

## South West Gaffers

Promoting Gaff Rig Sailing in the

South West Branch of the



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

# The Dog Watch

For the Sea Dogs of the South West

Issue 50

March '23

## Welcome

Nick Fox has done a grand job of keeping our newsletter going this last year but due to other pressures he has sadly had to hand the role of Editor back to me. So, I will keep the seat warm while the next editor considers when he or she will step forward.

We are having a bit of a problem with involving you, our members to come forward and share the tasks which need doing to keep your Region alive and vigorous. I'm sure you all want friendly, lively get togethers with other boaty minded colleagues, listening to the banter, hearing those unbelievable tales and a having a good chortle. So, we need you to help keep it all going.

This year is looking fairly busy. Not only do we have our usual events but we are the stopover port for the RBC 60 fleet. Also South West Gaffers is 50 years old this year. And you may also note that this is the number 50 issue of Dog Watch but that's just an interesting coincidence.

You will see as you read on that we are fairly well organised to welcome the RBC fleet which at the moment comprises 17 circumnavigating boats. With regard to our SW Gaffers birthday this is to be a joint celebration of the two anniversaries.

We have mentioned other events where booking early is hoped for such as Brixham Heritage Regatta and Falmouth Classics and then added a light hearted look at dimensions and a cautionary tale of a gas problem. Also included is an offer of crewing on one of our local SW boats going on the RBC.

Do remember this is your newsletter so if you have tales to tell do please send them along.

So it's over to you, have a great sailing season.

Ed. John G

Next event 18th March

Fitting out Lunch after a Talk starting at  
11.30 at Fowey Gallants SC

## A note from the Secretary

*Tim Price*

I hope everyone has been enjoying the dry albeit chilly weather and getting their boats ready for the coming season. This year will be particularly busy with both OGA 60 and SWG 50 on top of an already busy season. Inevitably, with a number of members going around Britain, some of the events will attract fewer members but we should all enjoy the gatherings. Rob Brown has written a piece below regarding events for the year which will start off with the fitting out Lunch at Fowey on Mar 18<sup>th</sup>. The details for the lunch will have been promulgated by the publication of this issue and I will leave Rob to elaborate.

I am very grateful to Paul Jolley for his work and guidance as President over the years and his absence will leave a large hole. Any enthusiastic and willing volunteer will do much to help fill that void and I encourage anyone who has the inclination to get in touch. In the same vein, I am very grateful to John Gallagher for standing in as the Dogwatch editor until a willing volunteer can be found to take on the role. The role does not have to be filled by a sailing member but someone with the time and enthusiasm to help to maintain the information flow and build a sense of inclusion. Without such volunteers the organization will wither.

## Fitting out Lunch with Talk 18th March

*Rob Brown*

We are fortunate to have Vicky Samuels of the Britannia Trust to talk to us at the Fitting Out Lunch at Fowey Gallants. She will give her talk before lunch at **11.30**. It will last about an hour and should be fascinating. She will relate the story about a fine East Coast smack Britannia originally launched in 1915 with tales of her interesting 108 years of sailing and her essential restoration. Vicki and her husband Sam founded the Britannia Trust to facilitate her restoration and once done to give experience to others of traditional sailing.

We are always looking for speakers for our meetings and if you know of anyone with an interesting tale to tell please contact me.

The next gathering will be the Round Britain Challenge at Plymouth on 10 to 12<sup>th</sup> May. This is detailed in the following pages but here we remind you of the subsequent Heritage Regatta at Brixham.

## Brixham Heritage Regatta 27th—28th May

*Penny Jolley*

*Secretary, Brixham Heritage Regatta*

I am delighted to inform you that the entry form and details of this year's Brixham Heritage Regatta are now available on the website ([brixhamheritageregatta.uk](http://brixhamheritageregatta.uk)).

We shall have a new trophy this year, a beautiful engraved Coronation Challenge Cup - one of our 'bygones' being upcycled (I am sure the King would approve!). This will be awarded to the best newcomer boat; so please do pass on information about the regatta to anyone you know who might qualify, as well as the usual entries.

