

South West Gaffers

Promoting Gaff Rig Sailing in Devon and Cornwall

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OGA Web Site: www.oga.org.uk

The Dog Watch

For the Sea Dogs of Devon and Cornwall

Issue 44

June 2021

Welcome

This is a very brief newsletter. I have tried to get it out to you as early as possible in June as it is our busiest month for events.

Brixham Regatta started the season off in style as you can read here and now Falmouth Classics is imminent followed by the Helford Rally.

I am afraid our events are still constrained as we have to abide by the prevailing Covid regulations at this stage but at least we can legally get together again to have fun, enjoy that camaraderie and find out what everybody else has been getting up to.

The Plymouth Festival of Sail is similarly affected but as it is at the end of the month you may well still be able to book in but be quick !

Also, whilst it not listed in our calendar remember the Tall Ships Race is starting in Falmouth on 19th August. And you might be interested in the item on the Mayflower 400 parade of sail on 28th August, mentioned in the Poop Deck section.

Oh Lord keep the Jet Stream up above Scotland and give us decent weather down here.

Happy sailing

Ed

Next Meetings

Falmouth Classics and the Helford River Rally

From the Poop Deck

Presentation of the ODТАА Cup



From the right: Patrick presenting the ODТАА trophy to Paul with Mike Forwood on the far left.

NB all socially distanced

Photo: Phil Gallagher

This cup was gifted in 2018 by Alistair Randall and is the abbreviated version of "One Damn Thing After Another" to recognise achievements that fall outside the criteria of other awards.

Paul Jolley was awarded with this cup in 2020 for his very considerable efforts in getting the OGA AGM moved out of London and into the regions. The first meeting took place in January 2020 in Bristol which he organised with the Bristol Channel branch. Paul set the criteria for such a meeting to be at a venue which was easily accessible and had a maritime heritage. He was aptly vindicated in that view by the record attendance for a memorable AGM in Bristol. The next AGM is planned to be held at Newcastle next year and will be organised by the North East Region.

OGA President Patrick Vivian-Robinson came all the way from Brecon to Bere Ferrers near Tavistock to make the presentation to Paul, in our garden.

Ed.

Mayflower 400 River Dart Pageant

Paul Jolley

A parade of sail has been organised for Saturday 28th August. The procession will begin from Noss on Dart Marina, moving downriver to salute a dignitary in the Flagship, with all units in the armada 'dressed to the nines'. More information can be found on the website

www.premiermarinas.com/Marina-News-Events/Marina-News/2021/April/Dartmouth-Royal-Regatta-Join-The-Mayflower-River-Parade

I have expressed interest on behalf of SW Gaffers and would be willing to coordinate boats meeting up before or after the event. If you are interested please contact me at :

merchandising@southwestgaffers.org.uk

South West Gaffers Clothing

Start the season in the height of fashion. Update those tattered rags with crisp new tee shirts, polo shirts even rugby shirts and fleeces. Contact Paul at the above address. Ed.



Recent Events

Brixham Heritage Regatta May 30th

Penny Jolley

Our regatta went ahead this year in a somewhat limited form due to restrictions of numbers required by the pandemic regulations and recommendations. Despite this 21 boats enjoyed the traditional Brixham welcome in bright sunshine for the whole weekend, including seven OGA members: *White Cloud* (1912 Teignmouth built Devon yawl) skippered by new member Paul Stevens; Vic Love our erstwhile roving skipper had jumped ship from *Edna* (languishing in Italy) and borrowed the lovely *Ellen* (Tamarisk 24) and *Minx* (Morecambe Bay Prawner) with not only Paul and Penny Jolley on board, but also David Bewick. Beautiful *Cynthia* brought Peter Lucas round in style from Dartmouth and Ralph Bell brought *Charlie Bravo* from Torquay for his usual, very useful, stint as pontoon monitor.

The imposed limit of 20 visiting boats was rapidly taken up when we announced the event was taking place, with the furthest travelled and smallest boats signing up first. Two of the smallest boats, both junks, came from the Solent taking a four-day journey. The organisers were anxious about berthing for all our visitors due to delays in repairing our usual Heritage pontoon after it was damaged by a large sinking vessel during the winter. At the last minute the harbour authority completed basic repairs and handed over the pontoon to us at 14:00 on Friday after a couple of boats had already arrived. Very soon Paul Jolley, in our black RIB, was out in the Bay shepherding entrants to their berths and the pontoon party could begin.

