



DOGWATCH

The newsletter of the South West Gaffers



Contents

**Presidential
Ponderings**

**Secretarial
Scantlings**

Comms

My Boat - Zoe

**My Boat - Jenny
Wren**

OGA NL 20 Report

New Members

Events

All material for DogWatch 59 should be sent to Oliver Peterken (sweditor@oga.co.uk) as soon as possible and no later than 31st March. We accept no liability for any inaccuracies or omissions in Dogwatch.



Welcome!

The photo above is by SW Gaffer Mike Garlick called "Artist's Eye" and won third place in the OGA's 2024 photographic competition. Mike tells me that the boat in the painting is "Men a Vaur", a Francois Vivier design based on the Breton Langoustier as seen at the Falmouth Classics (see their [website](#) for a photo of this beauty under sail).

In this issue, as well as the usual updates, Julian Wolfram and Jon Tully have kindly written about building their boats and Barbara Runnalls reports on the Dutch OGA rally.

Oliver Peterken - Editor

"Kirsebær"

From The Poop Deck

Presidential Ponderings

Martin Elliott *"Roxanne"*

The brave few of the South West Gaffers who attended the national AGM in Gloucester recently can now reflect on their wise decision to live and sail in our climatically favoured region. The temperature in Gloucester only briefly managed to exceed zero degrees. However the event was a success and enjoyed by a good contingent of gaffers from the various areas.

The highlight of the weekend for me was the visit to the Tommi Nielson shipyard. Perhaps I should briefly explain. This is a yard with a worldwide reputation for the repair, rebuild and re-rigging of all manner of traditional sailing vessels, often to be seen in impressive full page adverts in Classic Boat. Tommi himself welcomed us in very entertaining fashion, albeit perhaps slightly daunted by the sheer number of visitors – in excess of seventy of our members took up the option of this tour.

Perhaps one of the significant memories here was the sheer scale of everything from the machinery in the workshops, to the huge waney edge boards waiting to be cut for planking, and the sight of a massive rebuild in the yard that took three levels of scaffold just to carry the temporary shelter.

Tommi's very absorbing tales and explanations at the many pauses throughout the tour were fascinating. One in particular where he showed us various serving mallets but then explained that for the size of rigging they get involved in, something more serious was required. He showed a Victorian era machine with a patina, the result of very many years of Stockholm tar, lanolin, dirt and grease. The end of the rope passed through the centre of the machine and a very tight serving automatically applied. The workings of this process were way beyond the

average lay person, and to this end he told the story of an official quality control inspection they had to endure. For this they decided to fix a grubby old computer keyboard to the machine and polish the digits that spelled 'quality'. The young inspector looked quietly studious, paused, ticked something on his clipboard, and asked to move on.

Tommi is no stranger to change and progress where modern developments can be useful. I spotted a CNC lathe and router table, and at the low tech end of the scale he was delighted with the availability now of long, wide and strong polythene tubes which meant they could steam planks very close to the hull position and more quickly clamp them in place.

Turning now to our own future adventures and the pretty well finalised programme for the coming season, we seem to be blessed with many good options for us to become active and social in attending our organised events. I would like to promote a good attendance in particular at Helford, and for the small boats, at the new event at Mylor, and then of course our flagship event at Mayflower Marina in Plymouth in July. I am personally very keen that we get a good number of our boats at Plymouth, so I will apologise in advance if I pester too many members.

Fair winds and quiet seas.

Secretarial Scantlings

David Patuck *"Susan J"*

Since writing my last report in September, a few boats made it to the Brixham Rally, and after some day sails when the weather allowed, most of us in the SW have been laying up our vessels, often up the various beautiful rias with which we are blessed. Some ashore, others remaining wholly or partially afloat, but all anxious for clement weather windows to perform essential, and not so essential, maintenance, while dealing with the land based ravages of the several named storms, already gone.

SW Gaffers Officers

Area President: Martin Elliot
swpresident@oga.org.uk

Life Vice-President: Mike Lucas

Commodore: Rob Brown

Secretary: David Patuck
swsec@oga.org.uk

Membership Secretary: David Patuck
swsec@oga.org.uk

Treasurer: Rob Brown
swtreasurer@oga.org.uk

Events: Mike Forwood
swevents@oga.org.uk

Dog Watch Editor: Oliver Peterken
sweditor@oga.org.uk

SW Comms Secretary: Barbara Runnalls
swcomms@oga.org.uk

Trophy Officer: Post VACANT

Examiner of Accounts: Gil Hayward
gilbert.hayward@btinternet.com

Merchandising: Post VACANT

Other Committee Members:

Tim Price
timpriceabroad@hotmail.com

The SW Area of the OGA [website](#)

OGA [website](#)

Instagram: [instagram.com/southwestgaffers](https://www.instagram.com/southwestgaffers)

Area Bank details: Metro Bank "South West Gaffers" Sort code: 23-05-80 Account No. 40530002

South West Gaffers are the South West Area of the OGA-
 The Association for Gaff Rig and Traditional Sail

Once again in November over 30 of us enjoyed another superb meal by Denaro's at the Fowey Gallants SC. This was followed by the SW AGM.

