem to have overtaken me. The director of the Museum, Hartwig Fischer, has used his Covid lock-down to radically reorganise the Museum collections. The bust of Sir Hans Sloane has gone. 'We have pushed him off his pedestal.'

Sloane is to be locked in a display cabinet 'alongside artefacts that explain his work in the exploitative context of the British Empire.' Sharing this reviled space with Sloane will be Captain James Cook, who mapped Australia.

The reason for this is that he 'benefited from the slave trade' by travelling to Jamaica and conducting field work there, and 'his family was immersed in the slave trade', meaning that he had married Elizabeth Langley. She had inherited her money from her father, but was also the widow of Fulke Rose, who left her a third of the income from his estates in Jamaica, which had been worked by slaves. I think we are about to see every revolutionary empirical botanist and biologist of the 18th century treated in the same way, as they were able to travel the world to collect specimens only by boarding privately owned ships, which were often involved with part of the old notorious triangular trade.

Expect a book on this any time soon, written by Kathleen Murphy, a science historian at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. I would urge members to read about the long and multi-faceted life of Hans Sloane — and all of his achievements — to maintain a sense of balance.





(Left) Hans Sloane, doyen of the Royal Society

An initiative worthy of comment has been undertaken recently by the Royal Society itself. They have digitised five volumes of the draft minutes of the meetings taken for Hans Sloane between 1686 and 1711. There are full details and a list of contents online — royalsociety.org

The volumes are displayed using 'Turning the Pages' technology. The minutes are records of the Society's gatherings in their most original form, dating from the presidency of Samuel Pepys and the publication of the *Principia Mathematica* to the early years of Sir Isaac Newton's time in charge. Clearer transcripts are printed in their leather-bound journals, but more exciting to my mind are the online contents of all the 'Philosophical Transactions' of the Society, which are searchable and linked to downloadable pdfs. These start with the creation of the Society in an *ad hoc* meeting after a lecture delivered by Sir Christopher Wren. The whole website is wonderfully organised.

The third reason for Martin Martin wishing to publicise his visit to Hirta is that he saw his Scotland, the Islands and Highlands of the West, as being wretchedly poor, woefully undeveloped and in need of investment and encouragement, especially in agriculture and fishing.

Just as he had used John Campbell's trip to help his own work, he also benefited by meeting the mapmaker, John Adair in 1698. Adair was about to visit the remote areas and islands of Scotland and survey them. An act of Parliament required the various area sheriffs to arrange for 'knowing men' to accompany Adair and help him; no doubt Martin was one of these. In this way he was able to use what he discovered to benefit his own research and the Royal Society, not just Adair, and without this opportunity his long work, *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland*, would not have been completed. Possibly the erratic sequencing of places in Martin's book, which sometimes reads like A Rough Guide to Scotland, stemmed partly from the arbitrary timing of visits by the mapmaker to different locales.

When Adair failed to pay him fully for his help, he was supported by modest sums of money from his clan

chief, the members of the Royal Society and even the Government, which reminds us of how Martin was valued at the time. His longer work, *A Description...*, was as rushed in its execution as *A Late Voyage to St Kilda* had been, and revealed the same stylistic and structural faults — to Dr Johnson's irritation when he used it as a guide in 1773 to tour the Hebrides with James Boswell.

Apart from his two outstanding books, Martin produced only one more brief article for the Royal Society's *Philosophical Transactions*, in 1707. There is some doubt about whether he seriously practised medicine in London, as he once more travelled abroad with the son of a Highland aristocrat as his paid tutor at the time. It seems he was engaged in that position when he studied for his MD in Leiden, too.

Then in 1716 he wrote to Hans Sloane once more to tell him that he intended to return from Paris and travel in Scotland again, 'as soon as an opportunity offers'. He asked if he might again be useful to him and the Society by searching for more 'curiosities' and reporting on them.

There is a sense that Martin had lost his way. The Jacobite rising of 1715, supported by the MacLeods, must have shaken him, and Sloane and the Royal Society seemed lukewarm in their lack of response to his latest offer. My feeling is that he damaged his reputation when he wrote *A Voyage to St Kilda*, by making extravagant claims for the inhabitants and their culture and then invalidating most of those claims with the facts and observations he recorded in his account. The Royal Society would have expected more intellectual rigour than this kind of publicity-seeking. Then his behaviour, born of religious zeal, in acting as some kind of witch-finder general when he interviewed the islanders and 'Roderick the Imposter' would not have been to their liking, either.

On the other hand this has never prevented his distorted claims living on to encourage overwrought reactions to 'St Kilda' over the centuries.

Early in 1718 he was in Kensington and had been 'taken ill of an Asthma these three months past'. He was planning to travel abroad, but it was not to be. He died of his illness on October 9th that year and was buried on the twelfth in the graveyard of St Martins. His mentor and friend Sir Robert Sibbald, physician and botanist, personal doctor to Charles II and James II of England, VII of Scotland, survived him by four years and died in 1722, to be laid to rest in Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh.

Martin Martin's resting place was destined to be close to some of the scientists he most admired, like Robert Boyle, who had been appointed a member of the Council when the Royal Society was chartered in 1663, and was buried in the churchyard of St Martin-in-the-Fields after he died in 1691. *KM*

'Toward the Remotest Isles..'

Attempting St Kilda under sail in *Hafren*, a 'Plus-S' 16 years-old Wayfarer dinghy, W10022, with a distinguished history

by Jeremy Warren, #3113

Jeremy qualified as a sailing instructor at 15, survived the Fastnet Race in 1979 and has been an offshore racing skipper and Yachtmaster for 30 years. In 2014 he and Phil Kirk sailed *Hafren* 1,400 miles round Britain in just 33 days to beat the old record of 72 days (they had allowed themselves 60 days to do it). He helped Will Hodshon to prepare his family's 60 years-old wooden Wayfarer W198 *Nipegegi* for a non-stop attempt with Richard Mitchel in 2019, which took the record in only 18 days, finishing on June 30th 2019.

Both Jeremy and Will have presented their experiences at DCA AGMs. Hamish Berkeley is a young but very experienced dinghy instructor.

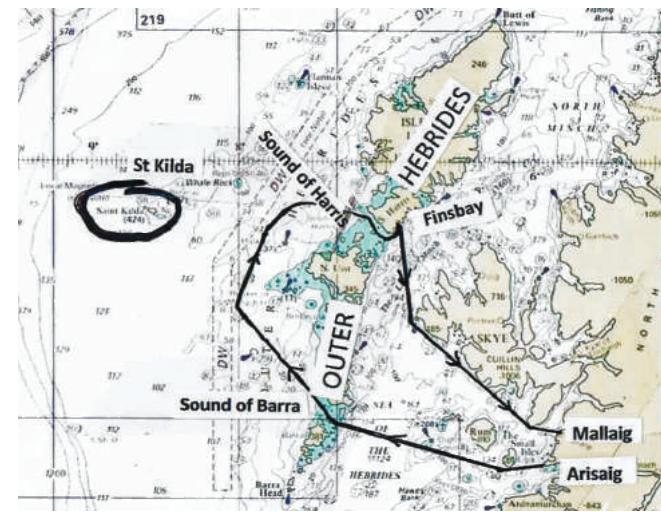
Despite this august background, Jeremy's log of their recent St Kilda attempt is a catalogue of errors and negligent planning, to which he is prepared to hold up his hand in acceptance. Why? Read on...

AS HAMISH BERKELEY AND I SET OFF UP THE M5 towards Scotland, Wayfarer on tow, we were feeling pretty good about our trip of the preceding month. In May we'd stormed across to Guernsey from Plymouth and back in a weekend, just like a big boat trip. We felt more than good; on reflection we were smug, and were soon to have a sharp reminder that failing to give the sea due respect never ends well. Here I recount this lesson, in all its embarrassing detail, to chastise myself and hopefully provide guidance for others.

The plan was to get to St Kilda and land on Hirta, the largest island. This group of islands lies 36 NM west of the Outer Hebrides, way out in the Atlantic proper. Of course it's been done in Wayfarers before, and often via the Monach Islands, which are themselves outside the protection of the Outer Hebrides, but we wanted a longer trip, a real Atlantic taster. So, cards on the table now, we were working up to retracing Frank Dye's iconic trip from Scotland to Iceland, and this Atlantic taster, along with Guernsey, was part of that work-up.

The Outer Hebrides form a 110 NM spine from the Butt of Lewis in the north to Barra Head at the south end. Sandwiched between them and the mainland are islands, including Skye, Rum, and Eigg, plus the Sea of the Hebrides and the Little Minch channel. This sailing water is challenging in its unpredictability, but it's still inside the Hebrides. Outside the Outer Hebrides, it's a different world as we now know, with nothing in the way across to the Americas. The seas are bigger, and it is lonely, with no shipping, few lights and zero Ports of Refuge.

We chose to leave from Arisaig, which is on the Scottish mainland just south of Skye. There are two major passages through the Outer Hebrides, the Sound of Barra to the south and the Sound of Harris to the north. From Arisaig it is 50 NM west to the Sound of Barra, then a further 60 NM north-northwest to St. Kilda. The plan was to get there, then plan how to get back. A poor plan, as will become evident.



On arriving at Arisaig we recce a launch spot for the next morning. The boat yard looked okay but all the B&Bs were full, so it was to be camping. Then some luck; we found a delightful campsite just north of Arisaig with hobbit pods overlooking the sea. So, back to the pub, live music and warmth and then a decent place to sleep.

Next day the forecast was SW F3/4 going E F5/6 overnight; nothing too daunting. We opted for launching over the campsite beach. The bay entrance was rocky and uncharted but not a problem when you can so readily see the bottom. Then to MISTAKE ONE: I had not packed enough food. What a halfwit! Fortunately, Hamish checked supplies before we cast off. I think he wanted to know what was coming at lunch time. So, two hours of daylight wasted whilst we waited for the Co-op to open.

Ten hours' sailing with one reef in saw us beat around the bottom of Eigg against the anticipated SW F4 to enter the Sound of Barra. Good visibility, wind dying with the sun and dolphins to entertain us. Best of all, a basking shark much longer than the Wayfarer. We all know it only eats krill, but it was majestic and a bit scary to see

I am more than happy to own up to these mistakes because I should know better, and, importantly, Mr Editor, it makes a much better tale than smugly recounting how clever and self-satisfied we are!

— Jeremy,
Nov 12th 2020

*'St Kilda, apparently'
— and a tired Jeremy, actually 23 miles away from it*

it circle the boat. And then off we set into the Atlantic proper, course NNW and not much wind at all. When it did fill in it was indeed from the east as anticipated, and the full F6. It was cold, the sea was confused following the change in wind direction, about 2m high, and with reduced sail the broad reach was pretty lumpy.

It took until first light next morning for MISTAKE TWO to dawn on me. I was driving, Hamish trying to sleep on the floorboards, nearly time to change over. Then I remembered what it said in the pilot book for St Kilda:

*Anchorage off concrete pier. Subject to swell.
Untenable in winds ENE to SSW....*

I woke Hamish and had another look, sheltering under the foredeck and trying to keep the paper dry. Yes, untenable in the easterly we'd spent all night with, and if it was changing then it was only going to go southeast. Which had been forecast before we left. Not just dumb, but negligent even? And it felt really bad. Worse for me, as I'd done the planning. We later learned that the St Kilda ferry had been cancelled for the two days we were out. We were 23 NM short of the islands.

Next? So we were closer now to the more northerly passage through the Outer Hebrides, the Sound of Harris, than to go back the way we had come. Although this was a beat, we were confident of the wind veering to make it easier to lay. So we turned right, off a broad reach onto the wind. With two reefs and most of the genny rolled up we could make progress, but nothing like as good as we had hoped. We were beating into a head sea, which had been building for ten hours, and it was wet and miserable, and we were both tired. It became clear we were only making about 55 degrees off the wind, with the boat's bouncing over waves adding to the leeway, so our velocity made good at 3.7 knots boat speed was a disappointing 2.1 knots. We weren't in imminent danger, and we could handle the conditions but this was no fun at all, with hours of misery ahead.

We skirted Hascieir island, seven miles from the Hebrides. Seeing a big island but no people only deepened our feeling of vulnerability and of isolation. With an island as reference our slow pace was depressingly clear. Then it veered a little, and we could lay the sound. Time for MISTAKE THREE to crystallise. We had not thoroughly prepared ports of refuge, which should have included the Sound of Harris. Again, a mistake bordering on negligent.



