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The Area's bank details are unchanged:
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From the Editor

This is my first and last editorial because we have a volunteer prepared to take on this hugely important role in support of our membership.

On the front cover you will see the appointments and new email addresses that have been adopted following a change in service provider (email links are live). None of the ---@southwestgaffers.org.uk will work in the New Year so please keep this page as an aide memoire of addresses and appointments.

In this bumper edition; unsurprising as we come to the end of another full season, we have an introduction from our New President and Secretary. We find Gil Hayward reporting on the Dart River Rally and appealing for a volunteer to take it on next year. Paul Musgrove gives us advice on trailering a boat into France and then reports on his adventures. Rob Brown has gone electric having taken a huge slice out of the back end of his Tela. Penny Jolley reports on the Brixham Heritage Rally, the social media update and finally we have introductions from new members before we reach the events calendar for 2024.

This leaves me to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and New year.

Tim Price- Interim Editor



Presidential Ponderings

All those of our members attending the recent SW Gaffers AGM in Fowey will have witnessed a possible very risky decision to ask me to serve on the committee as President. Others present even voted in favour of the motion – perhaps this can only be explained by the many visible wine bottles on the lunch tables.

Perhaps I should now take a moment to introduce myself and my thoughts. For the last four years my wife Jan and I have sailed a Heard 28 out of Mayflower Marina in Plymouth. This followed some serious refurbishing of the boat, much of it during the winter of 2019 when ‘the beast from the East ‘ was not particularly helpful. Our previous sailing history was with a Drascombe longboat cruiser, followed by a Cape Cutter, and then a Cornish Crabber MK 1.

Of course I am now keen to respond and offer whatever help I can within our association. It is clear to me that sharing and encouraging the collective enthusiasm and undoubted talent of the newly established committee will be very rewarding. The spread of in house knowledge and experience looks very promising, encompassing the whole gambit from serious seafaring to in depth I.T. skills. All this with the common denominator of a love of sailing proper boats. Having talked up the potential for the future, I will of course take the flak from the committee who will now feel under pressure.

We seem to be blessed with a few new members coming over the horizon in recent months and to include some additional boats that may be active sailing in our home waters. It would be great to expand the attendance at our various events in Falmouth, Helford, Fowey, Plymouth, Dartmouth and Brixham.

Finally I would also very much like to encourage members, old and new, to come forward with ideas, comment, constructive criticism or whatever. I am always very approachable and open to discuss all matters South West Gaffers or even just talk about boats.

May you all winter well.

Martin Elliott “ Roxanne “

25-11-23

Secretarial Scantlings - David Patuck

I would like to thank Tim Price, who has been our secretary for the last three years, keeping the committee on it's toes and enlisting new blood; in particular our new President. The last year without a President has been challenging for your committee!

By way of an introduction Julie, my wife, and I live in Somerset but keep our Heard 28, "Susan J", on the Helford River. While we have been sailing around Britain this summer with the OGA60 fleet, the Plymouth Rally, Fowey Classics, Dittisham Rally, Dartmouth Gaffers race and the end of season Brixham Heritage Rally have all taken place and have been described previously or are covered in this issue.

In November the SW Area AGM was attended by 32 members plus two on Zoom. We were delighted that we have now been able to elect a new President for the Area, after a year without one, when Paul Jolley stood down. It was only then that we appreciated what an important role it is, particularly in our dealings with the National OGA. Martin Elliott, with Jan, aboard "Roxanne" their Heard 28 is already known to many of us. They bring many years of practical gaff rig experience and his own organisational skills to the table.

The existing small committee are all staying on and are busy settling into their new roles following our "reshuffle". I am delighted that Barbara Runnals has joined the committee. She is a longstanding EC Area member, a veteran of OGA RBC50, NL OGA10 and she has just circumnavigated for a second time for OGA RBC60 in her Yarmouth 23, "Moon River" single handed. We hope that one or more other members may join the committee during the year.

Who is doing what:

Rob Brown is taking on the treasurer role, from myself. Tim Price will act as interim "Dogwatch" editor. Mark Turner will now also be welcoming new members, as membership secretary, combining this with his role as social media editor and also keeping the website content more relevant and up to date. Mike Forwood will be organising some of our main events but we hope that many more informal gatherings, both on and off the water, will occur by making use of our increasingly useful social media tools, such as What's App.

