

South West Gaffers

Promoting Gaff Rig Sailing in
Devon and Cornwall

South West Branch of the



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The Dog Watch

For the Sea Dogs of Devon and Cornwall

Issue 41

September 2020

Welcome

In the earlier gloom, from the varied array of restrictions it seemed that with just about everything cancelled we were unlikely to have any sailing get togethers at all. But over the summer we did have some lovely weather and reading the tales reported here you will see that determination and occasional tenacity resulted in some good times.

Brixham was the only organised event to take place and despite the easterlies causing problems the event was greatly enjoyed by those who made it there. Otherwise there were a series of spontaneous events governed by the weather which worked out well as you will read here. Also I have included an idyllic trip to the Scillies made last year as a nostalgic reminder of normality.

Otherwise those lockdown projects just kept going but with some very useful conclusions.

Sutton Harbour gave us a glimmer of hope that Plymouth Classics could be restarted. You will see how far we have reached with this and whilst we hope for a positive outcome there is still much to discuss.

Sadly you will note that our first winter event has been cancelled. The visit planned by Don Garman to Charlestown with lunch.

We Gaffers are a sociable lot and the committee are very conscious that sociability has been thwarted during this strange year. So do read the Poop Deck commentary and you will see we are trying to bring you together in other ways.

You will see that our normal Laying Up Lunch and AGM arrangements are not feasible but as usual we still need "new blood" in the form of keen volunteers to help shape and plan for the future. Contact any of us on the committee if you are interested and wish to know more.

Normality seems even further distant now but as a number of us must admit to being of the older generation we should remain vigilant to avoid the plague.

Keep safe John G



NB we still need

Next Meeting - AGM

In cyberspace above Plymouth via Zoom

14th November

The State of Play

Paul Jolley - president

- We have tried to keep the area “alive” during lockdown with some Zoom talks and quizzes that were designed to be answered and then researched to complete. The feedback from members that I have met both in harbour and online is that they were well received. There will be a Christmas quiz with a prize based on the honesty of members marking their own papers!

- The informal get together in Fowey organised by Martin and Jan on *Roxanne* was a great initiative and those that made it had a good get together at the yacht club. It was really good to see a non-committee members organising an impromptu event.

- The determined, either set out or got to Brixham Heritage Rally which became an extended event with SWG boats meeting up at Brixham, Salcombe and Plymouth Sound. Well done to all who set out and made the various get togethers. The SWG at Sea app enabled boats to keep in touch and keep up. We did suffer badly from strong easterly winds and a larger than normal spring tide. This produced very strong tidal surges, particularly in Brixham where *Roxanne* had a couple of mooring warps part and had a minor contretemps with *Pilgrim*. *Minx* also suffered with excessive strain on the cockpit quarter posts, a parted warp and on the advice of a friendly trawlerman was sent out to his swinging mooring which was like a different world. The moral of this story is if an alongside mooring is getting difficult get out to a swinging mooring as soon as you can. Next years rally will be planned for neap tides in case the “beastly easterly” strikes again.

- We hope to continue our series of Zoom talks with the plan being to have these on a monthly basis during the winter, we already have two volunteers to kick this off and would welcome members to “tell a story” for about 25mins. It does not necessarily have to be totally related to sailing. It is amazing when you talk to members what their varied backgrounds have to offer in terms of interest.

- Last year at The Bridge Restaurant in Plymouth Yacht Haven we had a record attendance for the AGM which I think lasted about five minutes! But the lunch and social chat lasted much longer and was enjoyed by all.

There will be some virtual awards at our SWG AGM, We are still working on these. David is organising the AGM with the all challenges it poses this year so please see his

comments below.

- I must quickly add that I have taken over the OGA merchandising role which has proved not so easy during lockdown and current restrictions. I think I have found a new and better value flag supplier. The boat plaques arrangement will remain the same. The garment/embroidery side has not proved so easy as due to the fact that there are very few “events” the embroiders are doing other jobs to keep their heads above water. Our SWG suppliers, L&M of Brixham should hopefully give me more detail before the next “Log” is published.

If members have any ideas to improve keeping “live” during restrictions please let a committee member know.