I did have a copy of the local pilot book, meticulously annotated by Chris Yerbury. Chris has a great deal of Wayfarer experience in Scotland and had briefed me and provided local OS maps too. But I had not really looked at the notes. I'd made two wrong assumptions: firstly, that the tide goes along the Outer Hebrides, and not much

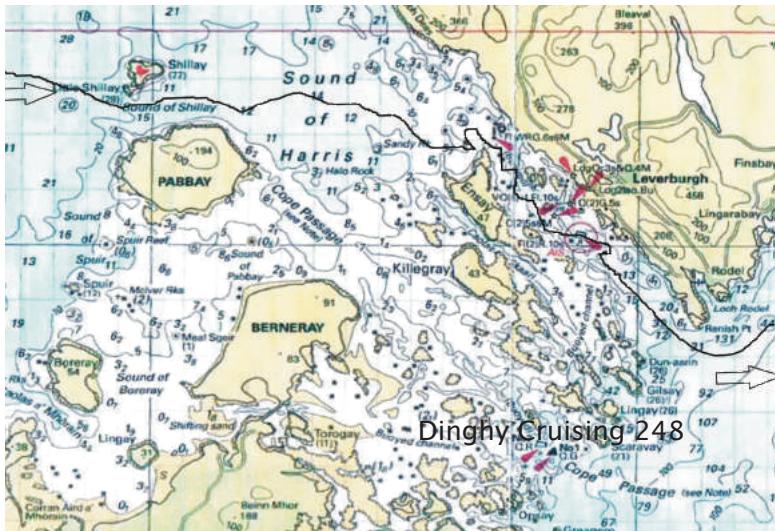
through the gaps (the sounds). A terrible assumption. And secondly, that whatever the

conditions, I could always read a pilot book under the foredeck. We found ourselves beating directly into the force five, with the full power of a spring tide taking us through, adding three or four knots to our speed over the ground. It was wet with the wind against tide, and now raining hard, making chart work difficult. Chris's pilot book just turned to pulp as I read it. Now here Hamish was impressive with his sanguine approach. I was scared; the passage through the Sound is two dog-legs around a dozen islands with lots of spiky rocks, and it came up fast with the strong tide under us. Hamish's view goes, 'We can see what's what and with the board and rudder up we draw 30 cms, so where is the problem?'. And through we went, keeping close to big nav buoys,

*Sitting together on
that beach, with a
bottle of whisky and
the sun going down,
Hamish told me he
wasn't going to
Iceland in a Wayfarer
any time soon...
Not a surprise and I
agreed...*



Determined Hamish as we enter the Sound of Harris
(Right) Blundering through the Sound of Harris



Passing the Cuillins of Skye



looking at the GPS and the rocks then gloriously blasting out into the Little Minch and relative safety, to my great relief. The sun came out and we reached northeast up the coast of Harris, surfing in a following sea at about 8kts. Phew!

The GPS battery was now flat and it was a bit too lively to change it. I thought we could not miss the turning into Finsbay, a lovely big loch. MISTAKE FOUR. So miss it we did, convincing ourselves that what we were looking at was what we wanted to see, and driving up a dead-end. However, an hour later, at 1800, we entered Finsbay, a mile across and perfectly sheltered. And very beautiful too; all green hillsides and grey mountains. We'd been at sea for only 33 hours and done 156 miles, but it felt like a week.

We beached the boat on an old slipway, tied up with six lines to an array of stakes ashore, and put up a boat tent I'd made from a plastic tarp. This 'tent' was only ever intended as a template to get a real one made up but it did the trick. And there we stayed for a day and a half as a gale blew through. Remarkably the plastic tent survived, although it was noisy in the wind. The locals from the nearby houses clearly feed seals on the promontory next to our berth, and we found they would come to a call. But not stay long when no fish appeared.

Sitting together on that beach, with a bottle of whisky and the sun going down, Hamish told me he wasn't going to Iceland in a Wayfarer any time soon. Not a surprise and I agreed. We'd had a tough time and learned we could not sleep in the conditions we'd had. It had been the opposite of fun. Voluntarily subjecting ourselves to ten or so days of this would be daft. With the passage of time this decision may be subject to review, but it certainly felt right back then.



Hafren in better times



Dusk off Skye

The sailing which followed next day was some compensation; we crossed the Little Minch in the benign sunshine and a F2, then had an extraordinary burn down the whole west coast of Skye. That morning we'd spoken to a meteorologist at the met office who was also a sailor; he advised we'd get gusts of F7 as we went past the thousand-metre peaks of the Cuillins. These movie-set crags with a wide valley before them did not disappoint, blasting us with cold wind like a monster trumpet. It was just stupendous. Windy yes, but intense sunshine, blue-black sea and we were ripping along, holding on to the spinnaker as long as we dared. Waves broke over the quarter as I cooked up curry: 30-knot wind and chicken tikka; hard to beat.

As it got dark we crossed the gap from Skye to make landfall at Mallaig, preferring it to Arisaig as it is well-lit for what was a midnight arrival. We had learned a lot. Annoyingly though, a lot of things we already knew but just had not done well. Pretty inexcusable.

And one more thing, MISTAKE FIVE: trailing back down the M74 the mast fell off. My bad securing. Luckily it didn't spear any bikers or kebab any cars. The police who attended let us off; they just thought we were stupid. Hard to disagree. *JW*

Hafren with Jeremy on the helm
— Round Britain 2014

Pigeonneau's Viking Voyage

A dinghy cruising adventure to Hedeby and beyond, in a MORBIC 12 with occasional campervan back-up,

by Sam Griffiths

A VERY LARGE CITY AT THE VERY END OF THE WORLD'S OCEAN.

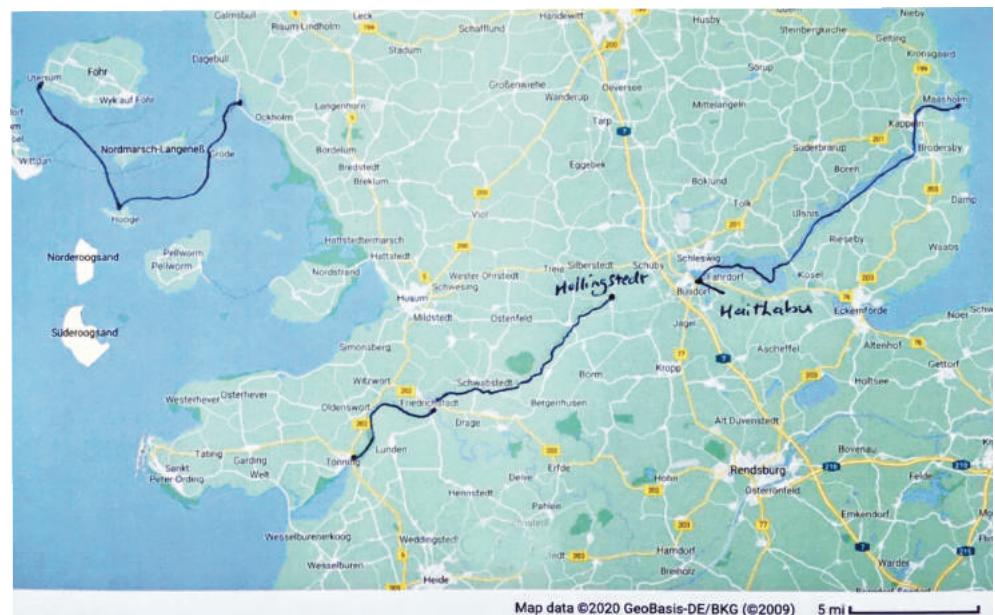
So said chronicler Abraham ben Jacob when he visited Haithabu, today known as Hedeby, in around 965CE. Such words are always enough to send your 'inner dreamer' delving into the atlas, or nowadays, the wonders of Google Maps.

Straight away one can see the geographical wonders of this Viking prime location: the settlement developed as a trading centre at the head of the narrow, navigable inlet known as the Schlei, which connects to the Baltic. It was favourable due to a short portage of approximately 13 km to the Treene River, which flows into the Eider and its North Sea estuary. It was therefore a convenient central base where goods and (possibly) small Viking ships could be pulled on a corduroy road overland for an almost uninterrupted seaway between the Baltic and the North Sea, avoiding a dangerous and time-consuming circumnavigation of Jutland.

Rather quickly, re-enacting this famous route became something of a dream, as I bumped it up the never-ending list of adventurous priorities. In November 2019, the plan came to final fruition when I flew over to a birthday party in nearby Schleswig and was able to visit Haithabu's excellent museum first-hand. From then the

winter months involved creating a week-long journey that would start at the entrance to the Schlei, involve a pick-up near Haithabu, before trailing to the Treene which we would then take to Tonning and (fingers very much crossed) sail up to my wife's family island home on Föhr. It was carefully considered, elaborate and as it turned out, completely impossible!

At first Covid seemed to be the spoiler, but by late July 2020 Lockdown was over, to be replaced by that other stubborn adversary; a consistent westerly. The ambitious voyage had always been somewhat dependent on an easterly of sorts, and so, for once, it was time to be practical and ditch the romantic idea of one continuous journey east to west and go with the now decidedly strong 20-knot westerly! As this was





forecast for midday onwards on Day 1, my Dad (the Davies figure of our last trip in the East Frisians – see DC245) and I trailed *Pigeonneau*, our Morbic 12 dinghy into position just east of Haithabu late on the evening of one Sunday in July.

Blessed with the use of a VW camper, we were able to park at Fahrtdorf, one of the many beautiful little harbours on the Shlei's southern shore and quietly pop up the roof in the dark. We were up early in order to: pretend we hadn't camped (!), slip *Pigeonneau* into the water before the wind became unmanageable, and to attempt to sail the whole of the Schlei in one day...

Free of the burden of our camping kit, we reefed the main, which, along with the handkerchief-sized jib were plenty as we soon rocketed off east (quite a wakeup call!), making quick progress to Louisenlund, a small Kurt Hahn-inspired boarding school on the south shore. After being cross at the hash we made coming alongside, we were quickly rewarded with a brisk leg stretch around the tranquil campus. Back on board our slight detour now ensured we had to reach across to the narrow entrance guarded by the stunning little town of Missunde. This proved to be a wet affair with waves crashing over the bows, as we struggled to find the narrow entrance. What's more, trying to tack (definitely not gybe!) would lead to certain capsise unless we pushed right into the far shore in order to find a little shelter to force *Pig* round. Task achieved, we surfed, funnelling through the entrance as if on a theme park ride, before rounding the corner to emerge into a tranquil bay with so little wind the boat even tried to spin its way dangerously — in an act of senselessness — into another quaint little marina with wooden boats galore.

The Germans see this thin stretch of water as 'Little England' and there is no doubt that it's a pastoral delight that probably has more in common with 'New England'. Most villages are full of decently priced holiday homes, with A-frame houses dotted around the foreshore, but there were also vast stretches of fields and woodland without a soul in sight; we really were in some sort of

sailing heaven! But the increasing wind was enough to fix the mind as we rounded another corner to be faced with a long straight section of the fjord, knowing that the further we went, the greater the wind speed and fetch would be. Powering along, Dad let the main fully out as I sat on the centreboard, frantically balancing the boat. This was similar to our sailing in the East Frisians the summer before, but this time we knew the water would not disappear and we could also easily swim ashore! Once or twice we nearly broached and so it was with no little relief that we nudged into a bay just short of the lifting bridge at Lubbe, wondering how on earth we were supposed to get through. As we tacked to and fro, yachts (under engine) lining up on either side, we almost ended up embarrassingly trapped in irons; we had one final tack to make it out and just managed to skulk round before hearing the bells of the bridge and scooting under, almost certain we would be arrested!

(Below) Behind Sam's father are the head of the Schlei, with 'Haithabu' in the background next to Schleswig,



Such was the drama and our pace, we decided to nip ashore for our sandwich lunch in a wonderfully warm, solitary Strandkorp. Casting off, our post-lunch lull was not shared by the weather, as again by the end of the next long patch of water without a bend we were surfing at considerable speeds, motor boats coming by just to check we weren't completely mad, one even asking how we were staying upright!

The lovely shelter in the town of Kappeln, a potential place to find a slip, was enough to make us think it was all right to carry on to Maasholm at the entrance to the Baltic. At 3pm, time was on our side, but the elements were not. The wind was now coming in huge gusts as we hubristically even visited a nice-looking boat in a bay before entering the marina in search of the promised slip. Alas, hurtling along in what was like a wind tunnel is not conducive to tacking a heavily reefed dinghy... Spotting the slip a little too late, the tiller was slammed over, but she wouldn't come round, the bowsprit trying

to impale the high concrete wall as we careered all over the place, eventually to drop the sails and paddle ashore feeling somewhat chastened. A taxi took us back to the camper and trailer where we celebrated our return with a refreshing dip in the brackish water. Back to Maasholm to retrieve *Pig* where we rewarded ourselves with a lovely supper in the local fish restaurant before driving the length of the Schlei for a third time in search of Hollingstedt on the River Treene. By now it was nearly 11pm, but our luck continued as we hunted for a camping spot for the night, eventually finding a perfect little track in the dark to pop up the roof tent and get our heads down.

