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Instagram:

[instagram.com/southwestgaffers/](https://www.instagram.com/southwestgaffers/)

## Dog Watch

For all Sea Dogs in the South West

Issue 47

Mar 2022

### Editorial

The boat fettling has started for the new season; the President has certainly been at work on his "Minx". Even the editor will be getting his hands dirty underneath his 4.8m LOD daysailer to touch up damage he caused to the keel last season.

In this Dogwatch, the President ponders the recent OGA AGM in Newcastle; (sorry about the TLAs – See below\*) and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations next year. There are reports on both. He also congratulates Stuart Anderson on winning the 'Tales of Sail' trophy. The Secretary and the new social media officer Mark Turner highlight plans for Instagram and WhatsApp.

There are reports on the SW OGA plans for Round Britain Challenge fleet in Plymouth in 2023, the prize-giving for the West Country Classics where the SW OGA was well represented and the Zoom Talk by Mike & Susan Phillips on trailer sailing with a difference and finally a report of the event at Fowey Gallants for lunch including a talk on the Troy dinghies.

We welcome 5 new members to the SW OGA. The Editor apologies to any new member that I've left out. If you want to be introduced, please let me know. Tony Laurillard describes his adventure with his Spritsail Rigged Open Canoe "Orca" in the Highlands; the chart, showing his route is excellent.

There are details of getting OGA and SW OGA regalia and the final page contains the all-important copy of the SW Events with some other significant events.

Website and eMail links are highlighted within the text. Over the past few weeks, I have been very tied up with serious family matters and my thanks to various people, in particular, Tim Price, who have helped to get this issue out on time.

*Nick the Fox*  
*Dogwatch Editor*

\*(A TLA is a Three Letter Acronym, which itself is a TLA!)

### Next Events

Tue 1 Mar: Zoom Talk by Vic Love

Sat 2 Apr: Fitting out Lunch

Sat 28/29 May: Brixham Heritage Regatta

# From the Poop Deck

## Presidential Pondering

[Paul Jolley](#)

Following on from our national AGM, there is plenty for your committee to get on with as we prepare our boats for the forthcoming season with a busy schedule of regattas and rallies here in the South West and across the Channel.

Despite a difficult last year, we had a good season, gained some new members, met up with old and new boats and friends in what most of us felt was a safe outdoor environment. As well as some day sailing, "Minx" and crew spent a four-week and two-week period cruising along our beautiful coast and catching up with many of you along the way.

Although for obvious reasons only about 40 people attended the AGM in Newcastle, many others took part using Zoom and given the strange circumstances, it was a success for which we thank the North East Area. As an area, we were successful in proposing Des O'Mara (President) and Anthea Connor (Secretary) of the North East area for The David Cade Memorial Trophy. Our nomination was seconded by the North West area.

Under very difficult circumstances they, in effect, organised two AGMs, the first being cancelled because of Covid.

Looking forward in our own area, it would be good to recruit more members this year and to this end we now have flyers available which we will get out to members to help spread the word. If you belong to a class association or sailing club, please think about how we can get the message out to owners or enthusiasts that the OGA has a lot to offer those interested in more traditional and gaff rigged boats. Please also make maximum use of social media to increase awareness of the Association. Our presence can always be shown by wearing SWG or OGA branded clothing and flying an OGA burgee or house flag when you are ashore or afloat, especially when attending events that are not organised by us.

The OGA boat register has been vastly improved and extended to include boats that are not necessarily owned by members. If you own a boat and it is not on the register, please consider submitting an entry with a few good photographs.

2023 will be the OGA's 60th Birthday with sailing and social events for us all to enjoy. Our contribution will be hosting the Round Britain Challenge fleet in Plymouth. Read more about this in Rob Brown's piece in this edition.

2023 will also be the 50th anniversary of South West Gaffers in its original guise as Devon Gaffers and having changed names a couple of times during its history. The first race was held at Salcombe on 23 Jun 1973 followed by dinner at Salcombe Yacht Club for £1! Our current Commodore, Peter Lucas, was there sailing "Ripple" which he still owns today. We ought to do something special locally next year to commemorate our 50th. If you have any ideas, please let your committee know. By our AGM at the end of this season, we ought to be able to have a plan for our celebrations the following year.

Congratulations must go to Stuart Anderson for being awarded the Tales of Sail trophy for his articles in The Gaffers Log on the restoration of "Stargazy". Close on his heels was Vic Love who was also recognised as runner up in the OGA photographic competition. More locally, Mike Forwood scored the highest of those who sent in their results for our Christmas Quiz and has received a prize from the RNLi shop.

The national AGM for 2023 is likely to be in Portsmouth on the weekend of January 14th based around the Historic Dockyard, something to put in next year's diary!

## Hon Secretary's Piece

### Tim Price

Now that days are getting longer, I hope that members have had the opportunity to get to work in anticipation of a new season – I know that I have. I was lent an oscillating multi-tool at the end of last year and have to say it is one of the most indispensable tools for getting into tight spaces and I hugely recommend it for anyone doing woodwork.

In an effort to try and increase communication about Gaff Rig sailing generally and, within the membership specifically, we have enlisted the help of Mark Turner to assist with social media.

We have given him an email address [socialmedia@southwestgaffers.org.uk](mailto:socialmedia@southwestgaffers.org.uk) to ask questions or provide content. We have done a significant amount which he has described in his article on social media in later pages and I will leave him to provide the detail. This is something we are feeling our way forward with and permission to use content between sites is something we will need to address.

## OGA 60th Round Britain Celebrations in Plymouth in 2023

### Rob Brown

Mike Forwood, John Gallagher, David Bewick and Rob Brown form the South West Team who are heading up the Plymouth Stop Over for Round Britain 2023.

Please put the dates in your diary..... 10th, 11th and 12th May 2023.

We are very keen that that 'home boats' not taking part in the whole event should come and stay in Plymouth to welcome members from around the country, join in the fun and make the stop over enjoyable and welcoming.

