

OGA Trophies and Awards 2021 – Winners and Citations

Cape Horn Trophy – Dave and Brian Rockall, Three Brothers

Outstanding seamanship performed by an individual such as a rescue.

On 03 September 2021, at the end of the Solent Area Old Gaffers Race, the sailing fishing boat Three Brothers was dis-masted. The way in which her crew responded to the situation, exhibiting the highest standards of seamanship and self-reliance, is the subject of this nomination for the OGA's Cape Horn Trophy on behalf of the three owners.

The Three Brothers was built in the early 1900s as an open fishing boat. She is 28' overall with a beam of 9'6" and is rigged as a gaff cutter with a fidded topmast. She has been campaigned for the last 50 years or so by her owners Dave, Alan and Brian Rockall, who are indeed three brothers, from their base in Littlehampton, Sussex. She has voyaged far and wide, attending the Festival of the Sea at Leith in Scotland in 2003 as part of a circumnavigation of the country.

Boatyard maintenance has for all that time been beyond her owners' inclinations, and probably their means. The seaworthy boat you see today is a tribute to their unrelenting efforts of the last several decades. It is worthy of note that the three owners are all in their 80s.

At the end of the race, Three Brothers' mast broke just below the spreaders and the trestle trees, topmast and whole rig went over the side, leaving only the unstayed lower mast standing. They proceeded to gather together the running and standing rigging preparatory to hoisting the wreckage aboard. The sheer weight of the rig was a problem and a tackle was rigged on the mast about 10 feet off the deck to give some height for the lifting strop. This alone required chimpanzee-like agility from the octogenarian crew.

Two other competing gaffers stood by, unable to come alongside and help owing to the wreckage, but active in alerting the Coastguard. However, the Gosport independent inshore lifeboat had been listening on VHF Ch16 and launched. By the time she arrived, the brothers had recovered all the wreckage except the heaviest section of topmast and trestle trees, and with the help of a couple of strong young men from the lifeboat all was brought aboard and secured.

Now able to motor home to join the after-race party, Three Brothers set off in company with one of the standby boats, whilst the other led the way to prepare a berth. Once alongside a friendly boat in Bursledon's Elephant Boatyard, the three set to work to secure everything so that they could complete the job and motor home to Littlehampton in the morning. This was accomplished successfully and they joined in the party, admittedly rather late, as if nothing had happened.

Throughout the whole episode, there was no panic or fuss and the three men moved methodically about the boat sorting, recovering, repairing, coiling and stowing, accepting little more help than the proffered cups of tea. No thoughts of calling the lifeboat – that was considered and discarded by the standby boats. Whilst the help of the Gosport lifeboat was gratefully received as it made it possible to get into safe harbour before dark, the three men would have completed the job unaided. This is in the finest traditions of seamanship – skill, patience, hard work and self-reliance.

The tragic finale is that Alan Rockall had just completed scarfing a new section into the lower mast when he caught Covid-19 and died in autumn of 2021. It is felt that the Cape Horn Trophy should be awarded to the remaining two brothers in recognition of the superb seamanship exhibited by the three together.

David Cade Memorial Trophy - Anthea Connor & Des O'Meara (NE)

A most outstanding contribution to the Association during the Year over and above the call of duty.

The South West Area would like to nominate the Des O'Mara (President of the North East Area) and Anthea Connor (Secretary of the North East Area) for the David Cane Memorial Trophy for their outstanding contribution to the Association over and above the normal call of duty. This proposal is seconded by the North West Area.

They fully embraced the principal of rotating the OGA AGM around the constituent countries on the basis of it being held at a place with significant maritime history and good communication links. They also carried on with the philosophy that the weekend should embrace a social/historical element and showcase the region in which the AGM is held.

They have under extremely difficult circumstances organised the 2021 AGM weekend, which was postponed by Government restrictions but never the less carried on bringing the arrangement forward to 2022 without knowing that we would all be facing various restrictions and limitation on travel and socialising, varying from country to country.

The 2022 AGM is taking place having required a lot of additional effort on the part of the organisers and still promises to be a great weekend for those attending, undoubtedly will be a success and set the standard for next year's event.

Undoubtedly Des and Anthea have worked very hard over and above the normal call of duty to organise the 2022 AGM. For this they should be suitably recognised by the Association.

PAUL JOLLEY,
President, Southwest Gaffers.

Jolie Brise Trophy - Paul Keogh

A significant contribution to Gaff Rig

The Jolie Brise Trophy is awarded for a significant contribution towards Gaff Rig. As a member of the original building team, skipper, sailing manager and general "keeper-of-the-show-on-the-road" for the Galway hooker, Naomh Crónán, for over 25 years DBOGA nominates Paul Keogh for the Jolie Brise Trophy.

