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The Dog Watch

For the Sea Dogs of Devon and Cornwall

Issue 43

March 2021

Welcome

In this issue you will find two articles involving heavy weather sailing. The first is a fairly light hearted tale which in the end did involve the help of the lifeboat. But the second is entirely different and "spine chilling". It was serious and underlines what a remarkable facility we really have here when in distress at sea.

Both tales involved well seasoned experienced sailors with sound, well equipped boats but the lesson is that things can still go awry despite best efforts. Check all your safety gear.

Otherwise the contents vary from the tales of lockdown excitements to a miscellany of bits and pieces.

You will note in the Poop Deck section, or this month the Jolley pages, advice on likely new protocols when crossing to the continent. Also more challenges for the "little grey cells".

With the demise of the Trailer Section a more inclusive arrangement has been devised and our previous secretary David Bewick has become the OGA Small Boat Secretary and explains here what is planned. Also you will see we have changed our bank thanks to a fulsome bribe to do so.

The calendar of events is sparser than usual but more importantly events will be happening although there may need to be adjustments made to on shore activities. Please do check whether dates have had to be altered from those shown.

Falmouth Classics is happening this year ! Unfortunately the Shanty Festival will not, other than in a virtual form.

So, normal life is returning !

Ed

Next Meeting— Tuesday 6th April

**Fitting Out Zoom Talk at lunhtime 12.45
by Barbara Bridgman on the Tamar sailing
barge "Lynher of Cremyl"**

Christmas Quiz

Penny & Paul Jolley

Feedback from the Christmas quiz was good and whilst many members took part some decided that their scores were not worth submitting. But some did send them in before embarking on research to the questions that flummoxed them.

Mike, Sue, and Alex Garlick the crew of *Mischief* won the quiz prize and received a copy of "Surviving the Storms" the latest book from the RNLI about some significant rescues at sea in recent times. Several of the rescues take place in the South West.

Close runners up were Martin and Rosemary West (*Cariad*) followed by David and Julie Patuck (*Susan J*). Well done to all who took part and congratulations to the crew of "Mischief" on coming first.

The papers entitled "Festive Feasting" and "Christmas Medley" all had answers involving traditional food in the first and nautical terms and history in the second.

In the third quiz sheet entitled "4, occasionally 5" the answers were all shipping areas so it was hoped that once this became obvious high scores would be achieved by all participants. Check your scores on this one if you are going to take part in OGA Round Britain Challenge 2023!

Dust off your duster

Paul Jolley

We all hope to be let loose on our boats before too long and some of us may venture to foreign parts. Hopefully, some of you will remember from one of our first lockdown quizzes that the yellow Q flag should be flown instead of the courtesy flag until your vessel is cleared by customs and immigration.

The appropriate courtesy flag should be taken down at sunset unless manoeuvring, entering, or leaving a port. In these circumstances the courtesy flag should be flown even in the dark until out of sight of land.

We have to get used to the idea that the UK is now a "third country" as far as our neighbours are concerned and also remind ourselves that the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands are Crown Dependencies and technically not part of the UK.



Those contemplating "going foreign" this summer would do well to study the RYA website on sailing your pleasure craft to and from the U.K. This gives guidance on vessel documents to be carried, entry and exit formalities, ports of entry and other essential information.

@artwork by Penny Jolley

Welcome news from Cornwall

Don Garman

We are steaming ahead on the Classics front. The Web site is officially live on Monday 1st March but was up on Friday and entries are already coming in!

There will be no Shanty Festival as such this year but a virtual festival will be on 19th June at 18.00. There will be an article and advert in next Classic Boat.

The Helford Rally will provisionally go ahead on 14- 16th June. But there may be an issue with the dinner facility and we might need to limit numbers.

I attach the recent press release that was taken up by several of the media. The Classics newsletter and social posts will go out next week.

NB Do look at the release which is shown on page 4
Ed

Puzzle Time !

