

South West Gaffers

Promoting Gaff Rig in Devon and
Cornwall

South West Branch of the



Area President: Paul Jolley
president@southwestgaffers.org.uk

Life Vice-President: Mike Lucas

Secretary: David Bewick
secretary@southwestgaffers.org.uk

Treasurer: Elspeth Macfarlane
treasurer@southwestgaffers.org.uk

Membership Secretary: David Patuck
membership@southwestgaffers.org.uk

Handicapping Officer: Peter Crook
admin@southwestgaffers.org.uk

Trophy Officer: Mike Garlick
trophies@southwestgaffers.org.uk

Commodore: Gil Hayward
commodore@southwestgaffers.org.uk

Examiner of Accounts: David Lovelock
auditor@southwestgaffers.org.uk

Regalia Sales: Paul Jolley
regalia@southwestgaffers.org.uk

Dog Watch and Website Editor:
John Gallagher
editor@southwestgaffers.org.uk

Committee Members: Paul Jolley,
Peter Crook, David Bewick, Elspeth
Macfarlane, John Gallagher, Gil
Hayward and David Patuck .

Cornwall Representative:

Don Garman
cornwall@southwestgaffers.org.uk

SW Web site:
www.oga.org.uk/south-west

OGA Web Site: www.oga.org.uk

The Dog Watch

For the Sea Dogs of Devon and Cornwall

Issue 33

September 2018

Welcome

After the magnificent Summer weather this Dogwatch is packed with accounts of events from our busy calendar as well as of tales of sailing adventures.

We have tried to organise a varied and interesting selection of events for members and with most occurring from June onwards this issue is rather packed.

For those who went to Falmouth Classics you would have to agree that event just gets better. And there were more magnificent large boats this year. As the largest such event on the South Coast and arguably this side of the Channel we are fortunate that such a gathering is in our area. Of course that's due to the efforts of the personalities organising it and the perfect location.

The Helford Rally, following on from the Classics went well and is certainly an established favourite. And the Plymouth Festival of Sail went really well and we plan to hold this event again next year at the same venue but try to improve the berthing arrangements.

Following the demise of the Start Bay Rally and Race it is noteworthy that events still continue on the Dart. The Dittisham Regatta clashed with OGA 55 so was not promoted by us. But a number of boats which couldn't get there joined the "Dittsum" rally. Also the gaffer section of the Dartmouth Regatta is having a modest revival but could do with more support.

The great event of year has been the OGA 55 Regatta which for a number of reasons was sadly only supported by three South West boats. But from the reports you can read here it proved most enjoyable. A number of boats from the South West and other regions went to Dauarnenez then joined the Rolling Snowball on their return and transit to OGA 55. One of the attendees has given us his story here as well.

Always remember that I am after your salty tales. So please send in your stories to give me something to put into our next edition of your newsletter!

The Next Event

Visit to Penpol Boatyard, Restronguet
October 13th

Recent Events

Falmouth Classics 22-24th June

Don Garman*

Sun and a northerly wind welcomed visiting vessels from France, the Solent Bristol and locations further east in the South West to the 31st Tilley Endurables Falmouth Classics and the 125th International Shanty Festival. By the end of Thursday 21st over 100 vessels were either berthed along side in the Haven, Port Pendennis or Greenbank with others on moorings and anchored. With the barque *Kaskelot*, *Phoenix* and other large vessels moored on the Trefusis shore by Friday, a scene from Falmouth past had almost been created. Gaff and lug rigged vessels formed just over half of the 192 entries. The Savills – Black Rock Brewery reception went with a swing on Thursday evening with pasties, a pint and Rum and Shrub, a local shanty band providing a song or two.



Racing in Carrick Roads photo: Asher Mann

Thursday saw the northerly wind reduce and it failed just as the course for race 1 was set. An early sea breeze seemed to be developing and the schooner *Spirit of Falmouth*, the committee boat was repositioned only to find the northerly developing again and chasing the sea breeze back out into the bay! *RFA Lyme Bay* then proceeded to enter the Carrick Roads. The race officer however managed to set a course which was enjoyed by all participants but the early wind problems and ship movements left time for just one race.

Friday evening saw skippers and crew enjoying wine and a 12 year old whisky from Old Pulteney in the Art Gallery whilst looking at maritime paintings by John Dyer. Visitors enjoyed getting close to the fleet at the marina on Saturday both before vessels left to race and on their return. *Vigilance* of Brixham and *Amelie Rose* welcomed



Racing in more wind in Carrick Roads photo: Asher Mann

the visitors aboard. A light wind provided a challenge for those racing but again another clear blue sky. The rowing a sculling yet again provided great fun and the skipper of *Hardiesse*, the Falmouth sail training vessel went away with a clutch of classic mugs. Prize giving for the day races preceded the sell-out Ancasta International barbecue at the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club.

