

GAFFERS LOG

ISSUE 114: SPRING 2024



NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR GAFF RIG SAILING
The Old Gaffers Association



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COVER PHOTO

Stormy Skies – The Winkle Brig *Sea Jade* off Lismore, The Lynn of Morvern. This photo was the winner in OGA 2023 Photographic Competition for Sailing Gaffers. Photo by Gerard Brown.

EDITORIAL

Vacancy for OGA Log Editor

Firstly, apologies for the tardiness of the spring log this year. The log has been delivered to the membership with a group effort from the membership secretary, secretary and publishers.

Due to work commitments in my own business, I will unfortunately have to hang up my boots now from editing the log and so we are looking to fill the role of Log Editor. Please get in contact with the secretary, Colin Stroud, if you would be interested in getting involved.

Editing the log provides a fascinating way to interact with the membership, learn, network and help to keep driving the association forwards.

Fair Winds & All the best, Philip Hopson

OGA Yearbook

Dear Member

This year we have printed a Yearbook again, but we need to find out how many members require a printed copy of the Yearbook of members details, as opposed to the on-line version (which continues to be available, with your log-in) on the website at https://www.oga.org.uk/members_area/member_list/members_list.html

(The on-line version is inevitably more up-to-date, as it updates itself every night, rather than once a year, or less. But a paper version may be handier at sea.) Now we need to plan for the future. The membership subscription has been increased at a rate less than inflation, and a printed Yearbook is expensive. Three possibilities have been proposed, each with different cost implications:

Have a paper-copy printed Yearbook annually

Have a paper-copy printed Yearbook in alternate years



Rely on the on-line version, which can be divided up into local areas (by boats or members), and printing parts of it at home is possible.

Please can anyone with an opinion on this respond; there are two ways to do this. You can either go on-line to <https://zfrmz.eu/XYXMLU6jSMz2leg8boQ1> or use this QR code (*left*) to vote electronically, or you can cut off the slip at the bottom of Page 1 in

the Yearbook and post it back to the Association Secretary, Colin Stroud, at 2, Tythe Barn Way, South Woodham Ferrers, CM3 5PX. Please respond as soon as possible, and in any case by the end of June this year.

From the Quarterdeck

Our AGM in January was hosted by the NW Area in Liverpool, and many thanks to our team there, Kevin, Alasdair and Jeremy for a very good conference. With lots of entries from OGA60 the Photographic Competition was one of the best I remember - many thanks to Sandy Miller who did the difficult job of judging the entries.

When the London Boat Show was running, our AGM was held in one evening in London and only lasted an hour or so. Since the Boat Show closed down, the AGM has taken the form of a weekend away, rotating round the country in towns with nautical connections. This costs us more but has many benefits. There is more time to deal with OGA business, but also great opportunities to meet with old friends and fellow Gaffers from all over the country. Today when we all have lots of meetings online, it was good to see so many people busy networking, sometimes in the bar and late into the night. Few however had the stamina to keep up with Georgina Tall's group of Younger Gaffers. Next year on 11/12 January we will be in Gloucester, and planning is well advanced being ably organised by a team lead by Alison Cable.

I am pleased that after a period of relative inactivity, our website is now under way again. Many thanks to Elly Rule for taking this on with characteristic energy and enthusiasm. We also have had a report from our Comms subcommittee chaired by Paul Masters looking at how we can have a more active social media presence without incurring excessive expense. Paul kindly agreed to do this before he and Jo slip away for an Atlantic crossing this summer. They have had a number of lively discussions and made some valuable recommendations. Like it or not, our internet presence is important in showing people that we are an active organisation and that we have plenty of activities going on. It helps attract new members and generally raise our profile.

I was also pleased that the AGM committed the Association to organising further Round Britain Cruises in the future. A circumnavigation of the UK in company is a marvellous way to spend the summer and I suggest it should be on every sailing enthusiasts 'to do' list. It does require careful preparation though. If you are thinking of having a career break, taking time off work, planning for retirement or working on a boat restoration, then I suggest going round Britain with the Gaffers is the target you should aim for.

As I write this spring seems to have finally arrived; the days are getting slightly warmer and longer, and named storms maybe less frequent. Somehow it now seems easier to find the time, money and motivation to get the boat ready for the



Mike Beckett.
OGA President.

season ahead. Among the many things that need to be checked, when did you last look at the expiry dates on your fire extinguishers and life jacket CO2 cylinders? I was interested to see the advice that you should inflate your life jackets regularly to check their condition. I hadn't done this before, but I tried it with one of mine. Although it looked fine at first, after a few hours the life jacket had deflated right down and looked very sad. It must have got chafed through somewhere: time for a new one.

Looking forward to the summer, we have plenty of events planned all around the coast, and quite a few are planning to sail or trail their boats to the Netherlands in early August to help our Dutch OGA friends celebrate their 20th anniversary. We hope to get a good turnout.

Happy Sailing!
Mike Beckett

Hello from the Secretary

Looking at our OGA.org.uk website there is an outstanding number of events already planned for 2024, with many more still to be confirmed or added.

So far, there are events on 80 days, and many more if you include those nearby in the Netherlands and France. That is an impressive number of opportunities to attend but equally impressive is the number of volunteers who help organise all those events. If you have enjoyed previous events I encourage you to give something back by helping to organise the planned ones. The Area contacts are shown on the OGA website but if you are unsure or want to discuss roles, please contact me.

On the website, hover over the "News" tab and select "Archive", then "Race Programmes" and you will see some recently added records from 1963. If you have any other early documents not already in the online Archive, please let me know.



Photo: Sue Feather

Colin Stroud, Association Secretary.

Colin Stroud,
Association Secretary, secretary@oga.org.uk

OGA Statement of Accounts 2023

Treasurer's report to year ending 30th September 2023

Income	2021	2022	2023
Membership Subscriptions	34,341.44	32,000.32	31,765.50
Merchandise Sales	185.00	105.50	180.00
Advertising Revenue	1,610.00	1,297.00	2,085.00
Bank Interest	339.98	19.86	24.24
Donations	242.50	230.00	215.00
Youth Fund Income	409.67	213.05	303.30
Total	37,128.59	34105.73	34573.04
Expenditure			
Direct Costs			
Youth Fund Grants	0	500	1000
AGM Costs	166.00	1,625.38	3,030.23
ACM Meeting Expenses	0	1,297.51	2,561.27
Area Funding	4,771.00	3,697.90	4,249.35
Gaffers Log and Yearbook Postage	3,536.79	6,533.84	7429.60
Gaffers Log Printing	4,343.00	4,295.22	5,105.00
Gaffers Log, Yearbook, Fliers, Pre-Press & Production	5,240.00	4,890.00	4,403.00
Yearbook Printing	805.00	1,422.00	0
IT Expenses	957.14	735.22	531.17
President's expenses	590.56	126.22	0
Membership Expenses	148.80	1,581.93	123.95
Total Direct Costs:	20,558.29	27,621.62	29083.57
Gross Profit:	16,570.30	6,949.11	5489.52
Less Expenses			
Direct Costs			
Merchandise Purchase	254.41	61.24	86.46
Paypal Fees	252.59	197.58	160.86
Bank Charges	280.46	263.07	241.24
Subscriptions	274.00	140	150
Business Insurance	1,456.10	1,700.85	1,712.53
Website costs	771.90	344.40	358.80
Advertising (Fliers)	647.60	511.20	178.80
Sundry expenses/ Trade Mark renewal	100	800	0
Total Expenses:	4,201.87	3,673.94	2888.69
Net Profit:	12,368.43	3,382.39	2600.83

OGA 60 RBC AND MAIN EVENT		
RBC 60 Income (Registrations & Flag Sales)	465.00	2,238.00
Sponsorship		2000
	Total Income	4703.00
Expenditure		
OGA 60 Flags		2,693.95
OGA Bristol Channel OGA 60 Funds		2000
Claudia Myatt Illustration OGA Map		150
Dundee Industrial Heritage		375.00
NE Area Bank OGA 60 Funding		1000
Matthew Power OGA 60 Artwork		1350
Whitehall Printing OGA 60 Book		2,100.80
OGA 60 Book additional Postage		650.00
Vessel Finder Ais		71.88
Oban Event		545.98
Dundee Industrial		1,125.00
OGA 60 Awards		320
Solent Area OGA 60 Funds		515.07
East Coast Area OGA 60 Funds (Main Event)		7,499.52
SW OGA 60 Funds		1,093.00
North West Ullswater event		896.25
	Total Expenditure	22386.45
	Net Expenditure	17683.45
Account Balances		
Balances at 31/9/2023		
Current Account	£5894.76	
Youth Fund	£3736.04	
Events fund	£13539.12	Current interest rate 1.51 %
Deposit account	£36,302.88	Current interest rate 1.51%
Paypal	£227.50	Gross interest: 4.12% %
Notes		
No additional funds added to reserves during the year.		
Subscriptions		
Current Membership fees are:		
Single Membership	£34.00 (Paypal £36)	
Family Membership	£39.50 (Paypal £41.50)	
Junior Member	£6.00	
Tony Kiddle		
OGA Treasurer		
Jan 2024		

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the OGA

Held on Saturday January 13, 2024, in Liverpool and on-line.

Attendance in Liverpool (58):

Adrian Spence, Alasdair Simpson, Andrew Kelland, Ann Ingham, Anna Masters, Barbara Runnalls, Chris Englefield, Chris Trevithick, Christopher Pearson, Clare Thomas, Dave Neilly, David Bewick, David Patuck, David Pennison, Deirdre Beckett, Elaine Rawlinson, Francis Mogg, Georgina Tall, James Munday, Jeremy Lambert, Jo Masters, Jo Tall, Joan Kelland, Kevin Goulding, Joe B., Joe Pennington, John Blackie, John Duncan, John Earp, John Ferguson, John Gallagher, Julie Patuck, Kevin Robinson, Kit Lee-Smith, Maddie Phillips, Maddy Masters, Margaret Wainwright, Marion Shirley, Mark Sweetman, Martin Elliott, Maxine Lomas, Michael Leary, Michael Weed, Mike Tomkins, Paul Masters, Pete the Knife Elliston, Pete Thomas, Peter Farrer, Peter Lillett, Peter Morrish, Ruth Metcalfe, Sarah Adie, Scott Metcalfe, Sue Pennison, Susanne Newbold, Teresa Robinson, Trevor Rawlinson, Wendy Duncan.

Attendance according to the Zoom login records (10):

Ben Collins, Chris Allender, David Elliott, Grant Morris, John Hutchinson, Mike, Richard Bailey, Robert, Sandy Miller, Tim Price.

Apologies from:

Beverley Yates, Dick Dawson, Laura Wakefield, Lorna Hill, Pat Dawson, Patrick Vyvyan-Robinson, Paul Jolley, Penny Jolley, Robert Hill, Simon Wakefield, Steve Yates, Terry Fitzpatrick.

The meeting started at 14:08

- OGA President Mike Beckett welcomed everyone, particularly Honorary Member Margaret Wainwright who attended the first ever OGAAGM and thanked Kevin Goulding and Alasdair Simpson for organising the venue for the ACM and AGM in Liverpool.
- There were no objections and no questions so the minutes of the January 14, 2023 AGM were approved.
- There were no questions or objections so the 2023 OGA Accounts presented by Treasurer Tony Kiddle were approved and will be published in the Spring edition of the Gaffers Log.
- Mary Gibbs, Membership Secretary, announced that Membership numbers rose from 1015 in October 2022 to 1050 in October 2023, probably assisted by the many OGA 60 events. The introduction of the online process to set up direct-debits has simplified the joining process for new members. Mary encouraged everyone to use the Member List on the OGA Website to check their details are correct and to let her know if not. These details will also be published in the Spring 2024 Year-Book if Member's consent has been given. It was noted that there were 60 Members in 1963 and 440 Members in 1970.

- Colin Stroud announced that Mary Gibb's term of office as Membership Secretary has come to an end, however, she has offered to serve one more year while her successor is found. There was a unanimous vote for Mary to serve until the 2025 AGM.
- Mike Beckett thanked the teams of volunteers who helped to organise all the events that collectively made OGA 60 such a successful year. He also:
 - thanked Georgina Tall who is leading the initiatives to engage with and recruit younger members,
 - admitted that the OGA website needed to be refreshed and updated more often but this is due to be addressed in the next month or two,
 - announced that the Sub-Committee that recently reviewed the name of the OGA recommended not to change, at least not until our registered trademark "Old Gaffers" is due for renewal in 2032,
- Alison Cable, the prime mover of OGA 60, gave a presentation on the planning that went into, and the results of, OGA 60, particularly the RBC 60 (Round Britain Cruise), the Area Party Ports and the East Coast Jubilee Party.
- Mike Beckett stated that there is an intention to have the next Round Britain Cruise in 2028.
- Richard Bailey gave a presentation about his experience sailing in RBC 60 in *Lahloo*, a Cornish Crabber 26 (1,900 miles, 63 different berths over 104 nights, 8 days single-handed, 35 two and 31 three-handed, plus 30 days not sailing).
- Julian Cable presented the new crewing offer/wanted facility that is now available in the Members Area of the OGA website. In response to a point raised by Clare Thomas on safeguarding, it was decided it would be inappropriate to offer this system to those aged under 18, and Julian agreed to add a stipulation to this effect.
- David Elliott gave a presentation on The British National Yachting Archive that aims to digitally preserve and act as a deposit for records of boat design and construction as well as the participants.
- Sandy Miller presented the results of the OGA 2023 Photographic Competition, details and photographs will be published in the Gaffers Log and on the OGA website. Sandy was thanked for being our competition judge. Summary of the results: -

In the Life at Sea category: -

1st	Alison Cable
2nd	Charles Erb
3rd	Mary Gibbs
Highly Commended	Justin Greig
Highly Commended	Simon Harding

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the OGA (cont'd)

In the Sailing Gaffers category: -

1st	Gerard Brown
2nd	Paul Masters
3rd	Douglas Bridger
Highly Commended	Paul Masters
Highly Commended	Kim Sturgess

- Mike Beckett announced the winners of the national awards and trophies. Results will be published in the Gaffers Log and on the OGA website and summarised as follows: -

David Cade Memorial Trophy	Robert & Lorna Hill.
ODTAA Cup (One Damn Thing After Another)	Alasdair Simpson.
Gaffers Globe Award <i>(presented by Margaret Wainwright)</i>	Barbara Runnalls.
Grumpy II Cups	Joff & Lily Hudson.
Gaffers Tales Award	Edgar & Else Wagemakers.
Tales of Sail Award	Nick Phillips.
Jolie Brise Trophy	Peter Thomas.
President's Commendation	Penny Jolley
Elder Gaffer	Clare Thomas
Special Mention & Association Thanks	Alison and Julian Cable

Location and Date of Next Meeting:

The 2025 AGM, as part of a social weekend, will be in Gloucester on January 11-12, 2025. A formal announcement will be published in the Gaffers Log.