This is a time of year when we are unable to sail and have an opportunity to reflect on the workings of our organisation. Below I summarise some of the outcomes of the SW AGM and subsequent deliberations.

SW President Martin Elliott ("Roxanne"), shared the success of another year of events on and off the water. SW Area Membership is currently around 184, representing about 110 households. Only about 20 boats are seen at at least one of our events. It appears that MailChimp invites etc. are reaching about 75% of our members, while the South West Gaffer What's App group has hosted several informative and interesting exchanges amongst its 42 participants. Our SW Treasurer, Rob Brown ("The John and Elsie") was able to report that funds remained healthy despite some subsidies for events. We awarded our retiring longstanding Trophy Officer, Mike Garlick ("Mischief"), with the George's Cannon. There was a demonstration of how to access the Area's pages on the National OGA website, including the now kept up to date SW Events page. Members took the opportunity under AOB to voice concerns regarding the informality of our Annual race, and the SW Secretary, was able to make amends for the confusion at the prizegiving in July by having our SW President re-present all 22 trophies. Peter Lucas ("Cynthia") kindly spoke about the history of each prize.

The President and remaining Committee were re-elected unopposed and no new volunteers came forward. The "new" Committee had their first meeting at the end of November. While many of the SW roles are filled, and may become easier for the reduced number of incumbents, two have now become vacant over the last year and one since the AGM, all due to deteriorating health, although they are all hoping to make sufficient recovery to join us at events next summer.

We are still seeking a volunteer to take on the role of SW Trophy Officer, the Committee now have one electronic list going as far back as 1973, of all the SW trophies, their engravings and their current holders. Now that they have been allocated, albeit belatedly, this role becomes simpler, particularly now that Peter Lucas ("Cynthia") is able to store the two large "Devon Gaffer" empty trophy boxes, and some of the larger trophies have been repurposed for SW Gaffers participating in the gaffer's race in the Royal Dartmouth Regatta at the end of August.

In January our area together with the Bristol Channel Area, helped the Scottish Area organise the "Scottish" AGM weekend in Gloucester. Some 10 (including 1 virtual) members from the South West joined 70 or more gaffers. Two of our SW Members, Mike Garlick and Nick Gil received prizes for their excellent photographs of "sailing gaffers. Mike Forwood was awarded the prestigious David Cade Memorial Trophy for sharing his lifetime of professional seamanship aboard traditional ships with gaffers for many years. Our interest was piqued by the enthusiastic French OGA contingent, from St Malo, who are keen to host any of us who care to cross over in early June.

The weekend of "gaffering" in an unlikely setting, with a dearth of real ale, included a splendid dinner in the ancient Llanthony Priory, and a fascinating tour of Neilson's Shipyard by Tommi himself. It is here that the few remaining sailing ships, such as "Kathlen and May", "Bessie Ellen" and others are refitted or rebuilt from scratch, despite the constant silt and complex access by canal.

By the time you read this some of you will have attended the talk by Jim Shedkhar on his solo row across the Pacific at the Weary Friar in Pillaton. Thoughts will be turning to Fitting Out. Our Lunch is planned for Saturday April 12th, at Brixham Yacht Club where Jim Seal will be telling us about traditional clinker boat building and its history.

Finally, do join the South West Gaffers Whats App group. You need to provide a mobile

telephone number and be a member of the OGA. An email to myself or another Committee member will get you invited. The Area pages of the OGA website have the latest details of the increasing number of sailing events planned for the coming season. I would urge you all to have a look. Any OGA member can also log on to the OGA Boat register and gain access to the Members pages as well as more from the Boat Register.

Racing in the South West Gaffers

Following on from concerns raised, before and at, the AGM, the Committee accepted that the Plymouth Annual Race, at the end of July, had been confusing, with five classes, reduced to three at the last minute, and a variety of race start formats, incorrectly named. Despite this, the race itself with two start formats for the 3 wrongly allocated classes was a success in excellent conditions. David Rollinson and team from Plym YC, assisted by local SW gaffer Barbara Harris ("Chocolat"), recorded all the times (except one!) on the back of an old chart. Then Tim Price ("Picotee") saved the day by using his laptop to factor in the OGA handicaps, leading to a list of winners.