Sunday morning saw crowds gather in great numbers at Pendennis Castle, Castle Drive and at Pendennis Point to watch the parade of sail and power. "Spectacular" said many because of the wonderful mix of craft. The parade was led by two PL 2000 patrol boats *HMS Biter* and *HMS Charger* and followed by Falmouth's two life boats

The small boat parade followed in the inner harbour and crowds gathered on Custom House Quay to watch. A greater number of boats than in past years participated and two *Bounty* replicas *Bounty's End* which followed in the footsteps of Captain Bligh and the National Maritime Museum's (NMMC) Tribute built for the 2017 exhibition participated before having a head to head in the Carrick Roads.

Throughout the three days the Maritime Village on Custom House Quay was busy with visitors intrigued at oar making being demonstrated by Falmouth Marine School or baggywrinkle making by Gweek Quay Classic Boatyard staff.

The 2018 event ended with prize giving in the NMMC and then out to enjoy the final performances of the shanty festival.

The 2019 Falmouth Classics and the International Shanty Festival will take place from 14- 16th June

**Don is Vice Chair of Falmouth Classics Assn*

Helford Rally 25th – 27th June 2018

Don Garman

Blue skies, sun and light winds welcomed the sixteen visiting gaffers to the fifth Helford South West Gaffers Rally, most having participated in the Falmouth Classics. Organisers were delighted that the Solent contingent had grown from two in 2017 to four. The visiting fleet joined the five local boats ensuring the fleet total of twenty-one exceeded the total of previous years. Unfortunately, the Elliott's newly acquired Heard 28 *Roxanne* experienced terminal engine problems in Falmouth and was towed to Mylor.

The counter stern of *Wanderer 11*, a new participant, clearly indicated her East Coast origin, built at Rowhedge she is now moored in Falmouth. Roger Dongray designs were a plenty with a *Shrimper*, three Crabber yawls, *Beagle of Woodbridge*, a Cornish Trader and the traditionally built 26 year-old *Mary Ritchie*.

Over fifty participated in the BBQ on Pedn Billy Beach, courtesy of Mrs and Mrs Bligh. Standing out amongst the inflatables was an Ashley Butler Lily Class clinker dinghy and of great interest the 100 year-old schooner captain's gig with its lug sail, recently renovated by Greg Powlesland, a Helford resident.

A light and unreliable easterly wind and an incoming tide provided a challenge for the eleven boats who entered the Tuesday afternoon race apart from the Swallow *Pippin*. Several struggled for a long time to cross the line. However, *Susan J* soon followed *Pippin* and then *Molly Oxford*, *Mary Ritchie* and *Ivy Green*. Off Toll Point there was a good swell and the wind was still patchy. *Sumara*, the rescue cruiser, generously, ensured *Pippin* rounded the correct first mark. The Race officer having received an update on wind conditions from Nare Point NCI, decided to modify the course to enable all to arrive at prizegiving! The wind strengthened and became more reliable. With *Pippin* and *Susan J* making for Pilchard, *Molly Oxford* was next to round Dennis with *Mary Ritchie* tight on her stern. *Mary Ritchie* held her south easterly course until well after the mark before making the turn. This tactic paid off well and she got a little closer to *Susan J* and well ahead of *Molly Oxford* both of whom had to tack for Pilchard. The broad reach and run after Pilchard saw *Mary Ritchie* close the gap a little on *Susan J*. *Ivy Green*, *Beagle of Woodbridge* and *Julia Neal* were now on the Dennis to Pilchard leg whilst the other five had retired but not before *Minx* crossed the line.

Prizes were presented by Ashley Butler of Butler from

Penpol Boatyard, sponsors of the moorings. An excellent dinner for fifty one was then enjoyed at Helford River Sailing Club.



Some of the fleet on the Helford start line photo: Chris Rear

Results:

Class 1

- 1st Mary Ritchie
- 2nd Susan J
- 3rd Molly oxford
- 4th Ivy Green
- 5th Beagle of Woodbridge

Class 2

- 1st Pippin (also overall winner Class 1 and 2)
- 2nd Julia Neal
- Prize for resilience – Minx

South West Gaffers Festival of Sail 6th—9th July

David Bewick

Our very first Plymouth Festival of Sail was held over the first weekend in July and what a weekend it turned out to be! We were blessed with scorching sunshine for the whole weekend and winds that were light but good enough to get the fleet around the race course on Saturday and up to Saltash and back on Sunday.