The Meeting Closed at 16:24

Colin Stroud
Association Secretary
February 17, 2024

Welcome Aboard to new OGA members

OGA MEMBERSHIP	TITLE	FORENAME	SURNAME	AREA
6701	Mr	Terry	McCarthy	BC
6564	Mr	Hubert	Hill-Reid	SOL
6702	Mr	John	Baynes	SW
6702	Mrs	Sarah	Baynes	SW
6703	Mr	David	Jonson	SOL
6703	Mrs	Prenita	Jonson	SOL
6704	Dr	Kirsten	Coe	NW
6704	Mr	Stephen	Coe	NW
6059	Mr	Ash	Faire-Ring	EC
6705	Miss	Elizabeth	Robinson	SW
6706	Mr	Alan	Hulme	NW
6707	Mrs	Clare	Roberts	EC
6707	Mr	John	Roberts	EC
6708	Mr	Ian	Gill	SW
6709	The	Tall Ships (Wales)	Trust	NWa
5785	Ms	Mary	Witt	NW
5785	Mr	Christopher	Taylor	NW
6710	Mr	Chris	Davidson	SOL
6711	Mr	Richard	Carman	SW
6712	Mr	Chris	Stanger	NW
6713	Mr	Mike	Sanders Hewett	SW
6714	Mr	Mike	Flynn	DB
6715	Mr	Lloyd	Kirton	SOL
6716	Mr	Stephen	Langford	EC
6717	Mr	Chris	Griffiths	SW
6718	Mr	Kit	Lee-Smith	EC
6719	Ms	Madeleine	Phillips	EC
6720	Dr	Maxine	Smith	SW
6720	Mr	Nicholas	Clark	SW
6721	Mr	Ian	Downing	SW
6721	Miss	Sarah	Downing	SW
5399	Mr	Christopher	Pryke	SOL
5399	Mrs	Susan	Pryke	SOL
6722	Mr	Mike	Caddy	SW
6723	Mr	Robin	Popham	SOL
6724	Mrs	Marcelle	Farr	BC
6724	Mr	Alex	Farr	BC
6725	Mrs	Marika	Gates	BC
6725	Mr	Oliver	Gates	BC
6726	Mr	Roger	Stride	NW
6727	Mr	Thomas	Nicholson	SOL
6728	Mr	Michael	Riley	NW
6729	Dr	Tim	Bunker	SW
6730	Mr	Otter	Fisher	SW
6731	Ms	Christa	Lossin	NW
6732	Mr	David	Atkinson	SCO
6733	Mr	Christopher	Pearson	NW
6734	Mr	Robert	Hewitt Smith	NWa
6735	Mr	Roland	Mann	EC
6736	Mr	Bill	Rollo	SOL
6738	Mr	Jack	Kiernan	DB
6739	Mrs	Jane	Cumberlidge	SW
6740	Mr	Jack	O'Keeffe	DB
6741	Mr	Dan	Osman	NE
6742	Mr	Nick	Gill	SW
6743	Miss	Elizabeth	Reynolds	EC

Area Abbreviations: SW = South West, SOL = Solent, OS = Overseas,
EC = East Coast, DB = Dublin Bay
NWa = North Wales, NW = North West, BC = Bristol Channel, NE = North East,
SCO = Scotland

Where the pink-foots sing

Zoe Dunford introduces us to the delights of sailing in North Norfolk and the formation of her company Sail North Norfolk



Zoe Dunford's Stiffkey Cockle Selkie.

The edges of a creek are just visible, with the tops of sea lavender, faded to autumn-brown, peeping clear of the water. Pink-footed geese chatter as they fly overhead, swapping positions in their streamlined skein.

The apparent stillness of the scene masks mighty natural forces at play. One of the biggest tides of the year swirls around us, smooth-surfaced but so powerful we could be swept off course in seconds.

I'm taking clients on an adventure from Blakeney to Wells-next-the-Sea in North Norfolk. The route is only navigable a few times a year when a spring tide covers sandbanks between Blakeney Point and the saltmarsh. Behind us in the haze-veiled distance, red sails tack back and forth near the seals at the Point. Once the tide starts to ebb, it will be too late to return to them. The sandbanks between us will reappear, cutting us off.

I press on with my clients, watching the shallows pass under my Stiffkey Cockle, a boat built for this coastline. At last, we enter the just-visible channel. I let the tide continue to flood until the edges are completely submerged. Water now stretches to the sky.

by Zoe Dunford

I anchor to cook breakfast, picking a few leaves of salty sea purslane to mix with scrambled egg. We eat while waiting for the ebb, revealing creeks that meander all the way through this vast wilderness to Wells harbour.

"Did you grow up sailing?", ask my clients, as many do. They wonder whether, like most other sailors, I was born into it: A parent passing on their passion, providing access to boats, funding courses. But I grew up in London and didn't start creating the life I wanted until I moved to Norfolk in my mid-twenties. I had always been drawn to the water, but had to work slowly towards making it a bigger part of my life.

My first career was in wildlife film production. I worked on two films about sharks, but only met the marine biologists who were interviewed when they came to the London office, looking uncomfortable in their city clothes and dripping with a life spent at sea. Sun bleached hair, glowing skin, and one wore a shark's tooth on a necklace. The shark's tooth was part of his identity.

To get my own experience of life in the field, I volunteered on a shark research project in the Bahamas. For a month, I helped track lemon and tiger sharks day and night from a skiff. In the UK, I volunteered on a basking shark survey, photographing them and recording sightings while sailing to the Scilly Isles.

We found basking sharks by watching for birds diving for fish and plankton. The sharks feed on the same bounty from underneath. Spotting a large bag floating in the sea, we got closer but it grew little fins, flipped upright and swam off. A sunbathing sunfish. In the evenings, we anchored in bays with clear cerulean water and rowed a tender to the pub.

The access that a boat provides to beauty, wildlife, solitude and adventure was revealed to me. I also realised how little I knew about boating. I wasn't even qualified to helm the skiff.

My final job in wildlife film production was in Norfolk and I started paying for sailing lessons by writing about the thrills and literal spills for a local boating magazine.



The author enjoying breakfast.

Where the pink-foots sing (cont'd)

Sailing from Brancaster Staithe, I spent a lot of early lessons capsizing. It was fun, but looking back I probably couldn't tell yet when I was about to gybe.

Working through the RYA certificates, I found I was less taken with racing than with Day Sailing, where you plot the route for an adventure. We circumnavigated Scolt Head Island, a roughly 4-mile long spit of sand and shingle that you can only sail all the way round on the biggest tides. To make it on the tide, we couldn't idle. But the slight sense of jeopardy only added adrenalin and excitement.

I also started to put in the hours to get know the saltmarsh on foot and by kayak. This wild habitat of shrubby sea blight stretches for 27 miles from Holme to Kelling. It's an AONB, and an SSSI, but those acronyms don't convey what it feels like to be out in it. I've become most familiar with it between Wells and Cley. Stepping away from a busy, landlocked life you feel a bit bigger with so much wild space to yourself. And you have to stay tuned to it because of the tides and changing conditions, so everyday stresses melt into the background.

I used my growing knowledge to crew and then skipper for local company the Coastal Exploration Company. I had no plan other than to be paid a little to do what I'd come to love, but after six years my husband and friends started to encourage me to go it alone. At first I resisted the responsibility, and didn't have the confidence to believe I could do it.

To carry on progressing within the company, I took more courses to get my Day Skipper certificate commercially endorsed. But more than any other training, the RYA keelboat instructor course at the Nancy Oldfield Trust on the Broads gave me the confidence boost I needed. The instructors refined our skills and drilled bad habits out of us. Seemingly simple things like making us break down the steps of a tack so we always do them in the correct order. It was gruelling, but at last I really believed I could create a valuable experience for clients on my own.

So, I didn't grow up sailing, but grew into it as an adult. The challenges and beauty of the seascape continue to enrich my clients and I, and to teach me about myself. These days, I wear a necklace with a sailing boat pendant, and I feel like it's part of my identity.

www.sailnorthnorfolk.co.uk

Contact: sail@sailnorthnorfolk.co.uk



Reflection, Wells next the Sea North Norfolk.

The New Crewing Service

Over at the boat register we've been working hard on implementing features to help skippers and crews get together. This is something the Areas Committee tasked us with in Portsmouth.

So, we've added some features in two separate areas of the OGA website. Under the Boat Register menu are the features we want to make public. Under the Members Area menu are the ones only members can access.

Under the Members Area menu there are new features on the existing 'My Details' page and two new pages: 'Find Crew' and 'Find a spot on a Boat'.

On your 'My Details' page, you can now:

- nominate your boat(s) to appear in the new 'Boats to Sail' page
- create a skippers profile
- create a crewing profile

On the 'Find Crew' page you can:

- create 'voyages' you'd like people to know about
- see crewing profiles and invite people to discuss crewing on your voyages

On the 'Find a spot on a Boat' page you can:

- see all the upcoming voyages
- contact the skippers.

Under the Boat Register menu, we have a new page 'Boats to Sail'. This is another filter on the main boat register, like the 'Boats For Sail' and the 'Small Boats' pages. The new one only shows boats where the owners have said they want to be in the list. We'll make it possible for non-members to create crewing profiles here, but for now we've let them know they can email us. We think providing crewing opportunities will be a great way to get new members. Of course, people will only know about this if we publicise it. So all you social media folks can help.

On the boat detail pages, we have added a new tab to list the voyages the skippers have created for the boat. If you come to the detail page from the 'Boats to Sail' page, the voyages are the default tab. If you come in another way, they are the last tab on the right.

It's at an early stage and we'd love feedback. But it might take a little while to make changes. We'd like to do some sailing too!

Julian and Alison Cable



Crossfields Conference

Laura owned by Michael Leahy after an extensive refit in 2019.

A conference for all Crossfields built vessels and owners took place in November 2023

Around 50 people gathered for the Crossfields' Conference in November. Crossfields of Arnside were leading builders of Morecambe Bay Prawners and yachts from 1840s from 1940s. There are 41 Crossfields' boats on the OGA Boat Register, though sadly not all in existence. The conference was chaired by Eric Crossfield, the great grandson of William Crossfield who set up the boatyard on the shore in Arnside.

Nick Miller, author of the Lancashire Nobby covered the history of Nobbies from the early nineteenth century onwards and the different fishing techniques used. The skill involved in sailing, fishing, and dealing with the catch must have been immense. Maurice Evans dealt with the decline of the Nobby.



Severn in Cardigan Bay.

Mike Beckett, the OGA's President talked about *Bonita's* OGA 60 round Britain voyage. Built in 1888, *Bonita* is the earliest boat built by Crossfields still sailing.

Laura, now owned by Michael Leahy, the OGA's North Wales Secretary, featured in Edward Delmar-Morgan's 1953 book "I brought a Prawning Boat". In the 1990s when owned by Gayle Heard the Tollesbury sailmaker, she won nearly every OGA race she entered. Micheal gave an interesting talk about *Laura's* history, how he came to own her and his ownership of the boat.

David Moss, a wooden boatbuilder, gave an update on the restoration of Arnside Sailing Club's *Severn*. Adam Kyffin and Ruth Taylor recounted their experiences of sailing in *Severn* as children. *Severn* was owned by Adam's parents and subsequently Ruth's parents at Porthmadog in North Wales in the 1960s. *Severn* was brought by the Club in 2018 to have a Crossfields' boat in the village.

Simon Williams, a local historian gave a talk about *Matchless* a boat taking holiday makers from Morecambe to Grange-over-Sands which capsized in 1894 drowning 25 people. John Hobson spoke about *the Pride of Liverpool*, which NOA Classic Boat Association are restoring. *The Pride of Liverpool* is one of around 12 boats made from the mould of *Sir William Priestley*, the Morecambe Fisherman's lifeboat built by Crossfields in 1934.

A highlight of the concert was the performance of the song "Ballerina" by Dave Walters a folk singer about *Pastime*, a Crossfield's boat he owned in 1970s. Andrew Price and Melinda Elder, whose father / uncle kept the boat at Menai Straits in the 1960s gave a talk about sailing in her as children. After David's ownership *Pastime* sunk off Anglesey in a Force 11 gale. Dave wrote the first two verses when he owned her and the final verse after she had sunk. The song includes poignant lines such as "Drifting to nowhere borne by the tide" and "Sailing's not easy two skippers on board." Dave gave a concert in Arnside Sailing Club's clubhouse in the evening. Dave took part in OGA 50 Round Britain Cruise in 2013 on *Syene*. Many of Dave's songs are about sailing.

Arnside Sailing Club plan to repeat the conference in 2025. There must be other places elsewhere in the country that could hold conferences about their maritime history.



The oldest Crossfield built boat afloat. Bonita owned by OGA President Mike Beckett.



The Manchester and Salford Lifeboat after her extensive restoration.

The Ex RNLI Lifeboat *Manchester and Salford*

In the last issue of the Gaffers Log, Mark Raynes told of his acquisition and history of the RNLI Lifeboat *Manchester and Salford*. Here he describes her restoration and how she is used

Between 2001 and 2002 we focused on building a shed in which to house the boat for the long term task of rebuilding/restoring the lifeboat. We initially tried to work under tarpaulins but found this was a waste of time. We needed working space and a dry area for a workshop and machines. A Poly-tunnel was chosen at a cost of £1,200 which is 62ft x 18ft x 18ft. This proved to be an excellent decision and is still good ten years on. It never rains or gets cold. It does get a little hot in summer.



The above photos show the amount of work needed. There was not much of the original hull left. The work was largely carried out by volunteers of all ages.

Rebuilding the curved aft deck

At first we thought we might be able to save the end box but the more we stripped it the more problems we found. The Oak curves that form the deck edge were rotten and although the deck planks and hoops (Oak frames) were okay, they all had to come off to enable us to get at the oak edges. In the end the curved oak hoops were the only things we kept.



New aft deck under construction.

Main construction details of the deck

2 layers of 6mm marine ply, epoxy bonded together then epoxy sheathed prior to laying 6mm teak deck planks, plus new main beams, new curved edge beams and copper rivets.



6mm Teak deck planks were laid over marine ply.

Manchester and Salford Lifeboat (cont'd)

Replacing the Keel bolts

Replacing the 33 keel bolts was a huge job, which we did ourselves. When we removed them we realised that the keel would have fallen off if we hadn't replaced the bolts.

Less than a third of the bolts had any real strength left. The worst ones were near the prop shafts.

We made replacement bolts in our forge and had them galvanised. Since then we have forged bolts for other lifeboat owners who are restoring their boats.



New Keelbolts made in our forge.



Driving out the old bolts.



Installing the new ones.

Tips:

- Get the drawings for your boats' keel bolts from the National maritime museum at Greenwich (archive department).
- Make dams round the heads inside and soak with linseed oil and paraffin mix for a week.
- Make some drifts that are smaller than the bolts.
- Hire a Mag drill as you may need to drill some out from underneath.
- Make a strong-back for removing the blind bolts at the stern.
- Measure each bolt twice before you order them.
- Planning and preparation is key, a competent practical owner can manage this job.
- Get help, it's tiring, lots of hammering!

Renewal of the Hauling plates

Initially we thought the hauling plates could be cleaned up and repainted. Following needle scaling and shot blasting, it was clear that the corrosion of the plates and rivets was so bad that the whole lot needed replacing, when painted, they looked even worse, they had to go. We forged new plates, made riveting tools and fabricated a new shoe (all galvanised). We all really enjoyed this job as it was a challenge and we purchased our own forge and some blacksmiths tools that we used for making the new floors and keelbolts.



