

South West Gaffers

Promoting Gaff Rig in Devon and Cornwall

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SW Web page:
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 27

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Welcome

Since the last Dogwatch we have gone live on our new South West Gaffers website. You can find it by simply Googling South West Gaffers or go directly using www.oga.org.uk/south-west It should prove useful for informing you of news items during those 3 months intervals between Dogwatch's. If an item involves more than just the South West it will revert to the main OGA site but you can get back easily if you wish by clicking on Areas at the top of the page and then scroll down to South West.

I am sure you will currently be doing your armchair sailing which involves a glass in hand whilst you plan your summer sails. So do remember we are hosting the **"South b'Sou'West"** sail in company with boats coming from the East Coast and Solent areas as well as some from the Bristol Channel. We do hope for a strong presence from our local boats so check the website and book up with Ben Collins as soon as possible. Boats will meet up en route at Weymouth and Plymouth .

At Plymouth boats will gather at Yacht Haven Marina for 28th July to join the Plymouth Classic Boat Rally which we hope will be held there ...*please see note in Forthcoming Events page 9.*

The Brixham Heritage Regatta starts off the South West sailing calendar but for those that really can't make it please come out to join the flotilla of boats which will gather off Plymouth Sound to welcome **Gypsy Moth IV** which will be returning to Plymouth to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Sir Francis Chichester's arrival in 1967 after his circumnavigation.

However, do dress the part. Special designer clothing has been organised by Paul Jolley for South West Gaffers so have a look at a few samples and read all about it in this issue. Paul Jolley is our merchandising man and has negotiated a very good deal for us, see page 8.

The Next Event

**Fitting Out Lunch and Talk "Crossing the Tasman Sea" by
Mike Garlick**

12.30 for 1pm 1st April, Royal Western YC Plymouth

Recent Events

Cornwall Lunch and Talk at Mylor

11th February

By Don Garman

Forty-four members and guests of the South West Gaffers met for lunch at Castaways, Mylor. Then when replete, the group moved across to the nearby excellent



Castaways bristling with happy gaffers

Photo: John Gallagher

facilities of Mylor Yacht Club where the numbers increased to fifty-one ! After a warm welcome by Brian Adams, Club Commodore the meeting started with the presentation of National OGA awards to three of our members by South West President Peter Crook..



Jo Jo receives Cape Horn Trophy from Peter Crook

Photo: Don Garman

The Cape Horn Trophy, a beautifully presented belaying pin from Endeavour II, was presented to Jo Jo Pickering of Penzance. Jo Jo skippered the family gaff cutter *Island Swift* on a 10,000 miles journey from Falmouth to the



Finbar receiving the Alan Hidden Trophy

Photo: Don Garman

Azores, across to Martinique and then back to Falmouth. Her crew were her two boys and her husband, all very inexperienced. Jo Jo had GPS but backed this up using sextant readings. She had sailed as a child but not for the last twenty years and had not skippered a vessel before.

Finbar Pickering, her son was awarded the Alan Hidden Trophy for an outstanding performance by a young person under 25. Finbar sailed with his mother and family across the Atlantic. At the start of the voyage he had very little experience of sailing but showed an intuitive ability making him an invaluable crew member. Being a bit of a night bird and interested in astronomy his favourite watch was 23.00 – 01.00.



Roger Dongray with the Jolie Brise Trophy

Photo: Don Garman

Roger Dongray, a yacht designer from Lostwithiel was the third recipient of awards. He designed a large range of boats including the Cornish Crabber designs for the Coble, Shrimper, Crabber, Yawl and Pilot Cutter and several others including a Golant Ketch. He received the Jolie Brise trophy for his very significant contribution to the development of gaff rigged boat design. Roger follows in the footsteps of the late Ed Burnett, Nigel Irens and Andrew Wolstenholme who have also received this award.

Peter Crook noted that “ three of the eight national trophies were awarded in 2017 to south west sailors, this is a great achievement and says much for the interest in traditionally rigged craft in the region.”

Following the presentations, Jan Pentreath, originally from Mousehole, whose family history includes privateers, smugglers and fisherman, gave a fascinating talk about fishing in Cornwall in the days of sail and oar. The talk covered different methods of fishing including, seining for pilchards, drifting, trawling and crabbing, the design of vessels and their rigs and the life of the fishermen and their communities. Jan explained the factors that brought about changes in fishing practice, for example the reduced frequency of shoals of pilchards around the coast, the introduction of steam and the coming of the railway, which made it possible to get mackerel quickly to London.