All you need to do is to make as many words (UK English) of 3 letters or more from the "Dogwatch"

No real names or plurals please and no cheating !

I will let you know how many we made with the next mailing

Penny Jolley

The Small Boat Secretary

When I handed over my role as Secretary of South West Gaffers to Tim Price recently, I was not looking for another job in the OGA. However, after talking with OGA President, Patrick Vyvyan-Robinson I have now taken on the role of OGA Small Boat Secretary. This role was created because Patrick and I felt that we needed some sort of focus for small boats in the OGA. So, I am pleased to be able to take this opportunity to outline how I see the small boat scene evolving.

Many of you will know that I own small boats. Currently I sail *Aberrare*, a lug-rigged sail and oar boat designed in the Breton tradition by Francois Vivier and *Thetis*, a gaff-rigged Tela. I have taken both these boats to a many OGA events and to maritime festivals like Seafair Haven in Pembrokeshire and Morbihan and Douarnenez in Brittany. Whilst I am probably only ever going to own small boats, I love sailing on big boats, too, and most years you might see me hitching a berth on a Pilot Cutter or a Brixham Trawler somewhere in the West Country or even further afield. I am also a serial builder of small boats. This is part of my quest for the “perfect boat” and to be honest, I hope I never find it because, if I did, the search would have to stop.

There is a long and rich history of small boat sailing within the OGA. The old Trailer Section had a reputation for having lots of fun both on and off the water and they did much to promote the OGA at events like the Beale Park Boat Show. These days, quite a high proportion of the people who join the OGA express an interest in small boats and in some ways, the small boat sailors are the lifeblood of the organisation. For the past few years, the Areas of the OGA have been encouraged to make provision for small boats in their programmes and there are now several small boat events that have become well established and for which people travel considerable distances to take part. We have done our bit in the South West with events like the Plymouth Festival of Sail, Helford and the Dittisham Rally. We now have the OGA dinghy as well (recently named the Gaffling 4.1) which we hope will provide a platform on which particularly our younger members might develop their boat building and sailing skills. I think there are now six of these either in-build or completed. With so much going on with small boats in the OGA, the need for some kind of focal point seems clear and this is exactly what my new role is intended to provide.

I agreed with Patrick that I would be the Association point of contact for any small boat issues or queries and the lead and point of contact for the OGA dinghy. The

dinghy has created a lot of interest in its short life but there are several things that now need to be sorted out like the class rules and the building manual. We also need to identify the preferred suppliers of kits for building the boat and, potentially, some builders of complete boats.

The Areas are already doing a lot of good work for small boat sailors and I have absolutely no intention of interfering with it. I will, however, be liaising with the Areas about their planned events and looking for opportunities for new ones. I will also encourage them to share best practices. By their very nature, the Areas of the OGA tend to look towards the sea while small boat sailors can go anywhere. I expect, therefore, there may be a few small boat events each year that will take place inland with little or no input from the Areas. There are already dates “pencilled in” to the calendar for events on the upper Thames at Lechlade and at the Clywedog reservoir in Wales. The dates will be confirmed, and more details added as soon as the Covid situation becomes clearer. Following the ACM and AGM in January, I have already been given some ideas for new events and I will be following up on these. The OGA is not the only organisation that serves the interests of small boat sailors, of course, so I will also be looking for opportunities to collaborate with bodies such as the Dinghy Cruising Association (DCA) and the Classic and the Vintage Dinghy Racing Association (CVDRA).

From time to time, I will be sending emails to let people know about small boat news and events. So, if you are interested in small boats and have not already indicated this to the OGA (or if you are not sure if you have), please let me know and I will make sure you are on the list. There are also pages for Small Boats on the OGA website(www.oga.org.uk/small_boats/small_boats.html) and I will be keeping these up to date with any small boat activity. I am confident that the future is bright for small boat sailors in the OGA and I am very much looking forward to sailing in company (or racing) with them.