The corroded Hauling plate.



The new Hauling plate made in our forge.

How the Lifeboat is used!

Following the restoration and re-launch which was completed in 2017 the *Manchester and Salford* Lifeboat started an active life with three main roles as follows:

1. She is used for pleasure use for all those involved in her long term rebuild and has revisited all of her past operating stations.
2. We have participated in Lifeboat rallies and have auctioned places on board to raise money for the RNLI.
3. We have got her commercially coded to Category 2 and now operate her as a classic sailing charter vessel bringing a quality historic sailing experience to the Irish sea, Wales and the West Coast of Scotland. This is used to fund her ongoing maintenance and upkeep.



The end of a long road. Gleaming paintwork.



The refurbished wheelhouse.



Will she float? Zenith after a lot of work. She leaked a lot initially but took up almost completely after about a month.

We bought a boat for £20.00

Matt Power buys a 1930s gaffer for a bargain price

One of my sailing heroes is the famed sailing couple Peter and Anne Pye who voyaged extensively in their gaff cutter *Moonraker* back in the 1950s and 60s. Aficionados will remember how they bought *Moonraker* for £25.00 and converted her from a fishing boat to an ocean going vessel. In comparison to their bargain we did slightly better and for £20.00 became the proud owners of *Zenith*, a Deben 4 ton gaff cutter built by Whisstocks of Woodbridge in 1936 of pitch pine on oak. Initially the asking price was £1.00 but we felt we ought to pay more than that so at least Bill the previous owner could celebrate. It is often said that the happiest days of boat ownership are the day you buy a boat and the day you sell her. I wonder how often the price paid for a boat is more than is actually originally asked.



Moonraker bought in the 1930s by Peter and Anne Pye for £25.00. They subsequently voyaged many thousands of miles in her crossing the Atlantic several times and venturing into the Pacific.



Zenith as we found her. She is a Deben 4 tonner built by Whisstocks of Woodbridge in 1936. She was basically pretty sound but had not been sailed for several years.

To cut a long story short this acquisition involves friendship, increasing infirmity on the part of *Zenith*'s former owner and his desire to see her refitted and sailing again. Fools own boats for wise men to sail and we have belonged to the latter group for some years whilst our son was being brought up and educated. So what kind of boat does £20.00 get? Well she has a Yanmar 1GM diesel installed in about 2000, a sound pitch pine hull, a fairly recent suit of sails and epoxied decks that were refitted in 2000 when she had an extensive restoration. In short, an absolute bargain. The bad bits – inevitable in a boat with this price tag – are: the rubbing strakes are rotten, the varnish is hanging off in ribbons, there is some storm damage to the stem and everything that can corrode had corroded.

Zenith was lying in one of those yards that we have all thought have long gone, the ones you used to discover skulking in the marshes or down a narrow rutted lane dotted with derelicts with wonky 'For Sale' notices fading to magenta on their peeling topsides. But this yard looked as if it might have built boats in the past, its tarred clapboard sheds slowly being replaced by poly ones. The rafters bearing the wooden masts of long deceased yachts deep in dust and draped in cobwebs. Somewhere there is a little office in which may lie the 1950s correspondence between the owners of the shapely Buchanans or Holmans that might have once emerged from the tarred shed. Beautiful yachts that took your breath away with topsides like bone china and spars the colour of stripped willow.

We bought a boat for £20.00 (cont'd)



Storm damage repaired. All ready for new rubbing strakes.



New rubbing strakes all secured prior to varnishing. Several coats of epoxy have been applied underneath.



We managed to work out the large amounts of string. Jib setting successfully. We have still yet to go sailing.

In this aura of nostalgia, *Zenith* seems at home here but nowadays she shares her mud berth with her non stick fibreglass cousins whose owners look at me with expressions of smugness or pity (I am not sure which). The shipwrights that kept the yard alive are now retired and riddled with arthritis although one or two stroll down the pontoon ready with a gum sucking comment or two. "you have got yourself a job there" or "at least someone is saving her from the bonfire".

Zenith demanded to be slipped and not before time where she basked in admiration, at least from those who know a good 80 something year old wooden boat when they see one. It is clear that I am a lover of such craft but really we should have acquired something far more sensible with less demands on time and financial resources. Nearly all of the work I have attempted to do myself with advice from the time served sceptical shipwrights with pipes clamped to yellowing teeth who have "tut tutted" at my clumsy caulking and none too politely suggest a witches brew of red lead stopping instead of epoxy, surely the amateur wooden boat restorers best friend.



Zenith sailing in 2011. This photo was invaluable to us as to how to rig everything.

But it seems that I am not alone in finding solace and satisfaction in refitting a wooden boat. Many OGA members have brought a neglected wooden vessel back to life with amazing restorations all with their own hands. Although some progress has been made, I have got a long way to go with more freezing cold days down at the boat yard, hands covered in grease, chipping rust and scraping away years of paint and varnish. My carpentry will be put to the test and there will be times when it will all be too much and I will wonder why I was daft enough to take on such a boat in the first place. The carrot will be when *Zenith* returns to her natural element with gleaming topsides, the varnish golden in the sun and people will (hopefully) say "what a pretty boat".

I am inspired by my heroes to go cruising. Theirs were great feats accomplished in small vessels with skinny budgets but a brush with cancer a few years ago has left me requiring marina facilities most nights, hardly the ethos of those great cruising pioneers. But I suppose I am lucky, as at the time it looked as if my next journey would have been across the Styx. My wife Lell who is wholeheartedly behind this project having grown up on a gaff rigged yawl says with typical feminine logic "can't we just explore places that we have never been to as our boats have always had too deep a draft". We may even attend an OGA Rally when you can all go "Tut tut!"



Heritage Harbours

Common Quay in Ipswich, Suffolk. Photo courtesy of Ipswich Maritime Trust Archive.

Update on Heritage Harbours and Heritage Inland Ports by Henry Cleary, Chair, The Maritime Heritage Trust

Ports and harbours which maintain their maritime heritage are a vital part of sailing, visiting and enjoying our coasts but increasingly they face pressures that put this heritage at risk. Heritage vessels of whatever size need home ports where they can rely on facilities such as stores, slipways and marine businesses as well as quay sides for loading and display. The historic buildings, water and green space of a small port (large ones often have little heritage left) are equally important locally but all of this needs strong local support to help see off unsuitable development and other threats.

This is the background to the emergence of Heritage Harbours (including Heritage Inland Ports) in a variety of locations across the UK – most recently Ipswich and Bideford announced on 5 January 2024. All of these have community based organisations looking to safeguard, improve, promote this wider concept of maritime heritage so that it can be sustained into the future. Three national organisations – National Historic Ships, Historic England and The Maritime Heritage Trust are providing support, in MHT's case by hosting the National Heritage Harbour Working Group. This brings the locations together to share experience, develop joint promotions and tackle common issues.

OGA Members will need little reminding of Brian Corbett (1941 -2022) who did so much to spread and enthuse many places with the Heritage Harbour idea and



Maldon in Essex.



Exeter. Photo by Exeter Canal and Quay Trust and Appleton Event photography.

drew on his unrivalled contact list to promote it. Thanks in part to funds contributed by OGA Members in Brian's memory we have been able to create web pages featuring all the Heritage Harbours – see <https://maritimeheritage.org.uk/heritage-harbours/location-map>

Several of the Heritage Harbours are establishing a charity so that they can raise money for projects, such as acquiring a building to attract a skilled worker such as a sailmaker, or to be able to get grants for improvements. Exeter is supported by the local authority and is developing a major programme of events including historic vessel visits. Shardlow (Heritage Inland Port) has an exceptional collection of 18th century canalside buildings but some are at high risk and an Annual Festival is used to raise awareness and promote action. One of the priorities at Ipswich is to create a youth activities programme including skills training.

Inevitably there will be issues affecting vessel facilities in some of the locations – moorings, fees, access which is still problematic. The creation of a Heritage Harbour does not resolve all these overnight but it does provide a forum in which they can be tackled more easily.

The basic ideas on Heritage Harbours are set out in the agreed statements from NHS UK, HE and MHT accessible on our websites – for National Historic Ships see https://www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/site-search?search_api_fulltext=heritage%20harbours The Heritage Harbour scheme does not provide cash or a legal designation but the status can help pursue those. One of its main aims is to mobilise the community support without which many of our small ports will not survive as working harbours. The National Working Group would be pleased to hear from other potential locations wanting to join. Contact info@maritimeheritage.org.uk

Molly Cobbler heads across country



**OGA Membership
Secretary Mary
Gibbs takes an unusual
route to join the 60th
birthday celebrations. Part 1
across the middle of England**

Main Photo: Molly Cobbler en route across the middle of England. Mary Sculling. **Inset:** Molly Cobbler under sail.

Why take *Molly* across country? After all, she usually wintered in the Menai Strait in North Wales, one of the most beautiful sailing areas in the British Isles, so you could argue that we didn't really need to go anywhere.

The planning for *Molly's* journey started in 2018. I had taken her from North Wales, round Lands End and along the South Coast to the Isle of Wight for the OGA 55 celebrations (what some people will do for a good party!) It was indeed an excellent party, with a lot of great sailing, and it was there, sitting in the camp on the shore that we started discussing an OGA 60 circumnavigation. I had crewed on *Minstrel* for the 2013 Round Britain Challenge, and I liked the idea of doing it again. I had already got plans to visit Ireland and to go back to Scotland, but I wanted to take more time about it, and see more than a few weeks would allow for, especially as *Molly* might well struggle to keep up.

My idea was to do it in stages: Southern Ireland in 2019, then the North of Ireland and on to Scotland, and let the Round Britain fleet catch up with *Molly Cobbler* during the main circumnavigation in 2023. It all started well, *Molly* wintered in Barry in South Wales, before heading along the Southern Irish coast in 2019. We had lots of adventures on the way there and back, and returned to North Wales for the winter.

by Mary Gibbs

But then came Covid! *Molly* did not even get to touch salt water in 2020. I was glad when we could launch her in 2021, but more restricted sailing in and near the Menai Strait showed me that my sailing capacity was more limited than before. *Molly* is small, and I had made adjustments to her already (an extra purchase on the mainsail, a lighter weight anchor chain) but now I found that it was difficult to get the mainsail set properly if there was more than a zephyr of wind, and raising the anchor proved hard, if there was wind, or any tide running. And in situations where wind, tide and swell did not always coincide (like most of the time!) I found myself struggling in situations which I knew I would have managed better in the past. Much of this was due to my weakening hand grip – most likely because of problems consequent on having broken both wrists in my time. Eventually, I accepted that I should plan to stop doing long-distance single-handed sailing. But of course, that didn't stop me wanting to do it! I did NOT want to sell *Molly* immediately. I realised that, in quiet conditions, I could still sail, but I should not set off if I was likely to sail in borderline conditions, as I had in the past. Though no weather forecast is guaranteed!

I promised myself that, though I would not be heading for the North Channel alone again, I would look at fulfilling the ambitions I had closer to home. I would visit some places nearby in Wales that I still hadn't managed to get to, and would allow more time to do it, avoiding challenging weather as much as possible. Then in 2023 I would attend the Round Britain party in Neyland, before heading up the Bristol Channel and across country via the Kennet and Avon Canal, and the Thames, back to the East Coast where she was built. And she and I would still get to the OGA 60 celebrations together – it would feel awful to go without her!

Come 2022, *Molly* was as ready for the two-season trip as I could get her, with extra coats of varnish, and everything checked. I sailed around the whole coast of mainland Wales, from the Dee to Milford Haven, and did it in short infrequent hops, with good forecasts. I visited favourite anchorages, and tried out different ones; I learned a lot about mooring against a quay in a tideway on a river in Aberdyfi, and explored different routes through the islands of St Bride's Bay. Occasionally I had crew, but mostly I was alone, and it was beautiful.

Neyland marina was as welcoming as ever – they remembered *Molly*! – and later, I explored further up the Haven. We got pretty close to Haverfordwest, and the next day, we came within sight of the quay at Cresswell Quay. We had motored all the way up – I bottled out of tacking along that channel! – but as soon as we turned back, the wind was from astern, and we had a lovely gentle sail back to Neyland with the staysail.

Molly Cobbler heads across country (cont'd)



Molly in Neyland, ready to go!

Molly spent the winter at East Llanion yard, uncomfortably far from Manchester, but she was checked regularly by David Grainger, to whom many thanks. He and his friend Dave were also towers of strength when it came to fitting out. Dave repaired some minor damage to the rudder, and also reconstructed the boom, when its end suddenly fell off due to undiagnosed wet rot when it was being removed from storage in David's boatshed! I was horrified, but David produced an old broken bowsprit from *Happy Quest*, and Dave did a brilliant job of scarphing it in. Despite the different wood colour, it is done so well, and the finish is so beautiful, that it looks as if that was how it was intended to be!

Parties at Neyland (and Dublin, on Minstrel) were great fun, but then it was

time to set off for the East Coast in *Molly*. The wind, as the RBC fleet skippers will remember, was a persistent north-easterly, and not at all favourable for heading up the Bristol Channel!

But at last, on 10th June, *Molly* and I headed down the Haven using the last of that East wind, to anchor in West Angle Bay. It was lovely, sitting in the cockpit in the sun, listening to the sea breaking lazily on the rocks....

I planned a leisurely trip up the Bristol Channel, anchoring in pleasant spots along the way, but I woke (very early!) to thick fog and no wind at all. It seemed to be lifting, and forecast was "visibility moderate to good, occasional fog patches" so I set off carefully. The fog did lift enough for me to identify Linney Head and Crow Rock through the haze and to navigate the sound between them, but then it thickened again, and I saw little except wildlife for the rest of the trip. We motored along half a mile off the cliffs west of Govan Head and saw nothing of them! I gave up on Caldey Island - the sea was flat throughout the trip, and the favourable tide meant our speed was excellent - average 6 knots over seven hours to Oxwich Bay. We had to motor all the way, though, and I saw nothing except shearwaters, guillemots, an enormous jellyfish and one dolphin. Mind you, keeping a look-out

into the fog all morning had me seeing things that weren't there.... Finally, as we approached Oxwich Bay, 40 miles to the East, a westerly Force 2 got up, and started to blow the fog into streamers of cloud around the hill at the entrance, which had been invisible up till then.

Once in Oxwich Bay, the fog had cleared and there was now a lovely westerly breeze, but the tide was changing to west-going and I was weary, so we anchored off the beach and I had a rest. But later, as the ebb tide slackened, we set off again under sail, and had a great broad reach for ten miles to Swansea Bay, where I anchored north of the Mumbles and west of the lifeboat station.



Sailing across St Bride's Bay.

Next day, there was no wind at all at first, so I motored across Swansea Bay. Then we got a light westerly breeze, but with a marked swell from the same direction, and there was not enough wind to keep the sails out. So I swore and carried on. But out in the Channel, once clear of the splashing outside the Nash passage, the East-going swell persisted, and the wind was now westerly 3 gusting 4. Much too good to waste, but *Molly* was rolling enough with the swell as it was, a dead run with the main up would have been horrible! So I sailed with both foresails set goosewinged, and had a great time (I found I had a big goofy grin on my face!) It was hard work of course, but got easier when I could set them on the same side. But I was stupid, and went on sailing after I knew I should have started the engine to help the speed as the ebb started, and ended up with a battle with the tide. Fortunately it was neaps. So we managed to round Lavernock Point eventually, and my back up plan of borrowing a mooring in Barry Harbour was not needed.