(Below) Where are the Viking galley slaves to row us against the wind?!



Up early to inspect our grassy slip in daylight. It is solely used by canoeists rather than hairy Vikings. That said, just as we struggled down the bank, as if from nowhere, a large body-builder of a man was able to help us lift *Pig* into the Treene and off we went to the sea on Leg 2 of our journey. Or so we thought. In fact, after a few hundred metres the river bent right to the west and we were buffeted by the ever-increasing westerly, just like the day before, but we were now against it. XC Weather App told us this, of course, but we thought the river current would be enough. It wasn't, and even ferocious rowing got us nowhere.

Terrific rainstorms scuttled through, to the extent we had to hide under the sail – where were twenty Viking galley slaves when you needed them? One and a half hours of miserable rowing later, a pause in the rain saw us take an early soggy lunch fearing the inevitable; with another day of decent wind from the west it was now obvious that we had to start at the North Sea end and work our way upriver. This still seemed totally counter-intuitive to us, but the fact that we sailed back to Hollingstedt under jib alone in 25 minutes confirmed that

this was a meadow river with only the tiniest of currents. And so the back-breaking work of boat retrieval began as we used a towing rope to bring *Pig* out from where we had only recently launched her, tied everything down and headed off for Friedrichstadt, further inland than Tonning as at this stage we were still keen to sail our long route to Fohr and so were running out of time.

Now, our luck may have deserted us so far that day, but after driving around the stunning, cobbled streets of this ‘Mini-Amsterdam’ of a town, we managed to find a tiny sailing club with just the slip we needed. However, there was the ubiquitous bolted barrier to get past. Just as we were giving up for the day, as luck would have it a father and daughter were just locking up. Totally bemused by our eccentric journey, they were quick to take our 10 Euros and watched us head off under jib alone, the main and boom having been left with the camper and trailer. It was now 6pm, the day had been rescued, as we felt every inch the Viking; steaming upriver with our tan sail aloft. The next three and a half hours were the highlight of the trip as we had seamless sailing and rowing, dropping the mast under a couple of low bridges – untie, drop back with jib still on, then push back up and tie back on, just before and after – great fun! As darkness fell, we pulled in round a bend and set up the tents behind a dyke, with the wind still quite strong, even now, and had the usual Pot Noodle, apple and tea in the dark.

(Below) Upriver sailing with just the jib



Having unexpectedly come so far that evening, Tuesday morning in the fading wind was somewhat of an anti-climax. Indeed, we reached Hollingstedt by midday. However, what this did allow was the chance for me to continue my marathon training as I chose to run 24km back on some delightful cycle pathways to collect the camper and trailer. Dad used the chance to tidy up *Pig* and I was back 3 hours later. We had her out in minutes, being so practised at recovery, followed by a cleansing swim in the fresh water of the Treene. Then there was a

quick tour round the tiny Viking museum; it was amazing to see how utterly dependent these grand traders were on rivers, even a small one like this was enough to achieve the transfer of goods. However, historians are now almost certain that the Vikings did not portage their boats between the Schlei and Treene, as they did elsewhere, especially on Russian rivers. Rather they used carts along tracks. Either way, somewhat exhausted, it was certainly time for a sugary bun and a coffee at a café and a chance to catch breath and plan the final few days.

The slip at Hollingstedt



After a long run, cooling off in Hollingstedt



quite a strong southeasterly. It just didn't seem possible to make the journey round the headland of St Peter-Ording in time and besides we had achieved our main aim of traversing the peninsula, 'Viking style'.

The islands we really wanted to visit on our way to Föhr were Pellworm and Hooge and so it seemed sensible to stay close to the ferry base of Dagebüll and launch from Schluttsiel – so off we drove. A night in the camper in the harbour was a louder than expected affair due to the active fishing fleet, but a hot sun greeted us as we took the ebbing tide out west.

What little wind there was quickly died and a mirror-like surface ensured the islands blurred into one. We pulled into Grode and were able to have a quick scamper around and climbed a dyke to see our destination of Pellworm. We set off for a long old row, only to find that we were quickly in knee-deep water!

Arriving at Hooge...



... and avoiding the drying harbour





(Above) Another view of Hooge

(Below) 'Lembecksburg' on Fohr — a Viking settlement



The chart showed this long patch of shallows, but there is nothing like experiencing the reality of it: how much more of the ebb was there to run? Does this stretch only get covered for a couple of hours a day before you have to start pulling the boat?

It swiftly became clear that we needed to retreat back into the deeper channel that ran all the way to Hooge and safety to avoid being cooked alive on the sands! Yet the blistering heat and general difficulty of identifying the numbered buoys ensured that it took at least an hour of frantic and certainly rather nerve-racking rowing over the shallowest sandbanks before with relief we found ourselves back into deep water.

Hooge itself is a 'Watt Insel', meaning that it does not have any beach as such – high water comes right up to the dyke that surrounds it. This posed us a problem: we could either enter the harbour as would a yacht, but then we would have to dry out

in very squelchy mud, or we could pull in just to the left of the entrance and see how far we could get *Pig* up the boulders. For now though, after 4 hours of rowing in the heat, we'd had enough and knowing the tide had another hour or so to ebb, we just pulled in, left her and went for our usual run ashore, relieved that car-free Hooge is a significantly smaller island to run around than Pellworm!

Searching for a bathing spot afterwards was somewhat hazardous; a sea of mud and sharp shells confronted us in our efforts to get clean, and yet, still fuelled with endorphins — that wonderful free drug — we were swiftly into our dry, if rather smelly clothes. A quaint little thatched restaurant served us yet more fish outside in the evening sun, this time surrounded by a scene of utmost beauty: cottages, cows and a few tourists on bicycles.

A slow walk back to *Pig* saw that indeed she did need pulling up yet further, but with the heavy mast and all the kit out she proved to be manoeuvrable when rolled over our dry bags. We pitched our tents one last time, keen to wake early and head off before the wind got too strong and indeed, the water disappeared again. Our final leg was another adventurous sail with one reef in as we looked to take a short cut at near high water past Langeness. Alas, even then it was extremely shallow, and we bumped along with the wind behind us for twenty minutes – it wasn't pretty, but it was faster and used the Morbic 12's advantages to their max.

Powering up the home straight to Uttersum on Fohr, our local beach, was another of those warm feelings that make the tiring nature and ever-changing plans that are inherent in dinghy cruising all worth it in the end. What's more, we were greeted on arrival with somewhat more affection than I'm sure the Vikings used to be! SG

(Below) A Dutch Plattboot owned by a friend on Fohr – very reminiscent of *The Riddle of the Sands...*



The DCA Burgee Flies in Sunny Brisbane ~ Jason Mayer #3701

Launching from the mouth of Cabbage Tree Creek which flows into Moreton Bay



LATE WINTER IN BRISBANE IS TYPICALLY GLORIOUS
Land this day was no exception, with clear sunny skies, light winds and cool temperatures. The day started nice and early at the mouth of Cabbage Tree Creek which flows into Moreton Bay from the northern suburbs of Brisbane.

My boat is called *Eadie Mae* and she was my Covid lockdown project. She is an 11-foot long, own design, that is still evolving as I test things and make changes. I've made a new friend since joining the DCA. Chris Waite and I have been conversing in the past few months about how to make *Eadie Mae* more seaworthy and make better use of the limited internal space. As you read this she is off the water for a brand new pointy bow, increased freeboard, better flotation and some nice side decks.



With everything prepared, I headed off into the bay with no particular plans but to sail northeast until the northeasterly afternoon breeze kicked in to blow me home. Moreton Bay is fairly well protected from the Pacific Ocean swells by a series of large sand islands located offshore, so the bay is relatively calm except during strong winds. There were no strong winds today so I pottered around looking for sea life. There were no



dolphins today but I did come across a highly venomous sea snake that was just hanging around out in the bay. As always there was the odd jumping fish.

After a while I changed course and headed north towards the famous Shorncliffe Jetty. It was built in 1884 so a ferry service could operate between Brisbane city and what was the separate town of Sandgate back in those days. The jetty was renewed in recent years because it became structurally unsound but a like-for-like replacement was done to maintain its heritage look. Lots of children were on the end of the jetty and waved excitedly as *Eadie Mae* glided quietly past.

It was then that I spotted a coffee vendor on the foreshore, so I dropped the sail and rowed ashore for a hot coffee and a biscuit. As is usual, *Eadie Mae* drew the attention of a couple of people and some long conversations ensued. Everywhere I go, people love to look at the boat and ask questions. In this age of white fibreglass and aluminium boats, a varnished wooden boat certainly draws attention. Unfortunately our local classic wooden boat regatta was cancelled this year due to the virus (which led to this short daysail report instead) but it will come again next year.

Shortly thereafter the northeasterly kicked in and it was time to sail back to the boat ramp. After putting *Eadie Mae* back on the trailer, I sat on the sea wall and ate fish and chips with the seagulls, while watching the rising tide. JM

The new Shorncliffe Jetty, identical to the 1884 original



A Different Dip Into The DCA Facebook Page

Focusing this time on just one discussion,
selected by Jennifer Heney

On 11 August 2020, new member Denis Flores asked, 'For the purposes of the Association, what is the definition of a dinghy?'

Although older members will know that this has been discussed before, it seems worth revisiting the subject as a number of prospective members have asked via the website if this or that boat is acceptable in the DCA. Must it have sails; is a motor boat all right; can it have a cabin, etc.? Another new member, Douglas Young, responded to Denis with, 'Such a good question.... Is there a DCA Definition?' So let's see what people had to say...

(N.B. The posts are not verbatim – I have edited them to make it read better.)

Les Burns No ballast!

Philip Barre Loads of traditional dinghies have ballast, Faerings for example.

Justin Patterson A sailing vessel of 17ft long or less that has no ballast besides the weight of the crew.... with a few exceptions.

Bill Haylock Ballasted open boats the exception? Only if you look back at the last half century or so — Northumbrian cobles and Shetland sixareens used stone ballast for centuries, as did the Viking boats and possibly most other open boats.



The James Caird, the 22ft boat in which Shackleton, Worsley and their small crew made their epic crossing of the South Atlantic from Elephant Island to South Georgia was ballasted with stone, which they had to sleep on.

John Hughes For the purposes of the Association, a strict definition has never been agreed upon. It has been debated in the past — you can explore the bulletin archives for that — and there have always been members with diverse opinions. A strict definition has never been considered necessary, for it is more an attitude of mind that counts.

Chris Yalland I've always thought of an open boat with no fixed cabin being a dinghy whereas when there's a fixed cabin it ceases to be a dinghy...

Michael Wilkinson A small boat for big adventures? As



John Hughes said, for the purposes of the DCA, it's an attitude of mind. Ask a man in the street and a dinghy is just a small open boat. Any simplistic definition is open to challenge. An open boat powered by oars or by sails on a single mast? That would include a Viking longship. Any limit on length would be arbitrary and open up the '...so one inch less and it'd be a dinghy?' Converting a GP14 to lug yawl rig would not stop it being a dinghy. If a small pram hood for shelter is acceptable, then so is a small cuddy, as for example on Robert Aspey's boat which is undoubtedly a dinghy. (*See above*)

Tim Evans It has always been an interesting debate... with no real right answer... Is a Shrimper a dinghy? After all people seem to accept that a Drascombe of similar size is...

David J Roy My Sailfish18 (*below*) is really a mini-yacht, with 2+2 berths if you are ever so cosy and friendly, with a vertically lifting ballasted keel, but it floats in 12ins water. Gross weight 500kg. I would say that technically it is outside the description implied by the DCA title, but falls on the borderline of the general capabilities of the DCA philosophies. I guess I claim 'compliance' on the grounds of limited length, limited boat capability and beaching / jumping ashore like a dinghy.

Sailfish 18 © Graham Neil



Juan De la Fuente How about any boat that can be trailed along by a regular car, and can be moved in and out of the water without great mechanical efforts? A dinghy should be smallish and '*tout terrain*'. Good question!

Roger Barnes This was debated at length many years ago. The final definition was that any boat with an indoor 'heads' was not a dinghy!

Andrew Thomas Johnston Ah...the "bucket and chuck it" definition!

Michael Storer Definitions lead to tears if taken seriously. Being interested and having the 'spirit' of the group is surely enough. Loose definitions like 'spirit' (for this atheist) are sometimes much more useful in reality than trying to pin things down.

Patrick Hay In my book, a dinghy is defined as any vessel any member of the DCA chooses to call a dinghy.

Denis Flores Yes, this changes the orientation to one on the basis of the DCA member's usage. Very appropriate!