The Committee felt that a less formal approach to racing should still be maintained. The thinking here is that, as the headline event of the year, and to encourage as many members as possible to participate with both the rally and the racing, we need to be careful to establish a balance between the more serious aspects of racing (in particular the start line), and the less serious style of 'competitive sailing a course in company'. The existence of several other opportunities in the SW for members with more serious racing inclinations should provide the balance. However, it was also agreed that we needed to follow the Racing Rules of Sailing, (as well as the ColRegs).

To that end, the SW Treasurer, Rob Brown ("The John and Elsie"), who, as current SW Commodore understands these things, is

creating a set of up-to-date templates for the Notice of Race, Sailing Instructions, Risk Assessments etc., and a summary of the three types of starts and their correct nomenclature. This will be the main task of the SW Sailing Secretary, replacing the SW Events Secretary, who has stepped down. Most of our events are organised by a different individual Member, supported by the SW Secretary and Committee as required, anyway.



Above: Over 22 SW Gaffers' trophies at our AGM.

Top right: Solent Block 2nd in Class 1 to David and Julie Patuck of *Susan J*.

Right: Commodore Rob Brown presents Mike Garlic with the George's Cannon Trophy for services to SW Gaffers.

Below left: The Anchor Trophy is presented by President Martin Elliot to Estelle of *Black Goose*.

Bottom right: The George's Cannon Trophy.

Photos: Martin West



Comms

To better reflect her role, Barbara Runnalls (*"Moon River"*) is now the SW Comms Secretary (swcomms@oga.org.uk). Barbara is, with the Secretary, able to edit and update more and more of the Area pages of the OGA website.

Website

Looking at the Area pages of the OGA website, the SWG events and SWG Calendar pages have been available and up to date for several months now. They already reflect a busy program of sailing for the coming season. We would urge all members to visit these Area pages of the OGA website, to keep abreast of future events etc. While you do not have to, as an OGA Member, logging in gives you full access and more functionality to the Boat Register and Members pages.

At the top of the SWG Events page there is a link to the latest version of the spreadsheet of SW events which can be printed. There is then a description for each event, with more information and links to specific attachments, as they become available, similar to those emailed to you. Events organised by the SW Area exhibit the round SW OGA logo. There are also many other events which we are part of and try to avoid clashing with, where possible.

The SWG Calendar page has an entry for the each event, and clicking these will lead back to the SWG Events page. To find the event, scroll down, from the most imminent, visible first, to those in the future, below. After these you come to entries for past events, the most recent first.

It is hoped that the SWG Useful Contacts page will not only reflect the current SW Committee, but also have a photograph of key Officers.

The SWG Useful Links page does work but we hope to expand and keep it updated, to reflect the many links that were in the SW Almanac. Almost all the information in the SW Almanac is already duplicated on the Area pages of the

OGA website, and has become increasingly out of date, so it will not be published again.

However, some of the information will be incorporated into a revised and more useful Welcome Letter to new SW Members over the next few months, perhaps in a format that can be down loaded from the website and printed.

Social Media

It became even clearer at the recent National ACM and AGM, that these are best managed nationally and Elly Rule online@oga.org.uk is doing a good job of adding interesting images and posts to the excellent National OGA Facebook and Instagram pages. It would seem pointless to reinvent the wheel (even if we could!). However, in the SW we do produce much material in the form of video clips, photos and articles. Elly would be happy to use some of this in the OGA social media. This in turn gives wider exposure to our gaffering activity in the SW, and the OGA as a whole, and may inspire more active, younger folk to get involved. Of course much of this material will be of interest to Oliver, our Dogwatch Editor and for Jay Cresswell, the Gaffers Log Editor.

Images, or video clips, with a punchy, informative caption are ideal. They can be added to the South West Gaffers WhatsApp group (set your Whats App to maximum image resolution), from where Elly can extract them. Large files can be transferred to Oliver, or Elly, using "WeTransfer", an app which works in the computer and is effectively "free". Apparently, you can also send images by Messaging, as well.

Remember to acknowledge the photographer and subject. This makes it simpler to be used with in the OGA.

Finally, any suggestions for improvement, within the limitations of the website and our own skills, would be appreciated.



Above: Tour of Tommi Neilson's traditional ship yard at the OGA AGM.

Left: Automated, serving mallet.

Below: Tommi Neilson addressing the AGM attendees.