David Bewick.

OGA Small Boat Secretary.

SmallBoats@oga.org.uk
(Mob. 07971 621448)

..... and now the last bits from the Poop Deck

South West Gaffers bank account change - reduce costs - reduce paper -save the planet !

David Pattuck

We have been banking for years with Natwest but we have now switched to the Metro Bank. We have done this as a result of a scheme adopted by the larger banks to encourage small non profit concerns to use other banks. So,we have benefitted by over £1000 by accepting the RBS switching incentive to leave them !

However, with this change we need to change our payment systems. Many of you already use the facility to pay for local events using BACS and this is the way forward.

This reduces our reliance on paper cheques, as they become increasingly more difficult and expensive to pay in (£0.30p for every cheque plus postage). It also streamlines the management of the Area's events. The introduction of PDF forms, that can be completed by participants on their computer and emailed back to organisers, will further reduce your own and the committee's costs.

In February we completed the anticipated **change** in the SW Area's **bank account** to **Metro Bank** so please do the following:

- 1 Delete any payee details you may have in your own on line banking for the old Natwest account (ending...5701).
- 2 Use the payee details which will be given out to you directly by the secretary and when paying for events in the future:
- 3 Please add any reference (Surname/event) or as suggested on entry forms etc..
- 4 Any payment you receive from us will have "SWGaffers" in the reference.
- 5 Please don't send us cheques

Hopefully, we will all have an opportunity to practice all of this once we can arrange to meet again, afloat or ashore, later in the year!

Falmouth Harbour celebrates its 150th anniversary by supporting Falmouth Classics 2021

Falmouth Classics Press Release

Falmouth Harbour, have confirmed support for the Falmouth Classics in Cornwall, as headline sponsor for 2021. The event will take place from 11 -13 June, Covid 19 restrictions permitting. Support for the Classics will be the highlight of Falmouth Harbour Commissioner's celebrations to mark the Trust Port's 150th anniversary.

Falmouth Harbour Chief Executive Officer, Miles Carden, said "In this important year of celebration for the Harbour and through our marina Falmouth Haven, we are excited to announce our support, to the largest heritage and classics sailing event in the UK.

We are really excited to increase our support to the event in 2021 in the Harbour's milestone year. Falmouth Classics is now an important part of the Harbour's culture and will bring a much needed economic boost to the town in 2021. The Falmouth Harbour team look forward to working closely with the Classics team to ensure a great event, which will provide an incredible backdrop as we welcome the world's press to Falmouth as a part of the G7 conference."

To recognise the 150th anniversary of the Harbour Falmouth Classics Association is planning a spectacular parade of sail and power on Sunday 13th June, at 10.30. A Royal Naval vessel is expected to lead the parade from Trefusis Point off Falmouth Docks, towards Black Rock, followed by a flotilla of harbour vessels, led by one of the Falmouth Harbour pilot boats. Behind the modern port craft , a fleet of sailing pilot cutters, some original and some modern recreations and other vessels relevant to the port's past will follow.

Keith Tullett is Chair but Don Garman, our Cornwall representative, is the Vice Chair of the Classics and with the rest of the team a huge amount of work has been put in to organise this very popular fun event which has grown so rapidly to such a large yet friendly gathering. It is a great credit to them all.

On behalf of SW Gaffers, thank you and well done

Ed

Tales from our members

Crab, Cocktails and a Lifeboat

Mike Garlick

Dear Reader, if you are expecting a tale of `courage and endurance, turn the page now. If however, you can stand two old codgers, well, codging...read on.

In May 2013 my old sailing friend Pete had moved to Tighnabruich, Argyll, and needed to sail his Nicholson 35 *Affinity* from the Hamble to Scotland. Could I help?