David Bewick - secretary

In the last edition of Dog Watch, I made a plea for someone to take on the stewardship of the “four boxes” of paper documents that I had inherited as Secretary (but never even opened). I made this plea more in hope than expectation, but I was delighted that Elspeth Macfarlane offered to give the documents a good home and to act as our Archivist. She might be able to extract the “wheat from the chaff” and write up our history for posterity. Many thanks, Elspeth.

We normally have all our major events listed in the calendar in good time. However, this year, with all the uncertainty over the Covid-19 pandemic, we have not scheduled the Area AGM. As you know, we normally hold this in early November but it is clear that we will not be able to hold our normal face-to-face meeting, then. At our (virtual) committee meeting last week, we agreed that we would hold the **AGM by Zoom on 14th November**. I will be circulating the agenda and other details of the meeting in the near future but please put the date in your diary. Whilst on the subject of AGMs, we have heard from “HQ” that the plans to hold the 2021 OGA AGM in Newcastle have been put on hold and that this meeting, too, will be a virtual affair. I am afraid that those of you that were looking forward to a wild night out “on the toon” will have to wait for another year.

As Paul mentioned we plan to hold further talks by Zoom and we now have a licence for the software, so we will not be restricted to 30 minutes, anymore. If you have a story to tell, and it does not have to be about sailing, please let me know and I will add you to the schedule.

Recent Events

Brixham Heritage Rally 2020

18th—19th Sept.

Penny Jolley

One dictionary definition of a rally is 'A gathering for a common purpose'; another is 'A pantomime mêlée' and the boats that came together over the weekend of 19th and 20th September were certainly determined to gather, although boats at either end of the Rally had difficulty in coming together at the same time – a pantomime of boats in disarray along the coast from Exmouth to Plymouth.

The pandemic enforced a limit on the number of visiting boats; rafting restrictions having only recently been lifted by the RYA meant we had the allowance of only 7 visiting boats which produced a scramble for the last few places (first invitations had been offered to those boats entered for the Regatta in May). We regretted having to turn some boats away and hope you will be able to come to future events.

The weather looked set fair at the beginning of the week and we anticipated good passage making and an excellent 'Sail in Company' on the 19th. Then the wind turned to a sharp north-easterly making the sail up from the west arduous and uninspiring. *Roxanne* came up to Dartmouth before the weather really turned and *Mischief* was already on her mooring in Dittisham. *Theta* made the passage later from Salcombe, having been offered a late place following a cancellation; after making a safe, single handed passage to Dartmouth her engine stuck as she was coming alongside, causing more damage to the skipper than the boat. Undaunted, he SOS'd for a crew, determined to continue. *Stardust* and *de Velde* from the Exe were unable to get out of the river

Brixham then put her unhappy face on; high spring tides combined with the north easterly 6/7 on Friday night gave very uncomfortable conditions in the harbour, boats straining on the pontoons and lines snapping even on the fishing boats. Having conferred with the Heritage committee early on the morning of the 19th the decision was made to postpone the Rally for 24 hours; the skipper of *Vigilance*, ex RNLI crew, had already decided not to take her out, particularly in view of the afternoon's poor forecast. Whilst this confirmed the committee's thoughts, it was extremely frustrating for the forecast to be wrong;; the afternoon turned out beautifully!



Penny at the helm not only of the Rally but also of Minx with a happy Paul beside her.



Pilgrim looking majestic



Fly with her powerful rig still reefed

So we ended up with *Mischief* arriving round from Dartmouth, fully reefed down, by 1000 on Saturday, shortly followed by *Theta*. Sadly the latter had to turn round and go back to Salcombe within an hour as the crew had commitments on the Sunday. (The moral of of this story is always catch up on phone messages before



Pilgrim and Fly

setting off for events, particularly in adverse weather conditions!) However we were compensated by an excellent supper in Brixham Yacht Club which had worked hard to give us a good evening within the current limitations of socialising.



Mischief and Minx with a colourful trawler in the background

The Rally boats present in Brixham over the weekend were *Fly* (junk rigged), *Joker* (a Westerly Pageant), *Pilgrim* (a Brixham Trawler), *Minx*, *Roxanne* and *Theta*, (all SWOGA boats) although the latter two were not able to remain for the 'Sail in Company'.