Inevitably, opportunities to meet will be land based for the next few months. There are a few visits being considered around a couple of projects on the Tamar and possible illustrated talks on the recent Round Britain voyages. If anyone would like to organise a gathering, talk or visit, get in touch. As secretary, I may be able to use our resources to help.

The next big event is the National OGA AGM in Liverpool on January 13th and details have just been circulated to us all by the OGA. I am looking forward to seeing some of you at another convivial weekend in another maritime city.

Wishing you all a very a Happy Christmas

David Patuck - "Susan J"

River Dart Rally 2023 (incorporating 'Ditsum Regatta')

This was the ninth 'River Dart Rally' and we wanted it to be memorable as it was to be our swansong. Anyone organising a sailing event will be used to the vagaries of the weather and over the years we have had everything from a delayed start due to lack of wind to a 24 hour postponement because of an unseasonable Force 8 gale. The one constant has been the catering from the 'Drinks Reception' on the Friday evening, the Prize Giving and Club Supper on the Saturday to the 'Red Lion' Breakfast on the Sunday morning.

This year the Cape Cutter 19 from the Yealm, the Cape Henry 21 from Plymouth and 19' Norfolk Gypsy from Salcombe all made it to the Dart for the beginning of the Rally. Forecasts earlier in the week indicated that we would be lucky with a favourable weather window over the weekend. The weather in July and early August had been disappointing and changeable. In the event, the weather was kind on both the Friday and Sunday but the wind was too strong for the smaller boats on 'Ditsum Regatta' day. Dart Sailability's Drascombe Longboat, 'Kanata' had to withdraw from the 'Parade of Sail' as it was too windy to launch her from their base on the other side of the river at Galmpton. Most boats attempted to take part in the 'Parade of Sail' and up by the pier and pontoon at Dittisham was the calmest part of the river. Excellent photos of the Parade of Sail were taken by Emma Turner (who chose to remain on shore).

It was a different story down by the start line for the Gaffer Race off Waddeton. There were white horses on the river and it became apparent that any racing would result in capsizes, gear failure and possibly boat damage. The racing was cancelled although 'Flirt' did attempt to start and complete a lap. This year we attracted three Francois Vivier Morbic 12s, a delightful Rushton Princess Lug rigged yawl sailing canoe (for which the conditions were not ideal), an OGA Gaffling dinghy in the capable hands of Mike Bennett (who had won the event in 2019), a Yealm Crabber, a Swallow Bay Raider, a Shrimper 19 modified with a carbon fibre mast/ cutter rig + bowsprit extended by 12" and the writer's 21' Kite class trailer sailer. The largest boat in the fleet was a Cornish Crabber 26, again with an all girl crew.



Rushton Princess Lug rigged yawl sailing canoe 'Emma'



The fleet of Morbic 12s
Photo Credit Mark Darley

The Club Room at Dittisham Sailing Club was full for the prize giving on Saturday evening. As there had been no racing 'The John Wynn Trophy' and SWG 'Grog Trophy' could not be awarded. However, Regatta Mugs, RNLI mugs and other RNLI items were all awarded to worthy winners. The Doom Bar had all been consumed and everyone was anticipating the Club Supper being provided by a local caterer. As the time for supper approached, urgent phone calls were made to see if the caterer was having difficulty finding the sailing club. All calls went to voicemail. Eventually, it became clear that the supper was not going to materialize. Plan B was to obtain takeaway pizzas from the Ferry Boat Inn, who came up trumps. Some decided to eat at home or on board their boats but everyone else was at least fed with a variety of excellent pizzas.

Some boats had to leave early on Sunday but the 'Red Lion' provided 20 cooked breakfasts in the garden of the 'Red Lion' so things were looking up. Early afternoon saw a cruise in company up the River Dart. Unfortunately, it was still too windy for the sailing canoe, but well reefed, the Morbic 12s made a fine sight. Mark Darley in the Bay Raider 20 acted as 'Mother ship' and took some fine photographs as here - Morbic 12 'Proteus' off Waddeton



Last year we divided the profit from the event between 'Dart Sailability' and 'Brixham Heritage Regatta'. This year it was agreed that any profit would be divided between 'Dart Sailability' and 'Dart RNLI'. This was estimated at £50. Everyone attending the Club Supper on the Saturday evening was offered a refund but people's amazing generosity and understanding over the supper fiasco has resulted in us being able to donate £150 to each charity. No satisfactory explanation or apology has been forthcoming from the caterer but at least there is a positive result for our chosen charities.

