DOG WATCH

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From the Editor

I hope that you all had a fantastic season even if the summer high pressure kept the wind in the East.

This edition reflects on some of the highlights and perhaps lowlights of the year. It also looks forward to events for later this year and into next.

Inevitably by the time a forecast of events is published it is out of date. The latest version of the events is always available as a PDF download (no more than 2 sides of A4) from the **SWG Events** tab of the OGA Website.

More details of future events can be found (most imminent first), by scrolling further down the SWG Events tab. Beneath each entry for a future event, there may be further files including, nearer to the event, registration forms, menu choices & sailing instructions, which can be downloaded and printed if you wish." SWG Past Events" will be transferred to the SWG Events Past" tab.

On page 2 you will see the appointments and email addresses for members of the SWG committee and our bank details. These addresses are live and you should be able to click on them to populate your browser.

I am still looking to find some keen volunteer with an eye for editing to take over the SWG editor role and would be grateful for anyone who might embrace this

Editor

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The Area's bank details are changed:
Nat West Bank; Acc. Name: South West Gaffers; Sort Code 50-30-42; Acc. No: 38129698

Presidential Ponderings, Autumn 2026

So where do we start these ponderings? This is not, perhaps, the most upbeat or exciting part of the sailing season, but to avoid the potential for impending dark gloom maybe we should have a figurative 'team hug' or some spiritual mutual back slapping for a summer where we did our best.

However we must face up to the reality of our boats retiring to yard storage, mud berths, trailer sailors loaded for storage on driveways, in garages, or even in a friend's barn. Well that covers our active membership; but we must not neglect to mention our equally respected non-boat owning membership. Here we can envy the 'sailing by proxy' adventuring. This can be an equally interesting (but somewhat less expensive!) way of following events and passages of the traditional sailing scene. Apart from the usual books and magazines we are now in the 21st century and blessed with the opportunity to follow the likes of the rebuilding and sailing of '*Tally Ho*' on U Tube.

In our case the crew of *Roxanne* likes to extend the season by joining the activities at The Falmouth Oyster festival, held mid- October every year. This includes the last of the working boat racing on the Saturday. For any members yet to experience the spectacle of this type of gaff rig racing, I heartily recommend a close up view by anchoring close to a mark or finish line. This is exceptional helming and crewing on very well set up boats. The events tent ashore involves three days of oyster shucking and tasting, bars, chef demonstrations and high quality music. This year involving world class blues and a finale from the Oggymen. When Roxanne is secure in the Falmouth anchorage just a short dinghy pull to Events Square we are happy with our lot.

Anyway, back to the gloom bit. Two years ago I decided that it would be useful to keep a *Roxanne* expense spreadsheet ----- Do not follow this example! or at least restrict its circulation within the family, partners develop aggressive thoughts and offspring try to shrug off any hopes of inheritance.

In the real world it would be great to see as many as possible of our members at the forthcoming **SWG AGM at Fowey Gallants SC, which follows the Laying Up Lunch on Sat 14 Nov 2026**. This year has parking opportunities – the Christmas Fayre that caused problems last year has just been cancelled.

A larger event, but further to travel, is the **OGA AGM on Sat 16 Jan 2027 in Windermere, Lake District**. It would be encouraging for some of the South West membership to manage to attend. A show of force may impress 'head office' and in any event I always find it fascinating to be in the company of so many like- minded enthusiasts.

Fair winds and calm sailing ---------- to the slip or yard.
Martin Elliott '*Roxanne*' 078312975560

SW Secretarial Scantlings Autumn 2026

I started to write this in the last weekend of September, for the first day in months wishing I was not in shorts, as the gentle rain darkens the grass free lawn. The coastal SW escaped the very worst of the heatwave but the fine weather meant more brisk easterlies than usual. However, following a successful Helford Rally (see summer edition of Gaffers Log), the next event was the second Small Boats at Mylor, with drier but just as windy conditions, than last year, some good sailing and socialising was had. Then, towards the end of July, gaffers in the SW had the opportunity to attend three events "back to back".

Starting with the Plymouth Rally and Annual Race, 20 gaffers assembled in, or were local to, the Mayflower Marina, while the 21st vessel was ably assisted by the marina from the outside, where one of several prop wraps of the year, required further full skipper immersion! (more of that later). A pleasant evening ashore at Jolly Jacks lead up to the Race Briefing in glorious sunshine on the Saturday morning. 13 of the participating boats decided to race, forming three classes, which started at intervals in the conventional fashion under the auspices of our Race Officer, David Rollinson of Plym YC.