The outline plan is as follows:

**11th May:** Arrival of 'Round Britain' boats at QAB (to be confirmed) and welcome event (probably starting with drinks at RWYC) followed by supper at a nearby venue.

**12th May:** After allowing visitors time to carry out all those essential stopover jobs it is planned to have an event in the evening which will be dinner and something entertaining.

**13th May:** Parade of Sail and departure of 'Round Britain' boats. Again we hope that as many home boats as possible will join in and escort the fleet as far as Fowey. We anticipate that there will be a 'gathering' of 'home boats' in Fowey in the evening.

Mike, John, David and Rob cannot organise and run this event successfully without support from members. If you feel able to commit to helping with such things as being on hand when boats arrive, provide local information, helping to organise local repairs (where needed) and join in the jamboree please do get in touch... the more we put into this event the more fun we will have.

Rob is pleased to say that your committee are hoping to subsidise some of the costs, so it is likely that if you do come you will find that some parts of the event are discounted.

Please contact Rob at [events@southwestgaffers.org.uk](mailto:events@southwestgaffers.org.uk) or telephone 07776 176 103 to indicate if you can help.

## Social Media for the SW OGA

### Mark Turner

Mark Turner has offered to help Tim Price raise the profile of the South West Gaffers on Social Media. Mark owns "Flirt" 21', a Yealm Crabber, that keeps at Dittisham.

He has found a disconnection between the younger generations who love messing about in traditional boats and the OGA whom they see as dated and stuffy.

Unfortunately, some social media requires a smart phone, either an iPhone or an Android device. What follows is an overview of two applications or "Apps".

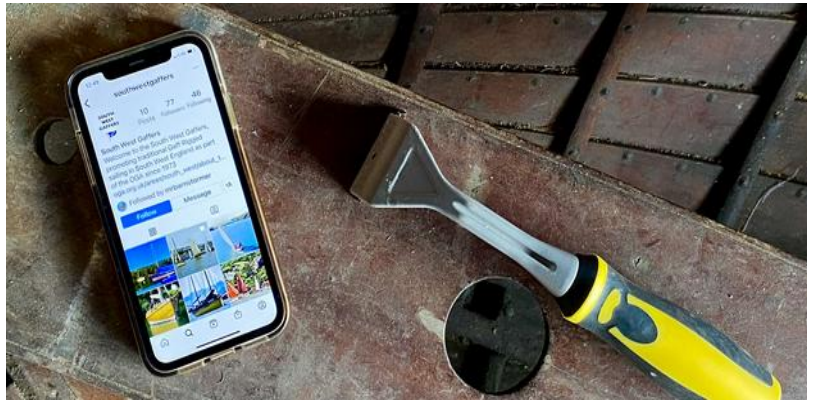
**WhatsApp** WhatsApp is a successful communication app that allows encrypted messaging to all smart phones irrespective of the operating system. You can make voice or video calls and it allows you to share photos, video clips or documents either to an individual or to a group, for example, the "WhatsApp At Sea" group started by Paul Jolley.

**Instagram** Instagram is another app that enables the sharing photos and videos. Those images will be seen by anyone who has registered to "follow" your profile. The amount of activity on the platform gives images only a short period of visibility, but remain archived on your profile.

**Benefits** Our Instagram feed is designed to compliment Dog Watch, to showcase our boats, activities and enviable locations to a wider audience, modernising a niche activity, increasing exposure and appeal to others. Hopefully, this will attract new members, likely to be younger who are critical to the future of our group and the OGA.

**WhatsApp** Tim Price and Mark will create an 'On Shore' WhatsApp group and, as an existing member, you may join either or both of the WhatsApp groups, please contact Tim with your name and mobile number.

If you sign up a condition of usage is that you accept we may choose to use your images on the SW Gaffers Instagram feed, credited of course to you. When posting photos to the group, please do include some details of who/what/where so we can enhance the Instagram post with descriptive text. The only other condition is that messaging is



SW OGA Social Media (Photo Mark Turner)

topical and respectful of other users. We reserve the right to remove users who abuse the platform.

**Instagram** To follow our Instagram feed, search '[southwestgaffers](#)' and click 'Follow'. We'll follow you back if your feed is relevant. We already have over 120 followers from all over the world, 4 days and 9 images after launch! (Monty Don from Gardener's World has 989,000 followers at the time of writing.) The OGA has 10,800. Instagram can be installed on a desk top computer, or a tablet, if you don't have a smart phone but do have an internet connection.

Tim and Mark are currently uploading images from our own collections onto Instagram but we need your photos, be they of your fettling and maintenance, or a relevant event or a museum with photos. This summer, please send photos of your sailing. They can be emailed to Tim or Mark, please include some brief copy on who/what/where, with who took the original photo and accept that you allow us to use your photo for no commercial gain - we don't wish to run into copyright issues! We'll also be posting photos of SW Gaffer events both on and off shore. Don't worry if your image isn't professional quality, we can improve them!

**Facebook** Whilst some SW Gaffers may use Facebook, Tim and Mark have stated that "they have neither the time nor the desire to get involved with the platform". The OGA's own Facebook page is little used. However, if you'd like to moderate a South West Gaffers Facebook page, please drop one of us a message.

**Next time** Mark will write about the importance of 'Hashtags', adding location details to photos to increase search visibility and a great photo editing app to format and enhance even the flattest and wonkiest photo.

# Recent Events

## OGA AGM Newcastle Jan 14 - 16

### John Gallagher

The OGA Annual General Meeting in Bristol was a hard act to follow, but Newcastle turned out to be a resounding success. Thwarted by Covid in 2020 and restrained by continuing concerns, the North East Region still went ahead with arrangements for the AGM with a full programme of events.