Roger Barnes Interestingly, for those of us who also sail in France, there is no direct French translation of the word 'dinghy'.

Michael Wilkinson Just looked it up. The etymology is from 19th century Hindi: 'dingi' meaning a type of rowing boat used on the river. Whatever definition we use now is an extension of the use of a word borrowed from another language. It can mean what we want it to as long as it is a smallish water craft.

Roger Barnes It was Admiral Fitzroy who renamed naval 'jolly boats' as dinghies. Indian-derived words were popular at the time. Naval dinghies tended to be 16ft lug sloops ... without inside toilets!



(Above) A model of HMS *Beagle*'s Jolly Boat – named 'the dinghy' by Fitzroy. It was a una-rigged lugger carried at the stern, so length was confined to 15ft in *Beagle*'s case. Any longer and she would have interfered with the 25ft whaleboats at the quarters — **Keith Muscott**

Bill Haylock This obsession with categorisation, classification and rule-making is just another example of the way that the minority interest of dinghy racing has affected the development of small boat sailing over the past 70 years or so. It is racing that demands rules and an obsession with ensuring all boats of a class comply with exactly the same definition. Remember — the other word in the name of this association is 'cruising'. I would suggest we define ourselves not by what we are or what our boats are, but by what we do.

Cruising is hard to categorise and define; to some people it is re-purposing a boat designed for the narrow needs of racing, to do something it was not designed for. For others it is about rediscovering the diversity of our largely unrecorded centuries-old heritage of traditional working boats. The one thing perhaps we can agree on is that Cruising Is Not Racing. We don't need rules to define it for us.

Andrew Smith Oh no! I have a Drascombe Coaster. Does that mean I can no longer be a member? How about if I tow my daughter's Oppi behind? It is a dinghy definitely and it will be accompanying me. Personally I think it's 'small boat sailing' by those who don't want to charge up and down a lake or patch of water sitting 'on' or most likely hanging off the side of, or dangling from a wire in relative close proximity to, a piece of plastic with their ass skipping the surface of the water, screaming and swearing at every other water user who gets in their way.



Mitch Smith And just to muddy the waters, and promote Anglo-American mutual incomprehension, a dinghy in the US is almost always conceived as a tender to a larger yacht. Open boats used on their own are day sailors or day boats...

Alastair Law We have been debating the wrong question. We are the Dinghy Cruising Association, so the question should be 'what is the definition of a dinghy cruiser?' As has been said above, it is a state of mind, not the hardware.

Andy Mace There is no definition of dinghy cruising but agree that it's what you do or are interested in doing. The Association (DCA) always strikes me as being non-pompous and inclusive — and there are all sorts of boats used. A definition only seeks to exclude, which to me defeats the objective.

Michael Wilkinson Dinghy: a small-ish boat that is open to the elements unless it has a cabin or is quite big, in which case it's a... dinghy. Dinghy cruising: using a dinghy for anything other than racing. I think if you're carrying an anchor that is ready for deployment, and you have tea or coffee on board, it's definitely cruising. As for racing, I read somewhere that DCA rules absolutely forbid racing unless there are two or more boats present!

Time for a brew...

Aspiring to be a Dinghy Cruising Vlogger? (Part One)

Steve Parke writes a dinghy cruising blog and has a YouTube dinghy cruising channel about his adventures sailing South Devon and Cornwall coastal waters in *Arwen*, his John Welsford designed 14ft 6ins Navigator standing lug yawl. Over two articles he shares some ideas that might help you on your way to vlogging success.

VLOGGING, SHARING THOUGHTS, IDEAS and experiences through shortish videos posted online, has grown exponentially thanks to YouTube. Some sailing vlogs, such as 'Sailing La Vagabond', are huge sensations earning Riley and Elayna serious sponsorship and 1.2 million YouTube subscribers. But there are also some small boat vlogs by people such as Creekssailor, Dylan Winter, Eyeinhand and Roger Barnes — with their wonderful mix of reflections on nautical life, small boat cruising tips and stunning sailing and scenery footage.

Steering, sail handling and trying to film content simultaneously isn't easy. Vlogging takes time, planning, patience and imagination and some of the sailing experience can be lost as you constantly keep a camera to hand. Persevere, however, and the benefits can be immense — responding to comments from viewers worldwide who provide inspiration, learning and new online friendships, or taking the opportunity to self-analyse your sailing skills and subsequently planning for improvement next voyage out. YouTube can be a powerful force for education, inspiration and change even at a modest level and someone, somewhere, will appreciate your efforts.

Serious vlogging requires significant time and energy in filming your dinghy cruising exploits in order to achieve worthwhile high-quality vlog content that offers a good viewing experience. The success of vloggers like Roger and Dylan shows there is an appetite for simple, well-crafted small boat adventures. Find your 'niche' and aim for a good story that allows your passion, skills and experience (or lack of in my case) to shine through and learn a few simple basic videoing and editing techniques well.

To help you do this, across two articles, I share some tips on choice of vlogging equipment, story planning and getting well composed and interesting 'creative shots'.

So, assuming you are not looking to fund an extravagant lifestyle dinghy cruising via YouTube and Patreon funding and further assuming that you understand that vlogging takes time and commitment, let's explore two topics in this article — your rationale and your equipment needs.

1. What is your rationale for wanting to Vlog about your dinghy cruising adventures?

The exciting 'Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau' and the 1974 film of 'Swallows and Amazons' left an indelible impression on my early years and a desire to

become a great adventuring cinematographer.

Fast forward 46 years, a Steve Backshall/Gordon Buchanan type I sadly did not become and although secretly, deep down, I still want to be a cameraman filming my own sailing, travel and expedition adventures, I know, in reality, I haven't the prerequisite skills or talent to do so. However, vlogging does allow me a half-way house so to speak and like all great adventure and nature cinematographers, I need to be very clear about my rationale for vlogging.

My blog and YouTube channel started in 2009, sharing my boat-building and sailing adventures with siblings who were, at that time, scattered across the world. It was also to be a 'visual memory bank' for my future 80-year-old self (to remind me that I had followed my dreams by building a boat, learning to sail it and having micro-adventures in it) and I hoped that my journey of 'sailing and boat building discovery' might inspire others to do likewise and seek their own adventures in their own boats on their own home waters too. YouTube, being free to use, was the easiest place to store and share such vlog content.

Your 'rationale' is critical as it will shape what kind of vlogging and storyline planning you do, what film style best suits your sailing and personality, and help identify consistent elements to incorporate across all your vlog episodes (thus giving your audience something to expect and look forward to). They are then more likely to subscribe to your channel. Figure 1 provides some questions to prompt your 'rationale' thinking further.

Figure One: what is your personal rationale?

- What is it you want to achieve?
- Which aspects of dinghy cruising are you most passionate about?
- What could you vlog about confidently?
- Where do you want this vlogging adventure to lead you?
- Who will be watching your vlogs and how big is the potential audience?
- What type of vlog content do you want to create? (Video diaries for yourself? 'How-to' series regarding sailing, boat maintenance and navigation? Vlogs to inspire others to camp cruise? Vlogs as a money earning venture? Vlogs about boating locations with travelogue tips on tides and places to visit?)

Figure Two

Words linked to the term 'dinghy cruising' in key word search

- Association, Boats, Blog, Roger Barnes, Best cruising dinghy
- Camping, toilet, France, Norfolk Broads
- Videos, YouTube, Anchoring, Wayfarer, Wanderer

Consider what 'niche area' of dinghy sailing your vlogs might fill. Start by using a keyword search engine such as **keywordtool.io** – click the YouTube section and enter 'dinghy' or 'dinghy cruising' as the key words (see Figure 2). Then explore what comes up with those words on a YouTube search — see what the different top video creators have focused on in their videos. You don't want to copy them, merely see whether there are 'content' gaps that you could usefully fill. If a keyword search turns up videos with low subscriber or viewing figures, then you know that is a low-demand niche with a small potential audience.

It all depends on what ambitions you have for your vlog and you need to consider this as part of your rationale thinking. Will you want to post occasional vlogs or one per month, week, day? I'd recommend you start initially by posting one every couple of months of good quality and then publicising them on social media to raise peoples' awareness. <https://ahrefs.com/blog/free-keyword-research-tools/> gives some other keyword search tools.

I am still trying to work out what my 'niche' is on my dinghy cruising channel or whether I need a 'niche' at all.

Figure 3: tips for using a smart phone for vlogging

- Stay horizontal landscape not portrait – aesthetically more pleasing and better to watch
- Use a tripod such as Joby GorillaPod to secure to mast, coamings etc
- Invest in a microphone to obtain better audio
- Use a fast-write microSD storage card in your smartphone – videoing is memory intensive
- Avoid zooming (unless you have a high-end smartphone). It leads to pixelated footage. Zoom with your feet by getting up close to your object or subject in the boat
- Avoid the flash infill feature – it skews the light and colour – natural sunlight is the best lighting you need.
- Lock exposure and focus – some smartphones have auto exposure and auto focus which can be locked manually
- Avoid videoing backlit people as most smartphones struggle to identify faces in such situations and give a person a haloed effect
- Switch on your rule of thirds grid in your videoing app to help with composition
- Longer term — invest in some smartphone accessories – clip on lenses or a 3-axis gimbal for steadier footage

At the moment I just organise videos into different playlist themes e.g. 'How to' build a galley box or use an anchor buddy; 'equipment', e.g. 'what's in your dinghy toolkit'; or some are just about mini 'sailing adventures' to local destinations. Across most vlogs though, I do try to stay true to my original rationale (a diary for my 80-year-old self to share with my siblings, parents and friends and a source of inspiration for others to do similar things, but in a better way than me).

One essential element I always try to adhere to within my rationale is self-deprecation. I'm never afraid to show how little I really know about sailing or boats and I really don't mind displaying my complete ineptitude and failure to master even basic things. It would show through anyway! Yes, some viewers may snigger, scoff or even scold. They will have 'done it all, known it all, been everywhere and handled every danger with accomplishment'. But, truthfully? The big secret about YouTube is that actually the overwhelming majority of people are just like you, really supportive and just want to see your journey of self-improvement. They will subscribe, many reminiscing about how 'painful' some of their first cruising experiences were!

2. What vlogging equipment do you have/need?

I use my existing mountaineering and travelling camera equipment built up over many years but I'd definitely advise against rushing out to buy new camera gear. Take a look at what you have already. Will it do what you want with some adaptation, imagination and flair?

For example, start with your mobile phone. Most have excellent cameras, filming 1080p, 2.7 or 4k footage using simple, automatic settings. Great battery life, easy to hand and some are even waterproof! Some allow the use of a lavalier microphone and come with a host of high-powered editing apps that can produce stunning, high quality short videos. If you intend using your smartphone for videoing your dinghy cruising adventures, then cast your eye over some tips I have assembled in figure 3 to help make your footage look more professional.

If you are buying new gear then start simple and build it up gradually. Decide on what type of vlogging camera

Figure 4: qualities I try to get in my camera gear

- Rugged, shockproof, waterproof
- Simple to use one handed - lightweight and compact
- Good rear screen size
- Image stabilization, wind noise reduction and inbuilt WIFI
- 1080p/2.7k minimum recording quality
- Range of manual setting options
- Good manual and auto focus
- Allows external microphone attachments
- Good battery life and chargeable from external power banks
- Variety of clamps and attachment bracket options

you want – a compact DSLR/Digital compact or an action cam? Figure 4 lists the criteria I personally consider when choosing new camera gear and avoid the trap of taking too much gear and tripping over it go on, ask me how I know that!

(Below) Avoid the trap of taking too much gear!



I am sure you could amend this list, for the internet is a great source of information about recommendations, reviews and personal preferences. Two YouTube channels I found really useful for ideas and tips are by Jeven Dovey and Learn Online Video.

On Arwen, I routinely carry a compact digital zoom camera (Sony HX-90) and 3 small action cameras (GoPros). On longer trips, a DJI Spark drone for aerial footage, a small range of accessories such as solar panel and portable power banks and occasionally my Canon 800d DSLR with tripod may join me (particularly on adventures where I will also be exploring ashore).

Neither digital camera is waterproof but both have a flip up screen — perfect for selfies and vlogging. Whatever camera you have/use, get a tripod and/or a gimbal to reduce video camera shake to obtain stable footage. I carry a medium-sized Joby GorillaPod, assorted clamps and selfie sticks and a 3-axis gimbal for the GoPros. Use manual mode on your digital cameras

if you can, as it gives you greater control over image quality. I share my preferred ‘manual’ video settings on a DSLR or digital compact camera in figure 5.