The course, in Plymouth Sound, had it's challenges with wind shadows either side of a moored Naval ship, changing tidal streams in the channels affecting wind strength, but a good breeze in fair weather. As ever shipping movements were anticipated but didn't happen, while others were noticed too late, leading to unplanned, time sapping manoeuvres, for some! However at least three, from each class, completed the course, so all the trophies were redistributed at the prizegiving. This was followed by an excellent and convivial meal at Jolly Jack's. Once again, The *John and Elsie*, was overall winner with Rob Brown remaining our SW Commodore. In class 2 *Likely II* was first and *Cynthia* in class 1.



Penelope Pugwash avoids D Buoy



Fleet off Gribben Head

Full results of the racing are on the SW Area of the OGA website. It was good to see two of our number, at the dinner, who were recently relieved of the burden of boat ownership! With only a day before Fowey, Sunday was, again, spent strolling at Mt. Edgcumbe, with a prompt Cremyl ferry having to return as we were all late this time!

From Plymouth we went straight on to the Fowey Classics, some sailing, others needing the motor. We were welcomed by the Fowey Gallants SC with an excellent fish supper. This was then followed with an interesting talk about Tom's boat yard, by the man from Polruan, himself.

Racing was organised for Tuesday and Thursday, with a walking and dinghy quiz on the Wednesday. The racing involved a variety of start lines and we were not always racing in the same class as similar gaffers. As ever there was good sailing and we all enjoyed honing our skills, such as they are, against some very sleek classic Bermudan rigged craft.

On the Tuesday night, an excellent meal was enjoyed at the Royal Fowey YC. At the prizegiving on Thursday the Fowey Gallants sent us off with trophies and Denaro's excellent fish or meat BBQ.We were joined by the crew of *Black Goose*, Brian and Estelle who came down to watch the final day's racing but are sadly no longer sailing.

With Fowey placed a day earlier, a few of us were able to go on to Looe Luggers and Classics on the Friday, some lying alongside in the harbour and others anchored off in settled and slightly cooler weather. Racing was straightforward on the Saturday once the VHF could be heard. With two races in the bay, of two laps each. *Cynthia* did well but other results are awaited. While several boats prepared for the final race on the Sunday, this was abandoned with insufficient wind to set a start.





All in all, for those attending all three events, it was 12 days of sailing and passage making in good company!

Our SW Sailing Secretary, David Bewick has worked very hard to bring our Sailing Instructions and Risk Assessments up to scratch, after concerns were voiced at the OGA last year. While the OGA remains an Association, and has excellent insurance, it is important that we take reasonable steps to mitigate any risks. There has been largely positive support for these documents, from SW members, many of whom are returning the Declaration, however, any observations or suggestions would be welcome. One theme that does seem to come across, in various races, is some discrepancy in classes allocated to similar vessels and also the OGA handicaps. If anyone has any observations or suggestions, other than ensuring your OGA handicap is up to date, then please let myself or David Bewick know.

Although this year is not unique, the other theme of 2026 has been problems and their solutions. While they have involved multiple immersions to clear props, raw water cooling, or descending crosstrees and parrel beads, a common theme is alongside or forward tows, following engines failing to start, be they petrol outboards (alcohol free petrol is, apparently, the solution) or inboards (where corroding or loose connections are often the cause). These are described elsewhere but we know that *Iskra* and *Susan J* are not alone, other members may be able to recount their own experiences and solutions, and share them in future editions of both Dogwatch and Gaffers Log as well as on the SW Gaffers WhatsApp.

The roles of the OGA are many and far reaching and, perhaps, enrich our modest membership fee. While in Nova Scotia, recently, even enjoying a cruise in company with the beautiful Grand Banks schooner, *Bluenose II*, your secretary took a mobile phone call from the Mayflower marina in Plymouth. They had managed to recover one of our gaffers from the opposite shore at Barn Pool, where she had dragged, rafted to another boat. I knew the identity of her previous owner and contacted them to ascertain the current owner, who turned out to be in touch with another current local member. So, in the space of an hour or so, and nearly 3000 miles apart, a gaffer owner and their vessel were reunited by our friendly and, unusually, independent marina team.



Our next event is the Laying Up Lunch and SWG AGM at Fowey Gallants SC on Saturday 14th November. This will not clash with Fowey Christmas Fayre, this year. Full details, agenda and forms will be emailed and on the website by the end of October. We hope that members will put themselves forward to join the SWG Committee. We need an Editor for Dogwatch and the future of this publication will be an item on the agenda. It would also be helpful to have additional members to manage the SWG Trophies and even resurrect the SWG Merchandise.