I'd sailed with Pete a lot on *Maybird*, a Fred Shepherd 1937 gaff ketch, including in the Fastnet Race, so we knew each others mettle. He was ribbed for having been in the RAF but had redeemed himself by doing a tour on *Ark Royal*, and so had earned the "Cat and Trap" badge. That means having had a catapult launch and arrestor wire landing on an aircraft carrier. That made him almost Navy.

Anyway, I'd done it before, although that was 1974 in a minesweeper. Turn right at Land's End and head North until the butter freezes, as I remembered it.

The first leg, with four crew up, was an amble to Dartmouth, where "coincidentally" I had a 50th reunion do at the Naval College. I survived that yet again so it was onward with four crew. We passed Land's End and had a pleasant sail across St George's Channel heading for Holyhead in Anglesea. Here the weather deserted us and we rounded the breakwater at 0400 in wind gusting to 40kts struggling to find the "V" pontoon amongst the dancing moorings. It was of course to leeward and a very uncomfortable night was largely spent stuffing fenders back in place.

Moving to a better berth the following morning and with the forecast firmly stuck foul all the crew strangely found urgent business elsewhere. Mine of course was serious - a cocktail party on HMS *Illustrious* at Greenwich.



The Royal Marine Band Beating the Retreat at sunset on the flight deck of a carrier is a spine tingler, not to be missed and that's without the G&T's and Horses Necks *

I had promised to return and Pete's messages and calls left no doubt that single handing was out. Duly taking the train north Holyhead was as left...foul! Pete had mastered the launderette in the marina and all the boat was sparkling clean but waves crashing against the breakwater ruled out sailing. We walked the two miles to the nearest pub which we never found - a disaster. No sailing and no pub, intolerable!



The breakwater at Holyhead all astir

But a careful examination of the forecast showed a weather window. After the strong SW wind would come a short lull before the strong NW wind. By leaving a bit beforehand we could get about half way to Campbeltown, our next port of call before the wind turned against us. We could motor sail or motor the rest. Campbeltown had an easy entrance to the sea loch enclosing the harbour, and moreover in 1974 the natives had been friendly and there was a really pretty girl in the woolly jumper shop. A no brainer.

So, we left at 0530 with a SW 6-7. It was "don't look behind" weather but *Affinity* was a good sea boat. It did as it said on the tin, calming during the night as we passed through the southern part of the North Channel then building from the NW, until with Ailsa Craig well in sight we were motor sailing to make towards Campbeltown to windward.

That's when Pete decided to lower the main. I half saw the coil of halyard in his hand but didn't register it fall; then BANG, everything stopped. Prop fouled.

Nothing would clear it so Pete altered course for Troon, an easy reach to the NE under genoa. We hadn't visited Troon in 1974, so I checked it out in Reed's. Lee shore, no shelter, narrow turning entrance, totally enclosed marina and heavy breaking swells in strong W winds....NO thank you.

We hoisted the main and settled down to some hard work. Probably only about 25 miles to Campbeltown but with a F7 on the nose, slow progress. We reckoned that we could sail into the loch and anchor for the night, sorting things out tomorrow. Dutifully we notified Belfast Coastguard of the situation and were asked to update hourly.



Affinity safely moored close to the Royal Hotel

Several drams later, after debriefing each other on their failings, was the only time I saw Pete nearly lose his cool when his wife, Gill, appeared on the jetty having

followed us on AIS and taken the bus. Neither crew nor boat was fit to receive female visitors. But all was well when Gill checked into the Royal Hotel where the showers, full Scottish breakfasts and dinners were a godsend to sailors, The rest of the trip past Arran to the beautiful Kyles of Bute was a joy.



Campbeltown lifeboat securing alongside for the tow

Many hours and hard won miles later the entrance was in sight. There was a BANG, WHOOSH.... the roller furling line broke and the whole genoa flogging to leeward in 30 kts of wind. More leeway! It was hard to keep the bow from falling off but somehow Pete managed to cobble up a repair with line wound around the drum; great foredeck work and we could resume sailing.