On Sunday the wind was initially blowing well at Force 4/5, ideal for the gaff rigged boats; *Minx* had an excellent run down to the Paignton mark, overtaking the much larger *Pilgrim*. During the afternoon the wind dropped away and the sea state became calmer and more comfortable which made for a really pleasant afternoon

out on the water. The boats spread out and their contrasting rigs and sizes looked beautiful in the sunshine on Torbay. Proper Brixham welcomed us all back in and we dined very well at Simply Fish.

The Heritage Rally was the only organised event in the South West for all Classic vessels to take place this year; thanks go to the organising committee, Torbay Harbour Authority and Brixham Yacht Club, but of course, the main thanks go to those boats who braved the elements to take part.

Mention in dispatches for *Arriana* and *Periwinkle* which made it as far as Salcombe but decided not to turn the corner into the nasty easterlies. I am delighted to hear that they got together with the returning *Roxanne* and *Theta* for a 'Rally Extension'. It appeared that *Arriana's* large cabin turned into the venue for soirees with fine dining. Should this be incorporated into future event planning? It sounds like a great idea!



Not all the Rally onlookers got excited

Photos by Mike Garlick

Plymouth Classics ? a possible restart

in Sutton Harbour 10th-13th Sept .

John Gallagher

Following a meeting with the new management a few months previously Jonathan Brice received a request to gather a few boats together for display as a small trial to see how a new venture might be greeted by the public. Very short notice was given but he managed to get two larger local boats to moor on Quay Wharf.



One was *Lynher*, the newly restored Tamar Sailing Barge built by James Goss at Calstock on the Tamar in 1896 and the other *Olga*, a Pilot Cutter initially based at Barry and built in 1909 by John Bowden, Porthleven, Cornwall. Both are registered as National Historic Ships and are used for introducing youth to traditional sailing, sail training and adventure. And both looked in fine condition in the warm sunshine. Five smaller boats were moored on an adjacent pontoon to add to the interest. The boats were *Muriel*, a restored 1890 open fishing boat built by Paul Ferris, Looe which had been used as a Falmouth Working boat. *Tiger*, an all wooden Folkboat keep in immaculate condition and *Alice*, a wooden motor cruiser built in 1970 by Edgar Cove,

Salcombe. Both *Arriana*, a replica Falmouth quay punt and *Periwinkle*, a replica Ichen Ferry fishing boat also joined the group.



Merriment was added on Olga by a small group of musicians and on Lynher, by Black Friday an Irish music group. As is often seen at French festivals there was a display of dance acrobatics in the rigging. This was on Lynher and the dancers were from a Cornish circus performance school. They certainly wowed the onlookers who surprisingly were spaced and not all jostled together.

So, altogether this small tester event went well. Whether this leads to bigger things will have to be seen.



Photos : John Gallagher

Roxannes's August Cruise

Martin Elliot

Well, if we are denied our summer cruise to the French festivals and then subsequently not allowed to indulge in the plan B cruise to the Channel islands, what are we to do ? As Mike Forwood once said to me , a day sail in Plymouth Sound is all very pleasant but lacks a purpose, a destiny.

So, we come to the mid August cruise. The intention now was to repeat our earlier cruise west, which we had achieved as soon as the ports opened up to visitors post lockdown. This was to be our nod to the cancelled Falmouth Classics. It was destined to be a solo affair now, certainly a shortage of boats, sea shanties and conviviality yet we enjoyed ourselves. But from now we would endeavour to meet up with as many other South West Gaffers as possible during the course of a week or so.

Our plan would be the Yealm to Falmouth. But back at base the first two days were spent in Mayflower Marina sheltering from a tempest and attending to a few of the jobs on the deferred list which were not part of the plan – but needs must. In any event come the Sunday lunchtime we judged the conditions suitably improved to make the Yealm a good first night out. Now, some would say that if the available gap in the middle of the visitor's pontoon indicated about a metre clearance at either end, it may be prudent on leaving to hold off and raise the bowsprit. To me it looked like a big metre, and with a general lack of panic from other skippers, I am sure that they too had seen the tidal conditions as perfect to ferry glide in – we made it. Of course, at any point the manoeuvre could have gone wobbly for us to sidle back out, but it still felt good.