Photos: David Patuck



My Boat - Zoe

Julian Wolfram



Zoe shortly after launching Photo: Nigel Sharpe

Zoe was conceived while we were in Edinburgh, in part as a reaction to a larger 38 ft. boat we had on the West Coast of Scotland. Too often I was doing the 160 miles round trip to the Clyde to sort out mechanical or electrical problem. I wanted a simple trailer-sailer with a little cabin, for the occasional overnight or weekend stay. It would be built in our large garage and stay there over winters. It would have no systems that couldn't simply be lifted off and deposited with a dealer to be fixed. I'd been sold on the convenience of gaff and gunter rigs from having a Mirror dinghy many years ago. We carried it on a roof rack with all the spars inside when going on camping trips to the Lake District. I set to work in the evenings on a large drawing board producing the lines plan for a little 6m gaffer that would be strip planked in Alaskan yellow cedar, on mahogany plywood frames with intersecting longitudinals and keel

assembly. The whole to be sheathed in fibreglass and epoxy resin. A so-called 'egg box' style construction. Roger Dongray used it for his Golant Gaffer.

The lines plan hadn't got very far when everything went up in the air. We decided to take early retirement and moved from a largish sandstone house in Edinburgh to a two-bedroom bungalow with a leaking flat roof extension in Falmouth. The garage wasn't big enough to build more than a dinghy, so boat built building plans came to a halt to be replaced by house rebuilding plans, together with a new, big garage. This was going to take years. Luckily our next door neighbours had a Shrimper. He encouraged us to get one, join the Mylor Yacht Club and the very sociable south west branch of the Shrimper Owners Association.

The next spring we became owners of a Mk 1 Shrimper with an outboard engine – the best if I wanted to do any racing.

We had a great 6 years with the Shrimper exploring the Carrick Roads, the Helford and other places around Falmouth Bay, but I still hankered after building a boat to my own design – many naval architect's dream if they have spent their careers dealing with large vessels.

I learnt a lot from the Shrimper that I could incorporate into Zoe and quite a lot that I'd avoid. I wanted all the sail controls in the cockpit so I could sail single-handed as well as a large cockpit so we could lie out in the sun when at anchor and sail comfortably with 2 or 3 friends. I wanted a tabernacle like the Shrimper so I could lower and raise the mast single handed and a big bow well to put my feet in while I sat on the deck to pull up the anchor.

However I also wanted an outboard that pivoted up in its well rather than having to be lifted out and a cockpit well that was narrow enough to brace your feet on the other side when heeled rather than sliding into it. I wanted wide, slightly-angled teak seats with sloping backrests; a cabin that wasn't split all the way down the middle by a centreboard case: I like to stretch my legs. A galley beside the cockpit so you could reach in to turn off a boiling kettle or dump your mug in the sink was also on my wish list.

I transferred all my drawings into Rhino, a CAD package, from which I could then transfer files for cutting out all the plywood parts, including the building jig, using a CNC machine. Before cutting up marine plywood, I decided to build a 1/6 scale models, with all the parts CNC cut from 1.5 and 2mm ply, and planked with 2.5mm cedar strips. This picked up a few errors that I was able to correct before cutting up the 18 sheets of Khaya marine plywood.

The build took nearly three winters. I was sailing and doing other things in the summers. I mostly worked alone but had three, three week visits from Margaret's boat building

cousin James Lockhart. A gifted boatbuilder (and guitar maker), he helped me with many of the difficult bits.



Turning in the garage Photo: JW

One bit I was anxious about was turning the 330kg hull over in the garage with a block and tackle. So I enlisted the help of 6 friends. They arrived on a Saturday morning had coffee and we turned the boat over and chocked it upright in 25 minutes! The lunch then lasted nearly 2 hours. The boat building winter extended into the summer of 2016 as we added deck fittings and finished off the teak trim. Zoe was launched in the first week of July, down the slipway at Mylor with a modest champagne ceremony. She sailed better than I (and few sceptics) expected and won several races.

The next year we had our greatest adventure in Zoe. We put her on the trailer, caught the overnight ferry from Plymouth to Roscoff and wended our way along the quiet Sunday morning roads to Arradon; the 'home port' for our flotilla, 6b, during the Semaine du Golfe. A festival of over 1000 boats from traditional dinghies to 3-masted ships on the inland sea of the Golfe du Morbihan that has dozens of small islands and numerous little ports and villages. At Arradon it was a complete rammy with boats being launched four abreast with no discernible organisation. Getting Zoe from trailer to finger berth was not without incident!