By now the Campbeltown lifeboat was launched, despite our assurances that we were not in peril and shadowed us towards the entrance. They were eager to take us in tow but we reckoned that sailing in was far and above preferable in those conditions. And we were proud.

After some chat with the cox'n, we gratefully agreed to assisted berthing, so once in sheltered water we dropped sail, were taken in tow and placed gently alongside. It was all carried out with great good humour and skill, finally tying up about 36 hrs after leaving Holyhead. Would you be wanting a diver, asked one crew member?... it turned out to be him and in half an hour the prop was freed for a paltry sum.



The Kyles of Bute



Old codgers— Pete and Mike

Photos : Mike Garlick

A hair raising rescue in wild and stormy seas.

This is a tale of every sailors nightmare of being caught in a storm of such relentless ferocity with your boat battered and unable carry on that you find your only option is to make that Mayday call and hope.

This all happened some years ago to one of our members, Ralph Bell A keen seasoned sailor who had been in stormy seas before having done several Atlantic crossings, sailed across to Brazil, to the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, home and Irish waters.

His boat was *Mister Cube* a sturdy Jeanneau 35 Sloop and he was mid channel returning from a sailing holiday in France with two friends and six children. On that fated day at 03.00 Ralph heard over the VHF that a previously unpredicted storm was approaching. So, they set about securing every thing down and reducing sail, putting in the wash boards and checking all was safe. Ralph was very conscious of safety on the boat with his young family and had drilled all three of his children on what to do when things got bad in such a way that they reacted readily and cheerfully. He felt his briefings are likely to have had an almost subliminal effect. So, when things really did get bad they were not panicky and seemed fairly well composed.

For several hours when the storm arrived the boat and crew held out well despite its increasing violence with 25 foot waves and relentless strong winds.

Then catastrophe happened really quickly. The genoa had been furled to a "handkerchief" but the 55 mph winds recorded on the anemometer had broken the furling line and the whole genoa blew out. The main had already been dropped. Ralph went forward on the safety wire and cut the sail free but the resultant flying, tearing sail, the boat's motion and wind had him promptly fired back along the safety line into the cockpit and against the pushpit. Bruised but still with it, he tried to start the engine but there was a strong smell of burning and it refused to budge. With the wild seas the boat had now become unmanageable.

Ralph made the Mayday call at 07.30. But as he was out of range it became a relay Mayday. The response was quick and the coastguard was reassuring with a helicopter being scrambled straight away. Ralph had liferaft ready to deploy. Two large vessels hearing the

call tried to manoeuvre upwind but were unable to hold position.

A one year old pack of flares were readied and when the approach of the helicopter was seen in the distance, in poor light under low cloud a parachute flare was set off. But this just flew up and was lost in the cloud as was the second. Of the other flares in the offshore pack frustratingly only one hand held flare worked ! But in such windy conditions holding this out resulted in a few burns to the hand.

Then the helicopter from RNAS Culdrose arrived and so challenging was the rescue that the Diver Rescuer as well as the pilot and winchman were decorated.

The citation at the ceremony for the main award to the Diver Rescuer is shown on the next page and it details how the this remarkable rescue was carried out.



Ralph shaking hands with the Diver Rescuer, Larry Slater with two of the children climbing out of the helicopter

Photo supplied by Ralph Bell, photographer unknown

Almost unbelievably the same helicopter crew were called out to another really difficult rescue that afternoon. This involved a well known boat owned by Simon Le Bon leader of the pop group Duran Duran. They were participating in the Fastnet Race. This is also described in the citation.

The second rescue hit the headlines.

Ed.