The following morning the forecast was reasonable, WNW force 4. The post breakfast crew meeting agreed that if we dropped the planned Fowey visit and used a little Beta assistance we could probably lay a course for Falmouth direct, and of course the sea state will have obviously moderated by now – wouldn't it ? After the first hour or so it became clear that the broadcast sea state "moderate" should have been in the next category – "moderate to crew disquiet / mild skipper abuse later" We had a single reef in for a comfortable motor sail, with which I would have preferred the jib and staysail, but with the bowsprit frequently burying itself I considered the chances of the furling line staying on the Wykham Martin drum as chancy and left the jib furled. Strangely no other gaffers seemed to be out for a sail.

Jan did unfortunately suffer a little bruising whilst involved in a strange gymnastic ritual in the galley, which

at one point seemed to require pinning the biscuit tin into a corner of the galley floor and muttering a determined mantra – coffee time – coffee time. I think she did also question what was moderate about the sea.

A while later, maybe abeam of Polperro, we detected a lessening of the sea motion and certainly after passing the Dodman things settled down to a much easier state, and visibility also improved. In any event we could now look forward to an arrival in Falmouth at around 18.30 and comfortably ahead of the following days forecast next big blow.

Then it happened. Jan emerged from below having been engaged in a general cabin tidy up after a bouncy ride. Call me perceptive but I could definitely detect a slight downturn in mood. She announced that the forward hatch had been leaking and that the bedding was soaking. I was beginning to anticipate my orders for the following day would involve booking a hotel somewhere dry and miles from the sea, maybe also looking for a campervan.

We now arrive at the visitors yacht haven to find all the berths taken and notices on the pontoons stating no rafting up. This did not suit our predicament at all well. We must consider the options, bruised and battered crew: wet bedding: tumble dryer in the shower block at the top of the pontoons, impending serious blow forecast, and an anchorage where dragging is not uncommon. At this point the skipper of a very well presented large classic sloop on the inside of the outer arm hailed us to suggest coming alongside him, he was very comfortable with that and I responded that to placate the authorities we would lay stem to stern. Some two or three hours later as the wind began to rise the bedding was dry, fish and chips had been sourced and everything was very cosy.

Well you will probably guess, the yacht haven staff didn't seem to be placated in the slightest come the morning, in fact they were positively agitated, demanding we move to the anchorage promptly. My protestations and attempts to describe what happens when you attempt to take a long keel heavy gaffer out astern into the teeth of a gale, gusting force nine through the crowded pontoons seemed to go over their collective heads. Well, they did listen more carefully when I suggested that as it was to be a move on their direct orders, then presumably their insurance would be taking care of the ensuing carnage. At this point they felt that my earlier solution of moving a tiny rib occupying a long length of pontoon at right angles to us and downwind, would now be possible. We all parted friends and the sun came out.

The first instalment of the social element of this cruise was then to have a most excellent lunch in the company of Brian and Estelle in the Sailing Centre next to Trago Mills, this was one of the Boris sponsored meals so I thought it o.k. to have steak, at lunch time! Excellent idea. Poor Estelle was still suffering her broken shoulder and four months in pain and a sling. It was really good that they were able to drive down from Rock for our little meeting.

This lunch was then followed by a very pleasant sail on the tide up to Gillan Creek for the first of several meetings with David and Julie on *Susan J*. A very good early evening indeed, gin, cake, good chatter. All in the warm sun and the boats lying very quietly.

The next couple of days were spent day sailing in Carrick roads, meeting Martin West of *Cariad* for coffee in St. Mawes, exploring the gardens of Treiske House and possibly managing a little more gin.



Roxanne and Susan J weighing anchor off Treisk Hd. Photo David Patuck

I had tentatively organised a get together in Fowey using the SW Whats App and by the Friday we were hearing whispers of a gaggle of desperate gaffers from Plymouth heading West, John Gallagher and crew Geoff in *Periwinkle* and Mike Forwood by car. Well, *Roxanne*, *Susan J* and *Cariad* headed for Fowey where a socially distanced raid on the Royal Fowey YC restaurant would be orchestrated. All this under the watchful eye of Brian and Estelle – the responsible adults, who would also drive down and join in. I think it is fair to say that the evening was very much enjoyed by all and very well hosted by the club.