I enjoyed a few days in Cardiff, seeing friends and getting *Molly's* Boat Safety certificate. Then we were on our way again to Portishead - easier to catch the tide up the Avon from nearer to the entrance, I thought! The trip was easy but nearly windless. I did get half an hour of sailing, with a northerly force 1-2, getting most of our speed from the tide, but the tide was clearly going to carry us away up the Severn, and when I motored in closer to the land, the wind disappeared entirely.

I don't think I've ever been more scared than I was just before we locked out of Portishead on Sunday afternoon and took the flood tide up the Avon at springs on

Molly Cobbler heads across country (cont'd)



Molly, ready for the canal.



Bath Deep Lock (No 8-9).

a twelve-metre tide! I had booked a lock-in, and was worried that I would not time it right. I had calculated how long I would need several times, but got different answers every time. But it was actually fine (if challenging!) when under way. It was interesting to see the Avon at about half tide (it was high water when we came downriver in 2015), and I rapidly realised that the vast expanses of mud were not at all alarming on a rising tide. And, though my time was changed while someone else locked out, the outboard coped well with the flood tide outside Bristol. The lock keepers were very friendly and helpful once we were in the lock, and it was very straightforward.

As it was soon after the dreadful fire at Underfall Yard, I moored in the visitors' berthing a little further up the harbour, and felt a great sense of relief that I had made it this far.

The following day, Jay at Traditional Rigging helped *Molly* into a berth at the yard, where the lowering of the mast went very well. But ALL the shrouds and halyards got involved with all the others - there was a complete snakes' orgy going on in the cockpit - and it took me ages to produce order out of chaos, and to secure all the spars and the oar across the supports. It looked a rather Heath Robinson arrangement, but was, in fact, pretty secure.

However, I had one more task to do - I really did not want to have to share the cabin all the way across England with the sails, so they got taken on a cross-country trip of their own, by train, to stay with my brother, just east of London (you can do the trip in an astonishingly short time since they built the Elizabeth Line, and only one change - but I got some very odd looks!!)

The Kennet and Avon canal, from Bristol to Reading, has three sections - the Avon, which is essentially the river with locks past the weirs: the canal proper between Bath and Newbury: and the largely canalised River Kennet from there to



Looking up the Caen Hill flight.

Reading, with much older locks. And then the Thames..... The canal trip was not going to be single-handed - operating all those locks alone would be beyond me! But canal crew are easier to get - travel and accommodation are easier, and my husband, Peter, (who avoids like the plague water that goes up and down, and big white things that flap) was perfectly willing to travel on a canal. I had no crew available at first, but I thought that the Avon (a total of 6 unstaffed locks in about 15 miles, including the Bristol Harbour section) ought to be manageable in two days, possibly sharing locks with others, though I was wary of sharing with steel narrow boats.

In fact, it mostly worked out. Netham lock, the staffed lock at the end of the Bristol Harbour, was standing open, and most of the River Avon is a placid wide winding river, with tree lined banks and large patches of yellow waterlilies. The first lock was easy - canal volunteers were painting it, and helped *Molly* and a motorboat through. There was no one in sight at the second one, but I found a couple of live-aboard lads at the moorings above the canal, who readily operated the lock for me. They were not sailors, and were fascinated by *Molly*! At the third lock, there was no one in sight, and the footpath beside the canal was blocked off due to building works a couple of fields away.... I resigned myself to a long wait, but no boats came, and I was just working out how I could safely take myself through when two paddleboarders arrived. They were very happy to help, but once the lock was full, and we tried to open the gates, there was absolutely no shifting them!! Three of us repeatedly trying got nowhere, so I thanked them and told them not to worry, as I wanted them to get back before dark. I rang the on-call number for the Canal and River Trust, expecting help in the morning, but they sent two guys that evening - and, because of the blocked footpath, they had to wade through dense nettle

Molly Cobbler heads across country (cont'd)

patches along the bank for over half a mile!! In shorts! I felt very guilty, but they managed to shift the gates (which had been silted up) and I moored on the waiting pontoon above the lock; it was now nearly dark, so no one would be needing it that night.

The next day was enlivened by a narrowboat crew who left the paddles open on the top gates (definitely a no-no, so I moored *Molly* and sorted them out), a Canadian hire crew who were very friendly and loved *Molly* but who had not realised how dangerous a steel boat weighing many tons could be to a plywood one weighing one and a half tons. My scream alerted them, and they got their boat under control, no harm done to *Molly*. And then a paddleboarding class occupied the entire width of the river!! (I didn't drown any of them, for which I think I deserve Brownie points!) It was a longish stretch to the last lock of the day, on the outskirts of Bath, where the Canadians, who had gone through already, volunteered to operate the lock. Soon *Molly* was moored at some public moorings, which happened to be just in front of a hidey-hole behind some bushes (clearly used by teenagers for smoking dope and possibly other nefarious practices: I did not investigate!)

From here I needed crew. The locks begin to come thick and fast, and the Bath Flight of six locks (one of them the double "Bath Deep Lock" – nearly 20 feet deep, and very intimidating as the water cataracts into it!) lifts the canal above the City of Bath, to an excellent view. Keith McIlwain very kindly came over to get us through them all.

I now had to wait a day for my friend Jane to arrive, after which we would be heading east across the south tip of the Cotswolds, to the steep slope up to Devizes, where the canal rises 237 feet in just over two miles through 29 locks. A canal expert friend of mine came to join us for that day, but Jane and I had sixteen miles with 8 locks to pass over two days first. Meanwhile, I discovered that my plans were in jeopardy – a lock which had already been closed for some time for repairs, just west of the summit tunnel, had been due to re-open before we got there – but the Canal and River Trust had now decided that they needed to remove the whole gate and take it to be rebuilt off site!!! This meant that Jane could not get me as far as planned, and that much of the time which Peter had offered would now not be usable!! It still seemed too late to turn back though.....

Jane and I had a lovely couple of days passing through one of the most beautiful sections of the canal, including two aqueducts across the Avon gorge. We had some problems with canal volunteers at locks not understanding the difference between steel narrowboats and plywood sailing boats, but with two crew, we managed to keep *Molly* safe.



Dundas Aqueduct on the Kennet & Avon Canal.

Alan arrived, and on 28th June he and Jane joined me close to the bottom of the Foxhangers flight. The long climb went very well, and we did it in less than the average time! One side effect of the canal closure further east was that the long flight was much less crowded than usual, and we had canal volunteers helping for the middle (longest and most difficult) part of the flight, where the locks go straight from one to the next, and each lock has a feeder pond, full of water lilies, to maintain the water level.

My hurling of mooring lines to Alan and Jane at first improved, but later got worse again (probably exhaustion!) *Molly* had to be secured in each lock while it filled, and my poor hand grip meant I couldn't now cope with holding her by the ladder while the water surged into the lock, so I had to get lines up to the top of each lock. Alan and Jane were very tolerant of receiving lines still wet from their last fall into the canal! Jane's knot tying improved rapidly, Alan's picked up after one of his knots gave way entirely...

Next day, Jane and I had a leisurely trip along most of the Long Pound, where masses of meadowsweet grew along the banks. We did have a section where the weed had grown so thick that it completely gunked up the outboard and I had to scull *Molly* for a few hundred yards, doing 0.5 or 0.6 knots. Jane was impressed, and actually, so was I!

Once in Pewsey, I was alarmed to learn that the updates on the lockgate repair kept suggesting a longer wait – and the liveaboards there, many of whom had been held up for weeks already, were getting exasperated. I began to wonder if I would make the party at all.

Part 2 In the next Issue. Mary continues her journey through London in Molly Cobbler and arrives successfully at the OGA 60th Jubilee party in Levington.

Goodbye to all that

***Lone Wolf* has been a familiar sight at OGA events for many years. Dick and Pat Dawson wrench themselves from her after an extensive restoration and an ownership that spanned 40 years**

Lone Wolf at the OGA Yarmouth Rally in 2018. Photo by Dave Moore



It had to happen one day, that we would pass our old gaff cutter on to someone else, and the anticipation wasn't easy. 40 years is quite a while and the parting would be hard, but we really did need to do it before old age and possibly failing health beat us to it. So it was done, and to our surprise we were able to move on with no regrets and lots of happy memories.

By Dick Dawson

In the beginning....

1983. Seeing *Lone Wolf* ashore at Ian Brown's yard in Rowhedge, port quarter bashed in by a coaster drudging the anchor up river and misjudging it. Falling in love with the lines, ignoring the mess. Who will fix the damage? – Oh, the yard here. Are they any good? Well, just have a look in the shed. There was Courtauld's 1912 gaff yawl *Duet* getting a new deck. Oh well, that'll be all right then. So we bought her. Easter early morning, frozen hands setting up the rig for the first time, snow on the deck, frying bacon aromas drifting up from below. Dinghy stuck in the mud, sugging and soeing, broken oar, smothered in mud, hilarity in sailing club, you Solent yotties – we saw your yellow wellies! Odd, because ours were blue. First passage down Channel, drifting off Brighton at 0200, no wind, engine says shan't. Old petrol Morris Vedette, carburettor always flooding. East Coast mud washed out of the seams, standard leak rate now rather fast.

The commitment

1984. At David Hillyard's yard for a serious look at work to be done, the last major refit perhaps 30 years before. Made an outline plan with yard owner Dennis Cullingford. "Of course, you could always do the decent thing" he said, putting a box of matches on the saloon table as he left. 18 months on Hillyard's slip, above high water, major structural repairs, learning from time-served shipwrights, always generous with help and advice. Sourcing second-hand oak, maple, pitch-pine and teak, ripping out dodgy bits and applying finishing touches to the professionals' work.

To Hillyard's with two baulks of pitch pine plucked from the Thames at Gravesend, once supporting a major jetty, offcuts from a consignment for a sheik of Araby's new palace. Shipwrights unimpressed – that's never pitch-pine – they saw you coming, didn't they? Over to the saw mill with a cutting schedule, oh yes, it's pitch-pine alright – the whole of Littlehampton was infused with its glorious aroma. One or two doubting Thomases furtively stroking, smelling, one even tasting it. Had to buy the yard a new bandsaw blade. Major hull work completed, then another 18 months of rebuilding accommodation. Working our socks off, finding some bits hard but never both of us depressed at the same time.

Finally relaunching, work not quite completed, but impatient to get sailing. Just one bottle of champagne, a few pals and one by one some Hillyard's shipwrights quietly congratulating us for what we had done. Berthed snugly at the Elephant boatyard on the Hamble, replaced the mast installed in the '50s when she was converted from gaff to Bermudan. Splendid hollow Noble spar, new 18' boom from a beautiful knot-free baulk of Douglas Fir in the yard, gaff from an unused Montagu Whaler mast. New gaff rig and sail plan very close to the original, copied from old logs and publications.

Goodbye to all that (cont'd)



Racing in the Solent in 1992. Photo by Hamo Thornycroft.

The reward

1989. Set off down channel to a Yachting Monthly classic boat rally in Brixham. Out through the Needles, set course past the Fairway buoy in a freshening breeze. The boat picked up her skirts and flew – back to the rig she was designed for. Our cups were full to the brim.

The next 20 years we cruised the English Channel south to Brittany, west to Cornwall, sometimes round North Foreland, often in company with other gaffers. Gradually, classic boat events sprang up around the Channel coasts and a good summer cruise involved regattas in Plymouth, Fowey and Falmouth, as well as major events in St Malo, Paimpol, Brest and Douarnenez.

Then finding that club racing has its attractions, that years of sailing in all conditions taught us how to get the best performance out of the boat and that even if we weren't always first at the start, we could give a good account of ourselves on the race course.

Some highlights

Running up Channel in half a gale, two reefs and spitfire jib, riding the swells of the massive spring flood, silver moon gilding the water, South Foreland light visible well beyond advertised range, relief at mooring quietly in Ramsgate.

Grounding on a rock pinnacle in the Rance the moment the barrage was opened to let out the last metre of water, taking a pluck from a pal using the staysail halyard to heel the boat over and drag us off.

Three gaff cutters, all about the same size, sharing a buoy in Carrick Roads, Falmouth, all three sailing on and off the buoy for the 4 or 5 days we were there, not one of us using the engine.

Racing with other gaffers in the Bursledon Regatta, squeezing tightly into Tom Richardsons' pontoons, then paddling and swimming races, visitors coming and going on board, live music and spectacular fireworks, late drinking and morning hangover.

On passage from the Channel Isles to Ploumanac'h overnight, no wind, our pal's boat ran out of engine, towed him for about 30 miles, anchored inside Sept Isle in peace and quiet in the dark, waking to the din of the spectacular gannetry as it awoke.

Joining a race of local gaffers off Ploumanac'h, sailing blind into the confined basin, no detailed chart, wind freshening, shoreline close under our lee, topsail drawing like a hot poultice, rounding up to grab a vacant buoy, dropping the main and topsail in one, pouring a glass of wine - well, we couldn't let the French gaffers think they were better sailors, could we?

Entertaining on board, six is comfortable for supper round the saloon table, eight fairly easy, we once manged more than 10. The very best of friends, new and old, joined together by the adventure of sailing, learning from each other, yarning until late, rising to a fresh new dawn – how we all cherished it.

Return passage to Hamble from Falmouth, all sail set to the tops'l, light and fluky until Start Point, a mob of dolphins in Lyme Bay, too early for the tidal gate at Hurst, the freshening breeze giving enough power to climb over the tide all the way up the Solent, to round up and hand the tops'l in Bursledon pool just 12 hours from Start Point. Not bad for a 25' waterline buxom cruising centenarian!



Friends aboard during YOGAFF in 2008.



We had many memorable parties aboard over 40 years.

Small Boats

Looking ahead to the 2024 sailing season

I think this is the time of year when many people are thinking seriously about which sailing events they might go to in the season ahead so I thought it might be helpful if I previewed some of the small boat events that will be happening this year.



*Boats at Howtown Beach, Ullswater.
Photo by Steve Mitchell.*

I am pleased that there will be some new events in the OGA sailing calendar this year. In August 2023, we were due to hold the first ever Teamac Gaffling 4.1 Championship as part of the OGA 60 celebrations at Levington. Sadly, this event had to be postponed due to the appalling weather but the good news is that it has been reorganised to take place from May 25th-27th at Waldringfield on the River Deben. It will take place alongside the OGA Deben Rally and the Woodbridge Boatyard Cherub Centenary. The East Coast Area is promising plenty of gaffer sailing on the river and plenty of fun ashore, too.

The North West Area is also planning a major new event. This will take place at the Windermere Jetty Museum on 3rd and 4th August. This should be a must for everyone with an interest in sailing and traditional boats. The awarding winning Windermere Jetty Museum was opened in 2019. It tells the 200-year story of Windermere's boating history. The Museum's collection includes steamboats, gaff rigged yachts, ferries and speedboats. For many years, Windermere was at the forefront of boat design and in the early twentieth century it of course became synonymous with Arthur Ransome and Swallows and Amazons. *Coch-y-Bonndhu*, one of Arthur Ransome's boats, is on display as, too, is a boat that was once owned by Beatrice Potter. The northern reach of the lake, where the Museum is located, gives excellent sailing with views across the Lakeland Hills. On one of the days, the plan will be to sail up to Ambleside for lunch. The weekend will include the chance to go on a guided tour of the museum and a visit to the boat conservation workshops. Steam boat trips will be available for non-sailors.

