

South West Gaffers

Promoting Gaff Rig Sailing in
Devon and Cornwall

South West Branch of the



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OGA Web Site: www.oqa.org.uk

The Dog Watch

For the Sea Dogs of Devon and Cornwall

Issue 40

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Welcome

There's a hint of a return to the "new normality" from these weird times but many of us are still classed as vulnerable to the Covid Plague we need to continue precautions. However, normal life should restart on a distant elusive date.

So, in this Dog Watch you will find tales of Lockdown Blues, goings on whilst in house detention, challenges of boat maintenance and a tale of an unusual voyage. Also there is a little piece of history included for you to contemplate.

You will note the Poop Deck is awash with information. Your committee which met via Zoom has been trying ways to keep you interested. Paul and Penny Jolley's series of quizzes has been head scratching at times and now Paul will be using Zoom to give an illustrated talk.

For those who have now managed to launch you will note a WhatsApp group has been started to help communication. Read on as there is plenty more.

But the committee needs new blood as there will be one or two standing down at the next AGM. We are all volunteers who try to plan activities for you all so do please come forward and get involved.

Our Calendar of would be Events is on the last page and you will note there are some events which still might happen and we will definitely inform you in good time if they do. We are pretty sure Brixham will !

On the real sailing highlight side two of our members Will and Sara Stirling were awarded the prestigious Classic Boat "Classic Sailor" 2020 award. Will, who seems to have a passion for cold waters sailing also gained a prize in the OGA Photography Competition. The prize photo shown here he took from the top of a small island. Moments later after a yell from an alert crew watcher he was scrambling down and into the dinghy as a hungry polar bear appeared.

Keep safe John G

NB we need



Next Meeting ?

Probably the Brixham Heritage Rally

18th—19th September

Your Committee

Paul Jolley

Normally it sits around a table of steaming food and glasses of frothy ale whilst it considers weighty matters of state many involving SW Gaffers. But please rest assured that your committee have been beavering away, some in more sober environments, to come up with ways to keep SWG and the OGA alive during these rather strange times.

Following our first ever online committee meeting using Zoom it was decided that in the present absence of any SWG events we would start a WhatsApp group so that members can keep in touch when at sea and visiting harbours and marinas.

The concept is that if you put to sea publish your intentions and activity on the WhatsApp group and then others in the vicinity may be able to get in touch even if it is just a wave or a shout at this stage before sensible social interaction can take place.

If you wish to join then please text me (07711 532886) your name and number so that you can join the group. The title of the group is "South West Gaffers at Sea" with its objective being for SWGaffers to communicate at sea whilst sailing.

Special thanks must go to David Bewick for his input into the new OGA website. Due to much of his work and critical comments the new site should be much more user friendly for those of us who occasionally struggle with IT when it does not always seem to do what it says on the tin!

Four boxes – and, no, it's not a line from a two Ronnie's sketch!

David Bewick

When I took over as Secretary of SW Gaffers in 2015, I inherited four large boxes of documents from my predecessor. As far as I could tell, without going through the contents page-by-page, these boxes contained paper copies of committee meetings, AGMs and some programmes and results of races, etc. all going back to "the year dot". The boxes have been safely tucked up in my barn ever since and I can honestly say that I have never had cause to go back and open any of them. However, the question remains about what should be done with them, now (incidentally, every document that I have ever created during my time as Secretary has been electronic and I guess all of them would fit quite comfortably on a single CD).

One very real practical issue is that, if we plan to keep them, the four boxes of documents clearly need to be stored somewhere and I know I will no longer have space to be able to do this in a few months time. I am sure that the documents in these boxes reflect much of the rich history of SW Gaffers (and of Devon Gaffers) and that they could be abstracted into a story that many members would find interesting. At the same time, they have no value whatsoever whilst they sit in four cardboard boxes with no one even knowing for sure what is even there.

To realise any value from these documents requires someone to at least go through them all and to index them, so we know what is there. A valuable next step would be to go through the documents, to separate the "wheat from the chaff" and to write up our story for posterity. We might then be in a position to dispose of the originals without fear of losing anything of real value.

Let me be clear, Dear Reader, there is no way that I am going to do this and the harsh reality is that, left to me, these old documents will one day end up in the recycling bin. I have been wondering, however, if there is anyone in our midst who fancies themselves and as a bit of an Archivist and/or Historian who might be motivated to take on the tasks outlined above for the benefit of posterity. So if you are looking for a nice self-contained little office project, especially in these strange times of lock-down and social distancing, please let me know. I might just be able to help with the source material.

Evening Talks

Paul Jolley

Bristol Channel area have pioneered a series of talks to members using the Zoom platform which is proving popular. The speaker is able to use a PowerPoint presentation in the normal way.

We are going to try this with me giving a talk on the origins and story of *Minx*. This will be an updated talk that was given at Brixham Yacht Club as part of their winter lecture series. I am working on the mechanics of this assisted by David Bewick for what will be a pilot event. If it goes well then please do come forward with a story to tell that you think might interest our membership, not necessarily related to sailing but about a member's interest or activity. We will try this **on Wed 17th June at 18.30 !!**

Southwest Gaffers Merchandise

Paul Jolley

We have a selection of quality garments available for the new season from Labels & Monograms of Brixham, as listed below.