We went up on the day before, ready for the scheduled visit to Blyth some dozen miles north on the Friday. After boarding the coach outside the hotel, we had a fascinating running commentary from a local gaffer on the areas and the intrigues. On arrival, beverages and food were there as we listened to the concept of work at the old boatyard. Newcastle was a busy coal mining area and closure of the mines affected a huge proportion of the population. New industry developed but efforts to retrain and repurpose the many unemployed involved trying to revive interest in former skills and of which boatbuilding was one. Investment in apprentices for traditional boat building allowed a group of boat builders to set up a valued training programme which has already helped 50% into a range of productive work and 40% into further education. The boats they chose for training were

Zulus, Scottish fishing boats designed in 1879 in Lossiemouth when the Boer war was raging giving the name to this class of boat. It has a vertical stem and strongly raked stern, carvel planking with main and mizzen lugsails and jib on a long bowsprit. Zulus had formed a large part of the Scottish fishing fleet until engine power took over. One was in build for us to see. In the main boat-shed and there was an interesting array of other traditional boats.



*Williams 11 (Photo from <https://www.blyhtallship.co.uk/>)*

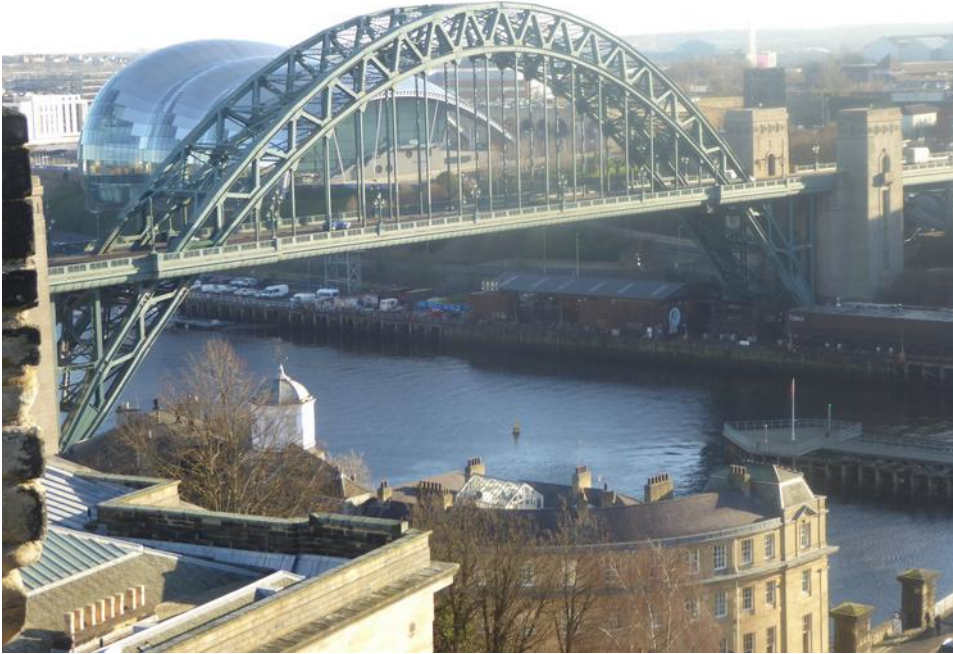


*Zulu Fishing Boat Under Construction (Photo John Gallagher)*

Also to see, was the tall ship Williams 11. She started as a Danish 100 ton ketch but restored and modified in Blyth she is now very similar to the original brig Williams built in Blyth in which Captain William Smith discovered the Antarctic landmass in 1819. She is a fine ship indeed with a busy sailing itinerary. Youth sailing is the main endeavour including day trips for school parties. See [www.blyhtallship.co.uk](http://www.blyhtallship.co.uk)

Our group had a free morning on the Saturday so we explored the city. The hotel is on the banks of the R. Tyne so a stride or two took us to see its famed seven bridges.

Having seen the “coat hanger” bridge in Sydney we were keen to see its prototype here.



Prototype Sydney Harbour Bridge (Photo John Gallagher)

Its massively engineered structure is really impressive. Just beyond was the 101 year old self-righting lifeboat “Henry Fredrick Swan”. She is the beautifully restored former Tynemouth lifeboat which had been in service for 30 yrs. and could be propelled by engine, sail or oar.



Henry Fredrick Swan Lifeboat (Photo John Gallagher)

Next, it was to see Newcastle’s castle which is well worth a visit as was the cathedral. Then we got talking to several locals and it was a tonic to hear the fine old Geordie dialect.

The AGM was that afternoon and with the 60 or so members here and the large group on the zoom link there were around 100 attendees. With one or two technical hiccoughs it went well. The OGA website details the event and the prize giving.

[Link to OGA AGM](#)

A couple of hours later it was time for evening meal and festivities, which was done in style. The food was great and was followed by a band which strolled in playing such lively music with such a fine beat that several members started dancing and the room began swaying with colliding dancers. By the end, a good evening had been had by all!

The next morning seemed to carry on the merriment with a series of musical-led performances. The Northumbrian bagpipes led followed by the Northumbrian Rapper Sword Dance. Originally this was performed by the miners on high days and holidays. Then Geordie songs and finally a cracking display of

traditional clog dancing originally by mill workers mimicking the noise of the looms. All just a flavour of the North and a great send off for us all.

Des O’Meara, Anthea and the team deserve hearty congratulations on a very successful and enjoyable event.

## West Country Classics Series

by [Don Garman](#)

### OGA and South West Gaffers Well Represented in West Country Classic Series

The first ever Pantaenius sponsored West Country Classics Series, for classic and heritage sailing boats took place in 2021. Results for two or more of three Classic sailing events which included Dartmouth, Falmouth and Fowey Classics were combined to identify four winners.