Paul's involvement with the Naomh Crónán began at the latter part of her construction period (1992-1997) when he was part of the building team. He then succeeded Stefan O'Laoire as skipper in 2002/3 having crewed and maintained her since her launch in 1997. It is one thing to help build an iconic gaff rigged wooden boat but to combine that with 20 years of stewardship and acting as the "glue" that kept her sailing and maintenance co-operative together through "thick and thin" is a significant achievement in the promotion of the Gaff Rig. While the few Galway hookers that were based on Ireland's east coast migrated to the west of Ireland during the 1980's and early 1990's the Crónán, moored on the Liffey, abeam Dublin Port's North Wall Lighthouse from 1997, became a beacon and much loved symbol of a uniquely Irish sea-going tradition to east coast based sailors and

Dublin commuters.

For over 18 years under Paul's hands-on supervision the Crónán visited OGA regattas on both sides of the Irish Sea and the Isle of Man as well as making longer passages to international maritime festivals such as Brest and Douarnenez in France. The Crónán's extensive attendance at these sailing events, often with crew members aboard who had not sailed gaff rigged boats before, hugely promoted the Gaff Rig and persuaded many onlookers and first time crew members to take an active interest in gaff rigged boats. Paul is a very active member of DBOGA and has served on its management committee for many years. He has served as President and has forged strong links between DBOGA and the Galway hooker sailing associations based on Ireland's west coast.

When the time came for the Crónán to be cared for by a new cooperative it was Paul who masterminded her transfer to the custodianship of the charity Bádóirí an Cladaigh (Cladagh Boatmen) in July 2020 for youth sail training duties. For some months prior to her handover Paul and his cooperative members carried out an extensive refit on the Crónán, at their own expense, (which had been their maintenance modus operandi for the last 23 years). The contract of sale to Bádóirí an Cladaigh needed a monetary value declared and despite her insurance value of 85,000 euros she was sold for 100 euros which was then promptly donated to Howth RNLI by Paul.

The story of the building of the Crónán, its subsequent sailing adventures and its transfer to the Bádóirí an Cladaigh is being recounted in Gaffers Log. Part 1 (Issue 106: Summer 2021), Part 2 (Issue 107: Winter 2021) and the final part will be in the next issue. The adjudicators of this award are recommended to read these articles for more background to this incredible story of a significant contribution to the Gaff Rig. A draft of Part 3 is available should the adjudicators require it.

Darryl Hughes
Hon Sec DBOGA

Gaffers Tales Award - Stuart Anderson, for his article about restoring Stargazy, his family's Cornish Crabber Mark I.

The best contribution to the Gaffers Log

Stu contacted me out of the 'green-blue' in July 2021 with an offer of an article for the Gaffers Log, about Stargazy and her restoration. I immediately fell for his enthusiasm and energy and of course for Stargazy herself, and asked him to submit a piece.

The result was published, with very little editorial effort, in Gaffers Log Issue 107 in Winter 2021. From an Editor's perspective, an engaging story, told by an enthusiastic writer, with a clear purpose and of lasting benefit to the OGA's cause. Here, pour encourager les autres, is Stu's initial approach to the Editor – that's the way to do it!!

"I wondered for the next edition of 'Gaffers Log' if you would like any articles? I've just completed a 7 month restoration of my Crabber MK1 called 'Stargazy'. All documented in photos (some examples attached) and I'd happily write an article if you wanted and send over photos. It nearly broke me!! What started as a deck replacement turned in to most of the woodwork. Luckily the hulls are GRP, but the wood on the entire boat was pretty bad. Still not quite finished inside- but she's on the water and we are just about to have two weeks in her floating around the Tamar! Let me know if you are interested... Stu"

Tales of Sail Award – Claudia Myatt

The best contribution to the Gaffers Log and associated media content

Nominated by Beverley Daley-Yates

This award is made to a Member who complements publishing in print with online contributions. An East Coast OGA Member is currently spending her second winter (well, summer really) in the Southern Ocean! Having sailed a gaffer round the Horn in December 2019, she is now on passage from the Falklands as Artist in Residence to the Friends of Scott Polar Research Institute aboard, not on a gaffer, but HMS Protector.

The past two years have been challenging for us all, but our winner has provided an excellent collection of material both online and in print to promote life on the water. Members may remember reading 'Sketchbook around the Horn' in Gaffers Log, based on a blog in four parts 'Oceans and islands' and later published as a book 'Sketchbook Sailor' in late 2020. From her base on the River Deben, Suffolk, Claudia Myatt complements publishing in print with a range of online contributions on her blog and her active Facebook presence.

Visit Claudia's blog for 'Oceans and islands' as well as many excellent, readable musings on sketching, sailing, paddling, living through 'lockdown' and, most recently, a period of quarantine before setting off for the Antarctic again.
<https://www.claudiamyatt.co.uk/blog/>