Dittisham Parish Council allow participants in the Rally to park campervans overnight in the 'Ham Carpark' and to pitch their tents on 'The Ham'. Dittisham Sailing Club run the Gaffer Race and allow everyone to use the club's facilities. This makes the camping a very civilised experience. Ditsum Regatta Committee regard the Parade of Sail as adding to the ambiance of the village regatta and would like us to return next year.

In 2024 'Ditsum Regatta' will be held on Saturday 17th August so put the date in your diary now! As 'Ditsum Regatta' is a week later than usual next year, Carolyn and I will be in France for a large family celebration. However, we will still be able to assist the new organisers to set up the arrangements, using our local connections with the Parish Council, Regatta Committee and Sailing Club.

The River Dart Rally is an important event for South West Gaffers as it is their main 'Small Boat' event which can also cater for the larger trailer sailers. We are sure they will want to continue it even if there have to be some changes to the format. The River Dart is a special place for small boats. If you can assist the organisers, don't be bashful, please offer your services.

Carolyn & Gil Hayward

My experiences of trailing my Shrimper 21, Dilly, to France in the late summer of 2023 gave me a greater understanding of the regulations and the way they are interpreted at Roscoff. This article is intended as a guide to others that are planning to take their trailed boats to the EU.

As you will be re-exporting your boat after your holiday (or possibly longer as you will discover below) you will be taking it into the EU under the rules for Temporary Admission (TA) which are in Articles 207 to 217 of the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/2446 (UCC-DA). There is a handy FAQ leaflet with states that:

Non-EU vessels which are intended for re-export may be temporarily be brought into and used for private purposes in the EU, or more strictly in the 'customs territory of the Union, (which includes our territorial waters) without customs duties or Value Added Tax (VAT) needing to be paid.

The boats concerned have to be placed under the 'temporary admission procedure' (TA) with Customs and the period of use in the EU is limited in time. When the time is up the boat has to leave, which in official jargon means that 'the procedure must be discharged'. The re-export of the goods from the customs territory of the Union is the usual way of ending or 'discharging' a temporary admission procedure. If the boat does not leave before the end of that time then customs duty and VAT become due.

A boat is temporarily admitted into the EU and not into one of the constituent Member States. Thus it can move from one Member State to another with no further customs formalities during the 18-month period allowed. So you can take your boat to the EU for a period of 18 months without paying any dues or VAT. The FAQs go on to state that:

*How can a yacht be placed under TA? Just crossing the frontier of the customs territory of the Union is in generally sufficient. But, you **may** be required to use a route specified by customs and they may require you to make an oral or written customs declaration. It is possible they **may** require the provision of some kind of security or guarantee to cover the payment of the customs duties and VAT that become due if the boat does not leave the EU.*

The problem for me in 2023 was that I did not know what this use of the word **may**, used twice in the paragraph above, actually meant. Would the French customs require a written customs declaration and a security or not? I couldn't find any further information on the internet and it wasn't until we were in the queue for the ferry at Plymouth that I found out we were supposed to have a form to hand to the Douane on arrival in Roscoff. I have since found the form known as the Supporting document for an oral customs declaration. The covering EU regulation states that it can be adopted as each EU state sees fit and we were very glad when the customs officer at Roscoff decided that the form was not required as we were on a three-week holiday.

It is the EU Commission's opinion that the bare act of crossing the outer EU border counts as a customs declaration, however in order to prove that you haven't had the boat in the EU for more than the 18 months allowed, the Supporting Document is needed. We found this out when we came to leave Roscoff. The customs officer this time was less amenable about a lack of paperwork and it took a discussion with someone further up the chain of command to let us on to the ferry. The forms are available in a number of languages and will be available from the SOA website. I couldn't find one in Dutch so I presume they are happy to have one in English.