Saturday evening was for registration and traditional fish supper in the Brixham Yacht Club bar, albeit with the limitation of table only service and limited circulation of visitors. However a great time was had by all admiring the extensive views of Torbay now crowded with moored cruise ships. Each boat was presented with a "goody" bag containing their Heritage flag, Regatta mug, individual polo shirts, snacks and most importantly a chartlet of the BYC racing marks that were to be used for the sailing on Sunday. The usual special large buoys used for course marking in previous years were unavailable due to their usage by the English Riviera dinghy championships being run simultaneously by BYC, hence the only alternative left to Heritage was use of the existing fixed BYC race marks.

Sunday dawned bright with a gentle easterly breeze and a bit of a chop on the water. Our friends from Paignton photographic club had ideal conditions for their pictures taken both from fixed positions on the Breakwater and from the water; have a look at the Gallery on the website to see their superb pictures. The Brixham trawlers *Pilgrim* and *Vigilance* commenced proceedings at 12:45, both with excellent timed starts to within a few seconds of the required time, some achievement with big heavy rigs and the light breeze. Others such as Paul Eedle's lugger *Guiding Star* took a more leisurely approach from some way off the line and took 12 minutes to get going! Movement of their marks by the dinghy regatta resulted in some interesting moments for both fleets but with no problems other than surprised looks on some dinghy sailors' faces. One lass in a Topper was heard to exclaim



Lexia one of the five junk rigged vessels and the swiftest.

that *Pilgrim* as windward boat should be keeping clear of her!

Sailing past the anchored cruise ships proved to be challenging with big wind shifts, vortexes and shadows caused by these giants and the whole fleet slowed down trying to get past. *Minx* learnt how to pirouette! The result was that the planned 3 laps of the bay was reduced to just one for most, however the elegant gaff rigged racer *Cynthia* showed her exceptional turn of speed and completed 3 laps to everyone else's one! Regatta officer, Chris Coote, called a halt at 16:00 to give time for everyone to return to harbour and ready themselves for our traditional prize giving and curry supper in BYC, to round off the regatta in our usual style. However we were not able to hand out the actual trophies this year due to Covid restrictions but commemorative glass tankards, winners pennants and Brixham Gin were taken to the tables together with raffle prizes. The intention is to superimpose pictures of the

Ellen came first in class 4 with *White Cloud* second and *Little Tern* third. *Minx* happily won first, but as the only boat in her class it wasn't too difficult! *Cynthia* won the Torbay Royal Regatta 1911 Cup ahead of our stately Brixham ladies *Pilgrim* and *Vigilance*.

The Regatta results are appended elsewhere but the winner of the prestigious "King George V Cup" presented by His Majesty for Brixham trawlers was won by *Pilgrim*, and the Ibex trophy for fastest lap of the course went to Peter Lucas and his magnificent racer *Cynthia*.

Tamarind is a regular entrant but surprised us this year with her crew choice. One was 2 years old and one, Harry, only 4 weeks old. An RNLI bear known as "Harry's Bear" somehow found his way on board at prize giving! Both the recently restored double ender *Escape* and the smaller gaff cutter *Little Tern* attracted the judge's eyes for the Concours award, the latter being awarded. The junks with 5 boats was the largest class and the junk schooner rigged *Lexia* proved to be remarkably swift and able to complete the course ahead of similarly rigged local boat *Fly*. She was also the only boat to register a passage time from Dartmouth by inspection of her log and so was awarded a trophy. *Minx* a replica Morecombe Bay prawner, was the only working boat in her class and *Guiding Star* the only dandy or lugger in hers, so each won a trophy. Maybe this will encourage more boats in these classes to attend and provide some competition in Class 2. The only yawl seen this year was *White Cloud* in amongst all the cutters and ketches and showed a good turn of speed when all sails were drawing. We have received many comments about the "Brixham" welcome and thank you for those, we will endeavour to repeat at our Heritage Rally on September 25th.

It almost goes without saying that an event of this scale would not be possible without a great deal of local help and support. Warmest thanks to all who helped physically and financially. Next year's Regatta will be held over the last weekend in May 28/29th (now NOT designated as the bank holiday weekend).

Chris Coote (Regatta Chairman) and Penny Jolley (Regatta Secretary)

photos: Alex Hamer and Stuart Chapman, Paignton Photographic Club and downloaded from Brixham Heritage Regatta website.



Ellen , slipping along nicely



The eye catching yawl White Cloud owned by new member Paul Stevens



Peter Lucas amidst his winning crew on the beautiful and fast Cynthia

Forthcoming Events

Falmouth Classics 11th—13th June

Over 100 boats are already booked in for this event. Whilst there will not be the International Shanty Festival this year it is still sure to prove as great a fun event as ever.