<i>T shirt-printed logo on front</i>	£7.60
<i>Polo shirt *</i>	£10.86
<i>Sweatshirt *</i>	£13.25
<i>Full zip fleece *</i>	£19.65
<i>Cotton rugby shirt *</i>	£27.95
<i>Crew jacket *</i>	£29.50

(New for 2020 and will be shown at fitting out lunch)

* All except the T shirts are embroidered with South West



Gaffers logo and can include your boat name if required. To order telephone 01803 854822. L&M and pay by BACS or Paypal. If you have any difficulties please contact me. The prices include VAT. Standard colours are dark blue or red but you can choose any colour you wish.

Have you seen the new website ?

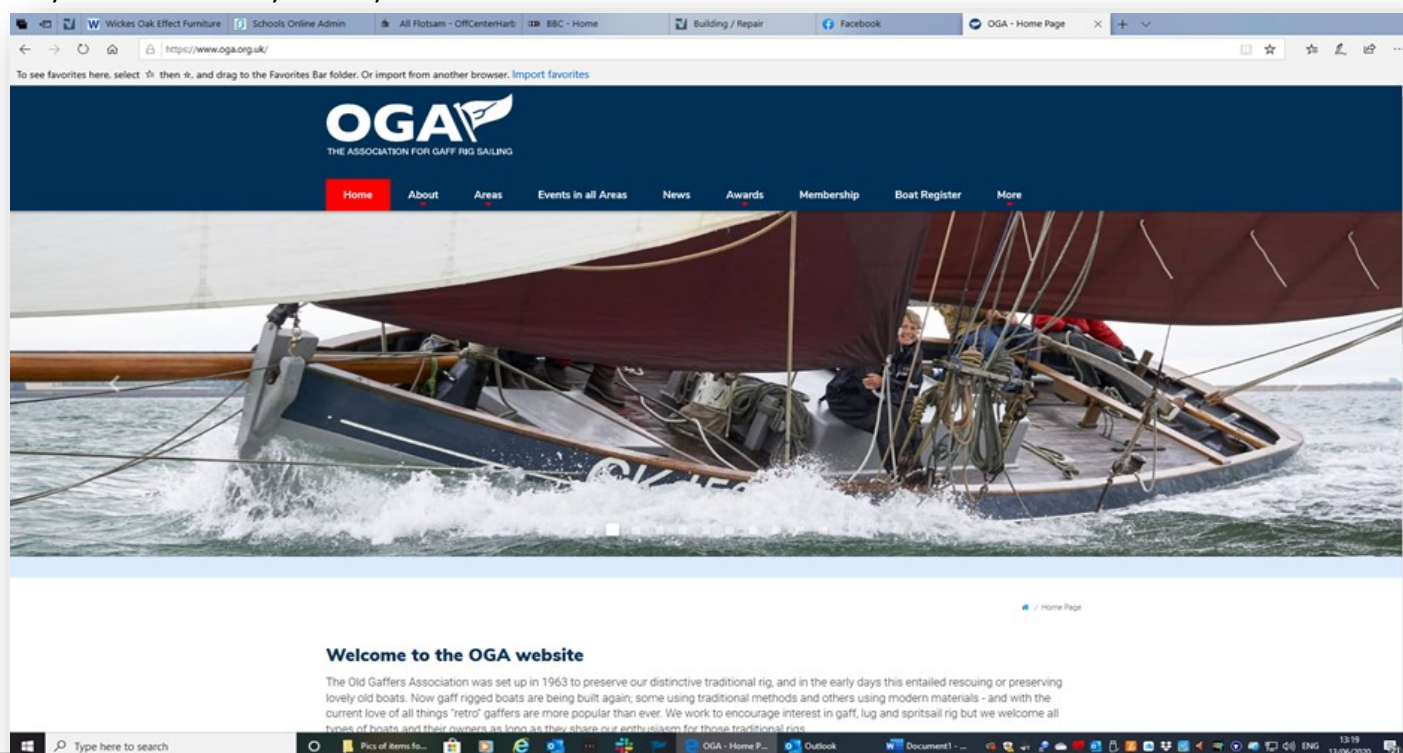
David Bewick

There has been a need to update the technology that underpins the OGA website for some time, now. I am pleased to say that this has been done and the new site has recently gone "live". The new site has the same URL (<https://www.oga.org.uk/>) as the old one so any links you have stored on your devices will still work. The new site has a very modern look and feel with some nice scrolling pictures on the home page. Functionally, it is quite similar to the old site with the South West Gaffers Area pages operating very much as a "site within a site" as they always did and with their content solely under our control.

One of the new features that I think could be really useful on the new site is the ability to "subscribe" to different parts of it. If you do this, you will be notified by email of any new content on those parts of the site. This would be particularly useful if, for example, the instructions for an event had been updated.

You will see the subscription to OGA E-News option towards the bottom of the home page. All you need to do is to enter your email address and then invoke the forgotten password functionality to set your own password. I would strongly recommend that you use this functionality. I hope we will soon have a Crew Register on the site to put skippers and potential crew members in contact with each other.

If you have any news items or short articles that you think would interest our members, I would be very pleased to put them up on the Area pages. They can still go into Dogwatch when the next edition is published.



Classic Boat Awards for SW Gaffers

Sara and Will Stirling have written to say :

Thank you very much indeed to those who so kindly voted for us.

We were nominated for Classic Boaters of the Year in the 2020 Classic Boat Awards and are delighted that we have been awarded this distinction.

This is a super accolade for which we are very grateful. Whilst both yards, South Yard, Devonport and Treluggan Marina are currently closed due to the Virus, it didn't take long for the whole team to reflect that we quite like work after all!