You can leave your trailer boat in the EU for up to 18 months and it does not have to be accompanied. So our plan is to take Dilly to Holland in 2024 for the ISW and then leave her there before returning later in the summer to either have another few weeks sailing there or trailing her to France. If we go over the Channel in June of 2024 we will have until December 2025 before we have to repatriate her.

Boarding the Ferry

We discovered another problem on our trip to France in 2023. Brittany Ferries had asked us to be at Plymouth three hours before sailing for security. It had never occurred to me that those little CO2 canisters that blow up lifejackets when the toggle is pulled can be used to kill people and are therefore considered to be dangerous goods! That is apparently the reason why boats have to go on to the ferry last of all, presumably so you will not have sufficient time to make your gun before the ship sails? Whist I was waiting I was wondering how many of the caravans and motorhomes have things like Sodastreams and other such dangerous objects. We at least had the sense to deny we were carrying a knife of any sort. The message is that there is no point in getting to the ferry two or three hours in advance as you will be sitting there until the last minute before boarding unless you forgo the automatic lifejacket and resort to blowing it up yourself!

We also discovered that they will not allow foot passengers on to the ferry with automatic lifejackets and that the number of lifejackets you are allowed in your boat are limited. The number varies between ferry companies so you will need to look that one up.

Finally be aware of the dimensions of the boat on its trailer. The Shrimper 21 on a two axle trailer supplied by Cornish Crabbers is 8m long and exactly 2.4 m high. I was concerned about the height as Brittany Ferries have 2.4m as a limit and the exact height of Dilly was determined by the height of the towbar and hence the angle of her on the trailer. At security they do check vehicle and trailer heights using a measuring stick. We were at 2.4m.

Good luck. Any other experiences of taking trailed boats abroad will be welcomed.

Brixham Heritage Rally September 16th 2023 - Penny Jolley

Gusty conditions gave an excellent day's sailing for the dozen boats who came to enjoy the late season Heritage Rally. Most boats arrived to the Town Heritage pontoon on Friday, where they enjoyed our free mooring. These lucky crews were able to join in the Brixham Yacht Club's hospitable Happy Hour. The boats attending from South West Gaffers were Mischief and Little Tern; others were Charlie Bravo, Chopsticks, Fly, Hui Mar, Krka, Lexia, Maid of Shannon, Mary Flora and Trio.

With wind from NNE the Rally control office (our Regatta chairman, Richard Spreckley) set an excellent course, crossing over the start by Battery Point from east to west, reaching down to Elbury Cove (avoiding the mussel beds) and then back up to a mark off the Breakwater. A short beat up to the windward mark which was about 400 metres NE of this and then back down to Elbury. An ideal course for gaffers and junks – the majority of the fleet. Most boats completed the three laps, with the Colvic cruiser, Trio, taking the honours in leading and lapping! For the first time for a few years we had enough wind to have great sailing in reasonable seas.

However the weather forecast for the next few days brought threats of Storm Nigel and Little Tern was forced to leave after 2 laps and head to her berth at Noss on the Dart (and that crew had a great sail back – under 2 hours!) Skipper, SWOGA member and BHR treasurer Dave Dickens at the helm of Little Tern. Mischief scampered back to Dittisham on Sunday in much the same time; great!



Regatta Bosun shuttled crews across from the pontoon to the yacht club for party time on Saturday evening with music from Sax 'n' Soul, a lively bar and excellent supper; all the sailors were presented with 2023 Heritage Regatta mugs. The storm gave boats a bit of a bumpy night, but crews hunkered down and were able to leave in good conditions at lunch time on Sunday, with a few opting to stay on and enjoy Brixham for a few days.

Dates for your 2024 diary: Brixham Heritage Regatta - 25-26 May (Provident's 100 th Birthday celebrations) and Brixham Heritage Rally - 7 September

Trailing a Shrimper to South Brittany 2023 - Paul Musgrove

After a poor summer of sailing out of Dilly's home at Dittisham on the River Dart it was great to remember that we had booked a ferry from Plymouth to Roscoff at the end of August. The Golfe de Morbihan is known to many Shrimper owners, so our early research was helped by logs on the Shrimper Owners Association (SOA) website. Jean-Claude Devaux of the French Association of Cornish Crabbers Owners very kindly responded to an e-mail asking where he might suggest for launching. His recommendation of a yard called Le Borgne near Baden proved to be just right. After putting off phoning and using my poor French to try and arrange a lift-in for Dilly, I bit the bullet and was delighted to find out that the lady at the yard had lived in the USA for a few years and spoke perfect English. First hurdle crossed.