Most of the boats arrived at Plymouth Yacht Haven during the day on Friday and the crews met for a meal in the Clovelly Bay Inn in Turnchapel in the evening.



Bryony in foreground with Susan J photo: Jane Bryan



Guiding Star photo: Jane Bryan

This is a pub with a splendid water-side setting, friendly and efficient staff and a menu with some really interesting options. I think the food and the ambiance were enjoyed by all and there was plenty of time for a good natter, interrupted only fleetingly by

the race briefing for the following day.

Race day on Saturday, dawned with very light winds but these built slowly during the morning and there was just enough by the appointed start time for Nick Head, our Race Officer, to set the fleet off on the shorter of the two course options. We used the Plymouth Classics-style “timed gate” start sequence so



Racing in fair winds past Drake's Island photo: Michael Costen

there was no unruly hustle and bustle on the start line off the Royal Western Yacht Club. As it turned out, most of the boats started early in the start window and most of them (!) managed to follow the correct course. The wind remained light, and I am sure the bigger boats would have liked a bit more, but it enabled everyone to get around the course. After two or three laps, I think everyone felt they had had a good sail.

We held our evening event in the Ocean Room of Mount Batten Water Sports Centre where we had a hot (in more ways than one!) buffet supper and the prize giving followed by some fantastic entertainment from a local band. These guys, known as the Inner Tube of the Calstock Rubber Band, were found by John Gallagher and they turned out to be real stars as they were all accomplished musicians and great entertainers. Those who endured the hot and sticky conditions inside the building were well rewarded for their tenacity.

On Sunday, we had a short cruise in company up to Saltash Sailing Club hosted by Nina Lillie. Nina is a good friend to South West Gaffers and is a past Commodore of the club. Some of the boats sailed up the river and some motored, but I am sure everyone enjoyed their trip along Plymouth's historic waterfront. Most of the boats tied up on the pontoon just under the bridge and, as we walked up to the sailing club, I overheard a lady outside say to her friend “I

"I think they're the Old Codgers' Sailing Club". The poor woman clearly did not understand the subtle difference between a gaffer and a codger! The visit gave us the chance to enjoy a proper pasty (well, Saltash is on the Cornwall side of the river) and a pint for lunch.

Back at Plymouth Yacht Haven, we managed to fit in a brief pontoon party before dinner at The Bridge restaurant. After a busy weekend, this was the chance for a relatively relaxing meal in pleasant surroundings. It must have given some of the participants their second wind, though, as they went back to the pontoon afterwards for round two of the party until late on!

We had decided to move our Annual Race to Plymouth this year because of the gradually dwindling numbers at Dartmouth in recent years. I think the turnout of boats (22) at Plymouth fully justified this change. More importantly though, we have had positive



Theta with all aboard having a great time photo: Jane Bryan

Racing results are as shown below:



Mnemosyne with all up photo: Jane Bryan

feedback from many of those who attended, and so we are hoping to run something similar in 2019. The dates have not been confirmed, yet, but it is likely to be **6th -8th July**. Please pencil these dates into your diary and come along to what I hope will be an even bigger and better event next year.

I will confirm the dates as soon as I can. I remain convinced that the yellow event T shirts we had this year will become much sought after by collectors in the future. However, if you were not keen on the yellow and would like to influence the choice of colour for 2019, you may find your secretary is open to bribes!

Race Position	Trophy	Boat	Skipper
1st Overall	Dittisham Bottle & Commodore's Burgee	Mary Hay	Gil Hayward
1st Class 1	Dartmouth Deadeye	Roxanne of Restronguet	Charles Taylor
2nd Class 1	Solent Block	Theta	John Crellin
3rd Class 1	Tyrone Trophy	Susan J	David Patuck
1st Class 2	Lewthwaite Trophy	Mary Hay	Gil Hayward
2nd Class 2	Pinrail Trophy	Summer Breeze	Julian Biggs
3rd Class 2	Marie Mahon Trophy	Ester	Chris Danby
1st Class 3	Scrimshaw Trophy	John and Elsie	Rob Brown
2nd Class 3	Anchor Trophy	Aberrare	David Bewick
3rd Class 3	Oyster Ring	Mnemosyne	Michael Costen

We are indebted to Jane Bryan for her photos which are some of a large collection taken when crewing for me! You will find these on her web page and please contact her for higher resolution images.

jane-bryan.co.uk

Ed. John G

Ditsum Regatta 18th August

Gil Hayward

At the beginning of August, linked to 'Ditsum Regatta' there is the River Dart Rally, aimed at the smaller gaffers and the trailer sailers. This year, it was later than usual and clashed with the Cowes OGA 55 celebrations, so it was not promoted by us but merely listed as the 'Ditsum Regatta Gaffer Race'. There was a drinks reception hosted by the Commodore on the Friday evening, a race on Saturday morning run by Dittisham Sailing Club followed by a Parade of Sail as part of the regatta activities on Saturday afternoon. On Sunday, there was an informal cruise up to 'The Malsters' at Bow Creek.