The G 7 Summit media base will be by the National Maritime Museum and it is expected that they will take some interest in this event. It is likely to be seen as a tourism boost for Cornwall. So just keep smiling for the cameras.

Pints and pasties will still be served but do read the latest Classic Newsletter to acquaint yourselves with the strictures which have been introduced.



Parade of Sail

photo : Mike Garlick

Helford Rally 14th—15th June

This will be a smaller event this year and it is already over booked. Those extra boats can join the racing but will need to make their own arrangements for meals etc.

This a great shame but yet another casualty of the regulations.



Peaceful sailing on the Helford

photo : Alistair Randall

Plymouth Festival of Sail 28th—30th June

There is still time to join but be quick. There are already about 20 boats booked.

Sadly we will be unable to have a group to give us live music. And we will be rather restrained by covid regulations with our pontoon party but I am absolutely certain that regardless of these strictures that a great time will be had all.



Hurrying to the finish line at our last event

photo: John Gallagher

Cockpit Experts, Jam and a Bread-knife

Mike Phillips

Mike Phillips confesses to a less than smart handling of *Tom Tit's* Topsail

My wife has just acquired a stopwatch. This instrument is part of an attempt to improve *TomTit's* appalling problems with setting her topsail.

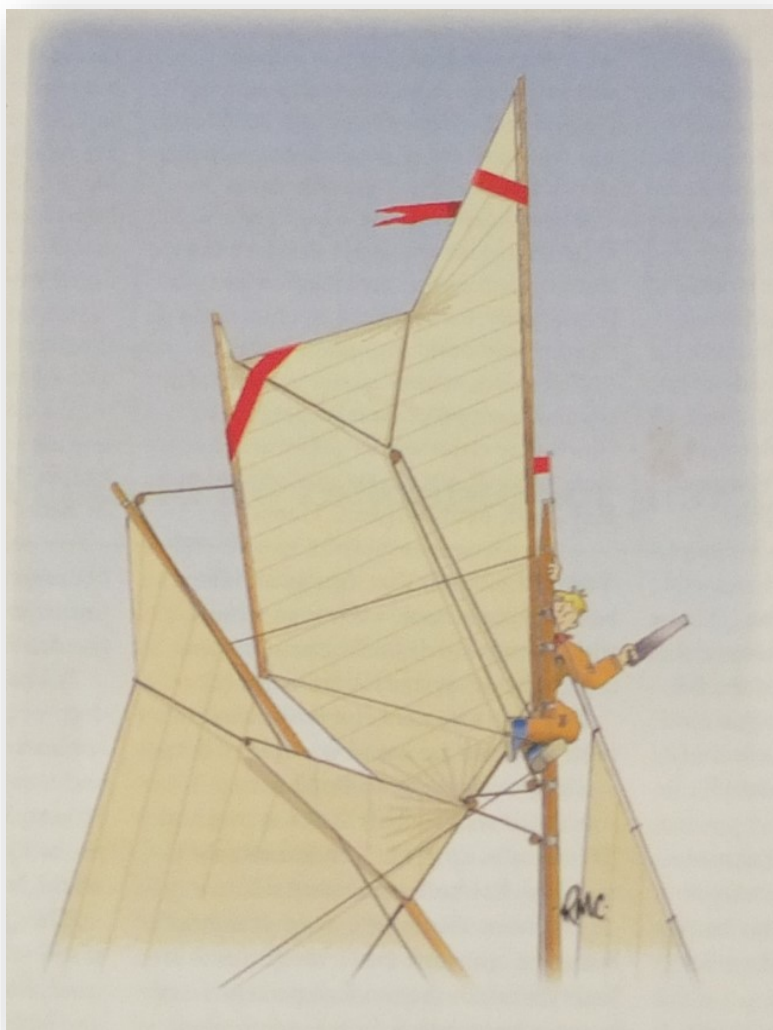
The problems must date back to when, with rose-tinted spectacles, I first asked sailmaker and gaff guru Mark Butler of James Lawrence for a full-size Victorian summer-rig jackyard topsail in cotton.

Mark, bless him, did ask if I had considered practicalities, like where you keep a 20 feet yard on a 25 foot boat and how you set it without a cherry -picker on the quay and even where do you dry such a sail after each race. However, I persisted and Mark finally accepted that the customer was right this time and made us a beautiful sail of pre-war shirt cotton.

The first attempt at setting was slow but, safely tucked in the marina with less than 1 knot of breeze, it only took a couple of hours. It set like a Beken photo.

Four years later we still struggle. The first problem is the bag. Being a cotton sail it has to be protected from the damp, so a long sausage of Mesowax-proofed canvas has to be slipped off its end, with the crew either perched half way out in the bowsprit net (risking submersion every time a Sunseeker passes by) or reaching way out over the transom in fear of being catapulted into the sky by an untamed mainsheet. This takes five minutes.