As many of you know, it is up to the SW Area to host the January 2028 OGA AGM. A hotel on the Hoe in Plymouth and two dates have been earmarked and enquiries as to activities for those arriving on the Friday evening and those not involved on the Saturday and Sunday mornings are being made. Any ideas or local knowledge would be appreciated, please get in touch with the SW secretary.

Some of us may be invited to the West Country Classics prize giving lunch, usually in Saltash in early December, but details have yet to arrive.

Before that, some of the SWG Committee will be researching venues for the 2028 OGA AGM, probably on Plymouth Hoe, and are already populating the 2027 calendar. The SW Area of the OGA website already shows some dates!

Details of the upcoming Saturday 16th January 2027 OGA AGM on Lake Windermere are already available to book on the OGA website, and will be in the winter Gaffers Log.

As ever the SW Area of the OGA web site continues to be the best source of up to date information, while the South West Gaffers What's App group is proving useful for general banter, as well.

If you have a smartphone but haven't yet installed WhatsApp, the installation process is straightforward. Just download it from your phone's app store. If you have any questions, feel free to contact David Patuck at swsec@oga.org.uk or Barbara Runnalls at swcomms@oga.org.uk.

Why take an outboard for a swim? Keith Muncie.

Many thanks to David Patuck who so eloquently relayed the story of rescuing my outboard, and subsequently me, in the South West Area Report in the Gaffers Log, Issue 121.

One could reasonably ask: “Why take an outboard for a swim?” or, more pertinently: “Why rescue it, rather than saving the fool refusing to discard it to the deep?” The event subsequently focused some entertaining discussion at the Fowey Classics Rally regarding the mishaps that we all encounter throughout the year, which led David to mention the “One Damn Thing After Another” trophy that is awarded at the OGA AGM. He thought that I would be a prime candidate, having won the “Anchor Trophy” awarded at the recent SWG rally in Plymouth. Using a 20Kg outboard as an anchor to stop me drifting away with the ebbing tide being the key criteria. The Anchor Trophy is awarded to those who suffer a mishap(s) during, or at previous South West events.

As OGA sailors we suffer endless travails throughout the year, which are generated either by the boat demanding more care and attention or our own clumsiness and stupidity. I have had a year of both and felt that by confronting this litany of my own failings, on both counts, a redemption of sorts could be achieved. So, a challenge to all OGA members: Why not let your Area secretary have an account of your “ODTAA” so that the SWG Comittee can nominate you for this wonderful, and liberating accolade, to be awarded at this year’s OGA AGM.

I have just done this and found it to be quite a cathartic experience which, perversely, has enabled me to remember all of the things that have gone well. To remember the effective workings of all aspects of the boat, as a direct result of the careful and persistent maintenance applied, and the skill and perspicuity deployed whilst sailing. So, here is mine.

The first thing: Start of the season. An ominous start it turned out to be: Whilst berthing at Queen Anne’s Battery after leaving my river mooring at Cargreen YC. I arrived single handed and unusually had to use a finger berth, as the alongside berths were all taken. *Iskra* is a David Hillyard, long keel gaff cutter with quite a long bowsprit. All was going well; alongside nicely, except…



the wind and tide were driving me off the pontoon and by the time I had left the cockpit and picked up the mooring lines the gap between me and the pontoon had grown alarmingly.

As you all probably know there’s no fool like an old fool. I jumped, toppled, and… got wet. Luckily, the berth next to me was vacant, so *Iskra* drifted slowly to port and nestled next to the adjacent finger berth. It took me a while to locate the escape ladder, which necessitated a swim to the next bay and out, back on to the boat and all was good. Some dented pride but luckily no dent on *Iskra* or on any big expensive shiny piece of plastic.

My friends arrived late that night and quickly settled in, planning the next day’s trip to Fowey. We left at around 11 am looking to benefit from tide if not wind. Slowly reversing out of the berth there was a sharp bang, a sound I know too well, from the tow line wrapped around the propeller suddenly breaking as it can take the strain no longer.

Back on to the berth, stripped off and into the water with goggles on. Luckily the propellor was quickly cleared and ready for departure. I say luckily, but maybe practice is improving my skill. Anyway, I did feel a sense of pride in defeating the shame of fouling the propellor in the first place.