The weather was kind, although the wind was a challenge on the Sunday morning and fourteen boats took part in the race. This was pretty impressive as the Trailer Section also did not promote this event. The 'Mayflower' class dinghies owned by the Marshall Sailing School were again the boats to beat. They were brilliantly sailed by Joseph Wellerd and Benjamin Lintel. Once again, they beat *Mary Hay* on



Launching, Aberrare on far right photo: Gil Hayward

handicap but even they could not challenge the Bay Raider 20 *Pippin* sailed by Mark Darley, who has now added the 'John Wynn' trophy to his collection following his success at Helford. We would love to see Joe and Ben sail a couple of the new OGA dinghies at the River Dart Rally next year to show everyone their capabilities. Does anyone have any contacts to get two of these boats to Dittisham on 10th August 2019, the provisional date for next year?

We hope to make it a proper 'River Dart Rally' with a meal in the Dittisham Sailing Club on the Saturday evening and breakfast in the 'Red Lion' on the Sunday morning. 'Ditsum Regatta' committee continue to enjoy our 'Parade of Sail' so we should obtain permission from the parish council to keep campervans in the car park overnight and a few tents on the nearby 'Ham'.

Each year we seem to attract new boats with certain regulars returning year after year. *Willow*, a converted RNLI boarding boat designed by the RNLI and built by Brooke Marine in Lowestoft in 1960 was of special interest. Sailed by Simon Stretton, at one point she was on her beam ends but he avoided a ducking. Not quite so lucky were John & Jannie Kimble in *Suzetoo*, who capsized when a sheet snagged during a gybe. However, they were awarded a 'Regatta mug' for their pains at the prizegiving by Jonathan Dimpleby.

Put 10th August in your diary now for next year.



Gil Hayward's winning crew, grandsons Jack and Adam receiving their prize mugs in elegant surroundings photo: Gil Hayward

Dartmouth Regatta 1st – 2nd September

Gil Hayward

In the past this has been a major event for gaffers. You only need to look at the extensive number of trophies for this event kept at the Royal Dart Yacht Club to appreciate this. However, in recent years it has been difficult to attract the necessary minimum 5 entries for there to be a 'Gaffer Class' race. We have tried subsidizing the event, persuaded the organisers to keep us on a separate course away from the main racing fleets but still we struggle to keep this event alive.

This year, the event involved a self timed start over a 15 minute window and self timed finish. The entry fee was only £10 per day. Now that Dartmouth Regatta has no air displays, the harbour was far less congested, so come and give it a try next year. On the Saturday, the White Fleet (a fun race of cruising boats – no spinnakers allowed) shared the same course without any problems. It was interesting to watch the famous *Jolie Brise* taking part. The winds were light but 4 gaffers managed to finish. Sadly at the last moment Jonathan Heighway in *Muriel* was unable to race although he did manage the parade of classic boats later in the day. It was disappointing, as it would have been interesting to see *Muriel* race against Peter Lucas' new boat *Cynthia* built in Falmouth in 1910 as a racing yacht.

Peter has carried out a major refit and she had only been in commission for a few weeks. Despite light airs, she flew around the course – we only saw her transom at the start. On the Sunday the winds were far lighter



Cynthia, just launched following a complete restoration.

Photo: Mike Garlick

than predicted. Only *Cynthia* and *Mary Hay* managed to finish taking 4 hours and 5.5 hours respectively!

Cynthia at one point was managing to achieve 1.5 knots with only 2.5 knots of wind! The southerly wind never exceeded 4 knots.

Brixham Trawler Pilgrim in the Parade of Sail through Dartmouth

Photo: Mike Garlick



Minx heads east for OGA 55

Paul Jolley

Minx joined the last few legs of the OGA55 Rolling Snowball leaving Brixham for Weymouth on 9th August 2018. Over the previous couple of days both *Corncockle* and *Susan J* visited Brixham and we were to catch up with them in a few days. The passage across Lyme Bay was enlivened by the largest pod of dolphins that Penny and I have ever seen, wonderful. The day gave us a steady F4/5 which made for good sailing. As we started to approach Portland a glance behind showed a significant squall line approaching fast and a somewhat hasty two reefs were taken in before the wind and sea state increased.