We are looking forward to getting back in action at the coal face as soon as we can.

And when global health and ice permits, escaping to East Greenland again later in the summer.

Thank you for your support.

Will and Sara's Gaff Cutter Integrity in an icefield off East Greenland.

photo: Will Stirling



Musings from our members

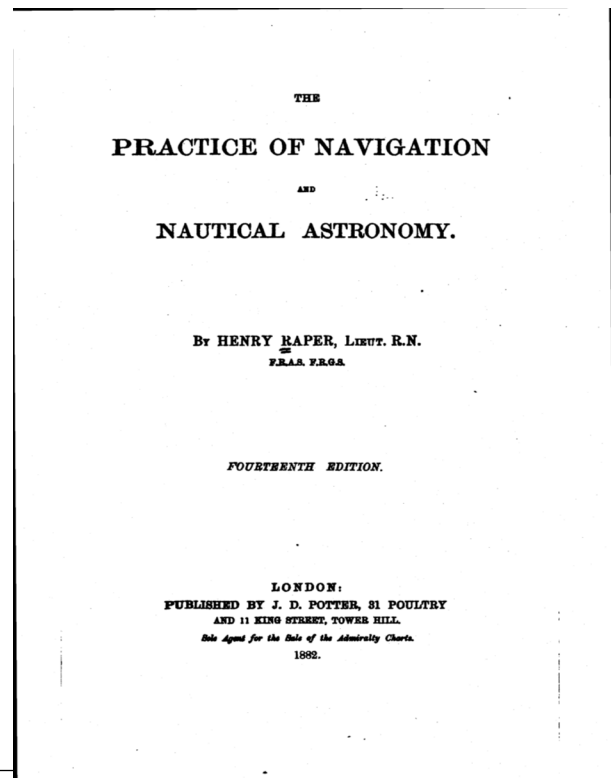
A piece of nautical history

Chris Danby

This find became my lockdown project. The following is from a book first published in 1840 and is the fourteenth edition published in 1882 and issued to all Naval Ships.

I thought it just the thing for other locked down gaffers who eagerly await their Dogwatch.

There are some fascinating bits in this book such as the correct way to mount and wind your chronometer, the original compass rose markings etc.



the compass would be in the way of the boom, is directed to be prepared for the reception of the standard compass; or mixed metal stanchions may be used, for the support of a copper binnacle head. These instructions are given in general terms; the particular fitting as well as the position, forward or aft, in the vessel, being left to the Superintendent of the Compass Department.

II. THE LOG AND GLASSES.

1. *The Log.*

259. The log consists of the *log-ship* and *line*. The log-ship is a thin wooden quadrant, of about five inches radius; the circular edge is loaded with lead, to make it float upright, and at each end is a hole. The inner end of the log-line is fastened to a reel, the other is rove through the log-ship and knotted; and a piece of about eight inches of the same line is spliced into it at this distance from the log-ship, having at the other end a peg of wood, or bone, which, when the log is hove, is pressed firmly into the unoccupied hole.

At ten or twelve fathoms from the log-ship a bit of buntin rag is placed, to mark off a sufficient quantity of line, called *stray-line*, to let the log go clear of the ship before the time is counted.

260. The log-line is divided into equal portions, called *knots*, at each of which a bit of string, with the number of knots upon it, is put through the strands.

The length of a knot depends on the number of seconds which the glasses measure, and is thus determined:

The No. of feet in 1 knot : No. of feet in 1 mile :: No. of seconds of the glass : 3600 (the No. of seconds in an hour).

The nautical mile being about 6080 feet, we have, for the glass of 30 seconds, the knot = $\frac{6080 \times 30}{3600} = 50.7$ feet, or 50 feet 8 inches; for the glass of 28 seconds, the knot = $\frac{6080 \times 28}{3600} = 47.3$ inches, or 47 feet 4 inches; and so for any other glass.

261. The knot is supposed to be divided into eight equal parts, or fathoms (which they are very nearly). In the Royal Navy the even fathoms only are reckoned, for the convenience of adding up the distance on the log-board.*

262. The log-line should be repeatedly examined, by comparing each knot with the distance between the nails, which are (or should be) placed on the deck for this purpose, at the proper distance. The line should be wet whenever it is required thus to remeasure it, or to verify the marks.

* It would, of course, be more systematic to divide the knot or mile into tenths, as in the Traverse Table, instead of eighths; but single tenths and fathoms may be used for each other without sensible error.

When it is found that the line is erroneous, it is known that the distance run (by account) must be in error. Rules have been given for correcting the distance run in such cases, but as the line stretches unequally, in different parts, the only certain way is to measure the quantity run out in a measured time. See No. 260.

263. As the manner of heaving the log must be learned at sea, it is only necessary to remark, for reference, that the line is to be faked in the hand, not coiled; that the log-ship is to be thrown out well to leeward to clear the eddies near the wake, and in such a manner that it may enter the water perpendicularly, and not fall flat upon it; and that before a heavy sea the line should be paid out rapidly when the stern is rising, but when the stern is falling as this motion slacks the line, the reel should be retarded.

[2.] *Manney's Log.*

264. This instrument shews the distance actually gone by the ship through the water, by means of the revolutions of a fly towed astern, which are registered on a dial-plate. This log is highly approved in practice; and it is much to be desired that the patentee could manufacture, at a moderate price, an instrument which affords a method, at once so simple and so accurate, of measuring a ship's way, and which could not fail to come into extensive, if not general, use.