Citation from the London Gazette Tuesday 11th
March 1986

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE HONOURS AND AWARDS
NAVY DEPARTMENT CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE
ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD
St. James's Palace, London S.W.1**

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the George Medal to: Petty Officer Aircrewman Laurence SLATER, D114895W. Petty Officer Aircrewman Slater was the duty Diver of a Search and Rescue Wessex helicopter crew which was scrambled at 0730 on 11th August 1985 to assist the yacht, Mister Cube, disabled in severe gale conditions approximately 55 miles south-east of Lizard Point. Weather at the scene was sea state 7 with the wind gusting over 50 knots.

The yacht was being pounded by 25 feet waves, its sails shredded, mast whipping violently through arcs of over 90° and the hull was lurching heavily in the severe swell. With considerable difficulty, a light line was passed from the helicopter to the yacht. This was attached to Petty Officer Slater on the end of the helicopter's rescue winch. The helicopter was thus able to hover clear to one side of the yacht, while Slater was lowered on the winch and simultaneously pulled in on the yacht. Fighting his way past sails and whipping rigging he eventually reached the cockpit to find six children and three adults. He quickly reassured everyone and briefed them comprehensively on the rescue method.

Three older children were single lifted to safety. On two occasions, as Slater started double lifting the younger children, severe yacht movement caused the light line to part. For the fifth time he was transferred to the deck, organising the single lift of two adults, but, as he returned for the final rescue the yacht was knocked onto its beam ends by a giant wave.

Miraculously Slater and the last survivor managed to hang on long enough for the aircraft to position itself and lift them clear. Once away from the yacht, Slater calmly cut the light line and was winched with the survivor into the aircraft. The aircraft returned to R.N.A.S. Culdrose at 0925.

Later that same day, at 1510, Slater was again launched as part of a Search and Rescue crew sent to the assistance of a Fastnet Race casualty, the yacht Drum England, capsized off Porthscatho. On arrival 18 survivors were found crouching precariously on the upturned hull. They indicated that a further six persons were either missing or trapped inside. Despite a sea state 5 and wind gusting 36 knots, the immediate danger necessitated Slater jumping from the aircraft and free swimming to the vessel. Totally fearless, and disregarding his own safety, Slater dived beneath the jerking hull. Fighting his way past alarming snarls of torn sail and a tangled array of rigging, he came upon a rope locker and a white hatch. On forcing the hatch open he swam into an accommodation space and was pulled into an air pocket by the missing survivors. Despite the eerie situation, his exceptional courage, professionalism and outstanding presence enabled him swiftly to reassure and efficiently brief an escape plan. Remarkably, Slater safely extricated all six, pulling them out past a maze of rigging before returning each to the surface Slater then remained on board supervising the winch evacuation of 20 survivors.

Throughout both of these exceptionally hazardous rescue operations Slater totally disregarded his own safety. The rescue of 29 people under the most arduous conditions in two very demanding situations on the same day was accomplished due to the great fearlessness, superb stamina and unflinching courage of Petty Officer Aircrewman Slater in the face of enormous danger.

NB The helicopter was at the limit of its range during the first rescue and the actions of pilot and winchman resulted in them receiving the Queen's Award for Gallantry.

Some months later Ralph and the family were invited to Television Studios, London to appear on "This is your life" show with Eamon Andrews. Eamon spoke with them all about the human side of the events and the effects on all of them during and afterwards .

Parrel beads and sounding lead

Mike Garlick

Last spring as the sailing horizon was receding and with no access to *Mischief* for maintenance or innovation we managed to find some therapeutic nautical projects;

Home made parrel beads — There had been problems with the gaff saddle sticking whilst lowering the mainsail and capsizing when fully sheeted out. The Crabber has a very high peak angle which may have something to do with this but anyway we decided to try fitting two rows of parrel beads to the saddle to increase its stability. More beads needed. Plastic ones cheap to buy but oh no, not really please.

Davey & Co. sell ash beads, at a price. We have lots of ash here, so why not make some up? Expert wood turners please look away. There's no wood turning lathe here but there is an antique metal one that has done service for other ad hoc items.