Departure was slightly delayed by a marina official telling me that I couldn’t go in the water. Odd, that having fallen into the water on the previous evening, and being completely ignored by any marina staff, I should be told not to go into it. In such situations, best to be humble, apologise, and commit to never doing it again. Unfortunately, future events will confirm that I would foul the propellor, and go into the water to fix it, again.

Two days later, we were in Falmouth for the Classics, with two days of racing with my old friends before they headed home on the Sunday morning, I was then joined by a crew member keen to experience the pleasures of sailing a gaff cutter, even if only in the Parade of Sail. As the wind freshened, we enjoyed an invigorating sail in Carrick Roads before returning to the berth at Falmouth Haven.

But, another thing: Head sails down, into wind and engine on. Engine refused to start. Now I know how to short across the terminals on the solenoid, having done it a few times before, but inexplicability this knowledge abandoned me and so I radioed for help. Race committee boat…no answer, Falmouth Haven Marina,,, no answer, Falmouth Harbour Master… no answer. Fortuitously, a passing fishing boat had picked up my call and was adjacent in a couple of minutes, followed by the event safety RIB, the Harbour Master and another rib. All was sorted in the end thanks to the skillful RIB helm who taught me a lot about an alongside rescue with a smaller boat. Something that was extremely useful about five weeks later at Misery Point at the entrance to the Yealm. But I get ahead of myself.

Once docked, I was able to identify a potential cause: Corroded terminals either side of a fuse, either through luck, or perhaps even some skill, the engine started consistently on the next dozen or so attempts. However, why did I forget to do the usual strategy of shorting across the terminals to start the engine? Why does the tide ebb and flow? I went blank. Sorry.

Another thing: Next day, off to the Helford River for the SW Gaffers event there. And you know what happens next, provided of course that you've read David's account in the South West report in the Gaffer's Log. I shan't retell the tale other than to offer some advice to the single hander. When alone, on a mooring or at anchor, put out a line with a fender on it and have a ladder down in anticipation. There'll be something to grab should you be tempted to test the hypothesis that you can float with an inflated life jacket, holding a 20 kg outboard, and a means of getting back into your boat. My experience is that it is just possible. But all experiments need to be peer tested, so I await your results.

Our summer cruise began on July 21st, to include classic boat events at Plymouth, Fowey and Looe, and a trip to the River Dart. All went well, Starting with a river trip up the Tamar to Calstock, good wind for racing at Plymouth and good company. And the winning of the Anchor Trophy for my mishap with the outboard. Well, there was another thing that didn't go so well.

On our return journey we moored on the outside of the outer pontoon at Mayflower Marina as we needed to sort out a few things before going on to the Yealm for the night. As the day progressed, we were driven on to the pontoon by tide and wind. It was really quite difficult to get off, and when reversing against a mooring line to kick out the bow I managed to get the floating tender tow line wrapped around the propeller, again, and therefore stayed on the now very uncomfortable berth. It was impossible to get into the water as the bucking boat and pontoon would have caused me some serious damage. Will this man ever learn? Hopefully, but probably not!

We needed to try and release the line without entering the water. Initially we tried manually turning the engine, in both directions whilst pulling on the remaining line, including using the Handy Billy to increase the force and aided by a couple of sturdy men sweating the line. The propeller was freed off but the line was still wrapped around it. Many thanks to all who helped and a special thanks to Mike from the marina who was understanding and helpful. He directed us to an easier berth that avoided the need to raft alongside other gaffers. Getting into the water to free the propellor seemed quite a sensible plan to him.

Eventually the force of the wind and tide dropped, and we were able to motor inside the outer pontoon on to a protected berth. The swim followed and with a sharp implement I was able to release the now fragmented line. This was the second time this year, so, with some emphasis: Never again!!!

We departed and motor-sailed to Fowey, choosing to forego the long beat out to Eddystone and back. Then, another thing: During the journey, and for an unknown reason really, I looked over the stern to check that cooling water was surging out. It wasn't! Engine off and check the raw water filter. Very clogged, but once cleared, water appeared, although not with the customary surge. We looked again on arrival and safely moored on the pontoon. Again clogged, deep into the feed tube, some levering, then long nosed pliers, and slowly a 2.5 m long piece of weed was withdrawn. The end must have been hanging out below the water line. The reassuring surges of raw water was re-established.

