

## Gaffers Tales Award

The Gaffers Tales was instigated by the late Jon Wainwright, and awarded annually in his memory. It is judged by the Gaffers Log editor, and awarded 'to an OGA member for the best contribution to Gaffers Log during the current year'.

### 2019 Winner: Steve Mitchell (SOL)

"As usual, it was a challenge for your Editor to select just one from her shortlist for this trophy. Many members from all Areas contribute articles which ensures that Gaffers Log is lively and varied, a big thank you goes to everyone!

In 2019, the trophy has been awarded to intrepid trailer sailor Steve Mitchell from the Solent Area who trailed his new boat to the Aldeburgh Rally, joining the East Coast Gaffers there. The very readable report appeared in the November 2019 issue of Gaffers Log, p.36. There is also a great video published on the East Coast website."

### 2018 winner: Mick Kneale, 'Skian', Isle of Man



There were several contenders in the shortlist for this trophy. It's great that many members from all Areas contribute articles to keep the Gaffers Log lively and varied, a big thank you goes to everyone from the Editor!

After careful consideration, the trophy in 2018 has been awarded to a Northern Ireland member based on the Isle of Man whose story 'Rebuilding a soggy wreck: Skian' appeared in the July 2018 Gaffers Log, p.52. Concise and interesting, the author describes his retirement plan for a 'simply rigged small boat that could be sailed alone or short-handed'. The boat is a rather neglected early Memory 19 and it's transformation is described in a clear, concise, personal and very readable style, ending with the hope that 'true Memory 19 adherents, proper wooden boat and gaff purists will forgive me!' for what he has done with the rig.

## 2017 winner: Nick Ward, 'Swift'



New member, Nick, contributed a lively view of his experiences of gaffer sailing in an entertaining, readable style maintaining interest throughout. This account really shows what the OGA is all about, camaraderie and cruising in company! Like many other award-winning members this year, Nick took part in the very successful 'Sou' by Sou'West Cruise.

## 2016 winner: Paul Baker, Solent Area



With only three issues now, there's still plenty of good material to browse through in order to select a winner for this trophy. The larger format has allowed more lengthy pieces to be published, sometimes in two parts. I am also trying to link articles in the Log with online reports, blogs, extracts from longer contributions and boats in the online Boat Register. This year has again seen receipt of a few 'unsolicited' contributions, including one from Bill Gale in Australia, published on the website and in the November issue of the Log

(p.39). Sadly, it is the only response to Andrew Wolstenholme's excellent article about modern gaffers, first published in Watercraft Magazine and featured in the March issue of Gaffers Log. Please don't wait to be asked, just send in your articles!

As more Members take to cruising, there have been several interesting logs submitted which have reached the shortlist. By their nature, these are longer and have sometimes been split over more than one issue. On the shortlist were two trans-Atlantic passages by Solent members Terry Coles in 'Mahler' (March p.37) and Paul Baker in 'Zeb' (July p.40, Nov. p.42 and online), an extract from a circumnavigation of Ireland by Alison Cable in 'Robinetta' (July p.29) and a birthday cruise to the Netherlands by Brian & Lorna Hammett (Dec. 15 p.25 & March p.24).

It's encouraging that I never find difficulty in filling the 'NOG' note, the spot for a 'New Old Gaffer' to contribute. This year it has included quests for tales of family boats and new family members at the Yarmouth Gaffers Regatta. NOG notes from Liam Newnham on his trip to Brest (Nov. p.12) and Paul Eedle (Nov. p.40) introducing us to 'Guiding Star' also reached the shortlist.

There are several other contributions that were certainly on the 'long list', including some Area Secretary's reports and other Race reports from around the Areas. It is always a challenge to award just one prize - after all, without the wide range of contributions, there

wouldn't be a Log at all, but - there is a name in the envelope and it is . . . 'What it takes to become an Old Gaffer: the delivery passage of 'Zeb' by Paul Baker, Solent Area published in two parts [and on the website](#), this long report keeps us interested throughout, from the first conversations about finding the boat, to bringing her back across the Atlantic and, mid-Atlantic, meeting up with a couple of lads in a rowing boat!