Small, tough, simple to operate and able to catch some epic video, POV (point of view) action cam footage is often valued by TV companies in situations where normal video cameras can’t be used. My GoPro Hero 5 Black film in 1080p, 2.7K and 4K video, have voice control, image stabilization, photo-burst and time-lapse photography and are waterproof to 30m. Their diminutive size makes them inconspicuous when vlogging in public and teamed with versatile mounts, straps, selfie sticks or flexi clamps, most action on board a boat can be easily filmed. In-built WIFI connected to a phone app allows you to mount and control GoPros in difficult to access places such as bowsprit or an upper gaff yard. My niggles? Touchscreen interfaces are fiddly with cold hands and often slow, audio quality is not good in windy conditions and fitting an external mic immediately stops them being waterproof.

(Below) GoPro Hero 5 Black, on head-strap with H1Zoom microphone and extendable selfie stick.



Figure 5: my preferred ‘manual’ mode settings

- Aperture: low F/stop number for shallow depth of field (only subject is in focus – background isn’t) and high F stop if you want everything in focus
- Shutter speed: double your frame rate e.g. if shooting 24 fps then shutter speed is 1/50; 60 fps then 1/120
- Frames per second (fps): cinematic quality at 24 fps; if you want to do slo-mo during editing then shoot in 60 fps
- ISO: keep it on lowest possible; never above 800 – 100 to 400 often best
- White balance: set it for the conditions appropriate for that day and then video all clips that day at the same WB setting – if in doubt keep on auto
- Focus: set to manual where possible unless lots of moving objects within your view finder – then auto focus
- Resolution: set it to highest/best for your individual camera

Tips:

- Keep rule of thirds grid on viewscreen
- Switch on image stabilisation if your camera has it
- Always wipe your lens before filming
- If not using a tripod or gimbal then keep three points of contact on camera – 2 hands and brace against the neck strap where possible
- Have a good fast memory card – I use a SanDisk Extreme PRO 128 Gb 170MB/s SDXC V30 U3 class 10

Figure 6: some action cam and vlogging camera review sites

<https://www.t3.com/features/best-cheap-action-camera>

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/uk/buying-guides/best-budget-action-camera>

<https://www.techradar.com/uk/news/best-action-camera>

<https://www.expertreviews.co.uk/action-cameras/1404343/best-action-cameras-uk-the-best-action-cams-for-4k-recording-running>

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/buying-guides/best-waterproof-cameras>

<https://www.techradar.com/uk/news/best-vlogging-camera>

<https://photojeepers.com/best-budget-vlogging-cameras/>

Which leads me neatly to a key point. New vloggers often over-invest in camera equipment at the expense of audio. Great looking vlogs with poor sound quality are doomed to failure as far as viewers and subscribers are concerned. I use a H1 Zoom handheld microphone to capture my sounds and commentary when using the GoPros or Sony 90HX (and a Rode video-mic on my DSLR). I then sync audio files to video footage during editing.

There are some serious lower cost alternatives to GoPros on the action cam scene and they do just as good a job. If I was starting out now, I would take a serious look at some of these to sit alongside my smart phone and digital cameras. After all, do you really need all the bells and whistles like GPS, voice control, WIFI or even a rear screen? My first action cam, a Hero 2, has none of these features and it is still in regular use now, giving me great footage at 1080p. If you are thinking of getting your first action cam or a new vlogging cam then figure 6 gives some review websites.

When using an action cam, get up close to the subject you are shooting. Thirty-five to fifty cms away is about right if it is set on linear view. Keep it steady, as being small it 'shakes' around easily. Remember too, it is definitely NOT a distance shot camera. Distant shots on an action cam will have a slightly curved horizon in anything over linear mode.

Two or three action cams allow you to combine shots of the same subject action taken from different perspectives during editing, giving viewers a more interesting visual storytelling experience which they will thank you for.

Figure 7 shows the settings I use on my GoPro Hero 5 Black action cams

The compact DJI Spark drone gives me the ability to take some stunning aerial shots of *Arwen* moored or anchored in upper river creeks and if you already shoot sailing videos then investing in a small drone 'elevates' your video footage (excuse the pun). I have yet to master landing the drone on the boat whilst sailing in open waters (something that will take some bottle on my part), but shots of *Arwen* in a hidden anchorage have added visual interest to my vlogs and been appreciated by many of my subscribers.

There are a few things to remember when using drones.

Know and follow the safe drone flying rules and make sure you have correctly registered with the Civil Aviation Authority (or similar body for your country). On a moving boat, your 'return to home' destination will be well astern of where you originally launched so don't hit the 'return to home' button, only to see your drone drop into the sea 50m aft! Watch out for mast, lazy jacks, flapping sails, etc, as you approach to land on the boat and don't lean out to snatch it from the air – it would be an embarrassing MOB situation!

Go no higher than 30m up because going too high loses the detail of movement below in and around the boat. Drone footage is best taken just before sunrise and sunset when the angle of the sun produces shadows and texture and the sky gains those lovely hues. The DJI Spark operates best in light winds, when it is more stable and battery life is therefore longer. To film in stronger winds, use a slightly larger drone such as the DJI Mavic Air. Practise, practise and practise in the middle of the countryside before you approach any coastline and know all the functions of your drone and how to control it. You don't want to panic and ditch suddenly out at sea!

Store batteries in LiPo fireproof bags and tape over each battery terminal before storing them as this will prevent contacts shorting with each other and stop moisture ingress. Carry extra props, gimbal covers and a power bank for charging the drone and/or your mobile phone and remote controller on the go. Carry spare SD cards, opting for a high-quality card such as Sans Extreme class 10 — 90mbps.

Figure 7: video settings used on my GoPro Hero 5 Black

- Shoot in 2.7k (edit in 1080p – which allows zooming, cropping etc during editing)
- Linear mode at 30 frames per second (fps) OR if wanting slo-mo during editing or video-ing something fast moving then 60 fps
- Automatic white balance (AWB) and GoPro Colour
- ISO – around 400 or auto conditions depending
- Shutter speed – auto and sharpness – medium
- EV comp – 0
- Audio – stereo and video stabilisation - on
- Save battery power – voice commands off and brightness reduced to 60%

Tips:

- Carry extra batteries and/or power-bank
- Film video time lapses in 4K (makes editing easier)
- Have a 64 or 128Gb fast memory card – I use Samsung evo micro SD cards class 10 U3

(Below) Action cam view ready for me to start vlogging, set up on flexi clamp attached to opposite coaming



If you want to see the camera gear, mounts and drone I carry on Arwen, check out this video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7bumIffvfE&t=327s>

Finally, some last tips regarding equipment. Firstly, really get to grips with how your camera(s) work and what functions they can perform before using them onboard. Fiddling about and sailing at the same time will invite disaster! I won't tell you how I know that!

Carry lots of spare batteries, number them and get into the habit of charging them immediately after a trip so they are ready to go next time. Invest in those reputable 64 or 128 Gb, class 10, 90MBs+ memory cards (e.g. Sans Disk Extreme PRO, Samsung EVO) and clear them at the end of every trip after editing.

In the next article I explore how we can get 'interesting perspective' video footage, compose visually interesting shots and plan for an 'engaging' storyline that brings 'creative' dinghy cruising footage to life. I also delve into some basic rules we can follow for shooting 'master story telling' footage, investigate B roll footage and why it's so essential to a good viewing experience and consider what other basic camera movements we can use to make our footage look cinematic.

In the meantime, here are a few of the small boat sailing channels I subscribe to (*figure 8*). You will, no doubt, have your favourites too. My blog and vlogs can be found at www.arwensmeanderings.blogspot.co.uk and www.YouTube.com/c/plymouthwelshboy

(Steve's work appears on the next page, too...)

Figure 8: some of the small boat vlogs I subscribe to

Sailing Moonlight <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9c3KQyej5yXZ6M69veSNlg>

Roger Barnes <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtzWwFEMaEVXejzRKgPjPNA>

Dylan Winter <https://www.youtube.com/user/KeepTurningLeft>

Eyeinhand <https://www.youtube.com/user/eyeinhand2003>

Creeksailor <https://www.youtube.com/user/creeksailor>

Travelbywater https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCs5Z_vERzM_gcvIWj0hcKiQ

Joel Bergen https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOIIIT5rejYrs0GP_g4sl0rw

Wayfayer-sailing <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRsr2RwWLmhucMU-tcw3Kw>

Totheblacksea https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOJAPT1M9p8Xur7PfY_SfTA

Bigbadthesailor <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3WFeEAWJ6MKZ2xRUE6MIfA>

Mirrorcruising <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCziN0L3EJ43fqxuVMlyTI1g>

Jbratt <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYO6vC7LWdUnU5m1TpGelTw/videos>

Paul Rickets <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1H0SgBtGztlU9Uideukfog/videos>

Navslipjig <https://www.youtube.com/user/navslipjig/videos>

Enrico Franconi <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCegYIHlxjiPXRDdjzul7LJw>

Watertrails <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbZIWYAhKS59XjhUwbdzxlg>

Advasive diamond https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcr-w_L8mGKCxQmEcRiTxDa/featured

(Below) DJI Mavic Air 2 Drone Fly More Combo — Grey

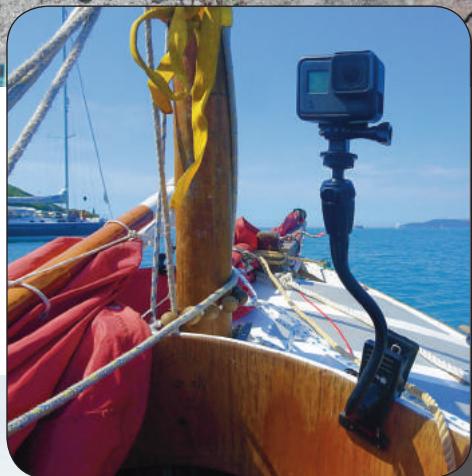




(Above) The World Gig Championship Heats held at Cawsand, 2019

(Middle right) One of Steve's action cameras clamped to Arwen's coaming

(Below) Arwen moored by the 120ft high Victorian railway viaduct over the River Tamar



The MacLeod Bìrlinn



by Keith Muscott

THE ELEVEN MACLEOD CHIEFS down the family line from Alasdair Crotach (see panel, right) brings you to Norman MacLeod, who was alive when Martin Martin visited Hirta in 1697. 150 years had passed; birlinns and galleys had changed in a number of ways and had generally become smaller, but we can form a reasonable picture of the 'Steward's Galley', which Martin saw in Village Bay, Hirta, by inspecting the tomb of the eighth MacLeod chief in St Clements church.

Fifty years before Alasdair Crotach's death, when he was in his early forties, there was a Crown Charter (1498), granting lands in Skye and Harris to the MacLeods, that states as one of its terms, '...they were obliged to keep one ship of twenty-six oars and two of sixteen each, for the service of the King, in peace and war.' There was nothing new in this strategy; Robert the Bruce had divided his enemies by requiring the use of a defeated clansman's galleys and crews as part of the peace treaty.

It is possible that one of the last remaining examples of the birlinn as a dedicated warship belonged to the

(Above) St Clements at Rodel, Harris, taken in the mid-19th century.

This is the only intact pre-Reformation church in the Hebrides. Alexander MacLeod (1455-1547), 8th Chief of Clan MacLeod, repaired the old 'Cathedral' of St Clement at Rodel and built a richly decorated tomb for himself inside (bottom left). Alexander was known as *Alasdair Crotach*, 'the humpbacked'. In his youth he had been called on to lead the clan against a raiding party of Clanranald MacDonalds during his father's absence. In the mêlée, a son of Clanranald wounded him in the back with his battleaxe. Alexander brought his assailant down and killed him with his dirk, then cut off his head and carried it home as a trophy. But he never recovered from his wound. The muscles of his back had been severed and he 'stooped ever after, from which he got the appellation of 'Crotach', or humpbacked'.

He died in 1547, and was buried in the table tomb he had prepared for himself, which combines gothic and Celtic motifs, in the Cathedral of Rodel; he was the first MacLeod Chief to be interred outside Iona. Among several interesting carvings crowning his tomb the most important is of his beloved birlinn (see panel on the wall and the close-up, below). It is the clearest image of a Highland birlinn to survive. (Also see the drawing of it on page 82.)



Macleods of Harris and Dunvegan (and probably another to Clanranald, the MacDonalds), and the carving in the tomb at Rodel is the best representation we know of the Hebridean type in use in the mid-16th century.

The 'Steward's Galley' in 1697 may have been borrowed from the MacLeod chief for the annual trip to Hirta, but Martin would surely have mentioned that in his account, out of courtesy to his friend and laird, so it is reasonable to say that the Steward, also an 'Alexander MacLeod', had a birlinn all to himself, and kept it on the Isle of Pabbay, which lies in a strategic position commanding the western entrance to the Sound of Harris. Being stationed on the western seaboard it was always ready to be of service to the Chief — or King.