Many of the "old favourite" events will still be taking place again in 2024, too, of course. Anyone within striking distance of the east coast will not want to miss the Swallows and Amazons event held from 7th-9th June, once again at

the Walton and Frinton Yacht Club. This year, the event is being extended to three days and it offers the chance to race around the Island and explore the backwaters. Sailing will start on the Friday, for those that can make it, with racing on the Saturday.

The Solent Area has weekend on the Beaulieu in mid-August (16-18th) that should interest small boat sailors. They will be meeting at Gin's Farm that is almost midway between the entrance to the river and Bucklers Hard. There is certainly the ability to launch trailered boats at Gins using their slipway and sizeable car park. There might also be the chance to launch upriver at Buckler's Hard. The Beaulieu offers plenty of shelter and small boats can even venture up to Beaulieu village although landing ashore is not possible. There will be a BBQ on the Friday and dinner at Gin's clubhouse on Saturday.

In the South West Area, the sailing season for small boats (and big ones) starts with Falmouth Classics from 14th-16th June and the Helford Rally that follows straight on from it (17th-18th June). The rally will include racing in the Helford estuary alongside the bigger boats and a barbeque and dinner, ashore. Later in the year (16th, 17th August), a favourite of many small boat sailors, the Ditsum Rally, will take place. This gives crews the chance to participate in the village regatta gaffers' race, a cruise in company on the River Dart and several shoreside activities, with camping right at the waterside.

The NW Area hopes to build on their successful OGA 60 event with a return to Ullswater Yacht Club (31st Aug-1st Sept.). This venue has excellent facilities including on site camping and launching for day boats and yachts. They plan a full programme of day cruises stopping on a beach for lunch for a picnic or visiting a nearby café. There will also be a programme of social events in the evening.

The Bristol Channel Area has scheduled several small boat events in and around the excellent Cardiff Bay, although I know they are also looking for alternative venues, too.

Full details of all the events mentioned above, and many others, may be found on the OGA website: www.oga.org.uk

Other Links:

Windermere Jetty Museum: www.lakelandarts.org.uk/windermere-jetty-museum

Falmouth Classics: www.falmouthclassics.org.uk/

Falmouth International Sea Shanty Festival: www.falmouthseashanty.co.uk

David Bewick, OGA Small Boat Secretary.

OGA Photo Competition 2023: Category 'Sailing gaffers'

Judged by Sandy Miller



Stormy Skies – A Winkle Brig off Lismore. The Lynn of Morvern. © Gerard Brown

'Wow! A perfect little gaffer amidst the grand and wild Scottish scenery. I can't think of anything better. Beautiful light on the hills behind, a moody sky and enough life in the water to suggest some blustery gusts. The lovely green of Sea Jade combines with the hills behind and of course contrasts beautifully with the red ochre sails. It is perfectly captured and a runaway winner for me!



Rainbow Treasure. Waiting for the tide on passage to Ipswich for OGA 60. © Paul Masters

'Take some lovely light over the beautiful river Deben, add a rainbow and then put Clytie in the foreground and you've got everything you need for a real showstopper. I see this picture and I just want to make more trips up to Suffolk!'



Pre- Season checkup. Setting up my Kittiwake Syrinx when Gaffers Log arrived. © Douglas Bridger

'I thought this picture was full of interest, humour, colour and detail, which all fit together very well. It's a very clever 'mise en scene' and the taker has managed to bring all these different elements together, which could easily look busy and distracting, into a very harmonious whole. Hats off!'



Green Cliffs. 3 little gaffers heading east OGA RBC June 2024 Scotland. © Paul Masters

'This was one of my favourite compositions of all the entries. The image is divided up uniformly by the vertical lines of the stays, sheets and furled headsail, and the horizontal lines of the canal and treeline. The boats then fit into this grid in exactly the right places. The Scots Pines lining the canal provide the atmosphere and there is a real sense of calm and natural beauty.'



Grace and race. Cynthia, the 1910 Gaff Cutter owned by Peter Lucas. © Kim Sturgess

Cynthia is certainly graceful, and the blue sky and sunshine make for a striking image that smacks of summer. A picture to keep handy in January.'

OGA Photo Competition 2023: Category 'Life at Sea'

Judged by Sandy Miller



1st

Fair for tomorrow. Looking over at Mull from the anchorage at Puilladobhain. © Alison Cable

'This is a wow picture for me. It's never easy taking pictures looking directly into the light. It often results in harsh shadows and blacks but this must have been taken at the perfect moment as the sun went down behind the hills. The misty tones in the hills provide depth and the reflected colours are just gorgeous. That stretch of water in the middle seems to balance the composition and the whole effect is one of unobstructed beauty. Just wonderful.'



2nd

Deluge! The heavy rain did not dampen the spirits of the parade! © Charles Erb

This is a great picture. I too was trying to take pictures at the time and I know how difficult it was. This captures all the dramatic atmosphere of the downpour perfectly. The bridge adds a sense of place and you can feel the squally gust and rain. There is also a sense of action that has been captured very well. Well done indeed.'



3rd

We've made it! Molly Cobbler back in salt water, with Tower Bridge ahead. © Mary Gibbs

There is something very satisfying about the excellent composition combined with the rather monotone atmosphere of this image. There may be a sense of triumph on reaching this iconic landmark suggested in the title but the image is understated and very successful. A keeper and an image that I am sure would print beautifully.



Highly
Commended

**After a lively night taken in Lyme Bay during RBC 60
© Justin Greig**

'This is a lovely soft image that is very well seen. The sky is a delight and interacts perfectly with the curve of the coach house. The wood adds atmosphere too. An image to be very proud of.'



Highly
Commended

**Peace. Loch Eriboll aka Loch 'Orrible.
Nature allows a brief window. © Simon Harding**

The light on the boat is beautiful and brings out her stunning lines. She stands out in the wonderful scenery and there is a postcard feel to this picture that will serve as an excellent memory. It must have been a lovely moment.'

Obituary

Desmond John O'Meara 27/03/42 - 18/10/23

Roger Vaughan pays tribute to this remarkable man



Des O'Meara. Photo by Sue Hall.

Des was a truly remarkable man and an inspiration to so many. 150 of us crowded in to the Brinkburn Street Brewery, Newcastle, recently to celebrate his life at a "bloody good shindig" which Des had asked for instead of a funeral wake.

Some of the memories told on that night are included below. He initially trained as a Mental Health Nurse and then qualified as a Social Worker, working with people with physical or mental disabilities, and latterly head injuries. Throughout his life he championed the rights of these people, raising awareness of their needs, and supporting them to live active, and independent lives.

Outside of work Des's big passions were the sea, wooden boats, especially gaff rigged, and sailing. He also loved to sing and set up and ran shanty singing groups as part of a Well Being initiative. He was an active member of The OYC in his early years and was part of a group that raised funds to have the *James Cook* built. He sailed as a first mate on many of their vessels and was excellent at supporting and enthusing young people whatever their backgrounds. He also organised cruises to the Orkneys, West Coast of Scotland, South Coast and across to France, always incorporating music and singing.

Des was always such a great motivator on sailing trips. Des was always optimistic, always helpful, always encouraging. I remember one, particular journey from St Malo to Weymouth. We sailed through the night in increasingly high winds and big seas. It was frankly hard work and not a little scary! By the time we were in sight of the English coast the whole crew (all 14 of us) was tired and dispirited. Two things brightened us up on that dark dawn – the sight of a pod of dolphins tracking the boat, weaving in and around and the sight of Des appearing on deck, clutching bacon butties and steaming hot mugs of tea! The shanties started then, and the rest of the trip was to become one of the most memorable and pleasurable moments of my life.

Outside of the OYC Des loved to sail on anything wooden! Nothing can compare to a sailing trip with Des on board. What a man! I can't think of anyone else I have

known who was so positive and upbeat, seeing the good in people and searching out the joyous moments in life. Des had little time for reflecting on what had gone wrong, only on remembering the good times. Des's love for sailing and his desire to make people's lives better, resulted in an amazing venture in 2003, when he was managing the Northumberland Head Injuries service, which he had set up years before. The Chief Executive of the health trust he worked for managed to secure funding to send some of Des's head injury clients on the Hartlepool Renaissance as part of the Tall Ships race from Poland to Finland and Latvia to Germany. Des and his wife Anthea (a Physiotherapist) headed up the crew on the first leg, made up of people with disabilities and enablers. It was good to tap into and share the extreme challenges of sailing and being confined to small spaces with so many people who had already lived lives with physical and psychological restrictions.

Of course, with Des's love of wooden boats and the sea he had to have his own boat. Des's boat was *Spindrift of Medway* a beautiful old gaff cutter, built by Dickies of East Loch Tarbert on Loch Fyne in 1929/30. She was 30 feet LOD and 35 feet with bowsprit. Des bought the boat from Heybridge Basin, Essex and had her transported up to Northumberland. However, when she was being "lifted" she sustained some major damage and then began the long job (about 5 years) of restoring her using old traditional crafts. It became a labour of love and Des and *Spindrift* were featured in a TV programme of the same name. Des was helped in his renovation by his stepchildren who were enlisted at a young age to scrub, sand and varnish amongst other jobs. Wife Anthea was also press ganged into those joys! Once renovated (although it was never really finished), Des kept *Spindrift* at the Royal Northern and Clyde club at Rhu not far from the Faslane Nuclear Submarine base.

We had a day out in the Clyde estuary, and all was going well until Des realised, too late, that we had inadvertently drifted into the zoned-off area off Faslane. Des assured me that we would be okay and that no one was going to be interested in an old bloke sailing his little wooden boat ... all was fine until a very fast rib started towards us with four mean looking Navy officers, clutching machine guns ... Des didn't miss a beat as they came by *Spindrift*, continuing in his characteristically jovial way, smiling broadly and saying that he was sorry for any inconvenience. We got a well-deserved ticking-off, but the Navy crew soon got in step with Des's craic and shared the odd joke or two before escorting us away from the area. Another memorable trip on *Spindrift* was when Des wanted to attend the Leith music festival. This involved taking the boat through the Forth and Clyde canal. They also had to be craned over some broken locks. It was a memorable trip in more ways than one. Certainly, life with Des was never boring!

Desmond John O'Meara Obituary (cont'd)

The Leith festival lived up to Des's expectations and he immersed himself in the singing and music. Following the "interesting, somewhat challenging" trip to Leith, Des decided to bring *Spindrift* back south and he kept her in Eyemouth harbour for some time and then brought her back to Blyth to the Royal Northumberland Yacht club from where she was eventually sold.

In 2015 he bravely joined a crew of 12 to travel out to Svenborg in Denmark to cobble together and bring what is now the *Williams II* across the North Sea to Blyth, to become the centrepiece of the bicentennial celebration of the discovery of the first land in Antarctica from Blyth in a similar sized vessel back in 1819.

The *Williams* had been mothballed for 10 years and was in a very poor state. Everything that could go wrong did of course! And it was clear that from the very start the heart and soul of the party was Des. Very up-beat, every ready to get stuck in, always up to lead the drinking songs of an evening, but never down beat or cross. If Des was worried about something he just had a quiet chat and invariably had the answer! He was also incredibly stoic, coping with the privations of everything getting wet below decks, endless watches and the cold biting through without complaint but rather with a wry smile and a rather jaunty wearing of his hat.

The man was a deep mine of hidden talents! He could caulk and talk, sew seams on the main when they parted and sing shanties and splice rope. It was an honour to sail with Des and to work with him for all the years that followed. He brought the same generous spirit and understanding of the pressures of running an expanding charity to his chairmanship of the Friends of Blyth Tall Ship and the parties he and Anthea organised were just great fun and felt like real celebrations of the life of the charity.

Des was also an avid member of the OGA and was president of the Northeast OGA for some years supported by Anthea. They were the driving force behind the OGA AGM held in Newcastle and the Blyth Party Port for the 60th anniversary round Britain voyage of gaffers last year. Anthea fully embraced being part of his sailing life enjoying trips to the Wadden Sea with friends on traditional and historic Dutch barges. These were a dream for Des as they combined traditional vessels, historic ports and more sea shanties than I had heard in a lifetime.

Des managed to haul his Old Gaffers pennant up the mast of these barges. He and Anthea also enjoyed many years of travelling together, visiting and exploring countries in Europe and Asia. A life so well lived, and a man once met, never forgotten. Blue Skies Des wherever you are. Des leaves behind wife Anthea, daughters Jane and Lizzie, stepchildren Joe and Michelle, grandchildren Jacob, Joe, Maisie, Jenny and Oran, all of whom he was so proud.

Burgees and House Flags as flown by members of the OGA

OGA Burgees and House Flags:-

House Flag



Elder Gaffer Flag



President Burgee



Burgee



OGA Areas May Use:-

Area President Burgee



Area Vice President Burgee



Johnny Wedick Obituary

Johnny Wedick 1945-2023

**Family man, Businessman, Sailor and Ringsender.
Darryl Hughes pays tribute**

Bracken Lass off the Poolbeg Light.

The news of the tragic death of Johnny Wedick on 19th November 2023 came as a devastating blow to everyone who had the good fortune to know him. Devoted family man, businessman, sailor and proud Ringsender, Johnny was best known in sailing circles as a stalwart of both the Dublin Bay Old Gaffers Association (DBOGA) and the Poolbeg Yacht & Boat Club (PYBC). Both organisations have benefitted hugely from his leadership at various times over the last forty years. Johnny's tireless enthusiasm, humour & wisdom have ensured that both clubs are much stronger at the end of his watch than at the start.

The large number of people that made up his funeral cortege, from all parts of Ireland and abroad was testament to the number of lives blessed by his friendship. Johnny's family home was on North Great George's Street on Dublin's Northside but he grew up at his grandmother Molly's house at 35 Pigeon House Road. Residing within a stone's throw of the River Liffey and abeam the North Wall Lighthouse it is not surprising that young Johnny developed a grá for the sea. Watching the ships coming and going along the river to the South Docks stimulated young Johnny to join the 1st Port of Dublin Sea Scouts (Ringsend) at the age of ten years. 1st Port taught seamanship and promoted a love of camping and the outdoors. There Johnny met a group of local lads that were to become lifelong friends: Pat Hughes, Frankie Allen, Peter Redmond and Derek Slevin ("The Lads"). The Lads progressed through the sea scouting hierarchy but at 19 years of age were deemed too old to continue in the fraternity.

Determined to continue their ten-year friendship The Lads decided to buy, between them, a nautical "doer-upper" (as dictated by their meagre budget) and so began their relationship with *The Bracken Lass* which was to last for another forty years.