Bear in mind that ANY boat over 30 years is eligible for entry. Since the departure of Trinity Sailing and the loss of Golden Vanity, Leader and Provident we are also very keen to attract more traditional craft too. Although we do have Provident's 100th birthday party to look forward to so put on our planners (25th-26th May 2024).

This office will be closed until 18th February; if there is no acknowledgement for your entry please don't worry, I will sort them out towards the end of that month.

*A glimpse through  
the rigging.*

*Photo: Paul Jolley*



The full list of events is set out in the last page of Dog Watch issues so you can mark the dates in your diaries.

## Preparations for OGA 60 in Plymouth 10 to 12th May

We have been extremely fortunate to have such strong support from Sutton Harbour in allowing us free berthing and use of their facilities. Registration forms for boats to attend will shortly be available for both the circumnavigation fleet and those doing set legs of the cruise as well as local boats which wish to also come into the harbour. We will need to limit the number of boats coming into the mooring area at Guys Quay depending on the berthing space. We don't expect to be able to fit in any more than 30 boats.

We are making arrangements to accommodate extra boats on the Cattewater pontoons. Only a short distance away is a small pontoon at Commercial Warf which has been installed to accommodate tenders.

Skippers packs will be sent out to all skippers attending which will detail mostly what is not included in Pilot Books. Also details of places to visit in Plymouth and costings for our organised meals and general domestic information. Sutton also wish to send their personal invitation to skippers with tide times and information regarding the Port of Plymouth and entry into the harbour.

The Royal Plymouth Corinthian Yacht Club run by volunteers will keep open for us as a social centre and for skippers and crews to register and receive their goody bags. The bags from Force 4 will contain local info on facilities as well as tourist info. It's a cosy club with a bar and upstairs lounge.

OGA has prepared a brochure which will go out to all OGA members with contributions from all the regions as well as quite a bit of promotion of our activities and what the OGA is all about. This also mentions recommended tourist venues of maritime interest.

On day one at Sutton we expect most to visit what's in the locality such as the back streets of the Barbican, the Theatre, the Mayflower Museum, or Smeatons Tower on the Hoe going past the Citadel which housed Drake's Fort. The National Aquarium is also close by. Or they may wish to take the ferry round to see the Royal William Yard.

On day two we have organised group trips to the Gin Distillery the oldest in constant production since 1763 and a trip to the Box at Plymouth Museum which houses excellent displays on Plymouth's history and a array of imposing figureheads.

The evening meal on day one will be at the Box with a short talk on Figureheads on Warships. On day two the meal will be upstairs at the pier Masters House with music from the Calstock Rubber Band. We hope to have full support for these occasions from all crews with the costs of £20 pp for a two course meal. using the discounted rates, based on crew numbers We will cover the cost of the talk at the Box and the music at the Pier Masters

Departure day will be lunchtime on Friday weather permitting and we hope a vast flotilla of SW Gaffers boats and any others will accompany the fleet across the Sound and that many will go onward to Fowey.

We want to give the visit of Old Gaffers coming from afar to stop over with us a real flourish. We will be asking all skippers to ensure that their boats are dressed overall whilst in the harbour to give a fine colourful show for all to see. The Barbican area is one which was not bombed to extinction as was much of Plymouth and the many old buildings left as well as the harbour with its bars and eateries make it a top tourist attraction. We also want the occasion to be a vibrant shop window for the OGA.

Sutton Public Relations agents wish to organise all this through their Media contacts so they have written the piece on the next page which will go to all skippers and the Plymouth media and news stations. They plan to involve local TV channels to publicise us in harbour and the fleet sailing off.



*Corinthian YC. Beside the Lenkiewicz building with one of his huge murals surrounded by scaffolding*

*photo RPCYC website*



## **Sutton Harbour hosts Old Gaffers Association's Diamond Jubilee celebrations**

Sutton Harbour in Plymouth is gearing up to host the south coast stage of the Round Britain Cruise to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the Old Gaffers Association (OGA), as it turns sixty this year.