We rounded Portland Bill using the inside passage and as we passed the Lighthouse and beacon heading up for Weymouth we were in a completely different climate! The sun was shining, and the wind was light. We felt a bit overdressed in our foul weather gear and safety lines, but half an hour earlier life had been different to say the least!

As we approached Weymouth *Susan J* arrived and we eventually persuaded the Harbour Master to let us raft alongside in company with *Cine Mara* from the Netherlands. *Robinetta* also appeared in the harbour and was off the next morning. *Bonita* came into the harbour and moored to the stern of us. So, it was "beer up" accompanied by some delicious Dutch cheese.

Minx spent a couple of days in Weymouth hoping that *Ariana* and *Carlotta* would catch up with us. Unfortunately, they were both hiding in Dittisham sitting out some nasty weather. *Susan J* and *Bonita* went on their way whilst *Minx's* crew explored Weymouth.

On 13th August *Minx* headed to anchor in Studland Bay arriving close to *Susan J*. On waking the next morning, it was good to see *Ariana* and *Carlotta* at anchor having a well-earned rest having both made the long passage from Dittisham single handed.

The next day we set off for Yarmouth, with a somewhat gentle sail to round Hurst Point approaching by the Northern Channel. As expected the bit of water at Hurst Point called "The Trap" made it a bit lumpy for a short time as we entered the Solent. Mooring alongside *Susan J* in Yarmouth was challenging to say the least! The harbour staff were using their dories as tugs to push boats into position. It was encouraging to see boats with bow thrusters

and all the other gismos also having extreme difficulty in the prevailing wind and tide amongst the pontoons. All was well with *Susan J* competently taking our lines and securing us. *Bonita* soon arrived on the pontoon and crews took themselves off to the Royal Solent Yacht Club for recovery pints and an evening meal. The next day SWG crews explored the West of the Island as far as the Needles by bus. This was interesting as we were looking down on a live tidal stream atlas of our passage to the Solent from above the Needles.

On the 16th *Minx* motored the short passage to Cowes and up the River Medina by mid-day, to raft up at the Folly with the rapidly growing fleet of boats arriving for OGA55. Following registration launches took us down to the Fizz at Five reception at the new Classic Boat Museum. There certainly was loads of fizz being consumed and the director of the museum gave us an extremely enthusiastic tour of the current exhibits which are hugely varied from Victorian steam launches to one of Ben Ainslie's foiling Americas Cup boats.

The next day was the race out in the Solent including the Solent Area annual race. This was a no show for *Minx* as I had to investigate some intermittent engagement of forward gear! Penny crewed on *Susan J* and some of the conditions were rather challenging as the Solent tides made getting around some of the marks quite difficult. About two thirds of the fleet, many local boats, were unable to complete the course



Freda and Minx, both Morecombe Bay Prawners

either being out of time or retiring. Nevertheless, SWG members got prizes! *Susan J* won the land-based treasure hunt and *Minx* won a whole cheese brought over by the Dutch contingent in the draw.

The Highlight for *Minx* was meeting her sister *Freda* at the Folly. *Freda* was the first and only production GRP

Morecambe Bay Prawner named after the wife of the Boat builder, Eric Berqvist. Built by Classic Yachts of Southampton and exhibited at an early Southampton Boat Show Boat Show, *Freda* is now owned and been restored by Garry Flashman who helped in the original fitting out.

The remaining unfitted bare hulls were, over time, purchased and fitted out in different ways whilst retaining the original concept. There is a further story



Mike and David making vital technical adjustments to avert capsizing

to tell about how these second generation Prawners came to be and the current locations of the vessels. It is interesting to note that the Nobby Owners Association have now acquired the mould for future use.

On the Saturday participants tried out a variety of things from sailing the OGA dingy to sculling and other activities. SWG ably led by Mike Forward built and had sea trials for their entry in the log boat race. The first sea trials had to be abandoned due to capsizing and the design was taken back to the drawing board on *Ariana* for further thought. A good lump of lead sorted out the problem and now our motley crew were ready to race. Our boat sailed extremely well in absolutely the reverse direction! Eventually she turned and headed off down the proper course at speed but sadly did not achieve a place.

The final element of the fun day was an auction to raise funds for the Youth Fund. SWG helped in no small way by *Susan J* bidding for a very nice set of wooden blocks and a brass binnacle lamp donated by your President achieving a good price. At the end of the day SWG and a few others repaired to the Folly for drinks and a meal.