The next day was the grand picnic on Ile d'Arz and as we sailed there in light winds, boats appeared from around every little island and headland to create a growing armada. At Ile d'Arz we spotted a small gap in the hundreds of boats and ran Zoe up onto the beach and waded ashore to find a spot on the grass amongst the growing throngs. We were treated to traditional

barge. It was a gentle sail to the barge and we tied up on the outside of a trot of 3 slightly bigger boats and put lines on to the barge. There were huge platters of shucked oysters and white wine on upturned oil barrels. The bread was apparently coming shortly – it never arrived. But more boats did, on the end of our trot. The band played, a few danced, and most swallowed



Semaine du Golfe Parade Photo: JW

bands and dancing and enticed by huge pans of paella and bars selling wine, beer and local cider. It was a great way to spend a sunny afternoon.

The sailing highlight was the trip down the Auray river, in the west, and over to the eastern side of the Gulf. Zoe, and many others in our fleet, had been left at St Goustan the night before. We poured bleary-eyed from a bus at 7am to catch the ebb tide. We were met with cups of strong black coffee and told that breakfast awaited us 5 miles down stream on a

oysters and drank wine (no coffee). The ebb grew in strength, our shore lines started to creak and our fenders were getting squashed. The boats on the end of our trot were told they would be cast adrift if they didn't leave now. They went. A south easterly breeze got up and we had a great beat down stream picking various paths through the islands. Our pilotage mostly involved following the tracks of bigger boats we knew had greater drafts.



Chased down the Auray River during the Semaine du Golfe Photo:JW

We have to occasionally check the chart and for a bigger boat to pass us. We shot past the sea entrance to the gulf and finally anchored, with the rest of the fleet, off Logeo for a late lunch and a nap in the cockpit. We sailed slowly and happily back to Arradon on the flood.

The spectators' highlight was the grand parade of sail from the sea entrance at Port Navalo all the way up to Vannes. We were supposed to join the parade one flotilla by flotilla, but this didn't happen. We saw 3 boats from our flotilla and joined them. The islands were covered with many thousands of spectators enjoying the spectacle. There was little wind and a growing flood tide underneath us. It was more fraught for helms, as before we got to the Vannes canal we were using reverse to stop hitting the boats in front. Many boats ducked out but our accommodation was in Vannes so we had to keep going. We finally arrived and grabbed a finger pontoon. We looked around for some of

the organisers – none were to be found. Later we found ourselves on a Belgian barque, listening to a jazz band, eating canapes and drinking white wine – a great finale to the week! The next week was a gentle one in a villa on the Isle aux Moines with day sails on Zoe, before we pulled her out at an almost deserted Arradon and trundled home to Falmouth.

Zoe was designed to meet (and exceed) RCD Category C - to cope with winds and sea states up to F6 – 27 knots of wind and 3m waves. This year we exceeded the former and hope never to meet the latter. For the first of the Falmouth Classics races I put a reef in. The wind was forecast to go down in the afternoon so, after some umming and ahing, I shook it out. All went well until we approached the final mark in the Carrick Roads before heading to the finishing line in Falmouth harbour entrance.

We were on a reach and got hit by a strong gust – measured by committee boats at 35 or 37 knots. But it wasn't just a big gust, but a serious change in mean wind strength. After a couple of minutes of indecision (and cursing myself for having taken out the reef) we decided to pull in the sheets, round the mark and beat back to the harbour. We sailed with jib sheeted in tight and I played the mainsail. Some Salcombe Yawls close to us were doing the same. I estimated we had at least 25 knots over the deck as we headed back towards harbour where the wind eased further.

Unlike some other boats, Zoe was fine, but the crew weren't. They needed a couple of large gin and tonics as soon as they were moored up. All the subsequent races we had considered had forecasts with stronger winds so we didn't race again this summer.

In our seventies, we have started to lean towards the Ballyholme Y C old timers' rule of 4s – not more than 4 people on the boat, no planned passages of more than 4 hours and don't go if the forecast is more than Force4!



Running down the Carrick Roads Photo: JW

My Boat - Jenny Wren

Jon Tully

Jenny Wren is a Paul Gartside-designed 12ft strip plank sailing dinghy in yellow cedar, built as part of a 40-week wooden boatbuilding course at the Boatbuilding Academy in Lyme Regis in 2022-23.

The course was a memorable experience – immersive, fascinating and rewarding. Friendships among fellow students flourished through mutual interests and a shared sense of purpose; and the amiable atmosphere of the workshop was full of laughter and chatter. We were there for a serious purpose, however, and the days were long and the learning curve steep. We owe a great deal to our two outstanding tutors, Rob and Matt, whose patience, knowledge and good humour was limitless.

Before boatbuilding proper commenced, we spent several weeks at the bench getting to grips with chisels, planes, saws and learning the joints of the trade – scarf, tenon, dovetail etc. Lessons were inevitably learned the hard way, with many jobs consigned to the firewood bin after over-enthusiastic application of the plane or chisel. Such situations would often cause our tutor Matt to remark “It looks like you require my putting-on plane” although we never did see this miraculous tool!