All good in Fowey and Looe. Again, my memory deceives me…there was another thing. We sailed into the Fowey at the end of the race on Thursday, looking to cross the finish line by the RFYC within the time limit of the race. Not a particularly good day for us on the water. We were able to drop the head sails whilst running and went to start the engine so we could maintain control into wind to drop the main. A definite click from the solenoid was audible but no starter motor action. Russell, the main engineer on the boat, leapt below, removed steps, emergency tool boxes and engine cover and shorted across the solenoid terminals and we had power.

Subsequent investigation of the solenoid revealed loose terminals; cleaned and tightened and…. it has worked ever since. Obviously with the massive caveat that it might not.

Ah, I have remembered yet another thing: Before leaving Fowey, we motored on to the Berrell's Yard pontoon to replenish the water tanks and use facilities. We were looking forward to a good sail to Looe with perfect winds forecast. With some panache, we sailed off the pontoon to start our trip. Congratulating ourselves on the perfect manoeuvre only to watch the port end of our double ended main sheet fly through the block and into the river. Why is the knot not on it!? Who did that? Unfortunately, I did that. As I had earlier untangled the main sheet and neglected to retie the knot that I had undone. One thing after another!

We returned to Plymouth for some comfort and sailed to the Yealm on the following day. Dropping our wives at Plymouth Haven Marina so that they could walk to meet us there. A very pleasant sail out of the sound, leaving the Mew stone to port and into the bay. Taking the jib and staysail down on a run before starting the engine for the turn into wind, to drop the main. Well, that was the intention.Steam started to appear from the cabin accompanied by the alarm blaring to ensure we knew that the engine was overheating. By this time, we were perilously close to Misery Point and closing too quickly by far. The dinghy was pulled to midships and fastened. The outboard, luckily still attached to the transom, was started and we slowly made progress to reverse away from our potential encounter with the rocks.



One boat offered help but was little bigger than our tender. Another arrived, which was more powerful and, a line attached, we started our tow towards the visitor pontoon. The harbour master's vessel was quickly on the scene and tied alongside and we felt secure in the knowledge that he knew what he was doing and where we were going.

That is until communication broke down between him and the towing boat. The towing boat took a sudden turn to port to avoid a moored yacht which had the consequence of creating the potential for a horrendous collision. But eventually our cries were heard and the situation was saved. A big lesson there.

Once snuggly and safely berthed on the visitor's pontoon, after allowing sufficient time for the engine to cool, we started the investigation into the overheating.

Filter clear, but no water being pumped. Next the raw water pump - only to discover a completely disintegrated impeller. Not one blade attached and an array of fragments. A troubling find as the cooling system had been overhauled at the start of the season by a marine engineer. I did have a spare, and again all was well.
The remainder of our cruise, taking in Dartmouth and a trip to Totnes went beautifully, and in my memory without "another thing" occurring. But more to the point I have remembered so much joy from our summer cruise and hopefully exorcised the pain of incompetence, and of course written the list of future maintenance that must be done.
Oh no! I've just remembered…

Helford Rally 2026 - David Patuck

Tim, Don & Pauline had, yet again, kept the BBQ dry, this year at Tremayne Quay, up river. This tested several outboards, although several gaffers anchored in the pool opposite and returned in the morning, some after an unscheduled, post nightcap swim! It was great to chat with Mike and Dan, *Susan J's* previous owners and acquire another spare tiller from their garage! There were 19 boats at the rally and the younger gaffers were represented with Georgina and Jo Tall, and Felix with a lovely varnished clinker 22 footer yawl *Flute*. He is a new local member keeping *Flute* in the illustrious Penryn River, where he uses a very efficient pair of sweeps, in lieu of the engine which is serving as ballast, while awaiting time and funds!





The weather was less good on the Tuesday. While nearly ready to cast off into the mist, which fortunately only started 50' up, we heard 3 cries for help. Rob, who had just come alongside in his new Smacks boat, *Little John*, abandoned his tea and came in our dinghy to the area about a 1/4 M up stream, where we had stopped to pick up an abandoned tennis ball and a wooden oar. A request for locating the source of the cry, revealed someone waving while clinging to the mooring chain of a yacht.

We arrived with another dinghy to find Keith, with inflated lifejacket, clinging with one hand and holding on to a rope with the other. At the end of the rope was his large 2 stroke outboard, which he had managed to float from the stern of *Iskra*. We raised the motor into our dinghy and offered to help Keith aboard, but he, wisely, clung to our bow as we moved away from the yacht, the tide took us astern to reveal a sugar scoop affair and the owner lowering his swimming ladder. Keith very considerately hopped aboard, drained his wellies, shook himself and came aboard for the short ride up tide to Iskra. We helped him reinstall the outboard and he bailed his dinghy. With instructions to go below, change, have a hot drink, then remove and grill the spark plug, we managed to get back to *Susan J*.