First I tried using a broken church bell stay that I had replaced, dated 1983, but this proved to be too brittle, not surprisingly.

The eyes then fell on a pitch fork handle awaiting fitting, which was already near to the desired stock size. I had paid twelve quid for it from the country store so no room for error !

Some time later, from piles of shavings, a dozen or so beads, suitably marinated in linseed oil, were fitted to the saddle which did indeed perform better when afloat.



Photos : Mike Garlick



Sounding Lead — Leafing through Classic Boat was a beautiful bronze sounding lead and line. Available from Arthur Beale Chandlers for £ Lots. Temptation but I managed to restrain myself to just the purchase of the bronze shackle and 25m of line.

A mould was fashioned from some oak, and salvaged lead melted in the beaten up saucepan. The brass ring was sawn off a plumbing fitting. Pouring into the mould gave wonderful fumes and flames and on opening something vaguely resembling a hexagonal weight emerged. Further fashioning made it fair, almost. How to mark the line? Traditionally it should be in fathoms with leather tags but succumbing to the modern

idiom it's marked in metres with tactile turks head knobs and coloured marks.

Traditionally, there is of course a dimple at the base so it can be armed with tallow. This all weighs in at 4^{1/2} lbs. so no problem in finding the bottom, though boat trim may be an issue!



General interest

A plea for your help to identify this boat.

Geoff Skinner

I have just been given *Cloud Walker* an 18ft open, centreboard gaff cutter, by my late neighbour's family. But it is in much need of TLC, having been laid up for the 14 years since they bought her from someone in Saltash.

The rig is in bits: bare spars, some fittings and running and standing rigging, plus sails. Given some time I am sure I will sort out the rig, but what would be really helpful would be some photographs if any of your readers have them, or indeed any information.

I am wondering whether you could find space in Dog Watch for this appeal for help? She has lovely lines, as you can see from the photos and I am sure will be a very quick hull once I get her sorted out. Does anyone have an idea what she might be?

There is no trace of her on the OGA register so I hope one of the other members possibly from the Saltash area might be able to help me please?

Contact : congerocks@gmail.com



Time to get kitted out



Treat yourself to proper South West Gaffers clothing. For the forthcoming season. The choice of colour is verging on infinite and there are so many options for type of garment .

Here is a selection of the most popular range of tee shirts, fleeces and polo shirts. Rugby shirts are also available .

You can have them with just the SW Gaffers logo or with your boat name added. Oh, and the prices are so reasonable !

Why not give the lady in your life a colourful embossed SW Gaffers nightie? The response might even be positive.

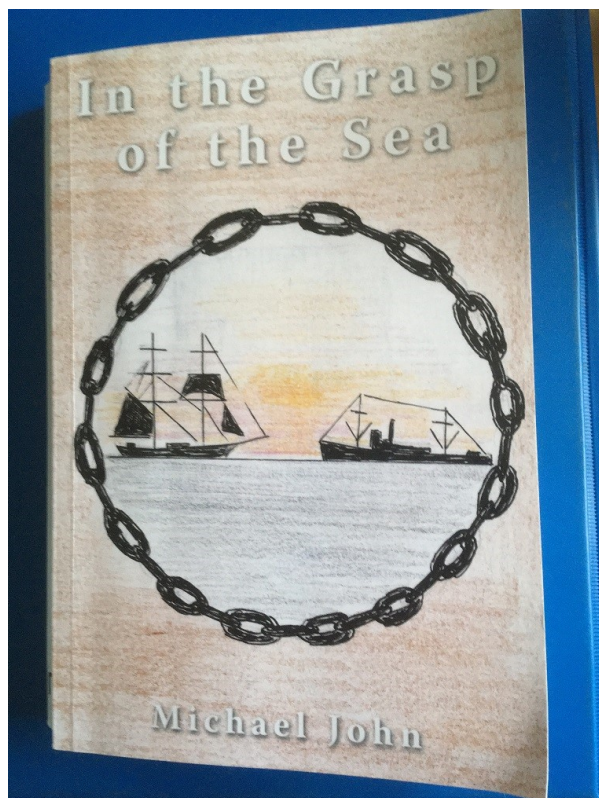
For all enquiries please contact Paul Jolley by e-mail on :

merchandising@southwestgaffers.org.uk

NB Paul asked me to do this advert for him Ed

BOOK REVIEW – “In the Grasp of the Sea” by Michael John.