The audience learned how the station in Penzance led to the reduction in the fishing economy of Mousehole as Newlyn expanded. The St Ives harbour extended to accommodate over 400 vessels plus many seine boats, which belonged to several companies. Jan also mentioned the significance of punts not only for getting to and from vessels but also for learning basic skills, for courting and getting the catch ashore. Mousehole Mackerel Drivers would be met by the punt out at sea often rowed by a young boy and towed to Newlyn for unloading the catch. Competition from East coast drifters led to fish wars in 1896 in Newlyn, Mousehole and Porthleven, whilst Penzance, with a smaller fishing fleet, welcomed the visiting boats as did many of the young women!

It was interesting to see the times taken for Newlyn vessels to arrive in Scarborough – 70 hours and to understand the significance of the fishing industry in some of the communities where more than 50% of the adults were involved directly in fishing.

The talk was very well illustrated with splendid 19th and early 20th century photographs from Jan’s personal collection.

Steve Lorraine was thanked for his help and suggesting these two venues. The gathering dispersed in time to watch England beat Wales in the Six Nations!

Official Opening of Treluggan Boatyard 11th March

By John Gallagher

In November 2016 Boating World was purchased by Will and Sara Stirling, both keen South West Gaffers. Will continues to run the busy Historic No.1 Covered Yard, Devonport and the plan is to run the newly acquired boatyard to complement this where repairs and maintenance on smaller boats can be carried out as well as running all the other aspects of a large yard. Currently there are some 250 boats there.

Sara is Director of the new yard which is in a former stone quarry and has been a boatyard since the 1970s. She has renamed it Treluggan Boatyard.

To help with reorganising it, some of the boatbuilders from Stirling and Son were transferred and the facilities there are now quite impressive. With extra covered workshops provided by several fine big movable clear reinforced tarpaulin boat sheds, two of which separately housed a Vertue and a Falmouth Quay Punt being

worked on and in the busy large sheds, a Fife was being repaired in one, so as well as a vast array of boats in the yard there was plenty to see. And all looked orderly. Indeed, Sara’s dream of having a vibrant and tidy yard is certainly happening in so far as any yard can be really tidy.



Approach to Treluggan Boatyard along the Lynher

Photo; Sara Stirling



Treluggan Boatyard –with houseboats

Photo: Sara Stirling

The grand opening was arranged and an old friend of Sara's, Tom Cunliffe who came along to do the honours.

An invitation had gone out to all South West Gaffers as well as the boat owners in the yard and by the milling crowds which turned up and the jam packed bar and function rooms over the chandlery shop, it appeared that virtually all came to the event. It seemed like a crowd of around 150 or more that came along.

Tom Cunliffe was on excellent form giving a rousing account of a few of his very many sailing experiences. He rounded off with an intriguing account of Sara's colourful early life in Ireland and beyond.



Old friends, Sara and Tom

Photo: John Gallagher

Sara's daughter Oona, a professional chef produced an endless procession of an array of tasty foods and the drinks flowed well too .

Altogether it proved a most excellent day.

A boat jumble will held here on Saturday 6th May which is already attracting a lot of interest. It is the plan to hold a jumble each year on the first Saturday after the May bank holiday.



Their website :

www.trelugganboatyard.co.uk

A fascinated audience, riveted by Tom's talk

Photo: John Gallagher

Sailing Adventures from our Members

The Best Laid Plans ...or Home the Hard Way !

By David Craddock

If careful passage planning was a guarantee of a successful outcome then *Constance* and I would have been in Plymouth in no time. As with Burns's poem, it didn't quite work out like that!

I had originally planned to keep *Constance* on Bangor until the completion of the Titanic project on which I am working and sail her home the long way round in June next year. But having been in commission for nearly 18 months, she is going to need more tlc than I would, with my less frequent visits, be able to give her. So I took the decision, perhaps lulled by the settled late summer weather we were enjoying in September (at least in the balmy south), to bring her home where I could get at her before the winter set in.

The first opportunity with sufficient time available would be the beginning of October and, given that I would be on my own, various permutations of route were planned so that passages could be made mostly in daylight hours. My objective was to get to Milford Haven from which Bideford is a manageable distance, leaving a short road trip to South Devon that was not going to cost the earth. I had decided that I was not going to attempt the long passage round Lands End to Falmouth on my own in October.