[3.] *The Ground Log.*

265. When the water is shoal, and the set of the tides or current much affected by the irregularity of the channel, or other causes; and when, at the same time, either the ship is altogether out of sight of land, or the shore presents no distinct objects by which to fix her position, recourse may be had to the *ground log*. This is a small lead, with a line divided like the log-line; the lead remaining fixed at the bottom, the line exhibits the effect of the combined motion of the ship through the water, and that of the water itself, or the current; and therefore the course (by compass) and distance made good are obtained at once.*

2. *The Glasses.*

266. The long glass runs out in 30^s or in 28^s; the short glass runs out in half the time of the long one.

When the ship goes more than five knots, the short glass is used, and the number of knots shewn is doubled.

267. The sand-glasses should frequently be examined by a seconds watch, as in damp weather they are often retarded, and sometimes hang altogether. One end is stopped with a cork, which is taken out to dry the sand, or to change its quantity.

* In numerous passages up and down the river Plate, where the above circumstances occur, made by H.M.S. Tyne, under the command of Captain Gordon Thomas Falcon, in 1818-19-20, we made constant use of this log.

LOCK DOWN BLUES

Mike Forwood

If ever there was a year that started off with such a bang for the OGA and South West Gaffers in particular, that year has to be 2020.

Who could have thought way back in the first weeks of January when many of us gathered in Bristol for the AGM, masterminded in big part by our esteemed President and in numbers never seen before, that our lives would take such a twist. It was a shot in the arm for the South West, who in their wildest dreams could never have envisaged that the AGM and its festivities could be wrestled away from the Capitol.



And we were promised all manner of new events in the calendar !

Our President was invited to Arnside for a mini conference on the lovely Morecombe bay Prawners.

These had developed a specialised fishing technique in the nineteenth century of dashing out on the tide first thing in the morning, dredging for shrimps and boiling them on the way back making sure they beached right in to dispatch the catch on the overnight train to London.

Brixham Regatta was to our first sailing event followed closely by Falmouth Classics and the Helford Rally. Spaces for these were filling up fast by February. Together with the Queen Anne's Battery event in Plymouth later in the month there would have been little time between these events to beetle on back to base to chuck the washing in the machine, victual up again particularly with some alcohol of course and head off again.

Then what about those events abroad. Brest eventually succumbed to President Macron's swift lockdown and those events up the coast Calais, Ostend, Dunkerque and Fecamp never got off the planning stage. East Coast and

Solent Gaffers would, I'm sure would have gone there in droves.

Maybe something will arise in Brittany at short notice because our Continental friends will surely demand their August exodus.

Were you like me looking forward to charting your way into Charleston harbour that has been out of bounds to vessels of our ilk since it was purchased by two brothers from the Council some forty years ago for filming purposes. Imagine their surprise when the deal was found to include a row of cottages that seemed to have been overlooked by the Local Authority or so the story goes.

So, what is left of our disjointed sailing season. Fowey Classics possibly unless anyone has heard differently. Mevagissey but it's anchorage only. But a gathering of us all at anchor could be an option quaffing ale and being very noisy looking forward to adventures ahead. Rather like a convoy setting off the New World methinks.

Thinking of the New World there is always the Mayflower Festival to possibly salvage our summer. Is there a slender possibility that if there are any Mayflower celebrations they might lead to a mini Plymouth Classics gathering in Sutton Harbour ?

NB

After attempts to restart Plymouth Classics in Sutton Harbour failed we were later offered the possibility of holding a mini event there when the Mayflower, (The Matthew) came into port there. They decided it would improve the ambience to have some old and replica boats there as well.

They had decided they would extend their pontoons to create an events facility pending planning permission where we could be berthed. But that is at the far end on the harbour near the Old Custom House square. That's where it is quite noisy with late the opening bars.

So, there is a hurdle of the planners to jump and also the problem that the main Mayflower celebrations have been postponed. So, whether they might still wish us to go is highly questionable.

Ed.

Falmouth Classics and Helford Rally

Don Garman

It is Thursday 11th June and the Falmouth Classics organising team should be welcoming upwards of 200 participating vessels, but they are not because of Covid 19. If they were the Haven team of volunteers would be experiencing rain and easterly gusts up to 37 knots and no doubt a few challenges in getting vessels berthed alongside safely. I anticipate they would have had to ask several of the larger vessels to anchor in the inner harbour pending a reduction in wind strength and a change of direction. No doubt an alternative venue to the Haven pontoons for the Thursday night's reception would have been required to enjoy the Choaks' pasty, the Dynamite Valley beer and Rum and Shrub. Looking ahead there is some rain scheduled for Friday and Saturday with winds gusting up to 28 knots on Friday but then reducing and providing a much lower wind strength and drier weather for Sunday which would have ensured the parades were able to take place.

The 2020 event may well have been memorable for the rain and strong winds but will be remembered for the year that was not.

A small invited event in September to assist the Falmouth Harbour Commissioners in commemorating their 150th anniversary but the Commissioners not surprisingly decided to transfer the commemorative year from September 2020 to September 2021 so Classics will plan to help them mark this miles stone during the 2021 Classics (11 – 13 June) and not this September.

You may not able to participate in the Classics but you can experience some of the jollity at a virtual Falmouth International Shanty Festival via: [www.facebook.com/falmouthinternationalseashanty festival/live](https://www.facebook.com/falmouthinternationalseashantyfestival/live) from 18.00 on 12th June. A three- hour event with 30 groups.