Members of the association will be heading to Sutton Harbour from 10<sup>th</sup> May until 12<sup>th</sup> May 2023. The gathering of enthusiasts will see classic boats, both large and small, sail into Plymouth and visitors to Sutton Harbour will be able to see around 20 vessels from the quayside.

Mark Brimacombe, Sutton Harbour Marina Manager, said: "We're really excited to welcome members of the Old Gaffers Association to Sutton Harbour in May. They're going to be berthed at Guy's Quay, in the heart of the old Barbican area and these boats are all based on traditional designs – most of which have evolved from the working craft of Great Britain. The boats are going to provide a wonderful backdrop to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations for the OGA60 and we're delighted to host them at our first-class facilities at Sutton Harbour."

The attraction to Sutton Harbour comes from its easy access to a wide variety of amenities that both the marina and surrounding Barbican area have to offer. Visiting crews will be able to support local businesses and make the most of the sightseeing opportunities too. That includes some organised local tours among other activities.

The Old Gaffers Association has previously centred these gatherings around Plymouth's Sutton Harbour because of the importance of the area to boat enthusiasts. Not only does it boast great facilities, but it is also because of

its position in the heart of Plymouth's historic city centre. Sutton Harbour is one of the finest places on the south-coast for heritage craft to visit, so both the boats and the wonderful historic backdrop complement each other.

All the boats are gaff rigged, which is the same rig used by many working craft over 100 years ago. Some of the of the vessels are built traditionally and made from wood. Others will be contemporary replicas built from modern materials while still retaining the traditional gaff rig.

"The OGA60 participants are thrilled to be able to stop over at such a prime location after several days at sea and enjoy their first celebration of their voyage around the UK," says Jonathan Brice, local consultant for the OGA60 Plymouth stopover.

"The OGA and the participants are most grateful to Sutton Harbour for their generous support of the gatherings by making available the berths and supporting facilities."

Evocative of a bygone era when such boats were a common sight in and around Plymouth's waters, this is an exciting time for local boat enthusiasts to enjoy the traditional vessels gracing Sutton Harbour.

Locals will be able to both welcome and send off the vessels upon their arrival and departure from Sutton Harbour and the waters of Plymouth Sound. Be sure to visit Guy's Quay from the 10th May until 12th May to join the Old Gaffers Association in celebrating their 60th Diamond Jubilee.

## Falmouth Classics 16 -18 June

*Don Garman*

June is proving to be a busy month in the port of Falmouth with the Richard Mille Cup event racing in the bay from 11- 13 June before setting off for Dartmouth on the 14th and the Classics being followed by Armed Forces Day on Sunday 24th with a number of grey ships in the port. Why not arrive early and witness the big classics racing in the bay, pop over to the Helford for the rally and return for Armed Forces day?

The Classics is attracting its usual variety of sailing craft from pilot cutters to luggers, gaff rigged cruisers and bermudan racers and cruisers. The Heather and Lay Steam and Small Boat parade on Sunday 18th will include a fleet of 12 steam boats from the Steam Boat Association as well as open boats under sail and oar. The steam boats will also be alongside in the Haven on Saturday from 11.00 - 14.00 whilst sailing craft are out racing.

There are great prizes available from Teamac, Noble Masts and Musto.

Several OGA vessels have already entered and a third of the alongside berths in the Haven are already allocated so, do not delay in getting your entry in.



*Parade of sail photo vi+amin cornwall*

*There is always a great mix of boats to see out racing Photo; Doug Jackson*



## Recent Events

### Visit to the Falmouth Marine School, lunch and boatbuilding talk 18<sup>th</sup> Feb

*Tim Price*

The SWG were welcomed to the Falmouth Marine school to see the development of Julian Wolfram's new trailer sailer. Julian is a Naval architect who had designed and built Zoe in 2016 but decided that as you get older a boat under 6m seemed a less and less attractive and comfortable proposition. He wanted a boat that could be transported on a ferry so boat and trailer together had to be not more than 8m long. This meant it had to be a boat of not more about 7.0m (23 feet) and a towing weight (boat and single axle trailer) of under 1800kg. The choice of 7m trailer sailers currently on the market is limited.