The idea for the series came from Bruce Thorogood the organiser of the biannual Classic Channel Regatta. Bruce said "The purpose of West Country Classics Series (WCCS) is to increase the number of vessels in all three events and to attract participants from other parts of the UK and France. The WCCS been an idea for a while but its introduction was delayed by Covid, so the organisers and myself are delighted that 2021 has seen the birth of the series, which culminated in a splendid prize giving event. We are very grateful to Pantaenius



*West Country Classic Series Prizegiving at Saltash Sailing Club November 27th skippers, crews, partners, supporters and organisers of the event (Photo Chris Williams)*

The prize-giving was hosted by Saltash Sailing Club during Storm Arwen. Skippers and crews from the ten boats that completed two or more of the events, gathered with partners and supporter to witness the presentations. All boats received a flag as a memento of participating in the first West Country Classic Series. Eight of the ten boats were either gaff or lug rigged and seven of them were members of the OGA and six from South West Gaffers. OGA members included the National President and the South West Gaffers' President

Sue Treneer, who has been involved in running Falmouth Classics in a variety of capacities for 35 years presented the prizes. In fourth place with 169 points was the Swan 55 "Lulotte" – Ben Morris, third the Heard 28 "Capraia" with 177 points – Patrick Vyvyan Robinson, the OGA President, in second place scoring 190 points was "Mary Ritchie", a 27' gaff cutter built by John Fuge and launched in 1992 - Don and Pauline Garman and in first place the beautiful gaffer "Cynthia" built in 1910 by Thomas Jacket of Falmouth with 191 points – Peter Lucas.

for sponsoring the series and to Salcombe gin for contributing to the prizes. My colleagues and I look forward to increased numbers in 2022".



*Mary Ritchie, Our Boys and Cynthia from left to tight (Photo Fowey Classics)*

The 2022 West Country Classics Series will begin at the Falmouth Classics from Fri 17 June.

**Zoom Talk in December 2021**  
**From Risør to St Tropez with Tom Tit**  
**by Mike & Susan Phillips**



*TomTit Under Sail (Photo Mike Phillips)*

Back in December Mike and Susan Phillips gave a talk about their full size trailer sailing exploits. If you would like to watch the full version it is on YouTube, just click here –

[Tom Tit Talk](#)

Otherwise here is the short version. It all started because we had to work for a living and sailing up and down the Solent had become boring but going further afield would mean taking more time off work and having favourable weather.

TomTit is an Itchen Ferry, built in teak. She was built in 1894 by Ernest Cave who worked at the yard that became Camper Nicolson, probably built with wood “borrowed” from the yard.

She already had her own articulated trailer, paid for by her first winter in a barn instead of a boatyard. The Holy Grail of wooden boat festivals to us was always the Risør Trebatfestival and in 2002 we borrowed a 320HP Volvo F89 artic tractor unit and off we went. I

should admit here that in my youth I was an international lorry driver and had just this lorry, at that time in the Seventies, the latest and fastest on the road. We took our own supplies of alcoholic beverages as those of you who have visited Norway will know the cost of living is unbelievable. The trip was a success, Susan agreed to take her HGV test so we could share the driving (I still get him to do the tricky bits – S). We bought the Volvo from the friend who had lent it to us and we went south to the Voiles de St Tropez (Nioulargue). Again fun, though we didn’t win against the likes of the huge Fifes such as Cambria and Mariquita, but it was quite an experience to be in the same fleet – or some distance behind it! There were some very smart parties!

Susan then fancied a mountain holiday for a change, so off we went again trailing the boat behind the lorry over the Alps to Lac Lemman in Switzerland.



*TomTit - The Trailer Sailer (Photo Mike Phillips)*

Now you would expect that an inland lake, even a large one, would be generally calmer than the sea. But not that summer – the first hurricane for 100 years assailed us – fortunately we were not out on the water. In a way it was worse as we were all enjoying our celebratory dinner in a tent – soon a blacked out swamped tent.

This set the precedent and every year we chose a new destination. Some closer like Crinan (permanent drizzle), the Morbihan (we did over 10 knots there!), Milford Haven and some further away like the Robbe & Berking Regatta in the Baltic where we discovered Death of an Aunt as a warming drink – google it (I did! The drink consists of cocoa, sometimes accompanied by cream, and a shot of rum, Ed).

We did investigate the USA, it was perfectly feasible with RoRo ships running Southampton to New York or Halifax, Nova Scotia, however the potential cost was too high so we flew over instead and crewed on other people's boats in Camden, Castine and Eggemoggin Regattas.

In 2008 it was Susan's turn to wear the rose tinted spectacles and she (no – we! S) bought the Myra, a 50 foot 1893 steam schooner in need of TLC.

Too much TLC as it transpired so we were pleased when a Dresden shipyard asked to buy her. Unfortunately the yard went bankrupt so the poor Volvo had her longest trip yet when we drove to Dresden on the Czech border and towed her back home, a 2000 mile round trip. Myra is now in the Ramsgate Maritime Museum, so hopefully her future is assured. We never did get to sail/steam in her.

After the Myra interlude, TomTit raced at Cowes and visited Douarnenez for the Temps Fete.



*Festival at Douarnenez (Photo Mike Phillips)*

When we retired from work we built a house on the Tamar at Weir Quay and that is now her home port.



*TomTit at Weir Quay (Photo Mike Phillips)*

If any other Old Gaffer is considering "trailer sailing" a boat over 2.5 tons (the realistic maximum for a 4x4 car) we would be pleased to talk about costs (less than you might think) and practicalities.

The evening was completed by Paul Jolley thanking Mike & Susan for the talk.



*Myra, Steam Schooner (Photo Mike Phillips)*

## Lunch and presentation at Fowey Gallants on Sat 12 Feb

### Presentation on "The Troy Story - Barbara and her sisters"

Tim Price



*Troy Dinghy "Barbara" (Photo Marcus Lewis)*

Thirty two members enjoyed a lunch followed by a talk on the "Troy Story – Barbara and her sisters" by Marcus Lewis a Fowey Boatbuilder. The lunch was as delicious as we have come to expect from the club's caterers and allowed us, replete, to sit back and enjoy the talk.

The Troy story started when Sir Charles Hanson wanted a boat for his daughter to race competitively and to beat a Polruan sailor who was winning all the cups in the handicap fleet. Archie Watty a Fowey Boatbuilder started building a boat with a lead keel in 1928. The local Bank Manager was so impressed by what he saw that he also ordered one and both boats raced very competitively in 1929. The results attracted 4 other purchasers so that by the 1930 season 6 boats were afloat. The Owners formed an association and approached Sir Arthur Quiller Couch to use the name of Troy for the new class of yacht. Sir Arthur was Commodore of the Royal Fowey Yacht Club and had written "The Astonishing History of Troy Town" based on Fowey.