The Elizabethan galleons with their gunpowder and ordnance had made the big galleys obsolete. In a fighting *longfada* or *langskip* the armament and defence was all carried in the hands and on the backs of her crew: broadswords, axes, longbows, aketons, chainmail, shields and helmets. Firearms and cannon were in a different league. The early 17th century saw the end of them as a potent force in naval engagements. They were still built for another 100 years, but they continued to dwindle in size and number. By the time Bonnie Prince Charlie arrived on the scene there was no cohesive Highland naval force, though there were still birlinns hauled out on shores here and there for the Royal Navy to destroy with grapeshot after it became clear that Culloden was not being accepted as the end of the fight.

The galleys had also been important to the Highland economy in a number of ways, not least in transporting mercenaries to Ireland, but that ended with the Union of Crowns. With the resources of Scotland and England behind him, King James had no longer any real grounds for fearing the Lords of the Isles, despite his vexation with the islanders of Lewis in 1605, who (he said) delighted 'in blood, theft, reifice and oppression', escaping capture and 'assisting one another against his Highness and his authority'.

In 1697 Martin Martin's concern for the failing Scottish economy was well founded. The galleys had earned their keep, but now the opportunities had all gone and there was no longer any economic reason to build them, except for the prestige earned by doing so.

The Rodel galley (*see next page*) had existed in an earlier golden age and Alasdair Crotach might have kept a number of similar vessels in his hidden base, but this one would have been the biggest, a flagship — his pride and joy. There are two clear design details that set it apart from Norse boats and make it especially Hebridean. First, it clearly draws more water than the *Karve*, its close Viking equivalent (*see Oseberg and Gokstad ships*). Speed has been traded for stability and sailing performance, especially to windward. In the Hebrides a big vessel had to perform well on all points of sailing.

Next, there is no quarter-mounted *styr-bord*, the immediate successor to the steering oar, that had operated in the same position. Instead there is a modern-style rudder, with gudgeons and pintles to



Rodel Harbour and Bay from the air: snug, sheltered, invisible from offshore, hard to enter without insider knowledge and easily defended. It was at the heart of Macleod operations in Harris, close to the eastern entrance of the rock-strewn Sound of Harris, which led to the Atlantic.



(Left)
Norse *styr-bord* on the 'starboard' quarter of a Viking model boat. It was superseded by the well-known arrangement, still in use today, of a stern-hung rudder held by pintles and gudgeons, with a tiller inserted through the rudderhead to be operated by a member of the crew in the stern

hold it, mounted centrally on the stern post. The carving clearly shows spaces chiselled out of the leading edge of the blade to facilitate lifting it clear of the hardware in order to stow it on board or ashore, or even to allow it to kick up slightly if it hit an obstruction at sea. The height of the rudderhead suggests that a tiller could be offered up through a suitably large hole in the sternpost, then slid through the rudderhead to be pinned in position. Failing that, a push-pull tiller extension might have been fitted to a tiller aligned at right angles to the run of the boat, as with the *styr-bord*.

Unlike the faster Norse *Karve*, or *Carbh* in Gaelic, there is no rocker to the keel. This means that the heel of the rudder remained in the water and gripped it without standing proud of the keel and being vulnerable, and still functioned at moderate angles of heel. Norse rocker would have helped to increase manoeuvrability when under way; the flat birlinn keel would help the boat take the ground and sit comfortably on a beach.

The sculptor knew that galleys were heraldic symbols

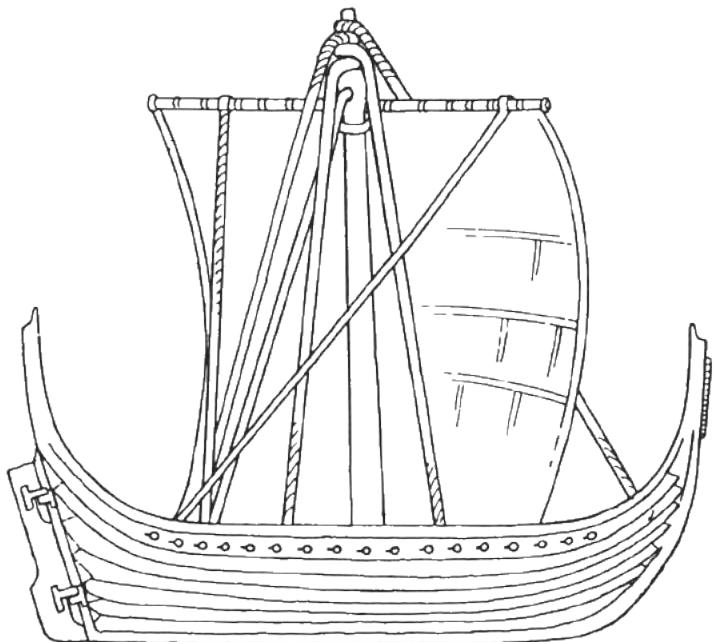
of power and status, but he wished to carve a realistic image of the boat, too, thankfully. It has the greatest number of oar ports of any vessel depicted in the West Highland series of galleys in stone carvings: seventeen, implying 34 oars in total. This suggests a complement of 100+ crew, three to an oar, or less with a regular change of rowers on a long haul, or some of the crew being required to fight intermittently while under way.

The ports are furnished with slits so the oars can be mounted from inside the boat, starting with the insertion of the narrow seagoing blades — and that operation would have called for a high level of practised efficiency on the part of the oarsmen to larboard and starboard. Deploying oars from the outside inwards would have been a chaotic nightmare in big seas, and very unhandy in calm ones — so it wasn't done.

Irish, and probably Highland galleys had round oarports with a diameter of \pm 5 inches (12/13 cms) and the slit allowed a blade width of \pm 6.75 inches (17 cms). These dimensions are very similar to the oarports of the Gokstad ship. It is also likely that oars could be shipped and held ready for action in loops or grommets secured to the thwarts, especially in warships. The optimum distance between thwarts was \pm 3ft (91 cms) between centres, based on the range of recovered ancient Nordic boats available for us to examine, so probably the LOA of the Rodel galley was 75ft or slightly over (22.86 metres).

Maldwyn Drummond, sailor and historian, has pointed out that thwarts in Royal Navy cutters were 3ft apart, too, but he did not accept his own reasonable analogy. He went on, unreasonably, to posit a distance of only 2ft between thwarts, that gives him a LOA of just 44ft (13.25 metres) '...which seems more in tune with ordinary shipbuilding of the time.'

That really is an ungenerous estimate. Look at the Oseberg Ship, and it is not the longest to be uncovered; it is a *Karve* or *Carbh*, built like a light Birlinn but 70.8ft in length. The men on the oars in a birlinn were not slaves; they were taller than average, high-ranking, well-



fed, probably with a great deal of Norse blood in them, and they considered it a great honour to be chosen as crew. They knew that songs would be sung to spread their fame if they fought well and successfully. Big men needed room to pull an oar or to unship it. As *Aileach's* crew bent to their strokes in 1991 (see pp85-86) they agreed that thwarts of 39-inch centres, not 35, would have given them the comfort of not striking the back of the man in front when fully extending for the first stroke, or burying their head in him if he was still sitting upright. Seven oars over a 35ft 6ins waterline instead of eight would have given them what they wanted. Perhaps the point is that on a Norse longship, as on a Naval cutter, men moved strictly in unison — or else. The Vikings knew the visible power of a big synchronised crew. There was nothing like the effect of full shield racks on both gunwales as they approached, and the sight of so many rowing as one was a metaphor of ruthless determination.

'He is named Helgi: you never can
Hope to do him harm.
His ships are surrounded by shields of iron:
No wishes can work against him.'

The Lay of Helgi, tr. WH Auden & Taylor

The Scots birlinn never carried shields above the gunwales, as far as is known.

Alasdair Crotach engaged a gifted artist to portray his favourite galley, and he created an impressive three-dimensional image. The strakes, narrow and nearly vertical at the ends in some cases, curve outwards amidships, where the shipwright has widened them as the beam broadens. They overlap the sternpost and stem, so their strength integrates with the stern and bow, unlike the planking of Viking longships.

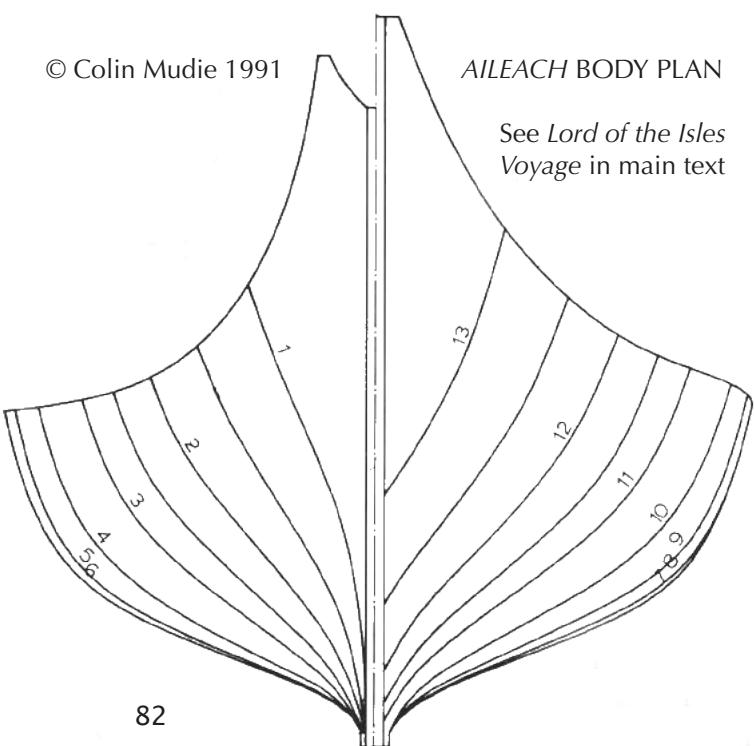
The hull starts with the keel, then six strakes follow, then the oar strake and finally the gunwale:

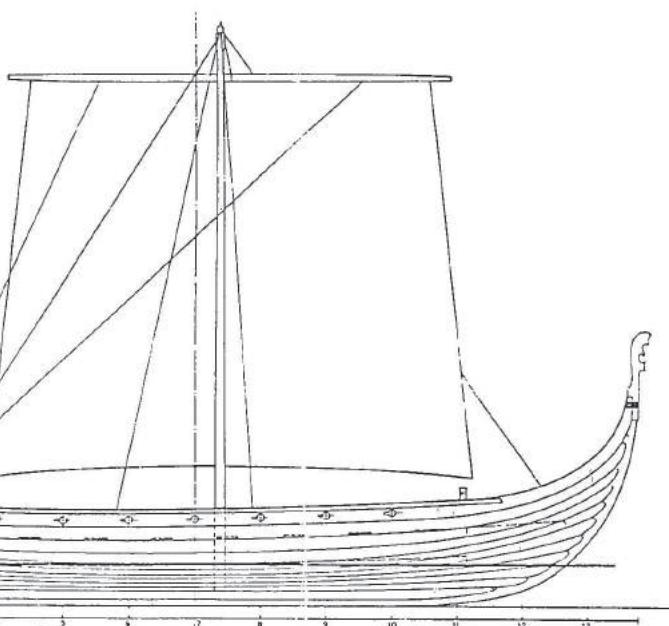
'The sense of depth achieved by the Rodel sculptor is unique in the West Highland series. The forestay presses against the sail from behind; the strakes curve out to meet us amidships. By comparison, on the much

© Colin Mudie 1991

AILEACH BODY PLAN

See *Lord of the Isles Voyage* in main text





© Colin Mudie 1991
Colin's drawings for *AILEACH*

starboard fore shroud, starboard aft shroud, halyard and parrel, the latter keeping the yard close to the mast when raising and lowering the sail. There is no sign of port shrouds up there at the hounds, which might suggest that there were positions at deck level to relocate to port the two shrouds we can see set up to starboard, when tacking and changing the attitude of the sail, to give the squaresail more freedom to align hard on the wind — or more likely they were omitted to avoid cluttering the picture at the top of the mast...

Tacking would have involved careful control of the two yard braces first and then the (unseen) sheets. In bad conditions a number of the large crew would have been enlisted to help the four men in charge of these.

earlier stone at Texa the clinker planks are indicated by simple incised lines,' writes Denis Rixson, in *The West Highland Galley*.

The sculptor avoided the easy option of showing rigging by 'simple incised lines'. It is carved and stands proud, which has led, ironically, to some commentators suggesting spars and poles, not ropes.