The Falmouth Marine School runs a variety of courses and apprenticeships and were keen to get students involved in a boat building project that would meet their and Julian's requirements. Simon Combes was on hand to show us around the school and elaborate on the technical details required to build the boat. The combination of Julian's requirements and Simon's skills made the visit highly informative and valuable to those with any traditional boat.

After the visit we rushed off to Castaways at Mylor for a lunch that could have been improved upon – specifically the service and delivery, before going to the Mylor yacht club for a talk by Julian.



They all seem to have at least four berths and to be designed around weekend camping for younger and fitter crews - two nights for 4 to 6 people. He only wanted two berths but he did want two generous berths, bigger than the typical sea berth. He also wanted a separate heads (with a basin) and a holding tank, a wet locker, a fixed galley with gimballed stove and sink, a cool box, a locker to hold a dinghy, an electric start engine and so on. There was nothing on the market that came close enough so he had to design and build his ideal boat.

Julian went through his design requirements and design methodology. Inevitably in every project there are compromises and Julian highlighted those choices and those that he was not prepared to give up. The link to the presentation will be included in the covering letter that distributes the Dogwatch.

The day was a fascinating insight into boat development and building from both Julian and Simon and we are particularly grateful for their time.

### How Tall are You?

*Steve Lorraine*

If I were to ask you your height the chances are that you would reply using feet and inches.

I just can't get my head around vertical distances in metres. I'm ok with horizontal measurements in metres but heights and depths leave me trying to do mental calculations.

In my case this comes from 30 years of flying around the World. We use feet for altitude except in Russia and China where we fly in metres. Modern airliners with glass cockpits make this easy with a push of a button to change the altimeter to read in metres. When in these regions air traffic control will give the wind speed in either metres/second or kilometres/hour. We just double m/s or halve kph to get familiar knots. Fuel loads are in kilograms except for the Americans who use pounds. Runway visibility, used during foggy conditions, is given in metres. So quite a mixture of units.

When coming into land the aircraft's radio altimeter (depth sounder) calls out the heights above ground in feet 100-50-30. This is particularly useful in large aircraft where the flight deck is high above the runway and high above and a long way from the main landing gear. I think unless you were French, Russian or Chinese then calling out in metres would be of little value and possibly result in firmer landings in my case!

So I can personally cope with heights and depths in feet and small horizontal distances in metres. For navigation then aviators like seamen use nautical miles of course.

I'm ok with my fuel in litres, my beer in pints, my weight in kilograms, my boat and wind speed in knots, visibility in either metres or yards, nautical distances in nm, but depths and altitudes must be in feet!

Mind you, perhaps I wouldn't have walked up Helvellyn, in the Lake District if I'd known the ascent was 3,118 ft instead of a measly 950 m!

It's a pity that in modern nautical paper charts depths are in metres, I'm not advocating fathoms but they could so easily have retained feet. In fact I understand that the oil rig industry do use decimal feet on their rigs, I guess it's the American influence. Bushels are still used in the

US and the Americans accuse us of having a five quart gallon!

Yes metres have become an international standard but aviation uses feet and so shipping could also have retained feet. My electronic charts on my iPad and charts on my plotter are in feet. My depth sounder and tide graphs/tables all display in decimal feet, which is something I can easily grasp. I do have paper charts but of course the depths are in metres.

Unless one is navigating using depth contours then surely the only real value of depth is in shallow water and in particular when choosing where to anchor. For me a depth of 2.85m say is meaningless. I want to know how deep it is and I can gauge that by my height and knowledge of the boat's dimensions which I know in feet. I have a feel for feet even though my education was in SI units. Feet seem tangible whereas metres just don't cut it for me.

It is interesting that when you ask someone what type of boat they have, they will give it in feet...a SuperBoat 38 for example. When you ask what she draws they will give it in metres yours truly then has to figure out what she actually draws!

Perhaps I'm mentally living in an era when Britannia really did rule the waves.