The organising team hope that you already have your vessel afloat or will soon do so and that you have a good sailing summer. The team look forward to seeing you all next June and will be posting the revised website during the Autumn. The Royal Navy have already been in touch to make provisional arrangements for their involvement in 2021!

And what of the Helford Rally. The first miss since it was first organised in 2014. Probably not the best of forecasts but winds from a generally westerly direction with a chance of showers, so manageable and light westerlies for those returning east on Wednesday. "Mary Ritchie" was launched last Saturday and for the first time in 28 years leaked but the ingress is now reducing. Considerably too long facing the drying east winds and experiencing high temperatures. Don's raking out of dried putty and some caulking and putting up probably enabled the bilge pump to cope adequately although a large pump was on board just in case. For the first time for several years we are in good company on the mooring with "Dawn" a Falmouth built yawl dating from 1905, Ben Harris' "Alva, another gaffer and a classic Bermudan all together in a group. Like a scene from yesteryear.

If you are visiting the Helford during the summer do let me know. Perhaps we can arrange an impromptu BBQ.



Racing in Carrick Roads 2019

*Photos: Max Wilcox
Mayn Creative*

Parade of Sail, Falmouth Classics 2019



Lockdown not Knocked down

Paul Jolley

This is the first time I have been in lockdown although once just clear of the Needles heading for Kinsale many years ago the boat was knocked down, not an experience I want to repeat with my now more sedate gaffer sailing!

I celebrated my recent birthday on the first day of the current lockdown and received a fine Pugwash card complete with "yellow duster", for some reason I am known as Pugwash in the family.



The yellow duster of course featured in one of the Quarantine Quizzes that I hope kept some of you amused during the last few weeks. Penny and I had just started the serious bits of re-fit on Minx, painted the boot top and then lockdown arrived. The nearest I got to a bit of nautical work was to cut an ex-Mayblossom spar into two pieces and fix some handrails on steps down into our back garden. There as always has been plenty of work to do in house and garden and Penny has quite a varied crop coming up in the vegetable garden and green house. Penny has been part of a group producing scrubs for Torbay NHS and I have been keeping an eye on a vulnerable neighbour.



Penny sewing scrubs



My magnificent tram collection at one end of the tramway

Major development work has been taking place on my model tramway with buildings and background as the next phase.

The boat yard at Galampton Creek on the Dart opened as soon as the current restrictions were moderately relaxed, so we are now working every day to get Minx ready for sea. This will take a few weeks due to the work need to be done which includes fitting a new gear box due to be delivered today. Even when we are finished there is a huge log jam of boats all to be launched when ready and tide allows.

Out of interest Labels and Monograms of Brixham who produce our SWG clothing have converted to making approved acrylic visors for the NHS sponsored by local business which is just one of the many ways people have adapted and helped each other.

It has been very strange at times sitting on our balcony overlooking Lyme Bay without a boat in sight. Penny and I hope to see some of you soon out on the water and are envious of those already sailing.

Photos: Paul Jolley..... Pugwash card created by Penny

In search of a port

Paul Jolley

We had been hankering to sail the Douro River and visit Oporto. There is the well known train and boat tour up the Douro from Oporto to Pinhao returning by boat which in itself is very good. The question to be answered was could you hire your own boat on the river? After much searching on the internet we found the only boat yard upstream from Oporto which was prepared to do bare boat charter. Having spent a few days in Oporto, proudly carrying our Certificado Internacional de Operadores de Embarcacoes de Recrios (ICCs) we set out on a three hour train journey up the Douro valley to the remote station at Ferradosa. The only buildings in the area being a wine warehouse, a restaurant and the boat yard with its full fleet of six boats. When booking our boat we had the choice of a sailing boat or a cruiser. As we would be essentially boating on a river and sometimes in deep gorges we opted for the motor boat. What you actually get is a McWester 26 with the mast taken off for you!

We were warned that a thorough briefing was essential, particularly for navigating some of the locks including the second highest in Europe at 43m. Briefing was a bit rushed as the boat yard owner had to get the train to go and collect his new boat, we had to get victuals for our boat *Fluvina* and the local restaurant stopped serving at 19:00. Then followed the most hair-raising part of our adventure when the boat yard cleaner took us in her car about thirty minutes inland to the local village up the most incredibly winding mountain roads. Back at the yard we left our kit in the office, not yet having set foot on the boat although we knew it was the second on the pontoon and hurried along to the restaurant that had agreed to stay open for us. Of course the meal was washed down with a suitable local wine followed by some excellent port.

Returning to the boat yard the first challenge was that the main gate was locked. However, with a little ingenuity and ex Fire Brigade experience we unlocked the gate and went to the office to pick up our kit. It was locked! So, it's the second boat along and off we go by the light of our mobile phones. Penny was suitably nominated to be first aboard *Fluvina*, find the master switch and put some lights on to make life easier for Paul (seemed logical at the time!) We found sleeping bags and pillows and settled down for the night and slept like logs. The next morning the yard assistant came on board to check fuel and give a short briefing on the main and secondary outboard engines. All good to go to join others at an upstream restaurant for lunch where the yard owner, joined by family and friends was going to show off his new boat. Our instructions were not to exceed 2,500 revs for comfort and fuel

efficiency, so off we go heading upstream towards the Spanish border. By now we were learning that the pace of life in very rural Portugal is much slower than Devon and above all a good sense of humour and flexibility was required. Another lesson learnt fast was that English seemed like an unknown language but fortunately most of the time there were people who spoke French.