The mast shows the hole, called a *hun-bora*, that was bored through the suitably fat upper section for the halyard to be rove through. This would have been well greased, as it was a blind sheave with no pulley wheel, and the yard would have been heavy. The ropes forming the standing rigging have spliced loops that simply drop over the masthead, gunter-rigged Mirror Dinghy-style.

From the masthead down, we have: forestay, backstay,

There is some difference of opinion about the horizontal and vertical lines on the back of the square sail — do they show lines of reef points with hanging pennants, or the sewn edges of patches of cloth, usually woollen, sometimes flaxen, which is how the sails were made? The lines in the drawing are misleading, having been sketched as prominent and sharp by the draughtsman who copied the image from stone to paper. The photograph is better, as it shows the forestay pressing against the back of the sail quite clearly (which is missing in the drawing) and the lines on the back of the sail are faint compared with the cordage that is bold and clear elsewhere.

Sails do not survive under water or underground, so it seems there is no archaeological evidence to prove the use of reefing points and pennants on birlinns or any other type of long ship. We need to look at written records and poetry.

The best description of a birlinn and how it was handled is found in the famous long poem that tells of the blessing of a Clan Ranald MacDonald birlinn prior to launching it. It was written by Alasdair MacDonald of Moidart (c.1695-1770). He was born just too late to see much of the boats, but he was party to the clan's collective memory and its experience of them, and it is probable that the chief still owned one or two during the poet's early life. He was a cousin of Flora 'Speed Bonny Boat' MacDonald, the saviour of Bonny Prince Charlie. The poem is a hymn of praise for the birlinn, and calls for blessings to be bestowed on it and the weapons, the equipment, all the crew and their jobs, right down to the man who had to bale out the boat continuously:

'A thick round wooden baling-can
In his swarthy hands,
Throwing out the sea forever...'

(translated by Hugh MacDiarmid)

I looked carefully at the verses that deal with tending the sail. In describing the control of it in heavy wind and





Building replicas of Norse vessels is a interest that started long ago. *The Viking* is an exact copy of the Gokstad ship. (Note the Gokstad Faering being towed along behind.) In 1893 Captain Magnus Andersen sailed her across the Atlantic from Bergen in Norway to New York and on to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, via the Erie Canal and Great Lakes. She is 78ft long and presently located in Geneva, Illinois at Good Templar Park.

squalls the poet refers to several different men and their responsibilities on board, including:

(*A sheet's man was set apart*)

Set too on the thwart a sheet's-man
With great arms ending
In horny compulsive fingers
For the sheet tending
pull in, let out, as is wanted,
With strength of grabbing;
Draw in when beating to windward,
The blast crabbing;
And release when the gust again
Ceases rending

(*There was ordered out a tacksman*)

Dispose another sturdy sailor,
Masterfully,
To keep the tack to her windward,
and deal duly;
The tack to each cleat his changing
up and down bringing,
As a fair breeze may favour
Or ill come swinging;
And if he sees tempest threaten
Against the shock
Let him shear the tack without mercy
Down to the stock

(translated by Hugh MacDiarmid)

There is some difficulty at first in understanding the role of the 'tacksman' who handles the sheet, as we have already been introduced to the horny-handed 'sheet's man' in the previous stanza, whose skill also resides in playing the sheet like a dinghy sailor. But on a square

sail, the tack is the windward clew (lower corner) and also the line holding down that corner; so the man playing the windward sheet had the more expert job when on the wind in a blow. Or has MacDiarmid understood 'tack' to be the windward end of the yard? The original text mentions belaying pins, not cleats, and this man controlled the yard braces, which were led aft to the stern, like the sheets. They are not otherwise mentioned. When the vessel changed tacks to present the other edge of the sail to the wind, and that clew became the tack, did the men change position?

More importantly, I can't read anywhere that a team tackled the heroic job of rolling up the sail from the bottom and securing it with reef pennants... that would have made a striking verse of poetry, if it had happened. Neither do I see any sign of them being able to secure the sheets further up the edges of the sail after reefing — no cringles are evident, just heavily reinforced hems, which presumably had the sheets stitched inside them.

When I look closely at the best photograph I have of the carving, I am convinced that the faint marks in the back of the sail are there to indicate the lines of stitching that secured the patches of woollen cloth together to make the sail. The sail vanishes into the interior of the hull, of course, so we can't see the take-off points of the sheets and yard braces at deck level. Were these sails ever reefed, or were they just de-powered by the yard being lowered steadily, or rapidly, as needed, and the sail's angle to the wind being managed carefully? Or were the sails trussed *upwards* to the yard?

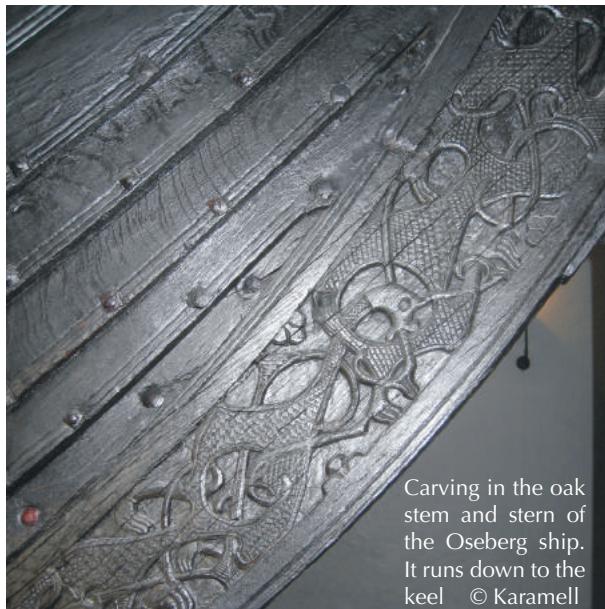
On *Aileach* in 1991-2 (see pp57-8), the mainsheet had conventional reef points which were used like this: the first reef was taken upwards to the yard to avoid weighting the bottom of the sail. The same procedure happened with subsequent reefs, as large rolls of canvas accumulate heavily at the bottom of a squaresail and inhibit a natural belly forming in it.

The Rodel carver's understanding of sails and ropes is nowhere better shown than in his tying of the yard braces well inboard from the outer ends of the yard. This reflects the need to be able to tame it as it is dropped down the mast with the sail still fully under control even at the lowest point, because the outward angle of the braces will then be nowhere near as acute as it would be if they were attached to the outer tips of the spar, right out over the water. Tying them further inboard indicates a sure knowledge of squaresail use. I'm sure Alasdair Crotach took time to explain this point to his stonemason — but he would already have known it.

The stemhead and sternpost are notched, possibly to take elaborate figureheads that could be removed for safety when in harbour. It is also possible that we are looking at crutches in side elevation, which would mean that they could take a spar to drape the sail over to form a tent. Norse boats often had supports like tall trestles on board that took oars over which the sail was draped to form a shelter. Some historians have said that the birlinn's mast would have been laid from stempost to sternpost to achieve this, but that makes no sense at all: the mast was very big, very heavy and had rigging in

place, carefully set up and stretched. The mast would also have been too short to span the length of the boat. A Viking rule of thumb was for it to be only as long as the boat's full girth, measured in way of the mast step, or the broadest beam.

Surely the yard would have been used as a tent ridgepole from mast to sternpost, covering just half the length of the deck, which would have been sufficient. It is also feasible to suggest that the sail could have been left bent onto the yard, and when unfurled and the yard in place, would allow sufficient area of material to be doubled down to one gunwale (or the deck)



Carving in the oak stem and stern of the Oseberg ship. It runs down to the keel © Karamell

then brought back over the spar to reach the opposite gunwale (or the deck), so producing a 'tent' in very little time, with one eave double thickness.

In May 1991 Wallace Clark had the pleasure of seeing a birlinn floating below him in a bay in Western Ireland. He had dreamed about it eleven years previously and then had overseen her being built. Now it was a floating reality. *Aileach* is a sixteen-oar birlinn. Clark decided to call her a 16-oar galley when he wrote his book, '...as the public wouldn't know what a birlinn was.'

The Privy Council Meeting of 1615 had arbitrarily decreed that a galley was a vessel of 18-24 oars, and a birlinn carried 12-18 oars, mainly so those present had a handy reference to visualise the sizes of boats they were commandeering for the king's use, and the galleys belonging to rebels that James VI wanted destroyed. Be that as it may, *Aileach* qualifies easily as one of the type with her 16 oars, even more so as her design was closely based on the Rodel birlinn of Alasdair Crotach.

Clark secured the help of Colin Mudie to draw up the plans. There was no other sailing man with a wider range of projects and designs to his name. And this was not Mudie's only galley: he had been involved with Tim Severin in his retracing of the voyages of legendary figures, starting with the first sea adventure, *The Brendan Voyage*, and then Colin drew the plans for *Argo* in preparation for rowing the 1,500 miles of the *Jason Voyage*.

'The construction of a replica invokes strong passions, and we had some acidic letters about methods and materials from purists who wanted us to use green timber and iron rivets. Colin replied to all with more sweet reason than I could have mustered,' Wallace Clark has written.



The Oseberg Ship

Is a 70.8ft long (21.58m), 16.7ft, (5.10m) wide vessel. It is the oldest known Viking longship as well as the best-preserved, giving historians an unparalleled insight into 9th century Viking life.

Although buried for over a millennium, the blue clay and turf under which the ship lay helped to preserve the wood. The ship is a Karve / Carbh, a small type of Viking longship, and is made almost entirely of oak. It could be sailed or rowed. With 15 pairs of oar ports, up to 30 men could row the ship, achieving a maximum of speed of around 10 knots (11.5 mph). It was probably built earlier than 800AD, so she is around 1,220 years old

© Peter Ulleland

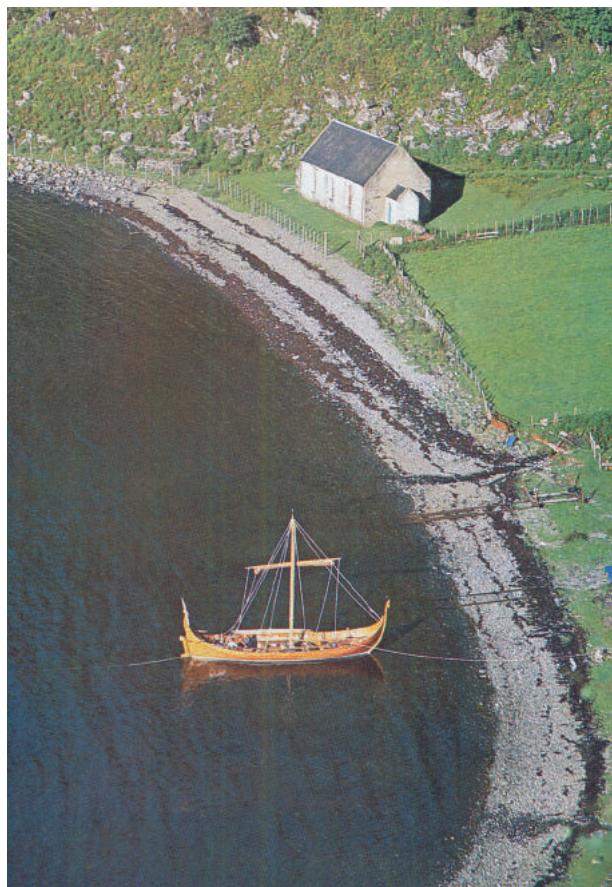
(Colin had decided to make the stem and stern posts with 14 laminations of oak, each one an inch thick, in the interests of structural stability.)

The word *Aileach* strictly means 'rocky', but it was also the name of a Scottish princess from Kintyre who married an Irish prince, Eochaid in AD400. He built a castle for her so strong and beautiful that it stands to this day. They began the family line that led to Somerled and so to Clan MacDonald, and then by marriage to the line of the O'Malleys that included Grace O'Malley, famous commander of galleys and the receiver of a pardon from Elizabeth I, after a face-to-face meeting characterised by mutual respect. A drawing of Grace with her chin stuck out, broadsword in hand, is on *Aileach*'s linen squaresail.

Wallace Clark's book is *The Lord of the Isles Voyage*, but it actually describes two major cruises in *Aileach*. Their first prolonged adventure, Ireland to Scotland, followed the coast of NE Ireland, slipping past Clare Island, around Achill Island and on to Rathlin Island, Ballycastle and Red Bay, before crossing over to leave the Mull of Kintyre to starboard, then up the Sound of Islay and on to Colonsay, Iona, and northwards, ultimately to Stornoway in Lewis. That was in 1991.

In June 1992 they undertook the 'Faroes Voyage'. *Aileach* left Moidart, passed up the Sound of Sleat, crossed from Badachro to Lewis, then had her rudder destroyed many miles due west of Sule Skerry and was helped into Stromness in the Orkneys. Rudder replaced, then off for 200 miles NNW, passing Sule Skerry and on to Suðuroy then Torshavn in the Faroes. The return trip was one epic due-south leg from Torshavn to Badachro in Scotland, leaving North Rona to starboard. They encountered a wide range of weather and sea conditions, and suffered two major breakages. They coped magnificently in all circumstances.