On 19th boats started to leave the Folly and many fond farewells were made. *Minx* headed off up river to

Island Harbour where adjustments were made to her engine control cables and some time was spent exploring other parts of the island including a trip on the ex-London Underground trains that serve Ryde and the East of the island.

With all well on the mechanical front *Minx* departed on 21st August for Bembridge creeping in along the channel on a rising tide with the navigator instructing the helm to keep away from the edge and getting the reply "there are two edges!" It is interesting pilotage and rewarding when you make it. The next day was spent walking and exploring the local area including the floating lobster/crab café in the harbour.

The weather looked bad for the next couple of days so on 25th *Minx* set off for Gosport to hide from it and spend two days at the Historic Dockyard which was well worth the visit, especially the *Mary Rose*.

Having visited the Historic Dockyard on 28th *Minx* was off again to visit Bucklers Hard and the Beaulieu River for further walking and exploring this beautiful area of the New Forest. After victualling and taking on water and fuel the crew of *Minx* felt that it was time to head for home. The wind had also decided to change from Westerlies, so plans were made to head West. With the forecast winds it was decided to go to Lyme Regis on the way back. On 30th *Minx* departed from Bucklers Hard to anchor overnight in Studland Bay before heading off the next day to Portland to be in a good position for timing the inshore passage.

The new month dawned, and *Minx* rounded the Bill and started to sail for Lyme, then the wind dropped off and we had to motor the rest of the way. Just after seven in the evening we moored up on one of the seasonal floating pontoons which gave us a noisy and bouncy night but was safe and fine.

Lyme Regis started to give us that "It's nice to be back in the West Country" feeling with mooring fees being half of some Solent experiences! On the 2nd we left Lyme and motored back to Brixham in light airs and a flat sea slowing down at the Ore Stone for a bit of mackerel fishing as we entered Torbay. At seven in the evening *Minx* was along the BYC pontoon having been away for over nearly four weeks. Altogether a great experience especially the camaraderie of the OGA and being in company with many friends met over the years with the OGA.

The fishing in the bay was hopeless so the crew repaired to "Simply Fish" for a pint or two and fish!

Photos by Paul and Penny Jolley

OGA '55 16th – 19th August

The “Rolling Snowball” “gathers moss”. or
a SW Gaffers perspective of a cruise to
OGA 55.

David Patuck

In early August *Susan J* joined the “Boule de Neige”, the Rolling Snowball. At Falmouth YH we were greeted by Piers, from *Carlotta* recently returned from Duarnenez and loosely accreted, as moss, to the “Snowball”! However, it transpired that *Carlota* and *Arianna*, other returnees were joining *Guiding Star*, in Plymouth to watch the international fireworks competition. So, *Susan J* detached herself, for the present, deciding to press on directly to waters fresh, with a very pleasant run to Salcombe. But whilst headed for the moorings the engine stopped! Julie very promptly loosed the anchor in the fairway, full of racing dinghies and just saved us from hitting a very expensive motor yacht, who's crew very kindly allowed us to lie alongside them! The fuel tank had over two gallons left but clearly the sloshing around, getting the mainsail down, “taming the beast” as some crew describe the process! - off Bolt Head, had introduced air. The other tank, although full, needed to be bled through to function. At least we have now replaced the primary filter “at sea”! One improvement might be a rubber bulb in the lines from each tank to aid primary filter bleed. Alternatively, don't run tanks lower than three notches (gallons) on the stick! Then it was onwards for an appointment with the fuel barge before rounding Start Point for Brixham.

In Brixham we found *Minx* on her mooring. But now we were following the Rolling Snowball's What's App which told us they were leaving very early. The harbour master

had directed us to go alongside *Vigilance* from where we then spied Rik and Cilest on *Cine Mare*, another intrepid Duarnenez returnee. *Susan J* now felt part of the gathering moss again!



Susan J alongside the mighty Brixham sailing trawler Vigilance

Like us *Cine Mara* planned a six am start and it was clear that *Minx*, true to her word, had already departed. We spied *Minx* rocketing south from Chisel Bank as we approached the north end of Portland Bill, as per Cunliffe and then onto Weymouth. By now *Cine Mara* was already there and joined by *Minx* so we decided to all raft up with *Gannet* and a very pleasant evening was spent enjoying a homemade cassoulet aboard *Minx* with Paul and Penny.