I don't think that's a bad thing.



Source Pinterest : [adventures-of-the-blackgang.tumblr.com](https://www.pinterest.com/adventures-of-the-blackgang/)

## Gas !! .... a cautionary tale

*John Gallagher*

With most of us having gas cooking systems on our boats I thought it apposite to relate this strange tale to you.

It all started at last year's Plymouth Rally at QAB. My crew of three had arrived so we four ancient vets, all previous workmates had gathered for our annual reunion. The catch up chatter had started but we all needed a cuppa to go with the chocky bickies. On went the kettle. I knew the gas bottle was getting low so when it refused to boil because the flame had withered then gone out it was obviously time to get out the new full bottle I had got at the beginning of the season. So all changed over I tried to light the burner again to get the kettle back on. By now we were gasping for a cuppa. But it wouldn't light. I tried again but to no effect.

Regulators are evidently the most likely culprit we decided. So, with Force 4 just a few strides away I bought a new one, this time a special more expensive "marine gas regulator". With that installed I confidently tried again to light the gas but again to no effect. So, clearly there was a real problem. With all gas switched off I had to get out the lemonade bottles it being too early to go onto the beer.

On my mooring the next day I checked my leak detector in the gas locker which was fine and then tried blowing through the pipeline using my electric tyre pump but the line seemed perfectly clear.

The cooker was the original and thus was at least 14 years old, rather worn with one of its burners rather corroded. I cleaned quite a lot of corrosion off it but still no go. So, it then became the likely culprit. Time for a new cooker. I bought a reasonable looking cooker a Tasman 4500, two burner with grill which is much the same as my old one. I had to carefully drill a couple of holes in the casing as advised in the manual to fit my current gimble arrangement. Then with all connected and brimming with confidence I lit it up. Or tried to but to no avail !

I now had tried a new sealed gas cylinder, bought a new fancy regulator and a new cooker but still I couldn't heat up a kettle! Fowey Classics was coming up so with my buddy Geoff we sailed off for a no tea or hot food trip but at least the weather Gods smiled on us. I related my sad tale to everybody in the bar who would listen but no clever thoughts were forthcoming. However, Mike Forwood's sailing mate, another seasoned Captain, Nigel was intrigued and came onto the boat to try and

rationalise what had happened. He took the used and the new cylinders out of the gas locker and then a quizzical look came upon his face. "Feel the weight of the cylinders ?" he said "I have a feeling your new cylinder weighs the same as the empty one " And so it did. Fortunately, Martin on *Roxanne* had a spare new cylinder and that got the burners flaming beautifully.

The moral to this tale is that we cannot so confidently assume a new sealed cylinder is full or hasn't a leak. I was pretty certain when I bought it in April that it was definitely heavier than the empty one, I always check before parting with my money. It was early July when I needed to use it. Quite a leak when considering the cylinder I had been using had lasted from mid summer last year.

But this is not the end of our tale of woe. Next morning Geoff was after some toast and marmalade so he turned on the grill. After about 30 seconds this was followed by the shrill piercing noise of the gas alarm. Off went the gas and all hatches were opened. Incredible, this is a new cooker. Surely nothing can be wrong with it ? After 10 minutes or so with the batteries back in the alarm and all quiet we tried lighting the grill again. About 30 seconds or so the alarm started screeching. So, it was off with the gas and a lemonade trip back home. Before taking the cooker out to send back I checked it again. I lit the grill and as before the alarm went wild. So out it came and I contacted the supplier.



My boat *Periwinkle* showing the relationship of alarm to galley area

Their engineer was off with Covid so they asked me not to send it back immediately. They would contact me. But a week passed, this was too much. I contacted them only to told they were checking with the manufacturer that I hadn't breached the guarantee by making holes in the casing for the gimbles. I was greatly unimpressed and told them to read the cooker instruction manual and I sent the cooker to them straight away with a frosty note. It was then sent onto the manufacturer where they found there was a fault with the grill and new fitments had to be installed then tested and passed. From first notification until getting back the assured safe cooker it took a month. They said they "had never encountered such a fault before" !! The cooker now works perfectly although I'm a few quid poorer than I was before.