## 2015 winner: Derek Biddle, Solent Area

Once again, there has been a steady flow of articles for the Gaffers Log. There has also been an increase in the number of 'unsolicited' contributions your Editor receives, which is great news. Don't wait to be asked, just send in your articles. The winning 'tale' this year is one of those, which just popped into my Inbox one day in July. However, it was not a foregone conclusion as to who would win the Gaffers Tales award in 2015.

The range of contributions was wide, not always tales, but cruising logs, maintenance or technical tips and experiences as well as race reports and practical ideas. It's particularly good to hear from our new members, sharing reasons for joining the OGA. New Trailer Section member, Leslie Aldous, was a shortlisted 'tale' for 2015, writing about his trip to Morbihan. Good articles don't need to be long! Another shortlisted contribution was the well-crafted piece capturing the essence of East Coast skies and salt marsh in around 300 words and atmospheric photos from Solent member, Ian MacGillivray. Amongst the cruising tales, I picked out Mary Gibbs' two part log of her passage from the East Coast to North Wales in 'Molly'. Young East Coast member, Josh Masters, was also on the shortlist with his illustrated reports on the restoration of 'Annelis'.

But who's name is in the envelope as the winner for 2015? That email in July arrived from Derek Biddle, Solent member for many years. It included 'Tales of Gypsy Mermaid' describing fellowship, adventuring and hospitality on a miniature tallship. Find it in Gaffers Log, September 2015, p.32-33.

## 2014 winners: John Laband and Jacqui Furneaux, Bristol Channel Area

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>'Working Yacht 1', Bristol Channel Area</b></p> <p><i>'Working Yacht 1' is a 55ft ferry boat built by her skipper, John Laband, during the 1990s. Often sailed single-handed, on this voyage she had a crew of two, and was awarded the BGA 'Hidden Challenge' trophy, 2013.</i></p> <p>It was early May, and we'd anchored off the white mark at Minchhead to wait for the tide and go ashore to collect firewood which I'd spotted on a previous trip. It was sunny and calm but the light breeze 'on the nose' (which we all know about in the Bristol Channel) meant we were motoring towards Bournemouth along the N Devon coast to have a look at the latest addition to the harbour infrastructure, Damien Hirst's sculpture, Verity.</p> <p>We were on the way to Lundy to await good weather to make passage to the Isles of Scilly, intending to join the OGA Round Britain Challenge (RBC) fleet, planning to be anchored off St Mary's in calm weather after a perfect trip down the English Channel. Well, it wasn't quite like that.</p> <p>May is usually a good time to get going (if there is a 'good time' in these waters) but not this year. We were off Lundy for a week, as low after low battered the island. I've dived from this anchorage before but the solution seems to be a CQR anchor, 4m of heavy chain then nylon 3-strand to the boat. Some people like this because the stretch in the nylon helps prevent snubbing back to the anchor, which can easily jerk it free. I've started sending a second anchor down the line with a large shackle to ensure easy sliding and, with its own line attached to the lifting eye, it's not too difficult a job to raise and lower. Well worth the peace of mind it imparts. Initially I sent it halfway down, to help increase the catenary, but after seeing it hurled out of the water repeatedly like an Orca with a seal, I have taken to sending it to the bottom where it rests against the chain and seems to do a good job helping to hold everything on the bottom.</p> <p>We had to be confident in the anchor because there was no alternative but to abandon the boat and explore the island, and excellent tavern. We had to collect water, carry it down the hill with the aid of a pole between two people</p> | <p><b>Windswept anchorage in the lee of Lundy Island</b><br/>Swallows taking shelter<br/>Photos: John Laband</p> <p><b>"we heard those never to be forgotten words of the forecast. NW, gale force 10, imminent"</b></p> <p><small>If you are an OGA member you can find out more about 'Working Yacht 1' online at the OGA Boat Register.<br/><a href="http://www.oga.org.uk/boat/working-yacht-1">www.oga.org.uk/boat/working-yacht-1</a></small></p> <p>and slinging the 25l can from the pole. It was amazing to see how well protected the anchorage was from the gale force westerlies and how rough it was around the island. There was a sizeable swell in the anchorage, especially on the ebb, and this made landing and launching the dinghy very interesting, especially with the water on board and two adults.</p> <p>On researching this problem there seemed to be a lot of different methods all with their advocates, which usually means there isn't a universal method, so we developed our own. On the way in to the beach and before getting entangled in the surf, drop an anchor (perhaps 10kg) with a light floating line attached. The rest of this line which has to be quite long, say 50m, has to pay out with no tangling. One way to make this happen, we found, is to stuff it all in a bag, although I expect a reel would be best. Pay out the line from the bow and tow the boat backwards towards the beach. As you reach the breaking surf, hold the boat with the bows towards the waves and it's an easy job to pay out the line and keep everything under control until you reach the beach. Take the line up the beach beyond the high tide line and secure it there. When you come to launch the dinghy, the line is ready to be used to help pull the boat through the surf towards the anchor which lies in calm water. Stuffing the line back into the bag as you go has prevented tangles so far. We used an 8mm polyprop line which was quite springy and bright yellow and had been discarded because it was unmanageable, perfect for this job though.</p> <p>At last we set sail for Padstow, in a NW F5-7, but unable to make this heading as it was too fine in the conditions, so reluctantly turned back to Lundy having sailed 13nm. The sail back was very fast, exhilarating sailing at 7-8knts, with 9-10 at times.</p> <p>Back in the anchorage we heard those never to be forgotten words of the forecast. NW, gale force 10, imminent. Why we had so little warning I'll never know, but it's a feature of this area that weather forecasting is often unreliable, I surmise that it's because the weather systems are often forming overhead and being unpredictable about their intentions.</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Well, without all the contributors from youngsters and those more mature OGA members, the Gaffers Log would make a pretty boring read! Click on the 'spread' above to read the winning article, 2014 as a PDF.