Then comes the easy bit, attaching a few lines. The outhaul is (hopefully) pre-threaded through the throat turning block and peak pulley. It should then pass inboard of the topping lift, outside the lazy jacks and aft of the sail before attaching to the jenny stick with a suitable Clifford Ashleon tops'l halyard hitch (#3013). The halyard is simpler, another t.h.h. (#3013) to the jackyard, inside the runner, outside the starboard aft shroud, through the yard foot eye and down to the deck where it is cleated on pin No 5 (starboard of course). Attaching the downhaul to the foot, and clipping all the clips to the timanoggy completes the advance preparation (ten minutes).



Next comes the hoist.

Nothing demonstrates Newtonian mechanics quite like a pair of Sitka spruce yards suspended horizontally like medieval battering rams trying to hit all the crew members at teeth level, so stage one is to start the two yards on their way sky-wards as quickly as possible.

On the way up the yards gently tuck over one and under one as they pass the peak halyard, until the shouts from the cockpit are heard by the foredeck crew (now hidden from sight). In response, the foredeck crew will lower the tops'l halyard just a little so the head of the spar will now jam itself the wrong side of the gaff.

Help is now needed and an expert from the cockpit may suggest slackening the gaff peak halyard. This indeed will

This indeed will free the jackyard – but trap the jenny stick into what can only be described as the world's first remote controlled Spanish windlass, complete with 4:1 purchase (45 minutes).

A second expert, also from the safety of the cockpit, may suggest hardening the main peak (which we do) and slackening the main throat (which we could). Unfortunately this can draw the swallowtail of the pennant into a halyard block jamming it solid.

The resultant intricately tangled rig will now be jammed and unable to go up, down, in or out and the only cure will be a trip up the mast with the bread knife (one hour).

To rub salt into the wounds the week after Tom Tit's last debacle I was racing in Maine on a friend's boat when we passed a bald-headed gaff cutter. After the first mark and a quiet nod from the helmsman two lads walked forward nonchalantly and, with a gentle whirl of well-oiled blocks, a full jackyard tops'l was set and pulling in under 30 seconds.

Maybe I should just invest in a Beneteau sloop with in-mast roller furlingor a set of golf clubs.

This article was originally published in Classic Boat

Copyright: Mike Phillips

*In the middle is Tom Tit sailing **without a topsail** during the 2019 Plymouth Festival of Sail. Ahead is Heron with Annabelle behind and Cariad in the background.*

Photo: John Gallagher



Tom Tit proudly flying her recalcitrant topsail .

Photo : Mike Phillips

(source: OGA boat register)

From our members

South West Gaffer's Trophies

Mike Garlic, Trophy Officer

With the coming of the annual race in late June the treasure trove of trophies held by SWG will come together for a brief moment.

Rather than staying in a dusty store room or even a glass cabinet the trophies are held all year by those who are awarded them at the race and so make only a fleeting appearance before being taken by a new winner.

This is an anxious time for the trophy "officer" who firstly has to make sure of their return, secondly cast a curatorial eye over them for condition and damage and finally make sure that he knows exactly where they have gone when the crowd disperses.

They are an eclectic collection comprising half models, sheave, block, deadeye, pin and pin rail to say nothing of a caulking iron, anchor, paddle and even a cannon! Enough to fit out a gaffer.

Many have a provenance dating back fifty years or more with long standing associations and in a series of articles I will try to highlight a few at a time to bring them to life for all the membership with all the information that I have been able to gather of their history, mostly supplied by Peter Lucas.

If you know more then please pass it on so that we can add it to the archive.

Below: The trophies set out together at the Royal Dart Yacht Club after the Start Bay Race in July 2015.

The Dartmouth Deadeye.

No lightweight trophy. This was made by Andrew Roberts of Dartmouth Yacht Services for the second Old Gaffers Race when it first moved to Dartmouth from Salcombe. This came from the schooner *Invamore*, that ended its days at the entrance to Old Mill Creek, Dartmouth.

This is currently awarded to the winner of Class One and is held from 2019 by *Theta*, owned by John Crellin.



We have tried to find out more about the *Invamore* and how she perished but to no avail. The Maritime Archaeology Trust in "Hulks of vessels used during WW1" mentions six boats whose remains have been found but not *Invamore*. But it goes on to mention that 31 merchant sailing schooners built from 1850 to 1870 are recorded as lost at this time. So, could a sleuth out there find out those vital clues?