By the Friday, *Robinetta* had arrived from Alderney, having been in S Brittany en route to Duarnenez. *Minx* was committed to stay over Saturday, for Penny to reflect with friends on past Olympic, game maker, glory. *Cine Mara* and *Susan J* were keen to move on to Poole to sit out the next day of rain promised for Sunday. All this, despite the possible arrival of *Arianna* and *Carlota*, for a potentially OGA funded, curry at the Dorset sailing club. In fact they were both delayed by bad weather in Plymouth, probably with a distinct feeling of déjà-vu from last year's Sou'by Sou' West sail!

A grey sail in company with *Cine Mare*, around St Albans head, had us catching up with *Robinetta*, despite her leisurely lunch at Lulworth Cove. Unfortunately, the tide had swept us past *Cine Mara*, which had passed the chain ferry ahead, then turned too early for South Deep and was stuck hard but, fortunately, on a rising tide. *Susan J* swept past behind the ferry and managed a brief call on Ch16 but could do nothing as she was already being swept past.

Susan J's tidal insertion into the Solent via Hurst Point was spectacular and followed by a hurried, turbulent crossing, avoiding ferries and being swept past Yarmouth. Following an about turn we found that Yarmouth was delightful. Soon after our arrival *Minx* appeared then *Moonbeam*, later to be joined by *Bonita*.



Rounding Start Point

The moss was certainly gathering on the “Snowball” as it rolled towards Cowes.

A rather damp Thursday, saw us sailing to Cowes then motoring up the Medina River, to the Folly Inn, where we rafted alongside the venerable *Witch* with Alistair Randall, our OGA president. We were slightly awed, having never attended a big OGA event but soon registered for sculling, before being whisked down to Cowes for the reception and fascinating Cowes Classic Boat museum. Several interesting craft demonstrate the astounding innovation, in all matters marine, that took place on the IOW during the last 100 years - truly a “university” of marine invention. A search for sustenance was facilitated by meeting Patrick of *Capria*, another Heard, who we had met on Bar Beach in the Helford last year. *Capria* had attended Cardiff’s 55 celebrations and Patrick was traveling alone to run the auction of boat bits, the next day, where we were able to lose some of our redundant bits and acquire four spare wooden blocks for *Susan J*. We adjourned to the Anchor Inn, where excellent fish, chips and beer were consumed.

Friday meant learning to scull with proper long keeled wooden dinghies, then sailing the lug sailed smack skiffs, so much handier than our grp, lug sailed, *Anarth*. David joined Paul and Mike Forward on *Arianna* to help complete the SW Gaffers entry, in the log boat race. Constructed from an innovative “bare hull” kit, our entry “Go West” went really well but in the opposite direction! Then once again, pointed in the right direction it sailed impressively but sadly failed to win.



Julie with Deirdre being tutored in the art of sculling.
Note OGA dinghy in the background

Following the auction and race briefing, rather incomprehensible to some of us “foreigners” we and *Minx* crew joined the *Ivy Green* crew and friends, to wait two hours for what was a most excellent pub meal but at 22:30 it inevitably resulted in some dyspepsia!



Mike Forward and the array of competing sailing logs



Above: racing started! Below: Go West races off in the opposite direction

Saturday, race day, was grey and windy. *Susan J* 's new crew had postponed by 24 hours so we acquired Penny from *Minx*, which had gearbox troubles. We arrived in timely fashion near the start line, with 66 other gaffers of all shapes and sizes. Comfortably passing ahead of *Jolie Brise* on port tack, despite her loud "Starboard" protestations but clear absence of any course alteration, we had identified the start line. This was off the Island Sailing Club, new and old breakwaters, frequent, fast ferry route, turning circle for large ships entering and leaving Southampton Docks and assorted other obstructions in a cross tide! We were still all waiting to hear what the course was to be, so planning was academic! With five hours ahead, we felt comfortable having crossed the line and rounded the first mark. Four hours later we rounded the second, windward, mark, making little progress against the tide, despite, an efficient "tacking machine" evolving with Penny's able assistance.

The rest of the course was completed by 16.40, but over an hour after the allotted time, so along with over 2/3rds of the fleet we were not placed. Only 20 finished within the allocated time, including *Bonita* with her new sails and tactic of sticking to one shore. However, *Susan J* took some comfort in being one of the few (only?) SW gaffers to, at least complete, the



Racing in the Solent, Bonita in the foreground

course. But, *Susan J* did win the treasure hunt! A complimentary water taxi took us to Shepherds Marina in Cowes for a pleasant buffet meal, followed by speeches, prizes and a very loud band, before a late water taxi back to the pontoons at the Folly.