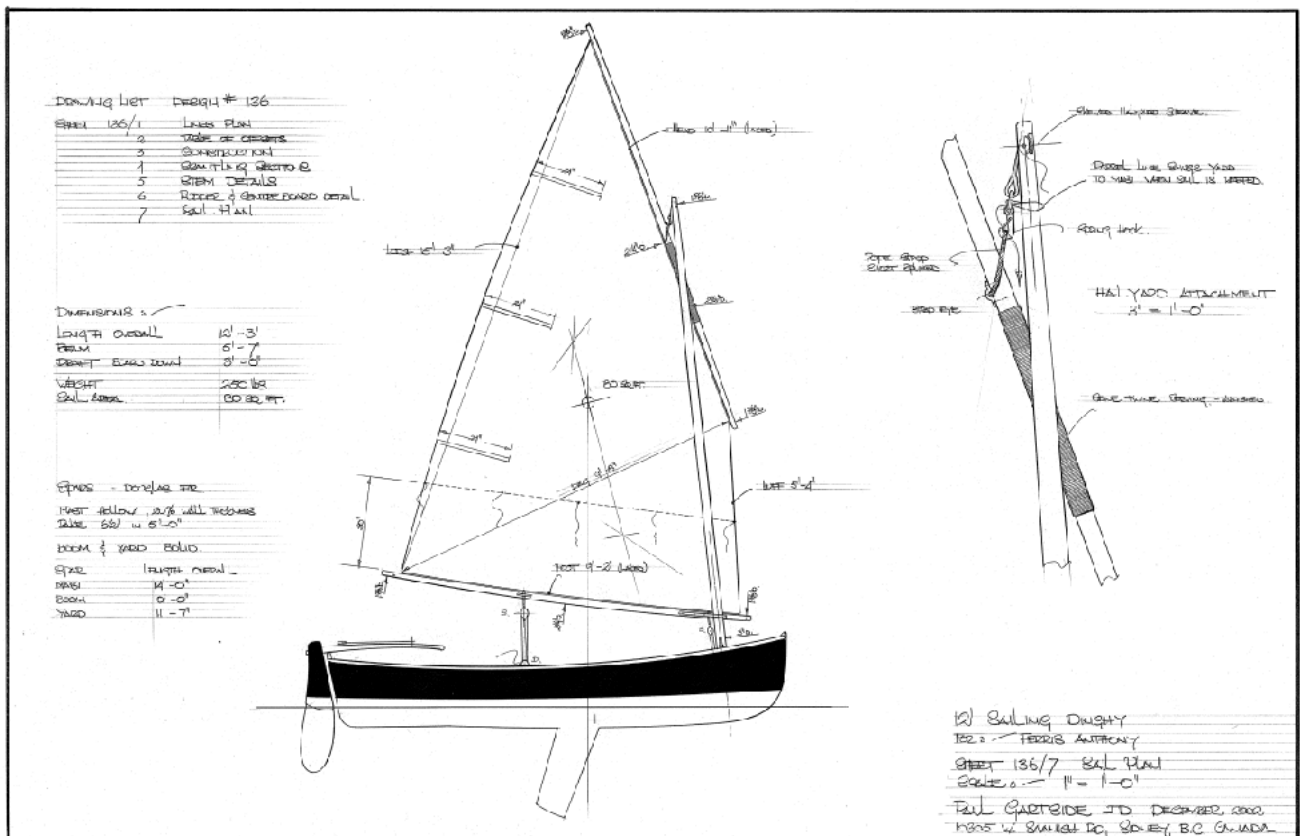
Having mastered the basics, we then worked through several stand-alone short courses including spar making, varnishing and finishing, sail making, ropework, planking and GRP work. We were then ready to build our boats.

We built six boats on the course, and the aim was for us to experience as many different types



of construction as possible, both traditional (mechanical fastenings) and modern (using epoxy adhesives.) I chose strip planking, having been inspired by the two beautiful Spirit Yachts in the recent James Bond films, both of which were built using this technique. Strip planking also has the advantage of utilising lightweight, slim profile sections that are more easily handled by the solo boat builder than clinker or carvel planks. I hoped to build further craft on my own, so this technique would suit me well.

The Paul Gartside design (number 136) is a beamy, stable dayboat with an attractive lug rig. Easily managed single-handed, she also makes a perfect picnic boat for three or four. I chose the design for its versatility; a dinghy I could



could see myself really using to the full.