Marcus was very familiar with the Troys and discovered that "Janet" (Troy no 3) had travelled to Gateshead via Norfolk, Ipswich and Blyth over the years up to 1984. She had had a cabin built by Jim Bell and was starting to look worn. Marcus and friends bought the boat for £500 and, with the unsuspecting help of the AA relay, managed to get her back to Fowey and, without the cabin, race worthy once more.

In 1985 Marcus discovered that "Barbara" (Troy 12) had moved from Fowey to Padstow and then sailed up to the Hebrides as part of an outward bound centre. Sadly she was swamped on the beach and was in a very poor state of repair. Always willing to accept the challenge of a free boat, Marcus went up on a recce in 1990 and managed to get the Navy and Airforce on Benbecula to load it into a Landing craft which was going back to Marchwood. The Navy had problems loading the fragile shell onto a ship and it sadly ended up in 3 sections. Eventually they docked at Fowey and the pallets craned off. The lead keel was stored in Marcus' garage but the other significant elements were kept in a friends barn roof between 1991 and 2014.

2014 saw the beginning of the rebuild, Marcus having managed to build 6 new Troys for customers in the last 18 years, he eventually managed to start own his own. It was during the 2020 Lockdown that he managed to complete the re-construction, relaunching "Barbara" in May 2021. The renovation is one of the contenders for a classic boat award 2022. See: <https://awards.classicboat.co.uk/restoration-of-the-year-under-40ft/>.



*Barbara in the Hebrides (Photo Marcus Lewis)*

The OGA President was on hand to thank Marcus for his inspiring and heartwarming story and wished him luck in the classic boat awards.

## SWOGA Recent New Members

I hope that I have included all recent new members. If I haven't, please contact me – Ed

### Phil Gogdel

Phil's most recent boat was a 55ft Bristol Pilot Cutter replica called Annabel J which took part in the 2013 OGA50 Round Britain flotilla. He ran the boat as a charter/ sailing holiday business and sold her in 2014 when he retired and moved to Devon. He and his partner Liz bought "Our Boys" which is a fishing Lugger, from Looe dated 1903. She is an engine-less, 2 masted lug rigged fishing boat. "Our Boys" had a very long fishing career as she didn't retire from fishing until the mid 1970's. Prior to this, as a member of the Royal Navy, He sailed the RN yachts and raced for the RN. Liz owned a small clinker yacht called "Carronade", similar to a folk boat, designed by MG Duff of the anode fame.

Finally, for a short time, Douglas managed some so-called 'Super-yachts' for their owners including the J Class, Shamrock V. Today he owns "Solveig" a Ness Yawl, built in 1995 and



*Solveig (Photo Douglas Clark)*

rigged as a balanced lug, rigged as a loose footed, fully battened standing lug with a small mizzen similar to Nigel Iren's Romilly design.

### Michael Wood

Michael is between boats, moving to a Norfolk Gypsy 19'10" ("Pelican IV") which is replacing his Cornish Shrimper. He has a drying mud mooring in Salcombe so does not trailer sail. Although his boat is based in South Devon, he lives in Bristol. He is also a member of the Dinghy Cruising Association from his Drascombe and Character Boat days, now into dinghies with lids!



*Our Boys (Photo )*

### Douglas Clark

Douglas comes from a seafaring family and his first memories of sailing was on the River Avon at Tewksbury, *(where I sailed for a while – Ed)* later sailing a Tutor-Ten (Heron) dinghy, a National Twelve and Merlin Rocket, usually at Clevedon SC. He joined the Merchant Navy as an Engineer Officer and ended up in Norway for three years on shipbuilding projects. While there he crewed on a Half Tonner in Kristiansand.

## Don Thompson

Most of Don's working life has been spent at sea, having grown up in Western Australia and later settling in Jersey, fishing SW waters in a 20 meter Breton built, oak on oak trawler and racing Hobie 16s for pleasure. The next boat was an historic 1902 built Dutch sailing "Tjalk Sfinx" 19.20 meters length. As retirement approached, he acquired and raced a composite built, but very traditional, Ed Burnett designed 30' gaff cutter "Foxhound" along with the open 23' Heard built, Falmouth working boat "Lena".



*Foxhound Under Full Sail (Photo Phil Brown)*

## Chris Forrest

Chris is a member of the Dinghy Cruising Association, as its newish Public Relations Officer. He has a 20ft Swallow 'Bay Raider Expedition', (yawl rigged, traditional looks but not a gaffer) called Albatross bought in 2021. With three other Swallow boats, they cruised from Torquay to Plymouth and up the Lynher river last August living aboard for a week. His wife Anna loved it so much that she insisted they keep Albatross for 'best' as a trailer sailor and get a second, more knockabout boat to sit on their mooring in West Bay harbour. Within 48 hours, before she could change her mind, he bought a gunter rigged, tan sailed, 1980s vintage 16ft Falmouth Bass Boat; "Motley Croo" which they love to pieces. Chris added "It's funny how the smaller the boat the more fun you have". They hope to bring Motley Croo to some OGA small boat events, most likely on the Dart or Poole harbour.



*Motley Cru and Owner (Photo Chris Forrest)*

# From our members

## My Sprintsail Rigged Open Canoe "Orca" in the Highlands

**Tony Laurillard**

Some years ago a friend and I planned an open canoe expedition from Fort William, through the Great Glen to Inverness. Unfortunately, he succumbed to pancreatic cancer and in his



Launch Site at Glenfinnan (Photo Tony Laurillard)

memory I planned to paddle/sail from Glenfinnan at the head of Loch Shiel, about 15 miles west of Fort William, out into the Atlantic, around the Moidart peninsular, and back towards the starting point via the Sound of

Arisaig, Loch Aliort and Loch Eilt. This would be a trip of around 50 to 60 miles taking four days.