Paul Jolley



For many of us the current lockdown situation is providing, amongst other things, plenty of opportunity for reading. I stumbled across ‘In the Grasp of the Sea’ after a chance conversation with one of our members. If you are interested in the history of both the Royal and Merchant Navies this is a fascinating book. Despite being published in 2008 the story is very topical with current discussions in the press and academic circles on the history and abolition of the slave trade.

As West Country sailors there is much to recognise in this book and even a bit to learn about local maritime history. The book explores the careers of two brothers who end up running a shipping company following their service as mariners in both of our navies. The scene in the last chapter takes place on the River Dart.

This final meeting at Kingswear includes a relative of the two brothers who has travelled from Australia on P&O Arcadia to trace his family routes.

An extraordinary coincidence then that sitting up in bed with my early morning cup of tea reading the book and glancing out of the window there in Torbay is P&O Arcadia! Not the one in the book, of course but I believe the third or fourth of her class. She is one of about eight cruise ships that are anchored off Brixham riding out the present crisis.

Near the end of the book the ship rounds the Skerries Bank buoy in Start Bay preparing to enter the Dart. This brought back memories of Penny and me on our first passage in Mayblossom from Topsham to Weir Quay several years ago when fog suddenly surrounded us crossing Start Bay heading for Start Point. We, to this day, feel proud of ourselves as navigating using traditional paper and pencil we passed within half a cable of the buoy.

As the ship enters the River Dart the Donkeymen get steam up for unloading; remember the Christmas Quiz? One of the answers was of course Donkey! I now understand why there is a building in Kingswear called Morocco House; read the book to find out why.

A recommended easy to read and informative book available on Amazon U.K, both new and used. And the surprise? Michael John is the nom de plume of Michael John Forwood better known as our Area President!

‘In the Grasp of the Sea’ by Michael John; Author House 2008. ISBN: 978-1-4343-4649-0



Please send your stories, tales of daring or woe, lessons learned for others to hear etc. This is your newsletter and we need you and your offerings. Ed

South West Programme of Events 2021

Please be aware that dates may need to be altered so check beforehand

April 6 th	Fitting Out Talk on the Tamar Barge, <i>Lynher of Cremyl</i> by Barbara Bridgman	Zoom talk 12.45 contact: <i>Tim Price</i> secretary@southwestgaffers.org.uk
May 22 nd -24 th	Brixham Heritage Sailing Regatta *	contact: <i>Penny Jolley</i> brixhamheritageregatta.uk
June 11 ^h -13 th	Falmouth Classics *	contact: falmouthclassics.org.uk
June 14 ^h -15 ^h	SW Gaffers Helford River Rally with Helford River S.C. & Port Navas Y.C.	contact: <i>Don Garman</i> cornwall@southwestgaffers.org.uk
June 28 ^h - 30 th	SW Gaffers Festival of Sail Queen Anne's Battery, Plymouth	contact: <i>Rob Brown</i> robbrown@southwestgaffers.org.uk
July 27 ^h -30 st	Fowey Classics *	contact: www.foweyclassics.com
Aug13 ^h -15 th	Dittisham Rally *	contact: <i>Gil Hayward</i> gilbert.hayward@btinternet.com
Sept 25 th	Brixham Heritage Rally *	contact: <i>Penny Jolley</i> brixhamheritageregatta.uk

**** events not organised by South West Gaffers but fully supported by us.***