The class 1 course was out to the Nare buoy, around Rosemullion and on to Maenporth before returning to the start line. We completed the race in a pleasant breeze but poor light. *Nomad* led the fleet, but was beaten by *Mary Ritchie*, then *Susan J*, on handicap, with *Capraia* and *Minx* not far behind. The small boats went to Toll, Fort, Turning Pt, Toll, Fort and return to the start / finish line. They were led by *Little John*, followed by *Proteus*, and *Squiggles*. Several other boats present had been put off by the forecast fog. Being Cornwall, hill fog, while unpleasant, doesn't really pose a risk to boats!





Mary Ritchie at the start



Nomad leads the fleet

After the race we returned to *Iskra*, with Keith pulling futilely on the outboard. Out came my can of spray ether / carburettor cleaner and after two puffs it started first time and continued. Third resuscitation of the season (lawn mower still to do)!

The conclusion of the Rally was the prizegiving, where the Mike Beckett made a speech, thanking Tim and Don and presented the prizes. 43 members followed up with an excellent meal at the Helford River SC, where the new chef, of some 18 months standing, gave us a splendid meal with lovely views. We had been in the illustrious company of several OGA Presidents, with Mike Shaw, Patrick Vivyan- Robertson, current OGA President, Mike Beckett and, of course, our own Martin Elliott.



Minx setting off to the start with *Roxanne and Cariad* rafted astern

Small Boat Rally, Mylor, July 2026 Oliver Peterken, David Bewick

The second SW Gaffers Small Boat Rally was held 10-12 July at Mylor Churchtown on the Carrick Rods, Cornwall. Compared to the storms of last year, the weather was scorching. Light winds made the sailing challenging but there generally just enough.

Eleven members came with 10 boats, including Mike Dixon the OGA Small Boats Secretary. Most members camped or were in their camper vans at the Coastland site. Some stayed in the self-catering accommodation at Mylor Yacht Harbour. Boats were either launched from Coastlands' beach or on the marina pontoon.

As has become our custom, the weekend started with a pint and pasty hosted by the Mylor Yacht Club.



Saturday saw the inaugural Mylor Raid. Boats had to visit as many of the eleven locations they could manage between 0930 and 1700. This could only be done under sail and oar, in any order they chose. Some of these checkpoints were up the Tresillian River, and the further away from the start, the more points were available. One of the locations was a boat at anchor where crews had to safely pass an orange with their entry number. Any thrown or splattered oranges would be subject to penalty points as the boat belonged to the organiser's wife. Four boats entered and between them proved how a combination of sailing and rowing, plus a fit crew, could cover a large area despite fickle winds and tricky tides. The location for the orange handover turned out to be impossible to reach under sail alone and required a stiff row.

Two boats achieved gold (5 or more points): *Gelvynek* (Jeremy McCabe and family) with a new world record of 14 out of 15 points and *Switha* (Mike Dixon and David Bewick) who achieved 13 points. Malcolm Goram in *Mallard* and Scott Bowring in *Maia* both achieved bronze with 4 points. Roger Wickham in his sailing canoe *Emma* also went round the course.

The rally dinner was held at Castaways where we were joined by a big boat *Roxanne*, the SW President Martin Elliot and Jan Elliot. Prizes were awarded: *Gelvynek* as Raid world-record holders; *Switha* for making David Bewick row so much and *Mallard* for claiming a point for reaching one of the marks in 2004.



Sunday was far more relaxing with some sailing, walks and long breakfasts.

Sea Salts and Sails festival – Mousehole. Tim Price and Rob McDowell. https://www.seasalts.co.uk/



The Sea Salts and Sail festival is a biennial event for traditional craft. Wooden hulls, spars, topsails and canvas are framed against the majestic beauty of Mounts Bay and the 500 year old harbour is decked out in stalls, music stages, food and bars. The 2026 festival took place on the 3 – 5 July 2026 starting with a reception and then 2 days racing in the bay around St Clements Island. There was also a pre-event on 2 Jul in the old harbour at Newlyn which also started with a reception, food, music and a bar. A great way to encourage vessels to arrive early!