This just left the conclusion of the cruise to be a light airs down wind sail in company with *Periwinkle*, obviously we wouldn't be racing but we did manage to steadily leave *Periwinkle* astern over the first hour. Until, John rummaged in his sail locker and came up with something that must have been a souvenir from his days of racing



After a fine socially gathered meal in the Royal Fowey YC

Photo: David Patuck—his photo in the chair where he was sitting with the J class – it was an enormous jib. And then the topsail was raised. This, of course, over the next hour bought him back abeam.



Abeam Periwinkle then way, way ahead photos: John G

O.K. I have read the books and downwind tacking is clearly the best tactic. Now we would be sailing further but faster and even allowing for cheese and wine for lunch would still be celebrating loudly at Plymouth breakwater. It was decisive, there was a clear margin of maybe ten metres at Rame Head!

Going back to what Mike said, a small cruise in good company does have a purpose and a destiny and it is very satisfying.

A week at anchor in the Isles of Scilly

David Patuck

With visitors gone and easterlies for 36 hours forecasted with neap tides, we decided on a passage to St Agnes in Scilly. A waning moon meant a 0400 departure, from Helford Passage, in the dark was feasible. We motor sailed to the Lizard and shot around on the tide, as the forecast south easterly filled in to carry us well beyond Wolf Rock before dying.



We met several pods of dolphins on the trip

This was our second visit to the Islands in *Susan J* and much less stressful, with her new red Beta engine, than the first time when we barely stemmed the tide in St Mary's Sound. A further 7 miles of motor sailing found us off The Cove, between St Agnes and Ghue, waiting for two faster boats to anchor. *Susan J* nosed closer in to find sand in 4 metres. This was a rolling anchorage but safe.

Despite a 13 hour, 60 M passage, we still had time and daylight to walk around Ghue, only possible since the previous week, as it is a nesting site for a large number of black backed gulls and other seabirds. The adolescent chicks, were constantly squealing and fighting resulting in lots of corpses under foot but excellent blackberries!

From St Agnes, which we walked around and across the following day, could be seen the Western Isles and Bishop Rock lighthouse, between the many pink granite tors found throughout. On returning to our dinghy, on the spit between the two Islands and following a pint at the Turks Head, we, almost bumped into two old sailing friends Trevor and Marion, not seen since our Plymouth days. They had just arrived, by ferry from Penzance, to stay on St Agnes for a few days so we enjoyed a catch up



Bishop Rock light from pink granite tops on St Agnes

with them. Both now retired and sadly no longer sailing. We were delighted to hear, upon our return, that the *Scillonian III* had been repaired, so hopefully they got back to Ivybridge in the end!

After two nights of rolling in the westerly Atlantic swell refracting around the plateau, which forms Scilly and into The Cove, we weighed anchor for St Helens Sound. A short but fraught passage around St Marys, passing a large cruise ship anchored in Broad Sound, before careful pilotage, at the right state of tide and in good visibility along several bearings to transits. Once there, one is rewarded with a large area of smooth deep water over a sandy bottom, with a wide choice of rocks to shelter behind. The outer reefs to the NW of Treasco and St Helen's, awash with breaking seas and spray, afford almost complete relief from the ubiquitous swell, as well as relative seclusion. From this delightful and peaceful open anchorage, we were able to use our dinghy with outboard to walk around St Helen's.

Now uninhabited, St Helens was the quarantine station for Scilly, with the remains of a substantial dwelling,



Remains of the Quarantine Station on St Helens

water well and other appurtenances, to afford only basic comfort to those surviving for six months before being allowed on to the other Islands. From the summit, Round Island and it's lighthouse can be clearly seen, while enjoying the overwhelming smell of heather honey, found on these outlying Islands. Moving over to Tean Island, we enjoyed views of St Martin's with the lichen covered rocks in the foreground. The Lichens, throughout Scilly are very prolific being subject to virtually no airborne pollution.