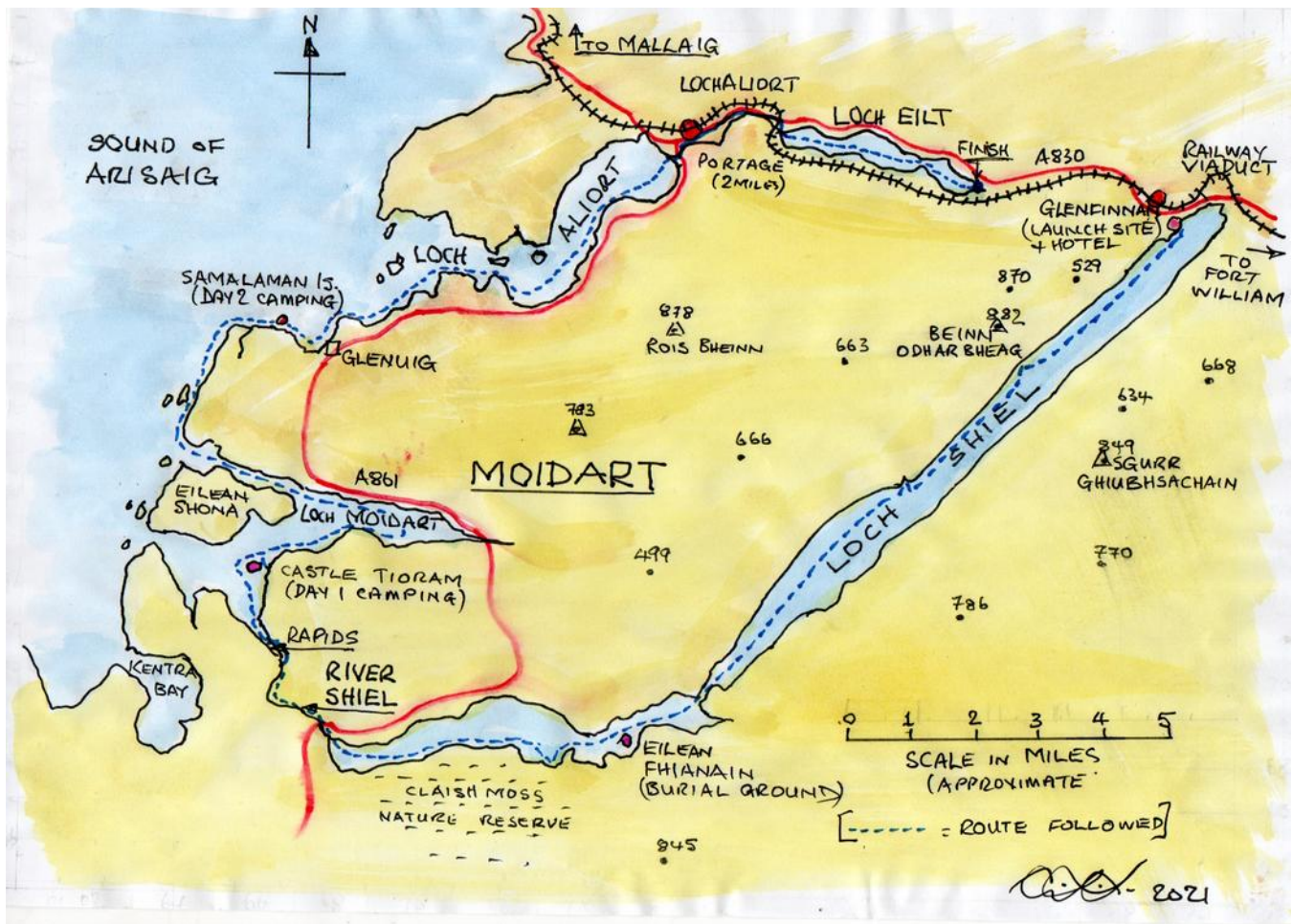
### Timings

Between late May and late September midges are a real problem, in addition, the weather should not be westerly to avoid the exposed coast and cliffs at the western end of the Moidart. After an incident filled 600+ miles drive from my home near Saltash to Glenfinnan, I arrived very late and elected to sleep in the car near my proposed launch site.

### Day 1

Tuesday dawned fine, clear with almost no wind, and by 7am I was afloat and started from the slipway behind the Glenfinnan House Hotel.

Loch Sheil is 20 miles from its head to where the River Sheil debouches into the sea Loch Moidart. The loch banks were mostly steep tumbled rocks, but after a couple of hours paddling I stopped for a full fried breakfast on a driftwood fire.



Route Map (Drawn by Tony Laurillard)



*Sprit Sail Rig (Photo Tony Laurillard)*

The forecast NE'ly wind was picking up and I was more than happy to rig my sail. This is about one square metre of light spinnaker cloth with a sleeve over a bamboo cane mast that drops through the forward carrying handle into a chock glued to the bottom of the hull. The other bamboo spar, a sprit, is slotted onto a pin on the mast at the tack and into a pocket in the sail at the peak. With the sheet held by my toes, I have my hands free to use a paddle to steer, or as a dagger board when reaching. However, with wind from astern I can steer just by moving my body forward or back. The small changes in trim and underwater shape, coupled with sail adjustments, are sufficient to make small course changes. It is a simple, perhaps rather crude set up, and "real" canoe sailors may sniff at my rig because I can't tack through the eye of the wind. But it was cheap and has saved a lot of paddling effort on longer voyages. It is my mini-gaffer ...!

The scenery was stunning with the mountains rising in places to over 800 metres on both sides of the loch. A young golden eagle soared overhead. About a third of the way down the loch, I met a group of fellow adventurers, with two open canoes, just about to break camp. The three younger paddlers were part of a

Ceilidh Band that would be putting on a performance at the Glenfinnan House Hotel later in the week.