The 1st Port and its relationship with other nearby sea scouting troops brought the teenaged Johnny into the orbit of a group of "movers and shakers"

who went on to set up the Poolbeg Yacht & Boat Club in 1970. Cecil Jackson (1st Port) & Leo Hitchcock (4th Port), both instructors, taught Johnny and The Lads the basics of seamanship and both became Commodores of PYBC during its first decade of existence. Needless to say, Johnny and The Lads well & truly caught the sailing bug. Beginnings are apt to be shadowy but given the overlapping memberships of the local sea scout troops, PYBC, DBOGA, and the rowing clubs of Stella Maris & St Patrick's all rooted in the local Ringsend community it is not surprising that Johnny would go on to play such a pivotal role in the development of PYBC and DBOGA.

Johnny went to school at Westland Row and on leaving at the age of 15 years took up a catering apprenticeship at the Inter Continental Hotel in Dublin and studied at the National Catering College at Cathal Brugha Street. Working in a number of Dublin hotels combined with his own drive and enthusiasm, gave him the knowledge and insight to set up his own wholesale meat distribution business supplying hotels and restaurants across Ireland. Johnny successfully ran the business with his wife Mary for over thirty years before selling it and retiring to Camolin in Wexford. Their five children, Eileen, Barbara, Mary, John and Carmel spent many happy times in Wexford.

Meanwhile, back in c. 1968, *The Bracken Lass*, a 50' wooden, open decked fishing boat, built in Fraserburgh, Scotland in 1921 to the seaworthy Zulu design was languishing in Dublin's Grand Canal Dock. Johnny and The Lads had heard that her owner had given up his dream of sailing around the world when he realised how much work the Lass required and that she might be up for sale. The Zulu sailing drifters were common to the fishing ports of the Moray Firth at the turn of the century.

After much haggling the deal was done and Johnny and The Lads had found the project that would bind them together for their lifetimes. The gang of five spent the next four and a half years working on the Lass, fabricating a new deck & pilot



Johnny Wedick.

Johnny Wedick Obituary (cont'd)

house, reconditioning the hand start Kelvin engine, installing a large round diesel tank liberated from a Dublin bus, laying steel ingots as ballast, installing main and mizzen masts and recaulking the hull. All of this work was undertaken in the basin where the Lass was moored. Peter Redmond, the nimblest of the Five, would paddle out to the Lass in a canoe, attach a rope and the lads would warp her to the basin wall for the day's tasks to commence. The wooden masts were made by a friend in Dun Laoghaire and transported back to the Basin with one end resting in the back of Johnny's car and the other end lashed to a small two-wheel axle while Peter Redmond lay in the back of the car trying to ensure the 40' masts were successfully negotiated around the corners!

By 1973 the Lass was deemed sea-worthy and made the epic voyage from the Basin to her mooring at PYBC. Determined to make their first offshore passage Johnny & The Lads sailed her to the Isle of Man. When the Customs men came aboard at Peel they were shocked to find no internal fit out of the boat had taken place! The accommodation consisted of sleeping bags on the cabin sole, canvas deck chairs, Johnny's mother's kitchen table and no heads! Over the next forty years the Lass made regular voyages to Peel in the Isle of Man, Holyhead, Wicklow & Arklow for the East Coast Regatta and from the mid 1980's Portaferry was added to her sailing schedule. In 2000 she took part in the Maritime festival in Brest and in 2003 completed the Classic Malt Cruise on Scotland's west coast. Ever on the lookout for useful talent Johnny had co-opted a bright eyed & bushy tailed electrician, Derek Woods, on to the Lass's maintenance squad in 1980/81 and Derek, although a former land scout not a sea scout (!) formally joined the *Bracan Lass* partnership in 1984. Over her forty years the Lass had three major refits and was converted back to her original gaff rig during the 1998/99 refit.

Following her inaugural passage to the Isle of Man in 1973 the Lass became a regular feature of regattas organised by the Northern Ireland OGA (NIOGA), the North Wales OGA (NWOGA) the Dublin Bay OGA and of course PYBC. Given Johnny's excellent leadership qualities combined with his business acumen it is no surprise that he played a major role in the development of both PYBC & DBOGA. Johnny served on the PYBC committee both as Secretary & Vice Commodore during the 1980's. Johnny continued to work on various PYBC committees during the 1990s serving as Secretary in 1993 and as Commodore in 2001, 2002 & 2003. During his time as Commodore Johnny led the Development Committee, which was successful in financing, building & completing the club's current clubhouse & marina development. A major achievement both improving the club's facilities and securing its financial future. Johnny was asked to join PYBC's current Development Committee to help formulate the club's strategy regarding Dublin Port's 3FM Project.

Just two weeks before his tragic death Johnny addressed an Extraordinary General Meeting of PYBC and through his reasoned logic and common sense was instrumental in the club voting to continue with its 3FM strategy. Despite PYBC's success in building a modern clubhouse and having its own marina - a far cry from its humble origins - Johnny was passionate in emphasising that PYBC must stick to its guiding ethos of "providing sailing and boating for people of modest means who wish to enjoy affordable sailing". This ethos Johnny carried with him into the DBOGA where in addition to being an active committee member & flag officer in various roles from the 1990's onwards he promoted the interests of the small boat membership.

Johnny played a central part in making a success of PYBC's role as a Stop-Over Port for the OGA's Fifty Year-Round Britain Cruise in 2013 as well as its Sixtieth in 2023. Johnny was always a vital part of the DBOGA contingent that visited the Saxon shore each year to attend the OGA's Annual Conference - "Head Office" as Johnny jokingly referred to it. During Johnny's final stint as DBOGA President from 2018 to 2021 he successfully steered the organisation through the Covid pandemic and although not a "techy" quickly grasped the potential of Zoom & WhatsApp as tools that could be used to bind the organisation together and make it stronger, so much so that DBOGA increased its membership during those years.

Working with Wally McGuirk & The National Museum of Ireland Johnny succeeded in organising quarterly working parties from DBOGA to clean & inspect Erskine Childers yacht *Asgard*. Unfortunately, *The Bracken Lass* sank on the marina during a big freeze storm in 2010 and the protracted shenanigans with her insurers led to a delay on the acquisition of her replacement. Johnny, Peter & Derek decided to go GRP (having observed its popularity over the last 60 years!) and in 2014/15 purchased *Beatrice B*, a classic Moody Carbineer 46 Pilothouse Ketch built to a Laurent Giles design in 1973, a very versatile cruising yacht. With the help of a Poolbeg delivery crew they sailed her back from Burnham on Crouch in Essex. *Beatrice B* gave Johnny much pleasure and allowed him and his shipmates to continue with DBOGA activities on the water.

Being a grandfather to Paul, Daniel, Lauren, Alan, Shane, Matthew, Ella, Cormac, Mikey, Oscar, Liam & Sadbh and great grandfather to Sienna, Mila & Hugo provided Johnny with much solace following the passing of his beloved Mary in 2018. As the linchpin of both his family and of the of the PYBC and DBOGA fellowships Johnny is greatly missed. We are all blessed to have known him. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.



Johnny Wedick (centre) presenting a cheque for €8,000 to Howth Lifeboat with cox'n Fred Connolly (left) and Launching Officer Colm Newport (right)

AREA REPORTS

BRISTOL CHANNEL

2023 will certainly be a year to remember as the 60th Anniversary of the Old Gaffers Association. The festivities began in April on the East Coast and 17 vessels duly arrived in Neyland for our Bristol Channel Party Port Event in May.

Our committee, led by David Botterill, did a fantastic job of organising the weather as well as a highly enjoyable three days of events. Visits to castles and museums went down really well with the skippers of the vessels! Evening entertainment and food was of a good quality, and was well received by all 50 or so participants.

The BC Area also celebrated the anniversary with a Small Boat Weekend in Cardiff Bay Yacht Club. 23 boats registered (55 persons), and many activities were organised with Charlie Harris in charge both on and off the water. Unfortunately, the weather was not kind but the entertainment continued, and a good time was had by all despite there being NO sailing! The homemade log boat race was the only sailing that took place, and was a huge success. These events were complemented on the water by the Cardiff Bay Racing Series, the Bristol Channel Cruises in Company and the Annual Gaffer Race, but the weather has not been kind this year so unfortunately not all of the planned events took place.

Evening entertainment has been well supported in Cardiff Bay Yacht Club, be it dinners following the Bay Race Series, or other social events including an in-house Sea-Shanty evening with an esoteric mixture of instruments being played by Gaffers and their families.

Zoom meetings are held over the winter period (November through March) to keep everyone in touch. Topics presented vary from Sailing on the Norfolk Broads, traversing England from the Bristol Channel to London, to experiences with an electrically powered Crabber Pilot Cutter 30. The Area Section has an active committee largely based in Cardiff, but it is regrettably a fact that there is little reported activity much outside the confines of Cardiff Bay, other than the cruises which also originate there.



Bealmed. Photo by Andrew Kelland. Winner of Bristol Channel Old Gaffers Association Photographic Competition 2023.

It has proven to be a challenge to engage meaningfully with Gaffers based in other locations within the Area, be it further West within Wales, or on the English coastline of the Channel. This continues to be a conundrum.

Susanne Newbold

DUBLIN BAY – CUAN ÁTHA CLIATH

This year 2023, was a very successful and exciting time for Dublin Bay. The year started off with a series of talks and lectures on a variety of nautical and historical topics.

We continue our work with the National Museum of Ireland on the historical sailing vessel *Asgard*. The social calendar was busy with weekend outings to Belfast, Crosshaven and Portaferry. The main event of the year was the significant participation in the RBC 60 Party Port Event.

Upwards of 40 boats took part in the event hosted at Poolbeg Yacht, Boat Club and Marina (free of charge) in the heart of Dublin City on the river Liffey. Many boats arrived midweek and stayed for more than a week. The event culminated with a parade of sail up through the bridges into the city centre. Membership of the DBOGA has risen to 181 members and we are continuing to grow. The membership is spread throughout the island of Ireland and makes for an excellent variety of ports and towns to visit throughout the year.

AREA REPORTS



Gaffers racing in Dublin Bay.

We have established a sub-committee to initiate plans for increasing membership, particularly younger members and to encourage people with gaff rigged vessels, who are not members of DBOGA to join.

We lost two longstanding members of DBOGA during the year. Mick Hunt in late summer who was an officer and member for many years, and our former President Johnny Weddick (*see obituary on page 46*) who died tragically in November at the Poolbeg Marina. Go dtuga siad suaimhneas le Dia go deo.

Peter Tobin, Rúnaí / Secretary
Cumann Seanghaiféirí Cuan Átha Cliath

EAST COAST

This year was very busy on the East Coast with the planning of the OGA 60th Jubilee Party celebrations taking a huge amount of time and effort from all concerned. A separate Jubilee Party Committee was formed to facilitate the organisation and we acknowledge the work of the committee and all our sponsors, supporters, and volunteers on the ground who made the event possible and of course the participants who made the event such a success. A good number of East Coast members attended the National AGM at Portsmouth which featured a very interesting and enjoyable social programme in addition to the actual AGM. East coast members



Small boats at the Swallows and Amazons event in 2023.

acquitted themselves very well in the National Awards with Poppy Curtis winning the Alan Hidden Trophy, Gus Curtis the President's Commendation, Ellie Rule, Steve & Beverley Daley-Yates winning Gaffers Tales Awards, while in the photography competition Tony Pickering won second prize, with Josh Masters, Paul Masters and Rob Hart all being highly commended.

February brought a social gathering to Woodbridge, where Claudia Myatt gave a fascinating talk about her Antarctic & Southern Ocean Adventures, then in April we had the ever-popular Burnham Dinner thanks as always to the efforts of Elaine & Trevor Rawlinson.

The last weekend of April the Ramsgate gathering sent off the Round Britain fleet, which included 5 East Coast boats and thanks must go to Robert & Jan Holden for organising such a successful event. In May & June the small boat fleet was treated to windy Tollesbury and Swallows & Amazons events. The OGA Jubilee Party weekend must have broken all East Coast OGA records for wind and rain at a single event but despite this and from the feedback we have received all attendees had a good time.

A special thanks must be due to Claudia Myatt & Sue Pennison for adding extra art and rope workshops to entertain those stranded ashore and to Haven Ports Yacht Club for opening and manning the Lightship bar all day on the wet and windy Saturday.

AREA REPORTS

EAST COAST (cont'd)

The 2023 Summer Cruise followed on from the Jubilee Party and headed south after a perfect evening at Stone Point with a very windy and rough beat, up The Wallet to West Mersea before heading to Chatham. A special mention must be made to the group of our younger members who stepped up and formed a subcommittee to organise the cruise, relieving Clare Thomas and the main committee of this responsibility. They have volunteered to organise the 2024 event; we are very proud to see the younger generation taking over with such enthusiasm.

As a follow up to the Jubilee celebrations our committee met to review the event, look at lessons learned and areas where we could identify room for improvement in future large events. Inevitably we did find some aspects which could have been improved (in addition to the weather) but overall, the conclusion was that feedback received had been very positive.

The OGA sailing events were rounded off for the season by the Slaughden rally and for some a trip to the Netherlands for the annual small boat event at Reeuwijk.

The East Coast AGM held at the Royal Harwich Yacht Club on the 4th of November saw a major change of the East Coast Committee with President Robert Hill 9 years, Area Secretary Lorna Hill 9 years, Treasurer Clare Thomas 16 years and Pete Thomas (a committee member of more than 20 years and former EC President) all standing down. The AGM elected the following Officers - Area President Paul Masters, Area Secretary & Vice President Pete Elliston (PTK), Area Treasurer Yvonne Graham. We also welcomed to the EC Committee Nick Phillips who did such a fantastic job with various printed publications for the OGA 60 events. Nick joins new committee member Sarah Adie and Beverly Daley Yates EC Editor who make up the Communications and Online Team. This team have already started a revamp of the EC Area web pages.



Gaffling dinghy sponsored by Teamac.

Looking ahead to 2024 the EC Committee were planning a quieter year, but a full and varied programme with some new events and ideas is being finalised see the following link.

https://www.oga.org.uk/areas/east_coast/east_coast_events.html

New events include an Aquatic First Aid Course on 20th January (delivered at cost) and a special invite (FOC) to all 2023 East Coast new members (40) to our final winter talk – Tugs & Pilots on the 24th February. This talk and all our events are open to all OGA Members.

We are particularly looking forward to hosting the postponed Teamac Gaffling 4.1 Championships on the River Deben 25th – 27th May. There will also be a small boat event at the Deben Rally the same weekend.

The EC Committee are actively working at how we can engage and communicate better with all EC members and especially our new members.

All the areas and the members are the beating heart and life blood of the Association, and it is vital we deliver better, more relevant, and targeted communication in all its forms to all our members.

As an area we are looking to actively support the Young Gaffer (under 35) initiative being headed up by Georgina Tall (Solent) and have provided a grant for 6 of the EC Young Gaffers to attend the National AGM in Liverpool.

The Young Gaffers are the future of the association, and we should be focusing our energy and resources on ensuring they are encouraged to join and take an active role in the Association both at an Area and National level.

EC Area President Paul Masters and EC Area Secretary & Vice President Peter Elliston

NORTH EAST

A Year of Celebration, Camaraderie, and Change 2023 was a year of joy and sadness, as well as significant achievement and warm fellowship, for the North East Old Gaffers Association. We had the privilege of hosting a memorable stop on the Gaffers' 60 Round Britain Cruise, celebrating the Association's 60th anniversary in style. In addition, through Martin Haigh our Secretary, who is also boat builder/adviser/consultant to many of us and assisted by Mark and Sue Batey, we continue to develop and promote our Gaffling project.