Julie atop St Helens with Round Island and light beyond

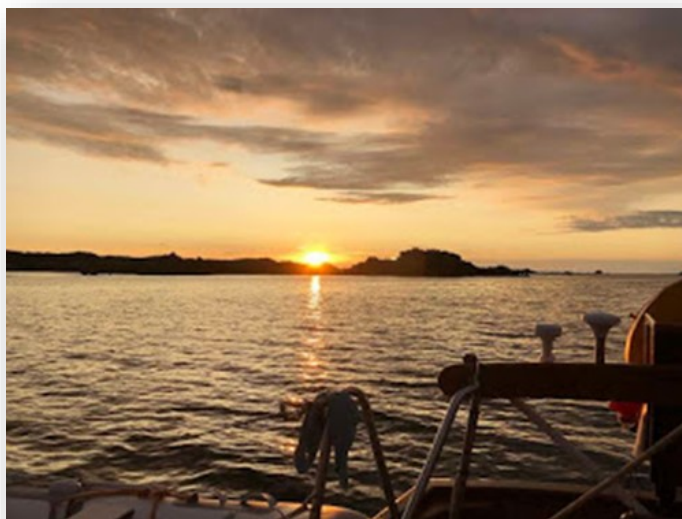
On St Martin's, the following day we found that the bays to the NE were deep in fine sand and at their western end, sheltered by White Island from the swell. Despite the light rain, we enjoyed a cleansing swim, before continuing to walk around the whole Island, visiting the daymark, replenishing ourselves with tea, buying stores at the post office and bakery, before a pint at the Seven Stones Inn. Once again, as at St Agnes, we bumped into the crew of "Tern", a blue water cutter seen laid up at Penryn. She was sailing in company with another sloop, skippered by Graham, our yard manager! Both vessels were anchored, snugly off Tean Island but would soon have to move as the springing tides meant insufficient water.

With potentially strong westerlies forecasted for as early as the next day, we decided to move, as our present anchorage could only be left at high tide and would prevent us leaving with favourable tides at the Lizard. As we left, the two other Falmouth yachts moved to the deeper water of St Helen's Sound.

We were anchored alone in Watermill Cove, on the north side of St Mary's Island, for the first night. As the forecast improved, so we were able to take two long walks around the northern half of the island and have another swim. By this stage we had managed to rig the new, replacement Zodiac, dinghy with lines to enable the

two of us to lift her over the large, smooth, boulders to the footpath from the cove. But this replacement dinghy was a poorer quality and not as handy, as the original 20 year old but leaky, "deflatable", Zodiac, of the same model.

By Thursday, it was clear that we would need to be back in Falmouth Bay by Friday evening, with strong winds forecast. An early start on the Friday morning would entail leaving the Islands in complete darkness, as the moon was new. On the other hand, a departure at dusk the night before would mean an overnight crossing with more flexibility in catching the substantial spring tide around the Lizard, if necessary, before dawn but still entering harbour in daylight. Julie had undertaken an almost identical passage from St Agnes several years ago as part of her RYA training. With one reef in the mainsail and the working jib, we were running east at around five knots and within an hour, could identify Wolf Rock and soon after the Longships, Tater Du and then the loom of the Lizard light. At daybreak we reached through the overfalls and could see the nine anchored cargo ships off Coverack, "waiting for orders" and providing a "highway" to Manacle Buoy and Falmouth.



Sunset at St Martins Sound

Another 13 hour passage, without major incident. We had had six nights of "free parking" anchored around Scilly. The downside is no water and no showers. Several sea swims made up for the latter but we realised that, with only one of her two tanks full at the start of this cruise and despite introducing Julie to washing up in sea-water, we would need to replenish the water soon. We arrived off Falmouth Haven's fuel barge, rather sleepily, at 0930. filled both water tanks and topped off the diesel. A brisk beat against 25 knots of wind across to the Helford and we were safely moored once more.

This trip was made last year . All photos by David Patuck

OGA Gaff Dinghy

Gil Hayward

What did you do in 'Lockdown'? We have all read about compulsive internet shopping, buying clothes or household items you don't need. I went a step further and bought another boat. I bought one of the new OGA Gaff Dinghy kits.

You may recall that the OGA treasurer, Tony Kiddle lent me the prototype OGA Gaff Dinghy last summer and my friend and neighbour, Mike Bennett with John Wynn as crew, won the 2019 Ditsum Regatta Gaffers' Race in it. This secured them the John Wynn Trophy, which had been donated by John some years earlier in memory of his father.