Heavy rain on the night of October 1st did not bode well, but still the high pressure was just holding and a chance that I could at least begin the journey in settled weather. We left Bangor Marina in light drizzle at first light on Sunday morning bound for Ardglass, with the options of either staying on the Irish coast to Malahide, with a short crossing to Holyhead or making a direct passage from Ardglass. As expected, the visibility wasn't great but there was no difficulty picking up the buoys inside the Copelands and the tide sluiced us through at good 7.5 knots.

South Rock buoy was abeam at 11.10 with a hint of breeze from the north and the visibility closing in rapidly. Several pairs of gannets swooping low and a small pod of dolphins heading north were the only things out there. With no sign of Stangford buoy passed less than half a mile away, we slow down and make a cautious approach towards my Ardglass waypoint. Fog does strange things to perception of distance and direction – seabirds on the water become small boats and dan buoys uncharted beacons. Slowly we edge forward,



Ardglass in fog

Photo: David Craddock

plotting carefully and eyes peeled. I had been into Ardglass before and expected to pick up the starboard hand beacon at Phennick Point, which eventually ghosted into view less than 100m on my bow.

Secure in Ardglass it was time to think about the next move. From the evening shipping forecast it was clear that the high is slipping away and allowing Atlantic systems back in. Wind SW 4/5, perhaps 6 – a good angle for a passage to Holyhead, so decision made to leave early in the morning, which we do at a few minutes before 7 into a dramatic dawn sky, good visibility and about 10kts of breeze from the SW. I set the stays'l and, expecting the breeze to pick up during the morning, then 1 reef in the main.

We settle down to some perfect sailing conditions though the wind, as we get offshore, has more south in it than I would like and we are only making 4 knots under sail alone with the wind and sea beginning to build. I decide to motor sail to make better speed and allow a reasonable arrival in Holyhead, still some 55 miles away. I needed a mean course of 153 (T). Even allowing for the tide setting us north of the track for the first 6 hours, the wind was resolutely SSW and with leeway, the best COG I could do was 135 (T). By 10.00 the breeze was touching 20kts with a lively sea.

The forecast from Belfast Coastguard gave SW 5-7; I certainly had the 5 but not the SW reaching breeze originally advertised. This promised to be a long slog and I had to begin to think about alternatives if the wind continued to increase. But the sun came out and lit an emerald sea with that sparkling translucence

that you can never quite capture on camera.

Time for a second reef. With her deep and heavy hull, *Constance* lies well when hove-to with just enough revs to let her foot gently into what was now quite a steep sea. Back on course again and she is more comfortable, taking the seas in her stride despite the odd one that sends a cascade of Irish Sea across the deck, thoroughly testing my oilskins. The autohelm, assisted with a loop of shock cord round the tiller, is behaving well and I go below for some chocolate and to plot our position.

The next few minutes make my mind up for me between the options of carrying on or putting in to Port St Mary at the southern end of the Isle of Man. We come off a wave heavily and I grab the fiddle on the chart table, which pulls away from the bulkhead bringing with it the switch panel and mounted GPS. Though I had a back-up GPS (and good old fashioned DR), I could not afford to lose the electrics, so I wedged everything back in place and decided it was time to bear away for a position a mile or two south of Chicken Rock Light House. Having already considered a passage to Port St Mary in my early planning, I had done the homework and for the next 2 hours we sailed fast with the tide still setting to the north west and the wind now around 25 knots with a peak, according to my little hand held anemometer, of 31.1 which is quite enough for me.



Constance alongside in Port St Mary

Photo: David Craddock

Chicken Rock was abeam by 13.30 and we ran on for a little before I hove to again and dropped the main rather than run down under main and stays'l in a rolling following sea. By 15.15 we were in the lee of Albert Pier and went to anchor south of Gansey Point as the sailing directions advise. I called harbour control, who invited me to come on in and lay alongside the harbour wall

much to my relief as despite the lee, it was far from a sheltered anchorage with the wind a steady force 6 and forecast to increase.

Ian and John from the harbour office could not have been more helpful and went out of their way to make us welcome. A little later, with their help with lines etc, we moved to the drying inner harbour, a chance to stow the sails properly and take stock.

The Isle of Man Met Office at Ronaldsway Airport provides a very efficient and regularly updated forecast and is one of the few places where you can still talk to a forecaster. One look told me that we were not going very far in the next few days with winds continuously between 7 and 9. I had well and truly missed my window and had to contemplate leaving the boat on the island till the weather improved and I had a sufficient gap to get over and resume the trip; that would be at least a week. I wasn't too happy about leaving her in a drying harbour but the harbour guys assured me they would keep an eye on her. The alternative was to take her to Douglas where once inside the tide gate in the marina she would be safe.