I should add that on our return run back from Fowey we heard a Mayday about a yacht ablaze in Whitsand Bay caused by a gas problem. The crew of two had to jump



into the water and swim but were initially picked up by a nearby boat before being passed across to the lifeboat which arrived soon after. The boat burnt down and sank. Did they have a gas alarm ? Was it working ?



## Crewing Opportunity on RBC 60 Circumnavigation Boat

Dear friends and fellow sailors!

As many of you already know, in 2023, Julie and myself (and possibly Mollie the dog), are planning to sail ***Susan J*** our 28' gaff cutter, as part of the OGA 60 fleet sailing clockwise around Britain.

We are planning to do all the legs, after Plymouth, where the South West Area are hosting the fleet from Wednesday 10th May, departing on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May. We would welcome the assistance of one (maximum two) additional crew, particularly on the first two legs towards Dublin and final leg towards Ipswich, ending with the main OGA60 party, there, in early August.

This is an invitation to fellow members of the Southwest Gaffers, family and friends, as well as the wider OGA and other interested sailors, who might wish to join us on *Susan J* for one or more legs of, what we hope, will be an enjoyable and epic cruise.

*David and Julie Patuck*

Photo: Miranda Delmar-Morgan



# South West Programme of Events 2023

|                                 |                                                                                                       |                                                          |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Feb 14<sup>th</sup></b>      | <b>SW Gaffers AGM— Lunch at Fowey Gallants SC.</b>                                                    | contact: Rob Brown<br>events@southwestgaffers.org.uk     |
| <b>March 18<sup>th</sup></b>    | <b>Talk at Fowey Gallants SC by Vicky Samuels on the Rebuilding of an EastCoast Smack then Lunch.</b> | contact: Rob Brown<br>events@southwestgaffers.org.uk     |
| <b>April 27-29<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>RBC 60 starts from Ramsgate.</b>                                                                   | contact: Alison Cable<br>alison.margaret.cable@gmail.com |
| <b>May 10-12<sup>th</sup></b>   | <b>RBC 60 arrives at Sutton Harbour, Plymouth also SW Gaffers 50<sup>th</sup> Celebrations.</b>       | contact: Tim Price<br>secretary@southwestgaffers.org.uk  |
| <b>May 27-28<sup>th</sup></b>   | <b>Brixham Heritage Sailing Regatta.*</b>                                                             | contact: Penny Jolley<br>brixhamheritageregatta.uk       |
| <b>June 17-19<sup>th</sup></b>  | <b>Falmouth Classics. *</b>                                                                           | contact: falmouthclassics.org.uk                         |
| <b>June 20<sup>th</sup></b>     | <b>SW Gaffers Helford River Rally with Helford River S.C.</b>                                         | contact: Tim Price<br>secretary@southwestgaffers.org.uk  |
| <b>June 26-28<sup>th</sup></b>  | <b>SW Gaffers Festival of Sail Queen Anne's Battery, Plymouth</b>                                     | contact: Rob Brown<br>robbrown@southwestgaffers.org.uk   |
| <b>July 25-28<sup>th</sup></b>  | <b>Fowey Classics - 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary *</b>                                                 | contact: foweyclassics.com                               |
| <b>Aug 11-13<sup>th</sup></b>   | <b>River Dart Rally and Dittisham Regatta*</b>                                                        | contact: Gil Hayward<br>wearesailing@hotmail.com         |
| <b>Aug 15-18<sup>th</sup></b>   | <b>Falmouth Tall Ships</b>                                                                            |                                                          |
| <b>Aug 26-27<sup>th</sup></b>   | <b>Dartmouth Royal Regatta Gaffer Races*</b>                                                          | contact: dartmouthsailingweek.com                        |
| <b>Sept 16<sup>th</sup></b>     | <b>Brixham Heritage Rally *</b>                                                                       | contact: Penny Jolley<br>brixhamheritageregatta.uk       |

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