About an hour out from the yard one of their boats came at great speed to tell us that due to a funeral, the restaurant was closing early and we were to forget any speed restrictions and go flat out to get there for lunch. We did and had a very amiable lunch in company with the yard staff and another couple who were doing a skippered day trip. As the afternoon party was gathering we quietly withdrew and set off upstream to our first scheduled stopover on a remote pontoon where we enjoyed a very peaceful evening and some excellent local wine.

As the morning sun rose it was good to see a traditional river boat net fishing. Then it was time to set off for our first experience of going through one of the locks. They are huge in excess of 40m high and you have to pre-book on line and are allocated a specific time. The very efficient the lock keeper saw us coming, although a little early and radioed us to come straight in. We were the only boat and had to moor onto hydraulic bollards that rise with you. The gates were shut and twenty minutes later the upstream gates opened, the lights changed to green and off we headed to Barca D'Alva by the Spanish border. *Fluvina* was kitted out with all plastic glasses etc. so our priority there was to get a couple of proper wine glasses. We cornered the market as the village shop had two, albeit both different.



Fluvina entering the gorge

photo : nice tourist on Chartwell



Concentration and some apprehension photo: Penny Jolley

Around midday we set off downstream on the hottest day of our trip to moor up outside Pochino. Having walked into the village we were in desperate need of a cold beer then recovered we sought out a place to eat. This tiny village had only one small restaurant, absolutely fantastic with just one sitting for a fixed price menu. The place filled up with seasonal grape pickers and provided plenty of local atmosphere.

Going back to *Fluvina's* pontoon proved interesting in the dark with what appeared to be a myriad of little paths leading down to the river, even the Guarda Nacional cruised by interested in what these two strange foreigners were up to! The following morning at the allotted time we entered the nearby lock to head off back to Ferradosa.

Calling into our small pontoon base for the night we refilled with water and fuel and had our briefing for going on the downstream leg of our journey. In the morning we set off for our allotted time at the lock a few kilometres downstream. Calling up the lock on Ch14 we were told to wait as *Chartwell* was coming down and we were to follow her in. The name seemed familiar and soon *Spirit of Chartwell* came around the corner with a party of Canadians on board. This was, of course, the vessel on which HM The Queen was taken down river during the Jubilee Thames River Pageant, the subtle difference being that it was a hot Portuguese autumn and not so cold and wet as the pageant had been in London.

Following *Chartwell* into the Ecluse de Valeria, which is the second highest lock in Europe, produced the rather

unnerving prospect of mooring up with the large party of Canadians watching, fascinated by these two Old Gaffers from England in their tiny little boat. A good fist was made of mooring and the upside of it was that the party on board took some photographs that were subsequently emailed to us. There then followed an interesting conversation with the Captain of *Chartwell* who explained that at the moment the flow from the hydro-electric turbine in the adjacent barrage was too great and he had asked for the flow to be reduced before we left the lock. He briefed us that we were to go first taking a sharp turn to starboard at full speed through the turbulent water outside the lock. We both thought this a little strange until the First Officer came to tell us the Captain's English was not that good and what he really meant was that they (*Chartwell*) will go first; this seemed more logical.

We left the lock when instructed by the lockkeeper and followed *Chartwell* through some fast flowing turbulent water and soon our accompanying vessel was out of sight. This section of the Douro is one way in a deep narrow gorge with a seven kilometre one-way system which twists and winds, has a strong flow and with no room for any boats to safely pass. You cannot see very far along the river so every 15mins you broadcast "Fluvina navigating" on Ch14 to let other vessels and lock keepers know you are under way. Arriving at Pinhao we had instructions to contact the dockmaster to get the key code for the pontoon area.



In the lock with *Spirit of Chartwell* photo : nice tourist on *Chartwell*

Coming alongside the public ponton was fraught by fishermen with no intention of moving when requested. Eventually we persuaded them to retrieve their fishing lines and rods rather than have them run over. With the gate code we then moved on to the more sheltered and quieter pontoons to spend the night.

Pinhao is a delightful town and is where most of the boat and train trips from Oporto terminate and so is well provided with good bars and restaurants. As usual walking a few blocks back from the river front and railway station the small bars and good restaurants are easy to find. In the early evening we had tour of one of Taylor's Quintas to see grapes being mashed and taken through the process of producing port followed by tasting three of their best products. we then set off to find a restaurant that was a bit off the beaten track but with an excellent menu and fine wines. The next morning we set off on our final downstream leg to the lock at Regua where we were to turn around and return upstream to a pontoon in a creek just off the main river at Tedo where we were to phone the local restaurant for the pontoon gate code. There was a complete absence of anyone who spoke any French or English so with dictionary in hand Penny eventually got the message through and one of the waitresses came down to tell us that no one that they could contact had the code! There was a new pontoon on the main river, so we moored up and Paul then walked up the restaurant to see what was on offer and book a table. Very disappointing, this was the first time we had moored near a road and the offerings were all of the nasty burger variety. Back at the pontoon Penny declared we could not safely stay here as a trip boat had just gone upstream and the effect of the wash on both the pontoon and our little plastic boat was a serious issue and could lead to boat damage let alone throwing us about. A quick decision was made to go back upstream to Pinhao where we scrapped in just before it got dark and found an excellent waterside restaurant for the remainder of the evening.