By morning, the wind had dropped to a manageable 3 to 4 from the west and I decided, though it was taking me further from my objective, I would take her round to Douglas as soon as she floated on the afternoon tide and catch the ferry to Heysham. But it was not to be. Having cleared the harbour and secured the decks we settled down to motor the short distance clear of the race off Langness Point and round the corner towards Douglas. The sea was still lively and flecked with white horses under alternating cloud and bright sunlight, which made the blue polyprop line between two floats lying in my path near impossible to see. With a distinct clunk against our steel hull, I knew we had picked up something but I was not at all certain what – did I have a line round the prop or was I fast to some lobster pots or both? Engine in neutral. Position check. We're on a lee shore with less than a mile of sea-room. I had a large scale plot going on the laptop and I could see straight away by rate of drift that we were not fast to any ground tackle. I gingerly tried the engine first astern, then ahead and it looked as if the prop was free though there was about 4 metres of line with an inflatable float attached visible at the bottom of the rudder which I later discovered had been dragged through by the propellor and wound round the lower pintle. To continue was inviting further trouble so no choice but to anchor.

We had 20 metres of water under us and lumpy sea so I veered 50 metres of cable and she soon brought up snubbing hard but holding. Being unable to raise the harbour control, I called Liverpool Coastguard on Ch 16

to advise them of situation – I was not in immediate danger but they weren't taking any chances and requested Port St Mary Trent Class lifeboat to come out to us, which they did in very short order.



Buoy around the rudder! Photo: David Craddock

As a long time Offshore Member of RNLI I had read hundreds of accounts of the coxwain's skill in manoeuvring these large powerful craft in difficult conditions; now I was on the receiving end. I suggested buoying and abandoning the anchor and cable because I did not believe I would manage to get it up in the conditions, but he was happy to wait and offered to put two guys, a father and son team, on board to help which was achieved deftly after two approaches with nothing more than a glancing bump on the lifeboat's fenders. They too struggled and in the end we agreed to cut the lanyard in the chain locker, buoy it and let it go. A tow was secured and we were on our way back to Port St Mary accompanied by the IRB, who took over the tow once in the harbour and nudged us alongside the inner harbour wall once more. It seems I was destined to stay in Port St Mary after all and so prepared the boat, having recovered the line and floats at low tide, for a stay alongside, which could last several days. With spring tides approaching, it also tested the extent of my rope locker to the full.

It was a ten days before the right combination of time and weather allowed me to get back and continue passage to Holyhead, which I had now accepted as the best I would be able to do. She would have to come home by road from there. Once again I prepared *Constance* for sea, re-stowing the anchor and cable that had been generously recovered during my absence and moved her to the outer harbour wall so that we could

make an early departure in the morning. I wanted to gain maximum advantage of quieter conditions before a forecast increase from the south, veering southwest.

We left Port St Mary at 06.15 on 14th October, a full hour before dawn and proceeded warily until well clear of Carrick Bay. It was completely calm with a near full moon and broken cloud; I felt this can't last but made good speed under power alone. By daylight the Calf of Man and Chicken Rock light were visible to the northwest with the rest of the island obscured by low cloud; there was nothing else in sight. Drizzle sets in and a breeze begins to fill in from just east of south, slowly building, and the sea with it, over the next two hours. I continue motoring but our speed is dropping as *Constance* labours a little in the rising sea. I set the main with 2 reefs and snug her down to motor-sail on port tack with the east going tide under my lee bow. I needed to shape my course to be up-tide of the Skerries north of Holyhead by the time it runs to the West at upwards of 3 knots.

By noon rain is reducing visibility with the wind now up to a good force 5 and slowly starting to veer as forecast so that I can very nearly steer the course I want on starboard tack. I am comfortably to the east of the track and the combination of tide and veering breeze brings Skerries right ahead at 3 miles by 15.30. Within a further 20 minutes we are in the strongest tide and put a short clearing tack in to bring the light house abeam to port with a speed over the ground of 8.5 knots. Despite the wind against tide, the sea has a curious slick with overfalls here and there but no great disturbance.

We tack back onto starboard and can lay our course for Holyhead breakwater, now out of the tidal stream which falls off dramatically once inside a line between Skerries and South Stack off the NW corner of Anglesey. We make our way into Holyhead Marina – it is as far as we are going to go this season, but at least we are 100 miles closer to home. Within a few days, *Constance* is loaded onto a transporter and in a matter of hours is back in South Devon.