For me, Thursday the 2nd Jul started fair with a NW 3-4. I left Helford at 0830hrs and reached the Lizard at around midday and then had to face the wind on the nose. By 1400hrs I had had enough of little northerly progress, put the engine on and motored up to Newlyn. I had to make the tide and put the legs on so I was constrained by the tide and a 1900hrs reception. I was one of the last to arrive and had to drop a kedge as I ran up to the beach and drop the main anchor once in place. Unfortunately the kedge didn't set and, in spite of going out in the dinghy to reset it, I couldn't get it to hold. With the tide now dropping and the legs taking the ground it was not critical because I was to go off to Mousehole on the tide in the morning. The moral of the story with the kedge was that 20m rope and chain was not long enough and I needed at least 30m. That evening there was an excellent reception with the Lord Lieutenant, Mayor and numerous councillors all supported by Paella and a bar on the old quay. There were some very jolly shanties and it was good company.

The next morning brought a glorious day with light winds and I started to get ready to come off the beach. As soon as I started lifting from the legs, I fired up the engine and got ready to go astern. I went into reverse to find that there was no drive. I can manually change the gears but with the tide slipping out and with the potential to cause a problem going into Mousehole during a festival decided to go back onto the legs and spend the day on the beach while stripping the Morse down. I fixed the drive but decided, because of tide times and being behind the curve on getting to Mousehole, I would go to the event by bus. There are 2 per hour and the journey is only 6 minutes.



The event at Mousehole was blessed with a beautifully warm sunny day and it was in full swing when I arrived in the early evening. 61 boats had booked to attend the event and were either anchored in the bay or making their way into the harbour. There were all sorts of craft stalls, food stalls and music along the old quay and it was really buzzing. One of the bands was 4 late teens with guitars, violins and a saxophone; quite brilliant. There were then various opening speeches and the Porthleven Town Band (about 40 of them) before a delicious opening supper of fish stew.



The forecast for Saturday was light winds during the first day of racing and even lighter for the Sunday. Because of that, and the issue with the Morse, I decided to cut my losses and get back to Helford.

The weekend racing had 19 boats in class 1 (over 32 foot), 12 boats in class 2 (23 – 32 foot) and 30 boats in class 3 (below 23 foot). The oldest boat attending was *Gleaner* built in 1878, which beached on legs in the harbour for the weekend. The oldest vessel in the races was *Barnabus*, built in 1881, a dipping lugger owned by the Cornish Maritime Trust charity and skippered by Rob McDowell who was a key organiser of the event.

After the racing on Saturday there was a sculling race with two identical 14ft Sea Salts & Sail oyster punts - *Port* and *Starboard*. Teams raced in a relay from the beach, around a buoy and back. Over 50 people took part in the sculling competition with the Bretons being victorious. This was absolute organised mayhem as probably the most exciting maritime event in UK. At least 46 could scull well. A 10 year old then stole the show as he sculled out (like a real pro) and rescued the last competitor (who convinced the organisers he could scull - having apparently been a champion rower in his youth - which was about 45 years previously!)



The boat that came furthest and took longest to arrive was the engineless *Maggie Helen* built in 1904 at Hays Dock, Lerwick in 1904. Based in Brittany, though exploring Scotland post May's Lugfest '26 event in Ullapool, she sailed from Inverness 3 weeks - facing strong northerlies and then the heatwave en route. During the Sunday race one 26ft vessel couldn't make a windward mark, so skipper dived in, swam around the mark, re boarded, and carried on (he was sailing solo!). He re-boarded just in time, as the 35 ton 50 + foot engineless Zulu bore down on him! Sea Salts really is the only event nowadays where skilled lugger sailors compete without handicap - so a real test of traditional seamanship - especially under sail through the harbour's 15m 'gaps'.



The whole event was a friendly, well organised occasion and is a testament to the 2 years work all the 200 volunteers put into - and there is no sponsorship. Every penny raised is from the sale of volunteer run food and drinks tents and a most of the profit goes back into the community. The core focus remains on traditional wooden vessels but there is also acceptance that traditional grp vessels retain the spirit of the past. For me, it was an opportunity to see Newlyn and Mousehole as potential stops on the way to the Scillies. For those with legs, it is an easy stopover. For those without legs you may get sent to Penzance if there is no room in Newlyn. For small boats that can take the ground the event should be considered as part of the Old Gaffers itinerary.