The book is full of dramatic sailing, good humour, malt whisky and entertaining detail on people past and present, together with musings on galley construction and cruising. And, since you're asking, she rows at 4 knots top speed, 3 knots average and attains up to 14k running off under sail, when she is tamed over Force 7 by towing a canvas sea anchor. On both major cruises she logged a respectable daily average of 75 miles. **KM**



(Above) Moored off Tarbert, Loch Nevis

(Below) Passing between Priest Rocks

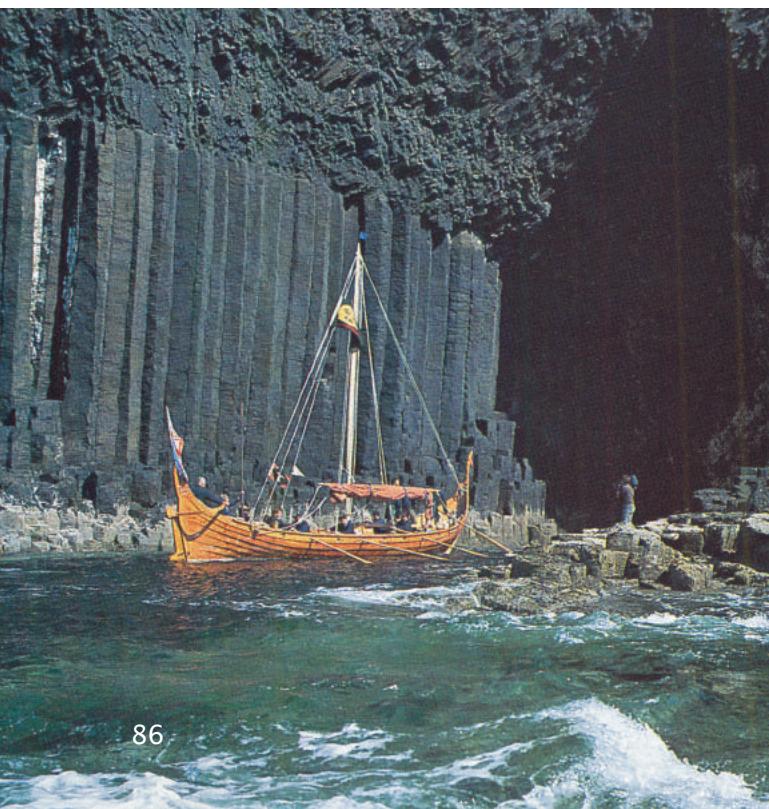
(Below left) *Aileach* entering

Fingal's Cave, Staffa

Aileach: Dimensions

LOA (Hull)	39ft 9ins
LWL	35ft 6ins
Beam	10ft
Draught	2ft
Sail Area	360 ft ² Oars: 16ft, ratio 4:1

Grace O'Malley



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

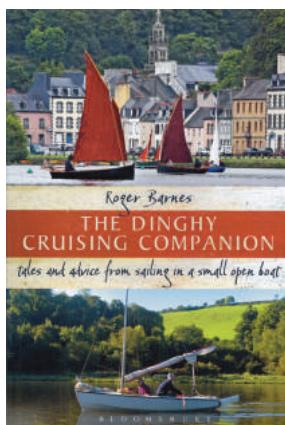


Knitted hat:
Designed to match the DCA burgee; hand knitted in navy with white triangles around the turned-up brim and a yellow crown.
Two sizes are available (same price): Small (skull cap) and Large £12.00

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



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:

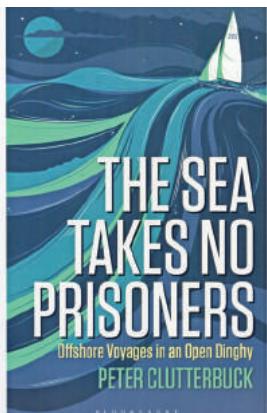
<http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/the-dinghy-cruising-companion-9781408179161/#sthash>.



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.



Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: Adlard Coles Nautical (11 Jan. 2018)

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ISBN-13: 978-1472945716

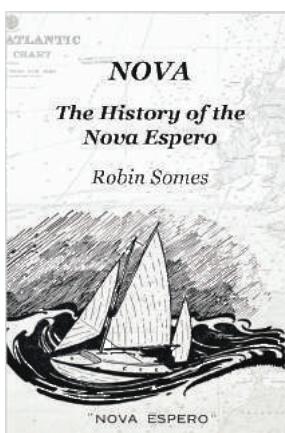
Product Dimensions: 15.8 x 1.7 x 23.7 cm

Price: £11.99; RRP £14.99 & \$22.00

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

Peter Clutterbuck joined the DCA aged 16 — and took the Naylor Noggin before the year was out. The Wayfarer Owners Association inspected his logs and awarded him the Viking Longship Trophy. As he approached 18, he sailed across the Channel and down to Marseille, via Bordeaux, Toulouse and Sète, 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 form Part One, and in Part Two he passes on his fund of knowledge and experience. Peter is one of this country's most outstanding dinghy skippers. His book is well written, exciting and informative — Ed



Robin Somes, whose article on his uncles, Stan and Colin Smith, appeared first in our journal, has now completed his book, *Nova — The History of the Nova Espero*. It is available from his website either as an e-book, at £7.99, or as a printed book costing £9.99 plus postage: shop.robinsomes.co.uk

DCA members can get a 15% reduction by using this code on checkout: **DCA-DISC_15**, and the same reduction using the code on other 'Smith-related' items.

'Part history, part sourcebook, part biography, this book tells the story of the boat, and the extraordinary characters involved with her, from the craft her design was based upon, to her final fate, and the brothers' audacious plans for peace colonies across the world.'

'Featuring news stories and published works from the time, and many previously unpublished letters and photographs, the book provides a long-awaited explanation of precisely why the brothers chose to cross the Atlantic in an unfeasibly small boat, and a history of NOVA's other, equally remarkable, journeys.' — Robin Somes

Boats...

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
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Replies to Frank Dearden: 01229 716 078



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Printed plans — 2 sheets, both 39ins / 98.5cms, by 28.5ins/71.5cms
plus spiral-bound building instructions: **£45 plus post and packing**

PDF copies of both plans
and building instructions: **£30**

Non-Members*

Printed plans — 2 sheets
plus spiral-bound building instructions **£70 plus post and packing**

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* The prices for non-members include four complimentary pdf copies
of *Dinghy Cruising*, the DCA quarterly journal, which will be sent to the
purchaser over the following year.

Post and Packing Costs

UK £8 Europe £12 Rest of World £15

Order Form on the Website: dinghycruising.org.uk/roamer-and-rebell

DCA ROAMER PLANS

We have just overhauled
the building instructions
and reprinted the two large
drawings that constitute the
plans for Eric Coleman's unique
self-righting cruising dinghy.
Our journal printer has these in
hand, and the instructions are
spirally bound A4 with plastic
covers in order to lie flat on the
bench.

REBELL plans updated shortly!

Dave Jennings

For Sale

TIDEWAY 246 £2,350

- De Luxe Clinker, 11ft x 4ft
- Built c. 1969, by L H Walker
- Varnished inside and out, white below waterline.
- Recent Jeckell's red racing sails.
- Pencil blade oars.
- Indespension Combi Trolley / Trailer. Interchangeable jockey wheel and heavy-duty winch. Spare wheels.
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- Ready to go – just add water!



Derek Morley
E: derek.morley1@btinternet.com
T: 0151 632 2857



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£500

- This 18ft. bilge keeler can easily be launched and recovered from its road trailer.
- The berth and cockpit cushions have been re-covered and are, as is the boat itself, in clean and tidy condition.
- She comes with two masts, one standard with roller Jib, the other shorter, with Gunter spar.
- Full inventory.
- This is a boat with a history. Journal 209 covers my live-aboard, two-month trip from the Bristol Channel to South Germany via the French canals.
- For further details contact:

Brian Chislett,
Email: chislettbrian@gmail.com
or phone 07910 433 223 (Somerset)



For Sale: Now £3,950

- Could this be the toughest and 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)
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- 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.
- A cruiser for the maturing dinghy crew who wish to continue their adventurous cruising.
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John Stamm,
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Email: jhs@waitrose.com

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A development of the well-known Thames Estuary One Design and Essex One Design classes. They have flourished over the years in the estuaries of the South East and as far north as East Lothian

LOA	18ft 0ins
LWL	16ft 9ins
Beam	6ft
Draft	1ft — 5ft 2ins
Displ.	675lbs / 307 kilos



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.

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West Wight Potter Endeavour

£550

- Not sure of the vintage but from the photographs in Autumn journal DC247 could be 1960s
- Complete with trailer in roadworthy condition
- Ready to sail but would benefit from some tidying
- I have owned her for 4 years and had great fun with her. She was in the Association for many years before that, and I would love her to stay in the DCA

Location home address: Huddersfield.

Mike Still

mike_still@hotmail.com

01484 854 889

0786 795 1512



DCA SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Boat

- 1.1 Should be insured with at least third party cover to protect yourself and allow you to attend rallies hosted by sailing clubs and other authorities that do not tolerate uninsured boats.
- 1.2 Sufficiently stable so the whole crew can sit on the gunwale without dipping it under the water.
- 1.3 With sufficient positive buoyancy to support stores and crew when flooded, and disposed so the crew can put the boat back into sailing condition unaided, after a capsize or swamping. Capsizing is a serious matter in a seaway: in rough seas, recovery can become impossible.
- 1.4 Hull, mast and rigging strong enough to withstand cruising stresses, and properly maintained.
- 1.5 With a mainsail capable of being reefed whilst at sea. Jib furling or reefing is desirable. Also consider carrying storm sails for strong winds.
- 1.6 Registered with the HM Coastguard-approved RYA SafeTrx, its replacement for the official voluntary safety identification scheme, previously known as CG66.

2. The Crew

- 2.1 Sufficiently experienced for the conditions expected.
- 2.2 Aware of their responsibilities under SOLAS and MCA regulations.
- 2.3 Adequate for the dinghy: at least one stone of crew weight for each foot of LW (20kg/metre).

3. Equipment for Cruising

- 3.1 Personal buoyancy for each member of the crew.
- 3.2 Waterproofs and plenty of warm clothing for each crew member.
- 3.3 Anchor, minimum 10lb (5kg). Anchor cable minimum 30 metres 8mm non-floating material, with 2 metres of chain between it and the anchor, secured to a strongpoint inside the boat.
- 3.4 Strong bucket as well as a bailer, both with lanyards. A bilge pump is recommended.
- 3.5 Two oars and metal rowlocks secured by lanyards, plus one spare rowlock. Paddles are not an adequate substitute.
- 3.6 Drinking water and emergency food rations, sufficient for everyone on board.
- 3.7 Orienteering compass and chart or large scale local map.
- 3.8 Fire blanket or fire extinguisher.
- 3.9 Waterproof VHF radio, preferably with DSC. Consider LW radio receiver for Shipping Forecasts
- 3.10 Mobile telephone in a waterproof pouch.
- 3.11 Powerful waterproof light and at least one spare torch.
- 3.12 First-aid kit.
- 3.13 Fog horn or whistle to give audible warning in thick weather.

4. Additional Equipment For More Extended Cruises Outside Sheltered Waters

- 4.1 Reliable steering compass, kept in one position and checked for deviation, preferably lit for night use.
- 4.2 Navigation equipment: charts covering the whole passage, pilot book, almanac, tidal atlas, leadline, handbearing compass, waterproof GPS or chartplotter.
- 4.3 Log book for passage planning notes and for recording the passage in progress.
- 4.4 Emergency radio beacon: EPIRB or PLB.
- 4.5 Repair kit and spare parts.
- 4.6 Effective radar reflector, if practicable.
- 4.7 Day and night flares in a waterproof pack.
- 4.8 For foreign waters the boat should be registered, display her number and carry registration documents.

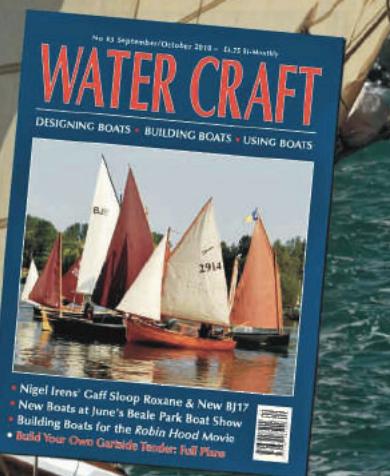
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