I've enjoyed receiving all the contributions, not always tales, and ranging from the fascinating, illustrated, technical

tips by Julian Cable to racing and cruising reports from members around the Areas and further afield. There was an invaluable guide for anyone thinking about 'going foreign' in a



trailer sailer by David and Sue Pennison. Tessa Hodgkinson shared engaging reflections on the early days of Swallows and Amazons on the East Coast and Viv Head contributed his musings on evening sails in the Bristol Channel. There was a lively piece from Nick Beck, skipper of 'Amelie Rose', competing in the St. George's Trophy, and I could mention more . . .

After re-reading many of the Gaffers Log contributions, the 2014 Gaffers Tales is awarded to John Laband and Jacqui Furneaux for their gripping article, full of practical tips, published in the June Log. It tells the tale of being caught in a Force 10 gale off Lundy, interspersing practical tips with what was happening as the winds increased and critical decisions had to be made.

Thank you to everyone for your contributions, keep up the good work, and remember that good illustrations always add to the tale!

Beverley Daley-Yates (Editor: Log and online)

---

## 2013 winner: Royston Raymond, South West Area



As with every year stories have arrived on the editor's desk which have merited inclusion in the Gaffers Log. To use the description 'tales' for all of them would be inappropriate. Some have been 'logs' in a story format, some have reflected historical interest in the OGA and some are simply a good yarn based on the author's experience. Royston's winning 'Tale', from the Gaffers Log, June 2013, ['The start of something good'](#) may be found on 'Sailing by', illustrated with

the photo above.

This year has been no exception. Alison and Julian Cable of the East Coast produced an excellent piece entitled 'The East Coast Race – now and then'. Although recounting the changes in the race over the years rather than an out and out 'tale' it was still an interesting read. Similarly Tim Magennis of Dublin Bay wrote a story around a new trophy presented to the area called 'The Leinster Plate'. Although about the trophy it recounted the history of RMS Leinster, after which the trophy is named, which was torpedoed during the closing days of the Great War with a huge loss of life. David Grainger of Bristol Channel Area wrote a wonderful piece about a gaffer called 'Grey Dawn' which he had known in his younger days and encountered again much later. A wonderful yarn starting with the evocative lines 'Slowly she came creeping into sight around the headland'.

But after much consideration the award goes to a tale entitled 'The start of something good' recounting the author's introduction to gaffering on the island of Alderney. Simply a thumping good story to read on a winter's night when it's blowing a force 8 outside.