The next morning it was time to return upstream through the big lock to end our cruising adventure at Ferradosa where we would spend our final night. Entering the one-way gorge system going upstream at the allotted time it was extraordinary to find that we were the only boat and had a seven kilometre section of the Douro to ourselves, obviously still occasionally transmitting on CH14 for safety's sake. A few hours later approaching the lock we were welcomed by the lockkeeper and entered for our final lift. We sadly navigated the last few kilometres back to Ferradosa. A

plunge in the pool, a few beers and a meal at the restaurant finished off our adventure and we had our final night aboard *Fluvina* before getting the morning train back to Oporto and then off back to Bristol and home. One night at home and then we were up early and it seemed strange after leaving *Fluvina* less than 24 hours previously to be catching the tide on *Minx* to get up to Dittisham and then Galmpton Creek for crane out and winter refit.

On reflection we had fantastic trip on *Fluvina* with beautiful scenery and as the only bare boat charter on the river were welcomed by the locals who were intrigued by our adventures despite limited repartee. The most remarkable thing was the emptiness of the river and riverbanks. All the major quintas and port producers own the land so access to the riverside is virtually impossible except for a few villages that are quite a distance apart. No vast marinas and no queues for locks as experienced on inland waterways here in the U.K.



Minx replica Morecombe Bay Prawner to return home to

Photo : John Gallagher

Active AIS ?

David Patuck

When our Heard 28 gaff cutter, "Susan J" came into our care it had all manner of top of the range, mainly Raymarine, electronics, fitted some 15 years previously. Also quite a lot of other redundant units and wiring, that had been replaced over her 27 year life but not been removed! By the end of our first season, we were pleasantly surprised that everything, including the radar on shore power, was functional, if a little slow and clunky and didn't really warrant replacing.

One of our projects this winter was attempting to install "active" AIS. The passive AIS 250 device, we had shows nearby vessels on the aged C120 Raymarine plotter (MFD) but "Susan J", herself, remained invisible. After a North Sea crossing in poor visibility aboard the gaff yawl "Bonita" in 2016, I felt that a transmitting, AIS would be useful, in shipping lanes and fog. It is also useful for crew and family to see how a cruise is progressing, using a telephone app, such as *marinetraffic.com*.

A winter of research on the internet, deciphering various forums and online manuals, found that the newer Raymarine AIS 700 unit would "talk to" the old C120 MFD using the same NMEA 1800 at 38,000 baud as does the AIS 250. Furthermore the "splitter" to allow it to use the same masthead aerial was part of the package. The caveat was that if there were a lot of targets the C120 wouldn't cope. More of a Solent problem than South West!

The wiring was straight forward, just disconnecting the old unit and connecting the various coloured wires to the multi plug, to a chocolate box strip, in a weather proof box. So far so good, all the correct status lights came on but "Susan J" appeared ashore in Penryn. After launching and sailing to the Helford River, we were still in Penryn! An inexpensive SWR meter, designed for CB but covering the marine VHF band (156 to 162 MHz) as well, indicated reflected waves greater than 3.1 to 1. The cables conducted, did not short and the connectors were in good condition. The only thing we couldn't check was the aerial and connector at the top of her mast.

The riggers had been up twice, to check the rig, replace the steaming /deck light and replace the frayed jib halyard. On discussion with them, they had observed some slight corrosion, when removing the Windex and fitting a cheek block for a pig stick (and dressing overall!).

This probably explained why, unlike other yachts,



Susan J, creaming through the waters. Photo: Miranda Delmar-Morgan

increasingly since acquiring her, "Susan J" has needed to be within hailing distance of the Harbour Master, to get any response! We have been reassured that, because we could hear other vessels and the Coastguard, all was well. En route to our mooring we tried our second ever "radio check" with Nare Point NCI, who, after a mobile telephone call, were very helpful and able to confirm a rather weak but readable signal over just one mile in plain sight on low power but no AIS.

After further confusing enquiries regarding an aerial suitable for AIS as well as VHF, we found that a newer version of the aerial we had with wind indicator, as Julie already missed the old one, would suffice. With the new aerial fitted we now had a SWR (standing wave reflection) reading of 1.4 to 1, which is supposed to be OK. Unfortunately, we were still stuck ashore at Penryn according to the AIS! We set off for Brittany anyway and were not plagued by fog until Brest.

By now I had rigged up my much repaired and elderly laptop aboard and was able to interrogate the AIS 700 via an USB lead. All was fine except there were no transmissions, even though the status led's were correct.

I had installed the dedicated GPS aerial on the taff rail, to join the other two, which I daren't disconnect but I suspect, in at least one case, is redundant. In doing so the 50 ohm cable had to be cut to feed through various apertures forward to the new AIS700. I had purchased some gold plated connectors and eventually, in Brest, discovered that the connection was intermittent, I suspect they needed to be soldered, after all. After various reconnections I resorted to the humble worked

“chocolate box” and some insulating tape and it has worked ever since.



Fitting the new aerial

Jake from Riggers UK, Penryn

Photo: David Patuck

We also now have a new, relatively inexpensive ICOM VHF/DSC wireless, with built in GPS, as a back up. It has all the same features as the aged, separate DSC and VHF boxes, it replaces. It takes up much less space but despite the new aerial, few people seem to hear us, but we can hear much more.