Blyth: Our "Party Port"

Blyth Harbour became our vibrant hub in July, welcoming weary yet exhilarated crews with open arms. Despite challenging weather, the spirit remained buoyed by fantastic organization, friendly faces, and an infectious "party atmosphere". Highlights of the Blyth event, centered around LV50 the converted lightship which is the House Yacht of the Royal Northumberland Yacht Club (great supporters of ours) in Blyth South Harbour. We also enjoyed a sizzling BBQ and lively music at Blyth Tall Ships, where rain couldn't dampen the laughter and sea shanties.

- Guided tours of the majestic *Williams II* and the boat yard at Blyth Tall Ships as well as the historic LV50 Lightship, offering glimpses into maritime history.
- Formal dinners and happy gatherings aboard the LV50, fuelled by camaraderie and the warmth of good company.
- Exploration ashore, including the Blyth Battery and Woodhorn Mining Museum, revealing the region's rich heritage.

While stormy skies forced some to adjust their plans, Blyth's hospitable character shone through, hopefully making it a memorable port of call for our fellow Gaffers.

Remembering Des O'Meara:

The year culminated on a sombre note with the passing of Des O'Meara, (see *obituary on page 22*) a true pillar of our association. His sailing achievements, dedication to community service,

and infectious zest for life will be deeply missed.

A celebration of his life is planned for mid-January to honour his remarkable contribution to us and his many others friends. Throughout, he was supported by Anthea Connor, our long serving and diligent Secretary who with our grateful thanks, has now stepped down,

Charting a New Course:

We started the year with a new President, Mark Batey. However, in April circumstances meant Mark had to step down and Des O'Meara resumed as President until his sad death in October. We owe a big vote of thanks to the National Group, particularly Mike Beckett, who attended our 2023 AGM in order to help us navigate our fresh course and future journey. At that meeting Francis Mogg was elected President, Martin Haigh, Secretary and Frank Cockburn, Membership Secretary. We were delighted that Sue Hall agreed to continue in her role as Treasurer.

Recognizing the strengths and limitations of our smaller NE group, we've adopted a revised strategy for 2024-25, focusing on:

- Sailing adventures: More day trips, extended voyages, and social sailing events are being planned.
- Social activities: Strengthening bonds through gatherings, outings, and shared experiences.
- Maritime history: Collaborating with the North East Maritime Trust for enriching discovery days.

By streamlining administrative tasks and prioritizing these core areas, we aim to navigate smoothly towards fresh maritime adventures and continued camaraderie in 2024.

Here's to fair winds, following seas, and many more nautical memories in the year ahead!

President: Mark Batey



Williams II.

AREA REPORTS

NORTH WALES

The North Wales Area include Wales north of St David's Head but most of our sailing is in a smaller geographic area, comprising the north coast of Wales and Anglesey. What it lacks in size, it more than makes up in spectacular scenery and interesting sailing.

The North Wales Gaffers are based at Conwy, Porth Penrhyn, and Port Dinorwic in the Menai Strait. We aim to sail together when we can to local anchorages or harbours or longer voyages to Ireland, Isle of Man, Scotland or France.

The Area made the best of what was a bit of a varied year in view of the weather. Membership is stable with 56 listed on GOLD including 3 new members this year. The following notable achievements this year included:

- A) North Wales AGM was held in January included a talk about the Onion Johnnies by Adian Farey.
- B) North Wales Gaffers attended the OGA RBC 60 events in Milford Haven and Dublin.
- C) North Wales Gaffers partnered with Tall Ships (Wales) to sponsor young people to sail on board *Klevia* during the OGA RBC 60 event at Milford Haven.
- D) North Wales Gaffers sail in company to Peel on Isle of Man for the Traditional Boat Festival.
- E) A number of area members are involved in setting up the Celtic Coast Trade and Sail Community Benefit Cooperative which is fundraising to restore the Morecambe Bay Prawner *Mystery II* to be used for sail cargo and heritage sail training.
- F) Area member John Duncan completed the build and fit out of *Wren*, a Lyle Hess 24 whose hull was built in Yarmouth in the 1990's but was never completed. Every possible detail is beautifully finished and most of the fittings and fixtures including blocks have been fabricated by John himself. She is now fitted out as a very handsome 2 berth gaff cutter.

Mike Leahy



Klevia.

NORTH WEST

The North West Area includes the Lake District, the Isle of Man and the eastern Irish Sea Coast. The Lake District is important for small boats nationally, whilst the Irish Sea is a shared cruising area with the North Wales Area.

The Region has had a successful year. As a result of putting on more activity, having a greater presence in the area and sending out newsletters we have recruited more members. With 12 new memberships in 2023, we have increased membership by more than a third.

The following events were held during the year.

- A) North West AGM and a talk about Swallows and Amazon boats – March
 - B) Arnside Classic Boat Regatta – June
 - C) Ullswater OGA 60 Small Boats Rally - August
 - D) South Windermere Old Gaffers Regatta – September
 - E) Crossfield's Conference, Arnside - November
- Separately from the OGA, a traditional boat festival was held at Peel on the Isle of Man and a tall ships event was held in Barrow-in-Furness, which has the potential to become a major traditional boat festival in the future.

The Ullswater and South Windermere events attracted boats from outside the North West. For example, 6 of the 13 boats at the Ullswater event were from outside the region. As a result of holding



Spray built in 1896.



Severn being restored.

the Ullswater event there, we attracted two new members from Ullswater Yacht Club.

In 2024 we plan repeating the Ullswater event and adding a rally based at Windermere Jetties Museum. These events will be aimed at small boat owners nationally as well as North West members. We hope by putting on these events, we will recruit more members from the Lake District.

As well as small boat events, we would like to do more for members with larger sea going boats. A number of area members are involved in setting up a Morecambe Bay Prawner Trust Charity to buy, maintain and sail *Spray*, a 32 foot long Morecambe Bay Prawner built in 1896. The NOA Classic Boats Association are restoring *Pride of Liverpool* and Arnside Sailing Club a Royal Mersey Rivers Class yacht *Severn*. All three projects should provide opportunities for people who do not own their own boat to sail gaff rig boats in the sea.

We are hopeful of another successful year in 2024.

Alasdair Simpson, North West Secretary

AREA REPORTS

SCOTLAND



Macaria and Titch in Oban for OGA 60 Photo by Beverley Yates.



Ullapool Lugger Fest.

We held our 2023 AGM in early December, at what turned out to be a poor time for attendance, although Zoom upped the number to 8. At this meeting Alison Cable was elected as the new Area Secretary.

After a year dominated by the 60th Anniversary events, the Scottish Area has shown that we can host successful events, despite our low membership. Our first event was a muster at the President's house on Saturday 20th April, with 6 members and 2 boats in attendance. There have been smaller rallies, and the weather was glorious. The Lugger Fest in Ullapool seems like it will be worth a visit on 11th-12th May. Look on the web for details. The Area president and Secretary will be in attendance in their lug yawl Tiki. So please stop by and say hello.

We hope to have a visit to look round the Crinan Boatyard on 15th or 16th June, followed by afternoon tea at a members house nearby. Look out for a mailchimp with more details.

AREA REPORTS

SCOTLAND (cont'd)



Robinetta in Oban, Scotland.



Robinetta (blue hull) at the Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival.

The Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival this year is being held on 22-23rd June. The President and Secretary are giving it a miss this year, but please get in touch with the secretary if you are going and would like to meet up with other members as I can put you in touch.

We hope to have another Oban event in 2024, probably on the first weekend of August. This will allow people to get there from the Peel Sea Festival the previous weekend so long as the weather allows.

We are also trying to organise a get together at Grantown in the Forth, because not all Scottish OGA members are on the West Coast!

Alison Cable
Scottish Area Secretary

SOLENT



Jolie Brise off the Needles. Photo by Rick Tomlinson.

The 2023 programme was back to normal with a full range of the usual events and was well received by those who attended.

The winter activities this year were the popular hands-on rope making and splicing day and a walk around Langstone Harbour. Events we repeated in 2024 together with a visit to the Boatbuilding Academy in Lyme Regis.

We started the 2023 season at Cowes coinciding with a very wet weekend for the Coronation. We were designated as the first 'party port' for the fleet taking part in the Round Britain Challenge celebrating the OGA's 60th Jubilee. The 1913 French Pilot cutter *Jolie Brise* joined the event giving members opportunity to experience big boat sailing in the Solent.

Our major on-water events in 2023 were the annual Yarmouth Gaffers Regatta in late May and the Annual Race and Rally held in early September. Yarmouth was, once again, a great success attracting very favourable comments and will be repeated again in June 2024. A less formal rally in Southsea was held in July tailored to be suitable for smaller boats and we intend to hold a similar event in Bembridge in the coming season.

Three skippers from the Solent made the long passage in very mixed and unpredictable weather to the Orwell to celebrate the OGA 60 Jubilee Party at Ipswich and Levington. The Solent Gaffers numbers

AREA REPORTS

SOUTH WEST



Brittanica a 108 year old East Coast Smack undergoing restoration.
Photo courtesy of Classic Boat magazine.



River Dart Rally, Dittisham August 2023 Photo by Emma Turner.



Racing in the Solent during the summer of 2023.



In March, OGA Members visited Lyme Regis for a fascinating guided tour of the Boat Building Academy (BBA)

were swelled by members who took the easier option and made the trip by road!

Solent welcomed over twenty new members last year and saw several of them come to events. But, generally, attendees were the usual faithful regulars, and they are a relatively small proportion of the notional 300+ Solent members on the OGA Gold database.

The long-term survival and prosperity of Solent Gaffers (and the OGA) depends on increasing the active participation levels of our members and, leading on from that, getting and keeping sufficient good people on the Committee who are willing to eventually take on the key posts on which our Area depends both to be "legal" and to plan & run events. These problems are not unique to the OGA, but it is down to us to find a solution.

Grant Morris, Solent secretary

2023 was likely to be a challenging year for South West Gaffers, due to a diminishing Committee, with no President, a retiring secretary and retired Dogwatch editor, as well as a lack of volunteers. Despite this, looking at Tim's secretary report at our AGM last month, it has been another busy year both on the water and off and all our main events went ahead.

In February, a visit to Falmouth Marine school was hosted by, SW member and naval architect, Julian Wolfram, where the trainees were helping to build his next boat. At our Fitting Out lunch at Fowey Gallants SC in March we heard Vicky Samuels talk about *Brittanica*, a 108 year old, east coast smack, they were restoring for the second time and now afloat in Exeter.

Our Subcommittee, organised the OGA 60 RBC fleet, in Plymouth in May, with several visits and two

AREA REPORTS

SOUTH WEST (cont'd)

shoreside meals. At the same time, the South West Area marked its 50th Anniversary. The anticipated Parade of Sail, past the Hoe, could not take place. Despite this, the accessible venue in the Barbican ensured plenty of local, press and television interest and several new members joined the OGA.

With one of our larger boats circumnavigating and another having had its mast broken by the yard, several local boats still attended Brixham Heritage Regatta, Falmouth Classics and our own Helford River Rally, which had a good number of smaller boats attending for the first time. The Plymouth Rally and Annual race was well attended, despite being rescheduled to tie in with Fowey Classics and relocated to Sutton Harbour, a great location for gaffers to be noticed. In August, despite appalling weather, the Dittisham Rally, perfect for smaller boats in our fleet, took place. A few boats went on to enter the Dartmouth Regatta gaffers race and they are keen to see more of us. Some boats also attended the September Brixham Heritage Rally.

Our AGM at Fowey in November, was a success. The current Committee continues forwards, with a new President, reshuffled roles, renewed energy and three new members, one of whom may become Dogwatch editor. Behind the scenes, our Social Media editor continues to make our presence felt on the SW Area of the OGA website, as well as through Instagram. He is integrating this with the membership secretary role and membership remains healthy and increasing. We have unified our two SW gaffers WhatsApp groups to just the one "South West Gaffers" and it is slowly increasing in active member participants. It now displays the new SW Gaffers badge, created to mark the year of our 50th Anniversary. An "Almanac" of, local information, who's who on the Committee, links to Social media and other useful sites, has been created, along the lines of the improved SW Area pages on the website. This will be going live, for new and existing members alike, and will form part of future Dogwatch editions.



Moon River took part in RBC 60



Susan J. also took part in RBC 60.

We have a new WhatsApp group, exclusively to aid communications for the expanded SW Area Committee. We have adopted the simpler OGA system of emails for our officers.

Fitting Out lunch and reflection on RBC 60 will be lead by the skippers of *Moon River* and *Susan J*, in April at Brixham YC. We will return to Fowey Gallants SC, at the other end of our patch, for the AGM in November. We hope to establish a date and venue for the Plymouth Rally and Annual Race, now that Fowey dates are published. Helford Rally is in the capable hands of Tim Price. We are hoping that Dittisham will continue in August with new local members helping. Dates, and contact details, are, or will be when finalised, published on the OGA website. It is hoped that increased use of Social Media, particularly WhatsApp, will facilitate more, but less formal, intercourse between SW members, both on and off the water.

Tim Price, SW Secretary

51st Swale Smack and Sailing Barge Match Saturday 10th August 2024



**Starts from Sand End Buoy
0700hrs Onwards**

High Water.

Friday 9th: 0427hrs/1631hrs

Saturday 10th: 0458hrs/1702 hrs

Hollowshore access approx. 3hrs +/- HW

Skippers briefing

Friday 9th at 1600hrs

Details from:

Hon. Match Secretary

Alan Gimes 07801 133822

Email: SwaleMatchSec@outlook.com

Website

www.Kentishsail.org

General/Membership Enquiries:

kentishsail@gmail.com



Many thanks to our sponsors



Images by Seamus Masters

OGA Merchandise

Our range of OGA clothing, which now includes good quality polo shirts, smocks, fleeces and caps, is available from Riviera Embroidery. Their contact details are: Telephone: 01803 521789 Email: rived59@gmail.com Website: <http://www.rivieraembroidery.com/>.

OGA flags are also available from Riviera Embroidery.

Items of clothing are available in a range of colours and sizes and are all embroidered with the OGA insignia, with the option of having your boat name included at no extra cost.

Polo Shirt (Product code: H400)

Polo shirts are available in red and navy, men's (unisex) or ladies' fit.

Embroidered with the OGA insignia on LHS, with the option of adding your boat name at no extra cost.

Price £23.80 includes delivery to UK mainland.



Fleece (Product code: 870M)

The OGA Fleece is available in a variety of colours and sizes and embroidered with the OGA insignia on LHS, and can include a boat name. The fleece is made of anti-pill, dense, compact pile, has a full-length zip, two front zip pockets, hemmed cuffs and an adjustable draw-cord hem.

Price £35.00 includes delivery to UK mainland.



Smock (Product code: SM01 for round neck, SM02 for V neck)

Hard wearing 100% cotton traditional smock, embroidered with the OGA insignia on LHS, and can include a boat name in the price.

Price £39.00 for V neck and £37.00 for round neck, including delivery to UK mainland.



OGA Merchandise

Cap (Product code: RC050)

One size, 100% heavy brushed cotton drill, navy blue with stone insert colour on the peak, with embroidered OGA logo.