The second hurdle was to find out the rules and regulations about taking a boat on a trailer to the EU and the third hurdle was to getting on the ferry with dangerous goods aboard Dilly. These are not complicated but the subject of a previous article.

On the 23rd August we arrived in France to find that the Douane at Roscoff are adaptable. We then had an easy drive to the yard and launched the boat in a hurry as the tide was falling fast. We were then able to relax and settle into three weeks of sailing bliss. Our first stop was Auray at the sailing head of the river of the same name. We were worried about where we could moor but simply went alongside the town quay outside a café where we had our first café longue.



That evening we popped out of the Golfe and turned to the east to stay overnight in the huge Port Crouesty. We tried our best to communicate with the Capitainerie before entering but realised that the best method of finding a berth was to turn up! Having a sweet little Cornish Shrimper has its advantages in Brittany as the local people like traditional craft. At Crouesty and the other marinas we were met at the entrance by young people in dinghies who had the list of berths available that night and they would invariably find a nice little slot for our vessel of 6.4 metres (with the bowsprit raised). The big plastic white yachts had to make do with the crowded visitors' areas.



It was at the 1,200 berth Crouesty that we picked up our Plaisance Morbihan card. This enables you to book in easily at the Capitainerie at each marina and gives you points for each night. I didn't really believe it would work but it did; our last night was free. The card and the app, that is linked to your card, also lets you gain entry to the showers by waving the card or your phone at the electronic gizmo by the door.

The cost of marinas in Brittany was remarkable. The first night, on the 24th August, cost us €19; the shocking thing was that after the 1st September the cost dropped to €12! No longer could I use cost of marinas as an excuse to anchor for the night

Our plan for the cruise was to visit areas outside the Golfe for the first fortnight and then be inside the Morbihan for the final week so if the weather turned against us we would be near our trailer for the journey home. So on the 25th we set off for Arzal on the Vilaine river. We had a lovely sail with a following Force 5 and then met the melee outside the Barrage d'Arzal. There is a website with all the information you need to go through this large exciting lock although we didn't know that until later. Viewing the Passport Ecluse site is well worth it because it not only tells you when the lock is operating but you can also register your intention to enter it at your chosen time. The lock is governed by the tides and water level on the Vilaine so the times of opening are not regular. .

When we arrived at the lock we didn't know when it would open but the vessels milling about by the entrance looked like a maritime version of a French ski queue so we presumed that it would be soon. Then the gate opened and the rush started. Being English in a small boat we hung back as the rest made for the lock. It is large. I am told that it can take up to 30 yachts and there must have been that many in front of us in the queue but we managed to push in and tie up alongside a lovely Guernsey yacht for the passage through.



. It takes about half an hour for the whole process after which you get out on to the Vilaine which is a large fresh water reservoir masquerading as a river. It is lovely. On the 26th we sailed up river (that has little current if any) to stop at Roche Bernard for lunch and a look around before going on to Port Foloux. We tried again to make contact over the VHF before arriving but couldn't understand the lady giving us instructions. A passing English speaking Frenchman helpfully told us that all we had to do was look for the man in the "little red boat". This we did and he found us a berth between a Swiss yacht that had been across the Atlantic a couple of times and a British 36 footer. Here we discovered that the French reaction to the British after Brexit seems to be much more relaxed than we had thought. The British boat was permanently moored in the Vilaine and because it was there before 2016 the owners were granted residency status so they can come and go back to the UK as they wish. We started to formulate a plan to make use of the 18 month rule to leave our Shrimper there for some time after taking it to Holland for the 2024 International Shrimpers Week.

To be continued

Electrifying the The John and Elsie - Rob Brown



The John and Elsie' is a Tela, 18' 6" gaff-rigged dayboat. The class was developed in the 1970's from a mould taken from a 3/4 decked Barry Docks seeker boat built in 1911. The Tela is a beautifully balanced ballasted 3/4 decked dayboat but has an unfortunate design issue with regard to the outboard engine in so far as when the outboard is in use, even with a parallel tiller bar, the engine fouls the rudder when turning particularly badly to port.