The concept behind the dinghy was that it was ideal for home completion by Fathers and Sons, using the Mirror dinghy stitch and glue technique. I am not sure this is a sound concept in this computer age. If our family is anything to go by, it is difficult getting teenagers off Xbox's or Fortnite. However, up in the North East they have obtained grants to encourage schools to build a couple of these OGA dinghies.

Having asked Tony if he knew anyone who would build one for me, he put me in touch with Martin Haigh, who is involved with the schools' project in the North East. I met him at the 2020 Dinghy Exhibition at Alexandra Palace when we were both volunteers on the OGA stand. I related to him immediately and the order was placed. I had expected with the almost immediate imposition of Lockdown that this would be a boat I didn't see in 2020. However, despite incurring a delay in the kit being supplied by Demon Yachts and a problem with the finishing when the varnish would not dry on the epoxy coating, the boat was delivered only 4 weeks late. Given the post lockdown restrictions, it's a long way up to Blyth in Northumberland from South Devon but Martin volunteered to meet me halfway at Junction 10 on the M42 for the handover.

Martin kept me informed throughout the building process with regular photo updates, which I attach. Martin works as a boatbuilder / supervisor for the Blyth Tall Ship (BTS) charity in Blyth, Northumberland. The BTS plans to restore a working tall ship as the *Williams II*. A replica of *The Williams* from which Antarctica was discovered some 200 years ago by Captain William Smith. The BTS now trains apprentices in traditional boat building and allied skills and plans to recreate sailing expeditions with local people, apprentices and others on *Williams II*.

It was a very satisfying experience during lockdown and I

can't praise Martin enough. I think the photos show the very high standard he has achieved in the boat's construction. I just need to maintain it!

Any member is welcome to contact me to have a test sail. I am always looking for an excuse to go sailing.....

Also does anyone in the South West have any contacts with local schools to encourage them to build an OGA Gaff Dinghy?





Photos by Martin Haigh except for the last , the finished boat sailing on the R. Dart which was taken by Caroline Haywood

A Lockdown Project – a second set of oars for “Aberrare”

David Bewick

I guess a lockdown project must be defined as something that you would only have done in lockdown, not just another thing on the “to-do” list of general life. If so, my little project certainly qualifies. I have had an idea in the back of my mind to make a second set of oars for *Aberrare*, my Breton-style sail and oar boat, ever since I built her in 2012. However, I probably would never have made them apart from the fact that the River Yealm was closed to all except human-powered craft during lockdown and I thought it would give Diane and me the chance to vary our otherwise fairly predictable exercise regime.

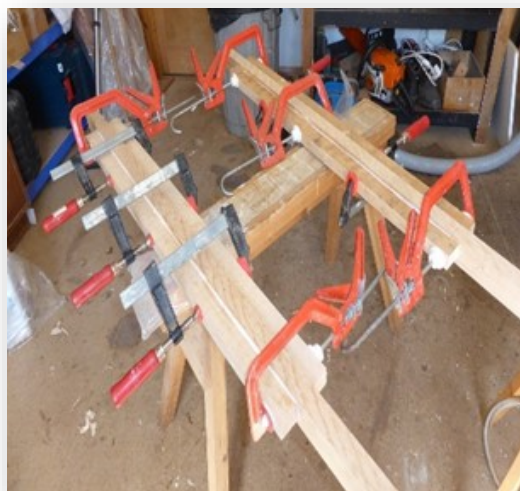
When I built *Aberrare*, I was not much of a rower (I’m a lot better now), so I had no real reason to deviate from the designer’s plans for oars. These are Breton-style with a simple shape that is flat on one side of the blade (like a big cricket bat) and they attach to the boat, each with a single bronze thole pin that runs through a hole in a piece of oak that is strapped to the back of the loom. They are not big and clunky though – the blades finish to quite a fine edge and they are made of spruce, so they are quite light.