Photos : Mike Garlic



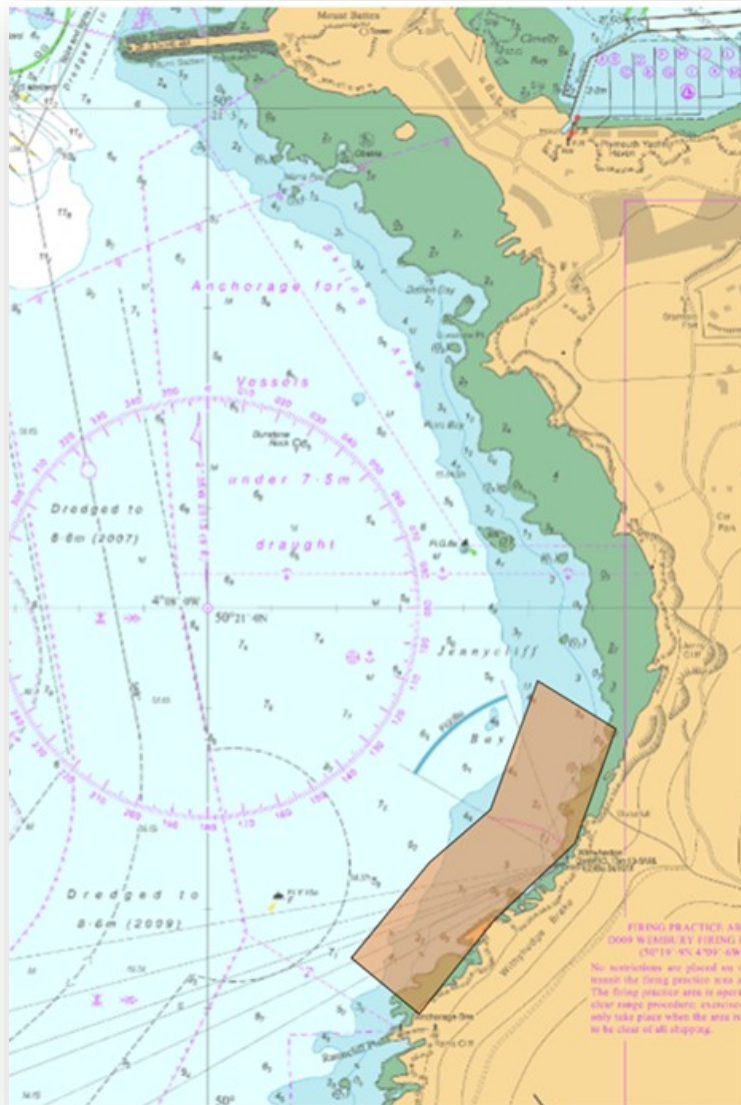
Seagrass Planting Project — Voluntary No Anchoring Area in Jennycliff Bay .

In a “Notice to Mariners” the QHM announced the above which relates to the orange coloured area shown on the chartlet in the south of the bay. This area was planted with seagrass last year as part of a larger project which involves work done by the National Marine Aquarium , Plymouth with the Ocean Conservation Trust.

Seagrass is one of the Ocean’s most important habitats, providing a nursery ground for many commercial fish stocks and acting as a haven for many marine animals including rare seahorses, stalked jellyfish, and rare seaweeds. Seagrass also stabilises sediments and prevents coastal erosion, as well as having the capacity to absorb carbon more efficiently than terrestrial habitats – making it an important player in the fight against climate change.

Today, seagrass is considered critically endangered and is an EU Red Listed habitat due to the damage regularly caused to the slow-growing beds from boaters, walkers and fishermen. The meadows are threatened by anchoring, mooring and launching of recreational boats, as well as trampling by walkers and bait collectors.

I am very grateful to Chris Danby for letting me know of this development. Ed.



Disposal of flares

It’s always a problem. But Chris Danby has been a source of information yet again.

Boat owners can now safely dispose of all their out-of-date flares at one of Ocean Safety's four branches around the UK. It doesn't matter where the flares were originally purchased - safety equipment and service

provider Ocean Safety will safely dispose of all brands.

Flares can become unstable and therefore dangerous if stored for too long or used after their end date. Ocean Safety's branches in Southampton, Plymouth, Glasgow and Aberdeen are all able to accept the time-expired pyrotechnics where they will be legally and safely disposed of.

There is a nominal fee of £2.15 inc VAT per item for disposal, however since Ocean Safety sells a complete range of new pyrotechnics the fee will be waived for anyone replacing their out-of-date flares with new ones purchased like for like from the company at the same time.

Our local branch: Unit 6, Eastern Wood Road, Langage Business Park,

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 28 th -29 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.***