After retrieving our "deflatable" from the shore pontoon (the "flubber" racing on the Friday, didn't happen), we motored to East Cowes where Rosie and Matt now joined ship and, while most other gaffers set off to their home moorings, we spent three days exploring the Solent, reaching as far east as Itchenor, where we said good bye to *Cine Mara*, swam off



The fleet moored at Folly Gate

Osborne House and had a delightful evening at Beaulieu after a brisk tack across Southampton water against the tide and dodging very large container vessels.

Saturday dawned bright and relatively calm, so *Susan J* tackled Portland Bill but a little too soon! She rounded easily enough but was then taken SW rather than to West, eventually making very slow progress westward motoring into swell and headwind, resulting in us reaching Brixham at 23.00 rather than Dartmouth.

Another tidal struggle, despite successfully passing Start Point and as far as Bolt Tail, found us beating directly into waves and wind but, eventually, anchoring at the familiar, passage anchorage of Cawsand, in the dark.

Our final passage, from Plymouth Sound, started as a calm motor sail but by Gull Rock we were gently reaching in smooth water at nearly 4 knots, in 9 knots of wind, surrounded by several pods of dolphins and diving gannets. *Susan J* was nearly home!

After 530 miles, 23 nights aboard, 13 dinners aboard (10 ashore), only 6 non sailing days, a very enjoyable OGA 55 event, was made even more so by being "gathering moss" to our more adventurous "Snowball" delegates en route. Thanks to Tony, Sue and all the National OGA, the Solent gaffers for letting us infiltrate their annual race, all the sponsors for the excellent facilities at the Folly, the Classic Boat Museum, Shepherds at Cowes and the water taxi, Piers for organising the very useful What's App and above all the company and encouragement of all the "gaffers" and their boats.

Photos by David and Julie Patuck

Temps Fetes, Douarnenez 2018

John Crellin

The OGA Rolling Snowball crews arrived off Rozmeur harbour mid afternoon 25th July. We moored up in our allotted berths on trots close to the main quay. This provided a good vantage point to see the larger vessels manoeuvring into the inner harbour. As ever at this event, we were welcomed by the readily available and well organised water taxi with rubbish collection and marine services facilities all at hand.

Ashore the waterfront was lined from end to end by a wide selection of restaurants, bars and cafes plus a row of stalls offering chandlery, flags, artwork and historical information and much more. The harbour quays were home to Fetes HQ bar and restaurant, a large gandstand and more stalls and food outlets plus the main stage and bandstand which provided a wide range selection of live music throughout the event. One night noisy music continued deep into the night!

Back afloat, Graham and Peppy bravely organised a drinks party aboard *Corncockle* and adjacent boats which enabled us all to get together, compare notes and discuss plans for the next few days.

The following day was spent soaking up the atmosphere and a visit to the fascinating maritime museum at Port Rhu on the other side of town with the evening ashore in the quay area.

A series of short and none to serious races was held



More boats on the outer quay photo: John Crellin

the following day and proved an interesting experience. In lieu of any written instructions the details of classes, timings and courses were delivered orally from the bandstand- but only in french !

Thus confusion on the water was widespread and not only amongst the non-french speaking community. In our case, after an abortive attempt to start on the ten minute gun we did achieve a start ten minutes later but looking around the other boats did not look like our allotted class. Anyway we persevered and much to our great surprise found ourselves on the results list with a third place!

Our prize was a rather dangerous looking device for launching water bombs and snowballs at great velocity!

Later in the bar we met up with Martin Goodrich who was on his way back from the Plymouth – La Rochelle race in *Gwenili*

The programme on Saturday featured a special race for the many luggers attending the event. However, the race committee, taking into account the prevailing F5 and strengthening wind wisely decided to cancel due to concerns about the safety of 10 luggers manoeuvring at close quarters. Nevertheless, the boats went out to provide a spectacle of sail in the bay. Charles and I on Theta had managed to arrange berths to sail on the recently rebuilt and restored 60 feet Lowestoft drifter *Gleaner*, which provided a truly memorable sailing experience on the day.



Boats on the outer quay photo: John Crellin

By this time some of the smaller boats, in view of the poor forecast, had moved to alongside berths in the river at Port Rhu. The final day of the Fetes succumbed to high winds and heavy rain which curtailed many of the planned activities. Fortunately though, the rain abated in time for the fireworks which concluded the event and provided a great display well up to the usually high French standards.

Right: Gleaner sailing full and bye !

Below: The mighty Cancaillase

Photos: John Crellin



Our next meeting is the visit to Penpol Boatyard, Sat 13th October
If you haven't booked already contact Don Garman straight away

The final meeting for the season is our Laying up Lunch at the
Royal Western YC, Plymouth 10th November