For updates visit OGA Website or to amend this email swsec@oga.org.uk

DATE	EVENT	ORGANISER	LOCATION	EMAIL(s) & WEBSITES	CONTACTs
	2026				
21st Oct	SW Area Committee Meeting. 1200 for 1230	SW OGA	RWYC	*swsec@oga.org.uk*	David Patuck
14th Nov	SW Gaffers Laying Up lunch and AGM	SW OGA	Fowey Gallants SC	*swsec@oga.org.uk*	David Patuck
End Nov TBC	West Country Classics Series Prizegiving & Lunch	West Country Classics	Saltash SC tbc	*bruce@classic-channel-regatta.eu*	Bruce Thorogood
Early Dec TBC	SW Area Committee Meeting	SW OGA	RWYC TBC	*swsec@oga.org.uk*	David Patuck
	2027				
15th January '27	Arrive Fri PM at The Old England Hotel,				
16th January '27	At: The Old England Hotel OGA ACM (AM) OGA AGM (PM) and	OGA	Windermere	www.oga.org.uk	NW Area of OGA
17th January '27	At: Royal Windermere YC Talks				
Early 2027 TBC	Lunchtime Gathering TBC	SW OGA	TBC	*swsec@oga.org.uk*	David Patuck
mid March TBC	SW Area Committee Meeting 11:30 for 12:00	SW OGA	RWYC	*swsec@oga.org.uk*	David Patuck
Mid April TBC	Fitting Out Lunch & Talk- tbc	SW OGA	TBC	*swsec@oga.org.uk*	David Patuck
28th - 30th May 2027	Brixham Heritage Regatta	Brixham SC	Brixham	*www.brixhamheritageregatta.uk*	David Dickens
17th - 20th June 2027	Falmouth Classics (West Country Classics series (1 of 4))	Falmouth Classics	Falmouth	*info@falmouthclassics.org.uk* *www.falmouthclassics.org.uk*	07774 633479 Paul Hobson
21st-23rd June 2027	Helford Rally BBQ Mon pm @ tbc. Dinner Tuesday @	SW OGA	Helford River	*timpriceabroad@hotmail.com*	Tim Price

DATE	EVENT	ORGANISER	LOCATION	EMAIL(s) & WEBSITES	CONTACTs
June TBC	Shrimper 19 Annual Rally TBC	Shrimper Owner's	Plymouth tbc		Martin Blake
June TBC	Plymouth (Yacht Haven) Boat Fest	Plymouth YH	Plymouth YH	*plymouth@yachthavens.com*	Steve Cox TBC
9th -11th July 2027 TBC	OGA Smaller Boats Rally	OGA SmallBoats & SW OGA	? Plymouth TBC	swsailingsecretary@oga.org.uk	David Bewick Oliver Peterken
? TBC	Dartmouth Classics (West Country Classics (2 of 4))	TBC	Dartmouth	www.dartmouthclassics.org	
23rd-25th July TBC	Plymouth Rally. Annual Race TBC	SW OGA	Mayflower Marina TBC	*swsec@oga.org.uk*	Martin Elliott /DP
27th July	Sail in company towards Fowey	(SW OGA)	(South coast)	SWG WhatsApp	DP & Committee
27th-30th July TBC	34th Fowey Classics (W/Country Classics (3/ 4)	Fowey Classics	FGSC Fowey	www.foweyclassics.com	Karen Toms
31st July	Sail in company towards Looe Luggers & Classics	(SW OGA)	(South coast)	SWG WhatsApp	DP & Committee
30th July-1st Aug 2027	Looe Luggers & Classics (West Country Classics (4 /4)	Looe Lugger Classics	Looe Harbour Commisioners	*jonti.brice@gmail.com jc.collings@btinternet.com office4luggers@bti*	John Collings Jonathan Brice
mid August TBC	Gaffers race at Dittisham Regatta	Dittisham SC	Dittisham	wearsailing@hotmail.com *	via Gil Hayward*
end August TBC	"Skipper Festival" (prev.Sails & Ales) Charlestown Hbr	Charlestown Harbour	Charlestown, St Austell	alex@charlestownharbour.com	Alex Bakhurst
end August TBC	Dartmouth Royal Regatta Sailing Week events tbc	Dartmouth Sailing Week	Dart YC TBC	*www.dartmouthsailingweek.com*	
mid Oct TBC	SW Area Committee Meeting. 12:00 for 12:30 TBC	SW OGA	RWYC TBC	*swsec@oga.org.uk*	David Patuck
Nov TBC	SW Gaffers Laying Up lunch and AGM	SW OGA	Fowey Gallants SC TBC	*swsec@oga.org.uk*	David Patuck
End Nov TBC	West Country Classics Series Prizegiving	West Country Classics	Saltash SC TBC	*bruce@classic-channel-regatta.eu*	Bruce Thorogood