As we returned from Brittany, The AIS appeared to track our position and we continued to pick up larger ships if they were less than 3 miles away. If we ever upgrade our MFD, the new AIS 700 will connect seamlessly to it, with a few more functions.

Having been rather dismissive of radar as a bit “over the top” for a small gaffer, our recent experience off Plymouth confirms that in fog, it is actually more useful than AIS. Despite it’s age, it was able to track three targets simultaneously, two of which clearly did not transmit AIS information and probably didn’t have passive AIS either, as they passed within 0.2 NM at 7-8 knots, despite our sound signals!

Book Review: *Longitude* by Dava Sobel.

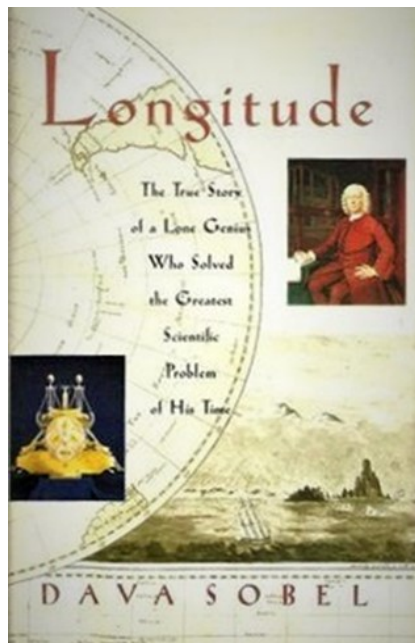
David Bewick

It is unusual for me not to have a book “on the go” but, I must admit, I have been doing a lot more reading than usual in these times of lock-down. With the benefit of hindsight, I realise I was very lucky to “win” a Waterstones book voucher at an RNLI charity auction: probably the last event we attended before we were confined to barracks. You know the sort of thing – you pay over the odds for something that you don’t really want as it is all for a good cause. Anyway, it gave me the opportunity to order a few books that had been on my reading list for a while. One of them was Dava Sobel’s, *Longitude*.

These days, it is very easy to take for granted that we can fix our position within a metre or two, anywhere on the planet, using our chart plotters, GPSs or even our mobile phones. It is also easy to forget that it was not always thus. When we were a nation of explorers, position fixing of any kind at sea was always a challenge and measuring longitude was essentially impossible. After many well-documented and costly failures of navigation at sea, the British Parliament, in 1714, offered a prize equivalent to a King’s ransom (£20,000) for anyone who could provide a “Practical and Useful” means to solve the longitude problem at sea. This sparked a struggle that lasted many years between the astronomers of the day who favoured an approach based on lunar sightings and the clock makers who favoured

accurate measurements of the time difference between a vessel and a baseline meridian. You probably know that the clock makers were eventually able to produce chronometers that were sufficiently accurate to allow practical measurements of longitude on board. John Harrison was the man who was able to make the necessary step changes in clock design to enable this. He eventually received his prize from the Longitude Board as an old man in 1773.

The story of the man, his clocks and his struggle to be recognised is told in this book. It covers what could be a pretty dry tale, but it does so in a very engaging way,



charting John Harrison’s struggle against the establishment through decades of political intrigues, warfare, academic back-biting, scientific revolution and economic upheaval.

If you haven’t read it, I would recommend it.

South West Programme of Events 2020

January 10 th – 12 th	OGA - AGM Bristol	contact: Colin Stroud secretary@oga.org.uk
February 8 th	Cornwall Winter meeting to <i>Pellew</i> Falmouth Pilot Cutter followed by lunch	Rhoda Mary Heritage Yard, Truro contact: Don Garman cornwall@southwestgaffers.org.uk
February 26 th	Informal gathering and meal	Duke of Cornwall Hotel contact: John G editor@southwestgaffers.org.uk
April 18 th	Fitting Out Lunch and talk on <i>Lynher</i> , Tamar barge, by Barbara Bridgeman	Duke of Cornwall Hotel contact: David Bewick secretary@southwestgaffers.org.uk contact: brixhamheritageregatta.uk
May 22 nd –24 th	Brixham Heritage Sailing Regatta *	contact: falmouthclassics.org.uk
June 12 th -14 th	Falmouth Classics *	
June 15 th -18 ^h Y.C. contact: Don	Iford River Rally Garman	Helford River S.C. / Port Navas cornwall@southwestgaffers.org.uk
June 29 th - 1 st July	s Festival of ally and Race) contact: Rob Brown	Battery, Plymouth robbrown@southwestgaffers.org.uk
July 3 rd -5 th	Sea, Salts and Sail *	Mousehole www.seasalts.co.uk
July 28 th -31 st	Fowey Classics *	contact: www.foweyclassics.com
August 14 th -16 th	Dittisham Rally *	contact: Gil Hayward gilbert.hayward@btinternet.com
August ? tbc	Dartmouth Regatta—Gaffer Races *	contact: www.dartmouthregatta.co.uk
August 30 th	Mayflower 400 Events *	Dartmouth contact: Paul Jolley
September 10-14 th ? tbc	Plymouth Classics *	Sutton Harbour * contact: John Gallagher editor@southwestgaffers.org
September 18-19 th	Brixham Heritage Rally *	contact: brixhamheritageregatta.uk
September 18-20 th	Charlestown Classics *	contact : Jess on jess@charlestownharbour.com
November tbc	Laying Up Lunch and AGM	Plymouth

* these events are not organised by South West Gaffers but we publicise and fully support them