I really like making spars and oars because it gives me the chance to use simple tools like a drawknife, spokeshave and hand planes. One of my wood working mentors used to go on about “simplest tools, greatest skill”. I now know what he meant. Anyway, the first job was obviously to glue up the blanks for the blades and the looms. These were then band sawn roughly to shape and then planed flat on both sides. The real fun could then begin. I cut a few stop cuts with a saw and then got to work to shape the backs of the blades with my favourite tools. Once the blades were the right shape, I moved on to the handles. I then discovered a check in the wood on one of them that I had not noticed before. After some pondering, I decided to tackle it head-on, so I ran the band saw blade down the split and glued in a thin veneer of spruce. This is barely visible on the finished handle and I am sure, it’s stronger than any other of the repair options. I then went on to shape the handles with a bit more spokeshave work. To finish the job, I put a rounded edge on the rectangular looms and made the oak pieces that attach the thole pins and provide wearing plates underneath. After a quick sand, a bit of whipping and few coats of Deks Olje No.1, applied wet-on-wet and a few days to dry fully, the new oars were ready to try.

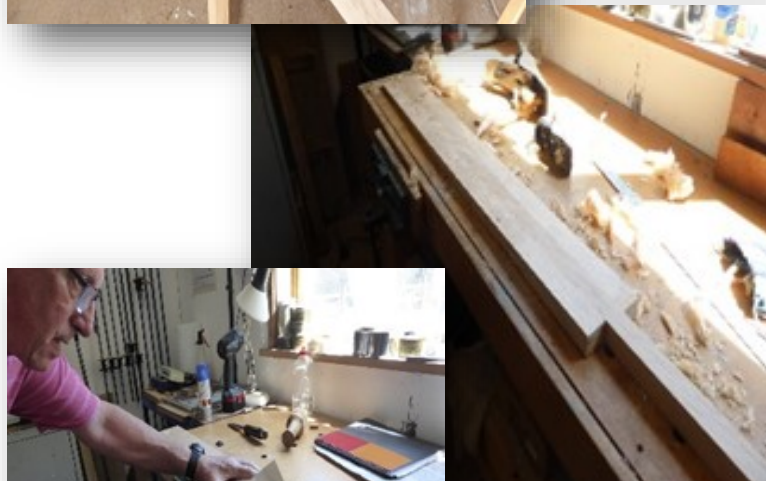
This was the first time that Diane and I had done double sculling (I really want to call it rowing as a pair but, technically, that is done using just one oar each). I think the single thole pins generally make rowing easier than

with either double pins (like on a gig) or metal oar locks, but they do mean you have to take care to get everything set up in the right order before you can start rowing together. We were both pleasantly surprised by how well we got on. The rhythm went to pot a few times but, when we got it right, the boat seemed to fly along with very little effort. We are looking forward to honing our skills.

Meanwhile, normal service has been resumed on the Yealm and we are back once again to noisy and smelly outboards being the norm! Every cloud...



*Left::
glueing the
blanks*



*Below:
Flat on both sides*



*Above:
making the stop cuts*



*Right:
to work with the drawknife*



Repairing the check in the handle



Oak sections for thole pins and wear plates



All assembled



The finished blades

Diane giving them the real test.

GAFFER'S LOG SHIPPING FORECAST

Here is the Shopping Forecast
For areas Plymouth, Lundy and Covid19
Issued by the Mut Office
At 06:00ish Cornish time
For the period indefinitely:

T(r)esco, good, occasionally busy later
Sainsburys, moderate to good, rough in toilet roll aisle
Asda, slight to moderate, heavy crowds by evening
Marks & Spencer and Co-op, fair
Waitrose, fair to moderate, spillage in aisle 7, increasing
8 later
Lidl, rough at first, easing later
Poundland, choppy
John Lewis, overfalls

Spar, reefing recommended
Drake's Circus, prepare for quarantine
Outlook - All areas, masks necessary.

The next forecast will be broadcast sometime.
That is the end of the Shopping Forecast

Kindly created by the right Rev Brian Budden

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.	Iford River Rally	Helford River S.C. / Port Navas contact: cornwall@southwestgaffers.org.uk
June 29 th - 1 st July	Festival of Sail ally and Race)	Battery, Plymouth robbrown@southwestgaffers.org.uk
	contact: Don Garman	
	contact: Rob Brown	
	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 10-13 th	(Plymouth Classics ? - trial *	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
October 10 th	Visit and lunch Charlestown Harbour	Contact :Don Garman cornwall@southwestgaffers.org.uk
November tbc	Laying Up Lunch and AGM Plymouth	Contact: David Bewick secretary@southwestgaffers.org.uk

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