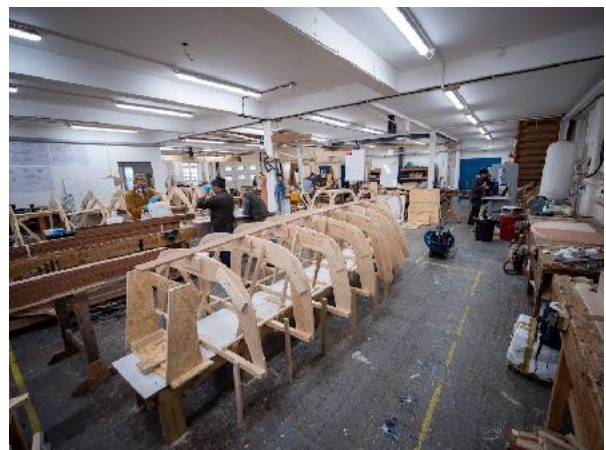
The build process began with drawing full-sized plans using the “table of offsets” provided by the designer, a process known as lofting. This required ruthless precision and a great deal of head scratching! Three views are superimposed on one another, so any individual point on the boat’s lines appears three times and must align perfectly.

Waterplanes (horizontal planes through the hull,) stations (vertical planes athwartships) and the curiously-named buttocks (vertical planes fore-and-aft) all appear as straight lines in one view, and curves in the other two. A mentally exhausting process!

Building moulds were then constructed using the lofted plans and set up on a rigid building base. These would be removed once the planking was complete, but they gave our first glimpse of the shape of the finished boat, especially having added the centreline components of stem, keel, hog and transom.

Around this time the Alaskan yellow cedar timber arrived from which Jenny Wren would be built. It was a strangely moving experience

looking at a pile of planks and realising in a few months they would become my boat.



Cutting and shaping the strip planks with a “bead and cove” profile was straightforward, if somewhat repetitious. The monotony was at least relieved by the large table router occasionally snatching a strip plank and reducing it to matchsticks with an alarming noise and shower of splinters!

With planking complete and a slot cut for the centreboard, the hull had a first fairing and was then covered with glass cloth and West System epoxy resin, producing an immensely strong monocoque construction. No need for ribs or frames here; a hull that looked nearly complete and a build process way ahead of the clinker vessels. The pay-off was about to come, however.

Once cut and shaped, the 120-or-so strip planks were then bent around the building moulds and fastened to each other using polyurethane glue. The glue was prevented from sticking to the building moulds by covering their edges in brown parcel tape. A completely unexpected but very useful lesson learned was that absolutely nothing whatsoever sticks to brown parcel tape! The planking up process was pleasingly swift, although edge setting of the planks did require some daunting ‘relieving cuts’ to be made.

I’d decided on a painted finish for the hull, hoping it would be better at hiding my mistakes than a varnished finished. What I’d failed to appreciate was that to achieve the glossy finish I desired would take weeks of unrelenting and exhausting filling and sanding. The naïve and hopeful misconception that a few coats of paint would somehow fill any imperfections in the hull was soon dispelled by the tutors, so we set about with Nautix blue epoxy filler and yards of abrasive paper. Fortunately, camaraderie and endless mugs of tea saw us through and the eventual finish, using International Perfection Pro, was every bit as mirror-like as I had hoped.

Fitting out was a joy. Lots of different jobs, each one bringing the bare hull closer to becoming a finished boat. Gunwales, thwarts, decks, floors, sole boards, mast, boom, gaff and

sails were all made and installed, and a signwriter added Jenny Wren in handsome gold leaf to the transom. Working days began to stretch into evenings and weekends but by launch day on 4th June 2023, Jenny Wren and the other boats were all ready to take to the water.

Launch day was memorable. The sun shone, the sea sparkled, and a crowd of well-wishers and holiday makers gathered at the Cobb. With all due ceremony, the six boats were launched and headed out for their very first sail. In the minute it took to launch her, Jenny Wren had gone from being an exercise in joinery to a real boat. A significant and joyous moment, and the start of many adventures to come.



The eponymous Jenny Wren
all photos Jon Tully



OGA NL 20 Rally

Barbara Runnalls "Moon River"

In July and August 2024 Moon River attended the NL OGA 20th anniversary rally in The Netherlands. The main rally was a two week-long tour on the canals and inland waters, starting on 3rd August in Hellevoetsluis. Launching facilities were available for trailered boats. Those of us arriving by sea from England, Belgium and Zeeland were invited to a reception in Wemeldinge in Zeeland on 30th July followed by a short guided cruise to the main event.

I set out in late July and crossed from Dover to Belgium in company with Crabber "Molly of Mylor" from the Solent. The crossing proved straightforward, in benign weather and good visibility. The EU checking in formalities were straightforward and friendly, with the police station next to the harbour office.