Though not the ending I had planned, the whole trip, including our 15 month stay in Bangor, has been a great experience and at times huge fun. We take away abiding memories of some great occasions among the many friends we have made in Northern Ireland – not least two Classic Sails at Carrickfergus, some poems and pints and the rally that I was proud to organise to mark the exact centenary of the launch of Titanic on 31st May. I hope we'll get back there one day soon and maybe even complete the voyage by sea!

**This article was originally published by the NI OGA Gaffer's Jaw*

Miscellaneous bits

South West Gaffers Clothing

By Paul Jolley

A new selection of clothing has been organised which we hope will prove popular. You will be able to have a look at a selection of these at the Fitting Out Lunch. But below is what to expect.

We thought a flexible but distinctive South West range would be agreeable to cover most requirements. So you can have a tee shirt printed with the small logo on the chest as below and a large logo on the back.

Cost £7.25 plus post and packaging.



An embroidered version of the logo is also available for a range of other garments :

Polo shirts	£11-00
Sweatshirts	£13-25
Full zip fleece	£18-95
Rugby shirt (long or short sleeve)	£23-45

Your boat name can be added to the above for an extra £2-00.

Sizes are S, M, L, XL in both men's and women's fittings and these items are available in blue, red or bottle green and can be ordered direct from: -

Lavender Mob, 1 Union Lane, Brixham, TQ5 8DY. Tel: - 01803 854822.

P&P will be added to each order.

Any problems, don't hesitate to contact me on 07711 532886



The embroidered logo for Minx

Forthcoming Events

Fitting Out Lunch

1st April

This is the next event which will be held in the Royal Western Yacht Club , Queen Anne's Battery, Plymouth on Saturday **1st April at 12.30 for lunch at 1 pm.**

Mike Garlick will be the speaker talking about a spirited trip "Crossing the Tasman Sea" the tale of a yacht delivery from Australia to New Zealand. Mike is well known throughout the OGA as organiser of the OGA National Photography Competition so you can look forward to a feast of fine images of these distant parts during the talk.

Brixham Heritage Sailing Regatta

27th-28th May

This wonderful event is the true start of the Classic sailing season along the South West Coast. Sailing boats of many shapes and sizes sail together on Sunday 28th May. With the preceding day offering jovial conviviality along the free Heritage pontoon, traditional fish pie supper and sea shanties at Brixham Yacht Club. A superb firework display is planned to light up the harbour to round off the evening.

There are very few restrictions on participating boats, simply that they be of heritage design, or a classic yacht, a dinghy or working boat over 30 years old. Last year included the impressive three masted lugger Grayhound which currently works cargoes between the south coast and the continent. The other boats included the Brixham sailing trawlers, smaller working boats, a historic lifeboat and Bermudan and junk rigs, as well as some beautiful dinghies.

Have a look at Heritage website for more details and entry forms. Don't hesitate to get in touch for further details. www.brixhamheritagesailing.org.uk

The following events which will have happened before the next Dogwatch but go the website www.oga.ul/south-west to get the full calendar of events.

Falmouth Classics 16 to 18th June

Helford River Rally 19 to 21st June

**** Also you may have heard rumours about problems with Plymouth Classic Boat Rally 28th to 31st July**

Sadly, Sutton Harbour which has generously hosted this Rally for the last 10 years find themselves unable to do so this year. Unfortunately we received this news only in mid December and we have only just been able to get a suitable venue for it at Yachthaven, Turnchapel. The South b' Sou West fleet plan to join Plymouth Classics and will certainly be berthed there. But we are quite hopeful that we can sort the financial arrangements to secure the whole of the Classics Rally there also however, we are awaiting final confirmation.

The Rally actually started at Turnchapel in 1987, 30 years ago as a fund raising venture for St Lukes Hospice. So it's a return to it roots.

The Classics website has been fairly dormant but as soon as all is secure it will come alive and all will be revealed.

Publications

A lot of the information we hold on our members, their own and other boats, and our trophies is available in the form of a Year Book, listing members names, addresses and boats; a Boat Register with details (including photos where available) of members' and others' boats; and a Trophy Register listing (again with photos) our splendid trophies and showing which boats have won them.

An order form for the various publications is enclosed - the booklets will be printed on demand so will be up-to-date when you receive them.