Price £13.50 includes delivery to UK mainland.



Flags & Burgees

Why not brighten up your vessel and be proud of your membership by displaying an OGA house flag or burgee? Our 18" x 12" flags are available complete with toggle and lanyard. The flags are made to MOD specifications of quality fabric, to ensure durability and many seasons of use. These are available from Riviera Embroidery. Special flags such as President's and Commodore's can also be made and quoted for on an individual basis.



Bronze Plaque

Boat plaques are fashioned in bronze by an OGA member and finished to a high standard. The plaque will enhance your boat and is engraved with your boat name and boat number for posterity.



To order your plaque please contact: merchandise@oga.org.uk or write to the OGA at the address given on the inside front cover of the Log.

Discover New Gaffers in
WATER CRAFT

Read about today's affordable
new gaffers in the practical
bi-monthly magazine.

www.watercraft-magazine.com

MEMBERS' BOATS FOR SALE:

https://oga.org.uk/boat_register/boats_for_sale/index.html

Please help us to keep the records up to date by letting the Boat Register Editor know when your boat is sold, or taken off the market. Remember to promote OGA membership to the new owner as you complete the sale.

Albion, Price: £1000.00 ONO

The *Albion* is a 37 foot Oyster smack, built by Harris and converted to a yacht in the 1930s. She is a project for someone keen. The boat has been out of the water for the last 40 years, with a fair portion of replacement planking (larch on an oak frame), larch planking on deck and counter stern undertaken. More recently the coach roof has been replaced. She comes with a full set of sails, a 20 HP Bukh engine (working condition unknown), original winches and other items shown in the photograph. **Contact Graham via: boatregister@oga.org.uk**



Ceres, Price: £32,000

One-off traditional gaff rigged Yawl. Built 1960 by Everson's of Woodbridge and initially registered as *Glee*. She is mahogany on oak frames. Built along the lifted lines of a retired local fishing smack with racing successes, refined from midships-aft to produce a handsome counter stern yacht. Sail plan said to have been designed by Maurice Griffiths. A sturdy vessel, perfectly balanced and a delight to sail. Accommodates 4 adults comfortably. Nanni diesel N3.3HE 29HP with technodrive TMC 60 2:1 reduction gearbox, new 2021 less than 10 hrs run time. 1x120 Amp alternator, 1xA3 engine start panel. New Calorifier. Refurbished Taylor's paraffin stove and Taylor's cabin heater. Overall yard refurbishment at Larkman's of Melton plus Norris Marine Engineering Ltd 2021. Full schedule of works available.

Contact: sue@suedaniel.co.uk



Clachnacudney, Price: £3,300

Gaffing prototype, built 2018. Easy to tow behind a small car and yet large enough for family sailing. Single chine hull form with a classic appearance and a sweeping sheer and raked transom. Construction is a variation of stitch-and-tape, using CNC-cut plywood components. Lowered deck in the same style as the Mirror Dinghy, which is useful for lessening the risk of lines going overboard and providing more sprawling space for children. The versatile design allows for sailing, rowing, sculling or outboard motor. Comes with 2 jibs and mainsail by McNamara sails. Jib Furler and quality fittings throughout. Combination Launch/road trailer and cover included.

Contact: ajkiddle@mac.com or 07860891193



Crow, Price: £85,000

38ft shoal draft centreboard gaff ketch based on Phil Bolger's Moccasin Design. Strip-planked and glassed hull by Spirit Yachts. Fitted out by Bob Berk. Kohler diesel engine series KDW model 702. Fitted in 2021. Featherstream folding propeller. Lofrans electric Anchor Winch and Raymarine Autopilot. Broad's type tabernacle on main. Masts and gaff are carbon fibre supplied by Compotech Booms, Other spars Douglas Fir. Main jib and ghoster by Jeckles and Mizzen by Wilkinson Sails. Loose footed mainsail with a clew attached to a car. Sleeps four, two in a double cross-berth at the forward end of the saloon, it has doors so can be shut away. Galley with sink, a worktop and a Nelson gas cooker. Taylors diesel fuelled cabin heater, Lavac marine toilet, holding tank or direct dispersal. Chart table with a fridge under the seat and then another settee berth. Brand new inflatable cockpit tent.

Contact Boatregister@oga.org.uk for more information



MEMBERS' BOATS FOR SALE: https://oga.org.uk/boat_register/boats_for_sale/index.html

Fifi, Price: ££5,000 flexible

Open GRP gaff sloop with fin keel. She is super fast for her size (16' on the waterline) and so much fun to sail. She has been based at Hollowshore for a number of years and is very basic, just sails and spars, no engine. Lying Hollowshore

Contact Fredtester62@gmail.com



Genesta II, Price: ££9,000

One of three Panda 711s, built 1985. Balsa core sandwich construction. Designed by: Nick Wyatt and Peter Whipp as a cruiser and built by Freedom Yachts. Re-built by Mick Kneale as an open dayboat. LOA 26' Watertight raised floor, 9mm Robins Elite ply, glassed over. She is a gaff sloop rig with alloy spars and the fixed keel has a 315 kg bulb drawing 2.15m. Sails: Mainsail, Genoa, jib, staysail, 2 x asymmetric spinnakers plus a superb Parasail. Boat is a fully rigged dayboat with all lines, compass, anchor, fenders, sail covers etc. 6hp Tohatsu outboard (2 tanks), Novasail NS360+ instrument, Banks winter boat cover and cradle. Lying Port St Mary. **Contact: michaelkneale@manx.net**



Isabella, Price: £4,650

Reluctantly selling much loved Isabella, an excellent family gaff daysailer with a deep roomy cockpit for 4 – 6 adults or a sizeable family with children. Built with high specification marine plywood with mahogany gunwales and laid teak decks fore and aft. Traditional tan sails (foresail on bowsprit, main, mizzen and topsail) and 140kg of bagged lead ballast for trimming. All spars are in good condition and would benefit from a coat of varnish. The outboard engine needs servicing. She has a galvanised steel centre plate/drop keel with winch in good condition. With the plate up, she will take the ground safely. Included is a road trailer with ball hitch, winch, spare wheel and jack. Lying: Helford. **Contact: mikesandershewett@gmail.com**



Kelpie 2, Price: £7,750

Canoe yacht built to a design by J Pain Clark and launched in 1902. The only extant example of a plate and bulb keel Victorian yacht. Red pine on oak ribs, pitch pine and oak centerline with a steel plate keel and lead ballast. Her current owner has done a rolling restoration over his ownership and hull and rig are in fine fettle. Accommodation is limited to two berths and a small galley with a 2 burner spirit stove. *Kelpie* is a very rewarding boat to sail and surprisingly forgiving for a boat so well canvased. Weatherly and light with roller reefing on both sails, *Kelpie* is easily sailed single handed. Lying Pin Mill, Suffolk. **Contact: Rik.Graham@aol.com**



Lulu, Price: £4,000

Gunter rigged Bass Boat 16. Hull no 370. An excellent boat that is easily handled solo. Can be used as a day sailor, for taking the family up a canal or coastal, and is set up for fishing. An excellent all-rounder. Very easy to tow, with a displacement of about 300kg. For a detailed report on the boat, PM me. Built-in buoyancy, Dry forward and stern lockers Outboard Sails, Oars, winter cover. Laminated rudder and reinforced tiller. Many extras. Ready to hitch up, drive away, launch and sail.

Contact email: julian.g@eleyfamily1.eclipse.co.uk



Megan, Price: £15,000 or part exchange on a 16' Oysterman

Bought as a "shell" from Portsmouth in 1985. The Testers Boatyard, Hollowshore, Kent, sold her on as a restoration project to present owner in 1986. Originally a twin masted Lugger, built circa 1895, re-rigged to carry a Smack's Yacht Gaff Cutter Rig, have an engine installed, new rig, spars and sails, a deck and a simple coach roof over an open accommodation cabin. Restoration/ refit completed 2013. She has been found to be a good and fast sailing vessel having won and been placed in local sailing events. **Contact: info@mjlewisboatsales.com**



Moonshadow, Price £25,000

37ft Gaff Ketch, Beam 12ft, draught 5ft. 12 Tons with internal lead Ballast. Traditionally built as a yacht in 1986. GRP Hull with Wooden Spars and Doghouse, Coach Roof and Decks Epoxy Sheathed. 2 Berths in Forward Cabin, 2 Single Berths in Aft Cabin and optional 2/3 Berths in Saloon. Spacious Cockpit. At present lying in Greece and has been cruised in the Mediterranean for a number of years. 40 HP Yanmar Engine fitted in 2009 and new Gearbox fitted in 2023. Would consider part exchange with a smaller boat or would be interested in a half or quarter part share.

Contact baggywrinkle37@yahoo.co.uk



Oran na Mara, Price: £23,000.00

Gaff Rig Sea Scamp. Full refit, in spring 2022 starting with a new inboard Sole 17hp Mini Compact engine, with all new water cooled stern tube and pumps, she has all new internal electronics as well as an all new raised coach house, that has been professionally constructed in hard wood, this has gives it plenty of extra head room in the cabin. Professionally buffed and polished. A truly great opportunity to own a one of a kind boat, all ready to for her next adventure. A reluctant sale for health reasons.

Lying Penzance, Cornwall. **Contact: neil.burman@btinternet.com**



Selene, Price: £11,000 ONO

1995 Kittiwake 14 Gaff Yawl. A real head turner. Professionally refitted in 2022. GRP simulated clinker hull. 2021 Coppercoat antifoul. Mahogany interior. Iroko planked foredeck. Bronze cleats and fairleads. Wykeham Martin furling gear. Tufnol blocks, Bronze rowlocks with 8ft oars. New running rigging, 2022. Stainless standing rigging. Galvanised centre plate in mahogany centre box. New 2023 custom, overall winter boat cover. Recently serviced R.M Trailers break-back roller road trailer.

Contact Herbie on 07808222433



Shoal Waters, Price: ££5,750

Rare opportunity to purchase a famous wooden gaff cutter as the owner is retiring. 16'6" Fairy Falcon hull built in 1963. New sails. Yard trailer. Spare original sails. Ghoster sail. Topsail. Canvas sail cover. Cockpit cover. Boat cover. Cockpit tent. Anchor, 90' chain. Binnacle Compass. Nav lights. Etc.

contact: tonyfs@hotmail.com



Skian, Price: £7,000

Memory 19 rigged with a standing lug. Sails: Mainsail, roller jib, asymmetric spinnaker Banks cover, substantial launching trolley and/or separate braked road trailer. Trailed to La Semaine du Golfe twice with no problem at all. 6hp Tohatsu outboard on stainless custom bracket. Novasail NS100 instrument, pvc cushions. Could deliver around UK at cost. Boat is the subject of an article in the Gaffers Log, issue 97, July 2018. Photo albums of Skian and its rebuild on Facebook page.

Contact:- michaelkneale@manx.net



Skylark, Price: £6,500 ovno

G.R.P. Winkle Brig. With her distinct livery she is a beautiful boat complete with all rig, mast, broom, gaff and tan sails. All the equipment is in very good condition with main spares all in spruce. Interior is 2/4 berth. It has fully cushioned units and is very comfortable. Comes with a 4 hp outboard motor. The yacht sits and travels on a bespoke galvanised two wheeled braked trailer also in fine condition and included in the sale. Included in the sale is "The Winkle Brig Book" by Martin Cartwright. Winter stored under cover near Carsington Water in Derbyshire. Can be seen at the club from March 2024. **Contact:- michaelkneale@manx.net**



Sprite, Price: £6,750

17-ft classic gaff sloop built 1920 - 30s. Wooden hull, larch on oak. Full restoration in 2002 -06. Mast and spars renewed then, also sails (James Lawrence). Long keel (filled with lead). Sails cleaned 2022. Running rigging renewed 2023. Cabin with grab rails. Can sleep 2, no creature comforts. Good inventory for day sailing, e.g.CQR and kedge anchors, warps, fenders. No electrics. Tohatsu 5 HP 2-stroke outboard. Insurance survey 5 April 2022 by AC Yacht & Boat Surveyors condition "reasonable". Trailer OK for yard work, not for highway. View by arrangement on drying (mud) berth at Brough, East Riding (berth belonging to Humber Yawl Club).

Contact: nicholas.arthurd.hall@gmail.; 0044 7900 650077



Witch Hazel, Price: ££1,800

24' 4" (7.4m) Classic Wooden Yacht, built by J Swinburne & co in 1962. Beam 8' (2.4m), Draft 3'4" (1m). 4 berth single cabin, 5'10" (1.75m) headroom. Marine toilet. Yanmar 10hp inboard diesel engine (low usage). Collapsible mast. Boat located in South East London.

Contact: Ben Piggott, jimbojazz101@gmail.com



Members' boats may be advertised for sale, at no charge, in the Gaffers Log for three editions and on the OGA Website until sold. Boats may be readvertised in the Gaffers Log if the price is reduced, subject to availability of space.

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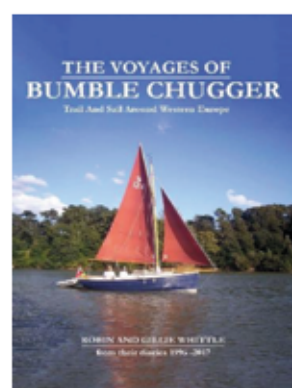
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Forthcoming events for 2024

Please see the OGA Website for forthcoming details of 2024 rallies and events in your area.

If you would like to advertise in the Gaffers Log, please contact the OGA Secretary, Mr Colin Stroud at secretary@oga.org.uk



Robin and Gillie Whittle have owned their Shrimper 19, 'Bumble Chugger' for 25 years. This book covers 21 years of adventures, trailer sailing in the UK, Europe and Scandinavia, often staying aboard for 5-6 weeks at a time. The Shrimper 19 with its shallow draught, is ideal for exploring the muddy upper reaches of rivers, and its robust construction is able to cope with rough sea conditions. Taken from the diaries written about their trips, the voyages have now been collected into a book which recounts their adventures in a pleasant chatty style, providing a fascinating read interspersed with over 1,000 coloured photographs, some poems, some watercolour sketches and a final chapter on Technical Matters describing the changes and additions they have made to the boat.

To order a copy of the book for £15.00 + postage and packaging, contact: Gillie Whittle at gillie.whittle@btinternet.com

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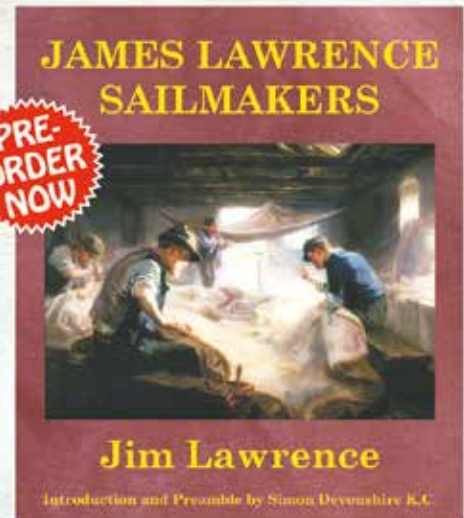
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Publication of Jim Lawrence's new book is planned for Summer 2024. He passed away aged 90 in January this year. Pre-order now from **www.Chaffcutterbooks.co.uk**

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