We were now four gaffers from the South coast - three being single handers. We had one pre-dawn start on our short voyage along the Belgian and Dutch coasts and into the canals. The weather was hot.

We visited delightful towns like Middelburg and Goes on the way to Wemeldinge. There was a reception and briefing for the next day's cruise in company to Willemstad, where moorings were reserved in the town harbour - an impressive sight. The following day we reached Hellevoetsluis.

Here we received a warm welcome from the Dutch "Admiral" Rik, with a reception, beer, pizzas, a land battle (game of "Kubb") and sea battles ("racing" on the Haringvliet - handicaps ignored).

For the next week our fleet of around 43 gaffers, wound through the Dutch "Standing Mast" canals, some very busy with huge barges, others quiet and rural. There were some locks and lots of bridges. Berthing was arranged en route at places such as Gouda. At Haarlem we had a guided tour of the reconstructed Molen De Adriaan, with a drinks reception and a talk.

The canal system finished at a lock and bridge just beyond Amsterdam, and we entered the Markermeer. We had box moorings booked at Durgerdam. These can be tricky single handed. That evening we were entertained by a jazz swing trio.

The next day we "raced" to Hoorn in no wind. Moon River was nearly the last boat across the start line. The race was shortened, but I soon retired. There was also a "battle" involving trying to capture painted clogs, being towed.

The next day in Hoorn was showery. Exchange meals were held with each English crew paired at random with a Netherlands crew, in order to further foster Anglo-Dutch friendship. I was hosted by a Dutch couple who made a delicious fish dish. I brought some wine and made a pudding.

Our final stop was Enkhuizen.

My original plan for the return voyage was to return to the open sea near Amsterdam but that was impossible when the remnants of hurricane Ernesto put an abrupt end to the spell of fair weather.

We retraced our steps along the canal system, in increasingly blustery conditions. Eventually we

reached the open sea at the Westerschelde and had two days of perfect winds back along the Belgian coast and across to Dover. My last day at sea ended into a stiff South Westerly and big waves so I was glad to be home at last.



Previous page: Indian Runner, Bonita and Moon River approaching Haarlem

Above: Gouda cheese market

Below: Approaching the Alblasterdam railway bridge over the Noord

Next page: Moon River moored on an island on the Kagerplassen on the way home

Photos: Barbara Runnalls





New Members

The following new OGA members have signed up in the past three months requesting the South West Gaffers as their area. Welcome to the following:

Martin Blake 6800 *TeePee Two*

Andy Bord 6791 *Minx* Falmouth

Events in the South West

For more details see also [OGA South West Events Page](#)

Fitting Out Lunch and Talk

12 April 2025 Brixham Yacht Club

Contact: David Patuck swsec@oga.org.uk

Brixham Heritage Regatta

25-28 May 2025 Brixham

Contact: Penny Jolley
www.brixhamheritageregatta.uk

French OGA Rally

6-8 June 2025 St Malo

Contact: see [OGA website](#)

Dartmouth Classics

7-8 June 2025 Dartmouth

Contact: royaldart.co.uk

Falmouth Classics

12-15 June 2025 Falmouth

Contact: falmouthclassics.org.uk

SWG Helford Rally

16-18 June 2025 River Helford

Contact: [Tim Price](#)
timpriceabroad@hotmail.com or
swsec@oga.org.uk

Open Day Plymouth Yacht Haven

21 June 2025 Plymouth Area

Contact: TBC

SWG Mylor Small Boats Rally

4-6 July 2025 Coastlands, Mylor Harbour

Contact: [Oliver Peterken](#)
sweditor@oga.org.uk or [David Bewick](#)
smallboats@oga.org.uk or swsec@oga.org.uk

SWG Plymouth Rally and Annual Race

22-24 July 2025 Mayflower Marina

Contact: [Martin Elliott](#)
swpresident@oga.org.uk or
swsec@oga.org.uk

Fowey Classics

30 July-2 August 2025 Fowey

Contact: [Fowey Classics](#)

Looe Luggers and Classics

25-28 July 2025 Looe

Contact: office4luggers@btinternet.com

Dittisham Regatta

16 August 2025 Dittisham

Contact: TBC

Calstock Steamboat Rally

16-17 August 2025 Calstock

Contact: [Ian Richards](#)
ianofcalstock@gmail.com or [Steamboat Association](#)
steamboatassociation.co.uk

Dartmouth Royal Regatta/Dartmouth Sailing Week

17-30 August 2025 Dartmouth

Contact: dartmouthsailingweek.com

SWG Laying Up Lunch and AGM

mid November Location TBC

The traditional end to the sailing season.

Contact: David Patuck swsec@oga.org.uk