The most common engine used is the Honda 2.3 longshaft which is awkward to handle and unsightly hanging off the back of an attractive traditional sailing boat. When using the engine, I had taken to removing the rudder before using the engine hanging over the small stern deck is fiddly at best.

Small outboards do not run well on E10 petrol and for best results Aspen petrol improves reliability to a safe constant. But at £5.00 per litre. I discussed my ideas with Nestaway Boats the UK agent for Epro engines. Ian Thompson was very helpful and came to the conclusion that a Epro Spirit 1 Pod Drive would give range of 10 nautical miles at 4 knots (still water) was realistic (this has since proved to be an accurate estimate). Given that I already had one battery for my dinghy outboard I decided to go for a second battery to give a fair weather range of 20 miles (Saltash to the Yealm being a good day out) on two batteries one on either side under the centre thwart.

Tela is a long keeled ballasted dayboat with centre board. The picture below shows the initial mark out to see if the pod would actually fit. I also discussed the idea with Jeremy Freeland of Collars (Freeland Spars) who currently hold the moulds. He suggested that it might be easiest to cut out the whole stern tank, fit the engine and install a new tank over the whole. In the end this did not prove necessary and we managed by cutting a hole in the top of the stern tank and fitting a waterproof hatch. The actual hole cut out was considerably larger than the hatch.



The skeg was then cut out and rebuilt. Engine controls were mounted on the forward end of the stern tank. The rudder blade had to be re-shaped to create the correct distance from the propeller. As yet I have only tested the engine a few times.



The rudder blade had to be re-shaped to create the correct distance from the propeller. As yet I have only tested the engine a few times.

The initial trial was with 38 stone of crew(!) and satisfied me that the project was a success. The second was an hour run up and down the Lynher (approx 4.5 nautical miles) which consumed approx 50% of the battery at 1,000 RPM. The following day I managed to sail in a light autumnal breeze which has satisfied me that the boats original good sailing performance has not been unduly affected.

I can't pretend it was cheap but given my lucky position of having the boat moored outside my house I am able to charge the batteries easily in the workshop. They are easy to carry weighing about 4.5 kg with a good handle. When sat on a swinging mooring it will be easy to remove the battery from the outboard and swing it into position below the centre thwart.

I have loads more photographs and am happy to chat to anyone thinking of installing an electric motor.



Dog Watch Winter 2023 Social Media update - Mark Turner Nov 23

SWG Whatsapp Group

Our collective use of Whatsapp continues to be refined. The original WhatsApp group was created solely to coordinate sailing activities so it seemed logical to rebrand this as the 'At Sea' group and add an 'On Shore' group for technical and general chat. Membership and use of both groups has remained limited so the committee have taken the decision to amalgamate the two into one group now titled 'South West Gaffers'. This now covers all aspects of member to member chat and at present has 40 members from a regional membership of around 200.

If you have a smart phone and aren't a member of the group do please sign up. This can be done three ways. We publish a QR code link here in Dog Watch which can be scanned with your smart phone camera and a weblink which can be followed to sign up. Finally if you are struggling it is very simple for me to sign you up using your mobile number. As ever, please contact me via my email if you are struggling or have any queries and I'll talk you through it.

Having taken over the membership secretary role I plan on adding new members to the group with their consent, along with a precis of where they are based, their boat and where that's kept. It would be great if existing members could welcome them especially if they are local to them or their boat as they won't be able to see any previous group chat.

The WhatsApp group is a great place to share photographs of your gaffer activities - on and off the water. Again inspiring to persuade others to get out but also incredibly useful for me as material to publicise our activities to our global following on instagram. Please do post your fettling photos this winter as they are always inspiring to others to get out in the shed/garage/workshop/boatyard.

Instagram

Our instagram feed showcases our activities not just internally to members who use instagram but also the general public worldwide. With nearly 800 followers at the time of writing I'm confident that with continued supply of material from the membership that we'll exceed 1000 followers by early 2024. Such a popular following recognises the South West Gaffers as a progressive, forward thinking OGA region and could inspire membership by local non OGA sailors.