Loch Shiel narrowed to not much more than 100 yards as I passed the Claish Moss nature reserve. The golden eagle was again overhead so I took a break. Soon after setting sail again, my rig collapsed - the spars were fine being very bendy - but the glued chock at the foot of the mast

became un-glued. So that was the end of lazy sailing, and I had done over fifteen miles with hardly a paddle stroke in anger.

At its southern end the loch narrows and at the mouth of this river formed white water rapids, depending on the height of the tide. Soon I heard the roar of the rapids, I turned round as fast as I could and hugged the bank and just made it against the stream. A reconnaissance on foot immediately told me that this was not a rapids to tackle alone in a loaded canoe!



*Falls at River Shiel (Photo Tony Tony Laurillard)*

The portage, using a fold-up wheeled trolley, was only a couple of hundred yards and re-launching across seaweed covered mud and was quite straightforward. Right ahead were the ruins of Castle Tioram, on a tidal island with a dry spit of land connecting it to the steep wooded shore.

The adjacent banks were all mud at what must have been nearly low water. I paddled around the castle isle and found on its north side a firmer sand/mud beach which was fine for using my trolley again. With my tent pitched above the high tide line I explored the castle surrounds. The castle was closed in 1998 as part of the curtain wall had collapsed. It was set on fire in 1715 by the chief, Allan McDonald, to prevent it falling into government hands during the Jacobite uprising, and has never been used since.

## **Day 2**

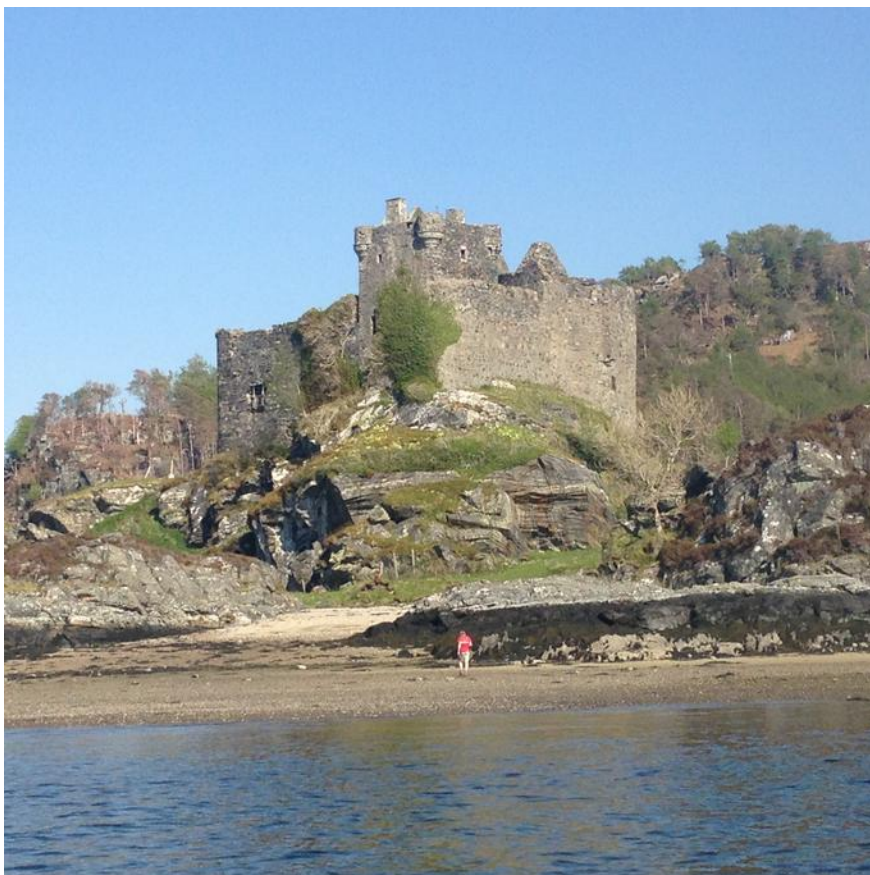
Next morning dawned fine with a cloudless sky. It was going to be another hot one but the wind was still from the north east so paddling out into the Atlantic to get into the Sound of Arisaig would still be calm and safe. After a cooked breakfast, I packed up and set out to explore

Loch Moidart. The wide entrance to this loch is sheltered by a number of islands and the Northern Channel, being much narrower, seemed a more interesting route to the sea.

After leaving Loch Moidart and following the steep black rocky coast northwards, I saw a white sand beach protected by a couple of small offshore islands. The only landing I had seen for miles where I stopped to make sandwiches and a hot drink.

As I rounded the north western headland of Moidart the wind in my face told me I was going to have quite a hard paddle for ten miles or so until I got into the lee of the land nearer the head of this sea loch. The hamlet of Glenug a few miles ahead had a pub which was open and served food and drinks which were excellent and fortified me for the hard push the next day. The small island off the adjacent cove had just enough level ground to pitch my tent.

I found that the battery on my phone, and therefore my camera, was dying. I had a backup battery but stupidly left the connecting lead in my car.



*Castle Tioram (Photo Tony Tony Laurillard)*

### Day 3

An early start with around fifteen miles of paddling and several miles of portage was the target for this final day.

The wind, though not strong, was dead on the nose, and I followed the shore closely, gaining some lee in places. The rising tide had no strength in this wide sound, but as Arisaig becomes Loch Aliort and narrows to a couple of hundred yards, the tide race overfalls close to the rocky shore and with opposing wind, were as dramatic as they were daunting. I managed to paddle and tow my canoe around the seaweed covered rocks and avoid the risk of the tide race. By the middle of the day I had reached the head of the loch and the River Aliort, which flows down from the next loch. I dragged everything up the embankment to the road bridge overhead to re-stow in the canoe and ready for the two mile portage to Loch Eilt. The Lochaliort Inn just happened to be at the top of the climb and it was downhill to Loch Eilt, though working out how to get on the water was a bit tricky.