The successful feed also adds to our credibility with outside groups and businesses when we organise events requiring support or perhaps sponsorship so the concept is well worth your support.

Again I'm very happy to advise members on how to set up their own instagram account in order to follow our own feed. That can be set to 'private' and need not require your own posts in order to follow our and other feeds of subjects that interest you.

OGA Website

You may be aware the SWG have our own pages on the OGA website and I'm now curating these. Expect regular updates on these pages for those who prefer website browsing to Instagram.

Thanks to everyone who has supported our on-line activities this year, keep up your support and if you've yet to sign up please do so, the feeds offer regular SWG updates complementary to this quarterly Dog Watch magazine.

Finally, if you have your own relevant social media feeds do let me know and I can promote them here. Congratulations to our own Social Media star Paul Cross whose You Tube coverage of the August storm in Brixham harbour on his 'Sailing Morning Vicar' channel has enjoyed over 49000 views! His own popular channel has over 1000 subscribers, well worth a look or subscribing to, especially if you are Shrimper devotee!

South West Gaffers

WhatsApp group



Our New Members



Oliver Peterken

The very first time I sailed a gaffer was in the early 70s. It was a bright red collapsible dinghy with a Gunter rig. I spent that summer day colliding with the river bank and being sworn at by the match anglers. It was my first time sailing and no one had told me how to go about. So I used the bank to stop and a cursing angler would kick my bows off. Heading over to the other side of the river, I would encounter another angler's boot.

Eventually I got down river to a bridge and could run back to the mill we were staying in. Luckily for the Stratford and District Angling Association I was restricted to a Canadian canoe for the rest of the holiday.

I must have liked it as I sailed a lot over the next 50 years in rivers, around various lakes, and then the Solent, Baltic, Med and Caribbean in both dinghies and yachts. But I must confess it was all triangular mainsails (and even a Bermudian in Bermuda) punctuated by the occasional encounter with a gaffer. There was a magical evening sail in a Herreschoff dinghy on the River Mystic. After that it was back to fractional rigs, spinnakers and, joy of joys, in-mast furling mainsails.

I like to think that day on the Avon planted a seed. As many years later I am sailing a gaff-rigged dinghy again. So if you see Cornish Coble number 344 tacking out of Mylor give me a hail.

Andy Mcharg

Keen to get back into sailing after retirement, through the years 2015/16/17/18, I attempted to join in with the 'club' racing the Olympic Star class at Viareggio, Tuscany. It was an odd style of racing, that had us waiting out in the start area for the ideal breeze, and getting the course set perfectly into wind – but the factor that confounded my attempts completely was that my fellow contestants believed in splashing out another 40-50,000 Euros on their next new boat/sails quite regularly, which in that kind of shiny boat would make all the difference. Never mind, lesson learned, I bowed out - gracefully I hope.



We were reshaping our lifestyle to more time back in Plymouth to coincide with one child bringing her little ones to live in the South Hams – and then the world changed momentarily. Spring 2020, we realized that we might be locked in for maybe a very long time; I had always hankered after a Cornish Crabber Mk1, ideal size for me, and for Jane's wants, 'not too much of a downstairs'. We could keep it just round the corner in the marina, a short walk away, with the major benefit of stepping onboard from the pontoon. But perhaps there were others who saw the same solution to getting out, suddenly there were no more Crabbers on the market, all sold, or their price was just a little out of reach. Lucky me, there was one possibility nearby on the Dart – I had never heard of an Oysterman 16, but this version had one of the main benefits over previous experience, an inboard diesel 10hp, as well as looking the traditional part.

The retiring owner looked kindly on my offer, and as Mike and his wife parted with their well-cared for, and much-loved Sulis, she pointed out 'you'll find she's a very dry boat' (comforts!?), and he with glee, 'you'll find she's pretty quick', that is, she is quick, and remarkably pretty. I bought her in full running condition, second suite of sails, new Summer boat cover. I've taken the view to make a small bite of long-term smartening each winter in manageable steps. Doubly lucky to find the resident all-rounder in the yard, John Bridges, was equally enthusiastic to be given a classic gaff-rig to look after.



First the rubbing strake needed some repair around the stern quarter just for peace of mind alongside the pontoon. Next the bowsprit certainly needed rubbing down, along with most of the wooden fittings on deck. Winter 22/23 was treating the spars, as well as reseating the foresail jamming cleats at a better angle; Winter 23/24 will be getting the mast out and giving it the proper attention. Maybe year after will see the outside paintwork restored to shiny perfection, how quick and pretty will she be then? But of course, it's not all about speed and good looks.

Time out with friends, introducing them to the working of running backstays. Access out onto the water, the enveloping Plymouth Sound, trips up the Tamar, even picnics further up the Lynher afforded by the versatility of using her as a launch – the engine cover makes for an excellent table spread – and being in the middle of peace and nature, birds calling, seals sniffing and the dolphins dashing!



Lance Whitehead

I originally joined the OGA in 2010 when Merlin of Falmouth, a 48' Bristol Pilot Cutter replica (based on an original 1902 boat called Peggy) finally commissioned after a 2-year build by Dave Cockwell. She was built in a shed in Ponsharden, Falmouth, before Cockwells took over the Heard Yard at Mylor. These days, she is moored at Plymouth Yacht Haven and I sail her as often as I can to the Scillies, towards the Solent and across to the Channel Islands and Brest, Paimpol etc., to attend the occasional maritime festival.



Retirement still seems to be some time away, so time is always the issue. However, each June for 2 weeks we head to Guernsey where we meet 2 other cutters (Amelie Rose (Luke Powell)) and Polly Agatha (Merlin's sister ship) and we spend the fortnight taking children sailing (just ½ day trips) with their teachers, carers, etc. and at the weekend we take scouts, brownies and cadets out. It is great fun; the children take over the boats as soon as we leave harbour and really immerse themselves. The occasional water fight with other boats adds to the hilarity when there is no wind...

I live on a very small farm near Modbury, about 12 miles east of Plymouth and we have a vineyard and cider apple orchard, and we grow other fruits as well. We make a range of wines, cider, Calvados method brandy, cassis and also Dartmouth English Gin. With the latter especially, we have sponsored some of the classic regattas, including this year the OGA 60th Jubilee Celebrations on the Orwell, which was a memorable event – so many beautiful gaff-rigged cruisers and dinghies all gathered together in a joyous event.

At the moment, I am at the very beginning of converting an old Fairey Marine Albacore hull (A998) into a balanced lugsail dinghy. The woodwork side of things is relatively simple but I'm struggling to work out exactly where to position the mast! Hopefully, the project will bring a neglected boat back to life and should offer some fun sailing too.

EVENTS 2024

Date 2024	EVENT	Organiser	Location	Links	Contact
13th Jan	National OGA AGM (& ACM)	UK OGA	Liverpool	secretary@oga.org.uk	Colin Stroud
2-Mar	Solent Gaffers Visit to the Boatbuilding Academy at Lyme Regis	Solent OGA	Lyme Regis	solsec@oga.org.uk	Grant Morris
13th Apr	Fitting Out lunch	SWG		swevents@oga.org.uk	Mike Forwood
25th 26th May	Brixham Heritage Regatta		Brixham	brixhamheritageregatta.uk	Penny Jolley
14th 16th June	Falmouth Classics		Falmouth	https://www.falmouthclassics.org.uk/	Chris Williams
17th 18th June	Helford Rally	SWG	Helford	swsec@oga.org.uk	Tim Price
17th 19th July	Dartmouth Classics	Royal Dart SC	Dartmouth	Tel 01803 752496	
TBC	Plymouth Rally	SWG	Plymouth	swevents@oga.org.uk	
TBC	Fowey Classics		Fowey	foweyclassics@gmail.com	Karen Toms
3rd - 17th Aug	NL OGA North to South Holland	NL OGA	NL	inst@a4all.nl	Rik Jannesen
16th 18th Aug	River Dart Rally and Dittisham Regatta	SWG	Dittisham	wearesailing@gmail.com	TBC
7th Sept	Brixham Heritage Rally		Brixham	brixhamheritageregatta.uk	Penny Jolley
16th Nov	Lay Up lunch AGM	SWG	Fowey	swevents@oga.org.uk swsec@oga.org.uk	Mike Forwood David Patuck