This valley is the route for the railway from Fort William to Mallaig and is the route for the steam train, The Jacobite, described as the greatest railway journey in the world. It was made famous as the "Hogwarts Express" in the "Harry Potter" films, and particularly the shots of the train crossing the Glenfinnan Viaduct at the head of Loch Shiel. As I was paddling Loch Eilt, this train chugged past on the way to Mallaig. The head of the loch was as far as I could paddle on this circular journey. It was either a four mile portage back to Loch Shiel, or leave the canoe and walk/hitch a lift. As predicted in these parts, the second car stopped and the driver turned out to be the

driver of The Jacobite that had earlier past me in the loch!

By early evening, I had recovered the canoe and all my gear, booked into a B&B for the night and also booked a table at the Glenfinnan House Hotel for my evening meal.



*Samalamen Island Camp Site (Photo Tony Laurillard)*

A late night in good company, with good music and perhaps one too many drams of Laphroaig, was a fitting end to this adventure.

## Flags and clothing – Show That You Belong

**Paul Jolley**



OGA Logo

<http://www.rivieraembroidery.com>.

Further details can be found in The Gaffers Log or on the OGA website.

Our own Southwest Gaffers clothing range is available from Logos and

Monograms of Brixham [lmobltd@gmail.com](mailto:lmobltd@gmail.com). The most popular items are polo shirts, fleeces and rugby tops embroidered with our Southwest Gaffer Log. T shirts with a printed logo are also available.

Boat names can be added to embroidered items at no extra cost.



SW Gaffers Logo

Be proud and fly the flag! It is important that we are seen in order to gain more members and raise our profile in the various harbours and clubs that we visit. OGA house flags, burgees and a range of OGA branded clothing are available from Riviera Embroidery Designs



OGA Flag

## WhatsApp Group

**Paul Jolley.**



For the forthcoming season why not put yourself on the "Southwest Gaffers at Sea" WhatsApp Group. Founded following the very successful use of the app during the OGA South by Southwest 'Cruise in Company' a

few years ago, this is a great way to keep in touch when afloat. As soon as you leave your mooring let other members know you are sailing and your plans; there is always a chance to hail another boat or meet for a sundowner at the end of a day's cruising.

The app has proved useful for boats keeping in touch and especially useful when members have experienced gear failure when a local member can often help with local contacts. It should be stressed however that the app is only for use at sea and is not intended to be a regular means of communication amongst members – the clue is in the name "at Sea"!

If you would like to join the group just text a message with your name and boat to Paul at 07711 532886 or send email to [secretary@southwestgaffers.org.uk](mailto:secretary@southwestgaffers.org.uk) with your telephone number.

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## Stop Press

*We have owned the Hillyard 2-1/2 tonner "Margaret Ann" (OGA No.1173) since 2000 and have failed to complete her restoration. She is now in desperate need of someone to take her on. Details and pictures at <https://tinyurl.com/y6t4f948>.*

*In hope Peter & Elspeth*

[peternelspeth@peternelspeth.uk](mailto:peternelspeth@peternelspeth.uk)

# Programme of Events

## South West Gaffers 2022

| Date             | Time  | Event                                                                                                                                                     | Contact                                                                            |
|------------------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thu 20 Jan       | 19:30 | Get together at Turtley Corn Mill, Avonwick                                                                                                               |                                                                                    |
| Sat 12 Feb       | 12:30 | Lunch and presentation at Fowey Gallants on<br>"The Troy Story - Barbara and her sisters"                                                                 |                                                                                    |
| Tue 1 Mar        | 20:00 | Zoom Talk by Vic Love - "Edna's Odyssey 2020"                                                                                                             |                                                                                    |
| Sat 2 Apr        | tba   | Fitting Out Lunch at Royal Western YC and<br>talk by Colin Bower "Paint Tin and a Helicopter,<br>painting lighthouses "                                   | <a href="mailto:events@southwestgaffers.org.uk">events@southwestgaffers.org.uk</a> |
| Sat 28-29 May    |       | * Brixham Heritage Regatta                                                                                                                                | <a href="http://www.brixhamheritageregatta.uk">www.brixhamheritageregatta.uk</a>   |
| Fri 17-19 Jun    |       | * Falmouth Classics                                                                                                                                       | <a href="http://www.falmouthclassics.org.uk">www.falmouthclassics.org.uk</a>       |
| Mon 20-23 Jun    |       | Helford Rally This event usually includes a BBQ,<br>race and supper at Port Navas.                                                                        | <a href="mailto:dj.garman@btinternet.com">dj.garman@btinternet.com</a>             |
| Fri 1-3 Jul      |       | * Sea Salts & Sails                                                                                                                                       | <a href="http://www.seasalts.co.uk">www.seasalts.co.uk</a>                         |
| Mon 4-6 Jul      |       | SW Gaffer Plymouth Rally, based at QAB.<br>This event includes the South West Annual Race,<br>supper and entertainment and a planned cruise in<br>company | <a href="mailto:events@southwestgaffers.org.uk">events@southwestgaffers.org.uk</a> |
| Sun 10 to 16 Jul |       | * Classic Channel Race - Dartmouth to Paimpol.<br>There are a further 2 races to Cameret and then<br>on to La Rochelle ending on 24th July.               |                                                                                    |
| Thu 14-17 Jul    |       | * Douarnenez Festival Temps Fetes                                                                                                                         | <a href="http://www.tempsfete.com">www.tempsfete.com</a>                           |
| Tue 26-29 Jul    |       | * Fowey Classics                                                                                                                                          | <a href="http://www.foweyclassics.com">www.foweyclassics.com</a>                   |
| Fri 5-7 Aug      |       | River Dart Rally (including Dittisham Regatta)                                                                                                            | <a href="mailto:gilbert.hayward@btinternet.com">gilbert.hayward@btinternet.com</a> |
| Sat 27-28 Aug    |       | * Dartmouth Gaffers Race                                                                                                                                  | <a href="http://www.dartmouthsailingweek.com">www.dartmouthsailingweek.com</a>     |
| Sat 24 Sep       |       | * Brixham Heritage Rally                                                                                                                                  | <a href="http://www.brixhamheritageregatta.uk">www.brixhamheritageregatta.uk</a>   |

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