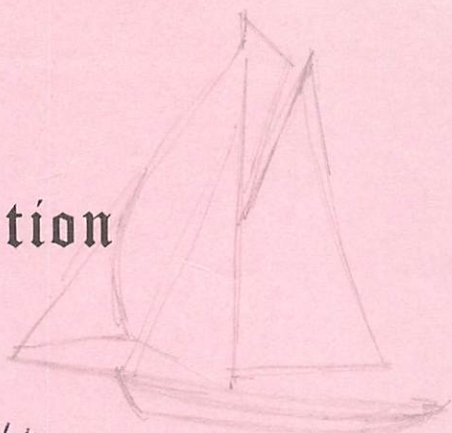


Old Gaffers Association Newsletter



78/4



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THE OLD GAFFERS ASSOCIATION

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OLD GAFFERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 1978/4

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held at the Cruising Association Rooms, Ivory House, St. Katherine's Dock, London, on Saturday, March 3rd, 1979. There will be a Committee Meeting at 4.30 p.m., the bar will be open at 6 p.m., and the Meeting will start at 7.00 p.m.

COVER PICTURE WENDER

The 1978 Lloyds Register will state (we hope!) :

Name: Wender Type: Aux. Cutter Owners: Sam & Susanne Poole
Port of registry: Liverpool Home port: Exeter
Tons: Registered 4.15, Net & Gross 4.15, Thames 7.
Dimensions: L.O.A. 29.1', L.W.L. 24', Breadth 8.5', Depth 4',
Draft 4'.

Sails: McCready of Belfast, Leith of Tarbert, McNamara of Exmouth
and Poole of Lympstone.

Built: 1898 Birkenhead by S. Bond. Designed by G.F. Holmes.

Which is really a bit of a shame because until this year we thought we were the proud owners of a 30 foot cutter. Delving back through some correspondence with a previous owner who acquired Wender after the Second World War, we noted that the beautifully rounded counter stern had been chopped off summarily because of end rot in the planks. She still has a lovely rump but nevertheless it must have been a nasty operation!

On first sight she is a Morecombe Bay Prawner all the way - her out of the water profile is undeniably the spin-off of centuries of development in producing a very fast shallow draft vessel that could face the short steep seas and violent storms of the North West coast and yet be back in time to land the catch in prime condition.

However, on closer inspection, I believe she was designed and built to be a small dayboat (they were beginning to become popular at the turn of the century). Her lines are extreme for the type. Indeed she is a dish - a departure from the long keeled Nobbies. The stern is gracefully cut away to a well rockered keel. The easy lines follow straight garboards and well rounded bilges. Despite her very low freeboard aft and shortened counter she still rises well to a nasty following sea and we are seldom pooped.

The oak keel is ballasted with $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons of external lead and there has never been any evidence of an alternative keel or internal ballast; surely one of the earlier boats of this type to be designed without internal ballast.

The stem is English oak and grown as are the frames with light bent timbers in between. The floors are oak with what looks like more recent galvanised strap floors about the mast and engine mounts. The mast steps on to the keelson and we have fitted a large steel plate to spread the load over three main frames. The deadwood aft and rudder are oak. The rudder stock is a recent sleeved bronze affair and the keel bolts bronze too.

Planking is 1" pine and carvel laid. The deck planks are very holy - pinched out of a bombed church after the last war, they are 1" Columbian pine. The fastenings are copper. All the uppers are teak; the cabin and doghouse were added after World War II.

2.

The deck finish is 'Fishermen' - straight planks with modern 'goo' seams which keeps out some of the water. The pine scrubs up well - the task of the younger crew.

As far as we know Wender has only had seven owners and has spent most of her life in the North West.

After the Second World War, Wender was lucky enough to be found by a Mr. Roy Davies, who fell in love with her and paid £5,500 for her. He and a Mr. Hughes attempted to bring her back from a yard at Bangor where she had been ashore for ten years, but she made so much water that the first attempt had to be abandoned.

Together, they took three years to restore her and were fortunate to have the help of 'Old' Mr. Bond during this time. When Mr. Bond visited Wender at Hoylake in 1949 he would not hear of a plan to fit thin batons in the seams which after ten years were half an inch wide. He insisted that behind each seam between the frames they fit a tingle held on with screws on to one plank only. He then re-caulked her and cut a new stem and advised on the handsome cabin and doghouse. It was three years before the planks took up and the batons could be removed.

Alas, the war veterans who had done so much to restore Wender married non-sailing girls and the yacht was sold to a splendid individual who lived permanently aboard her. She became a true Wender (Old English for wanderer).

After thousands of logged miles she found her way into more loving hands, this time in Northern Ireland. We were fortunate enough to meet the previous owner, Mr. Victor Fusco and acquire Wender from him in 1971, since which time she has been extensively cruised and raced in the Clyde, the Sea of the Hebrides, and since being appointed down to the South West of England, in the West Country, based mainly on the River Dart.

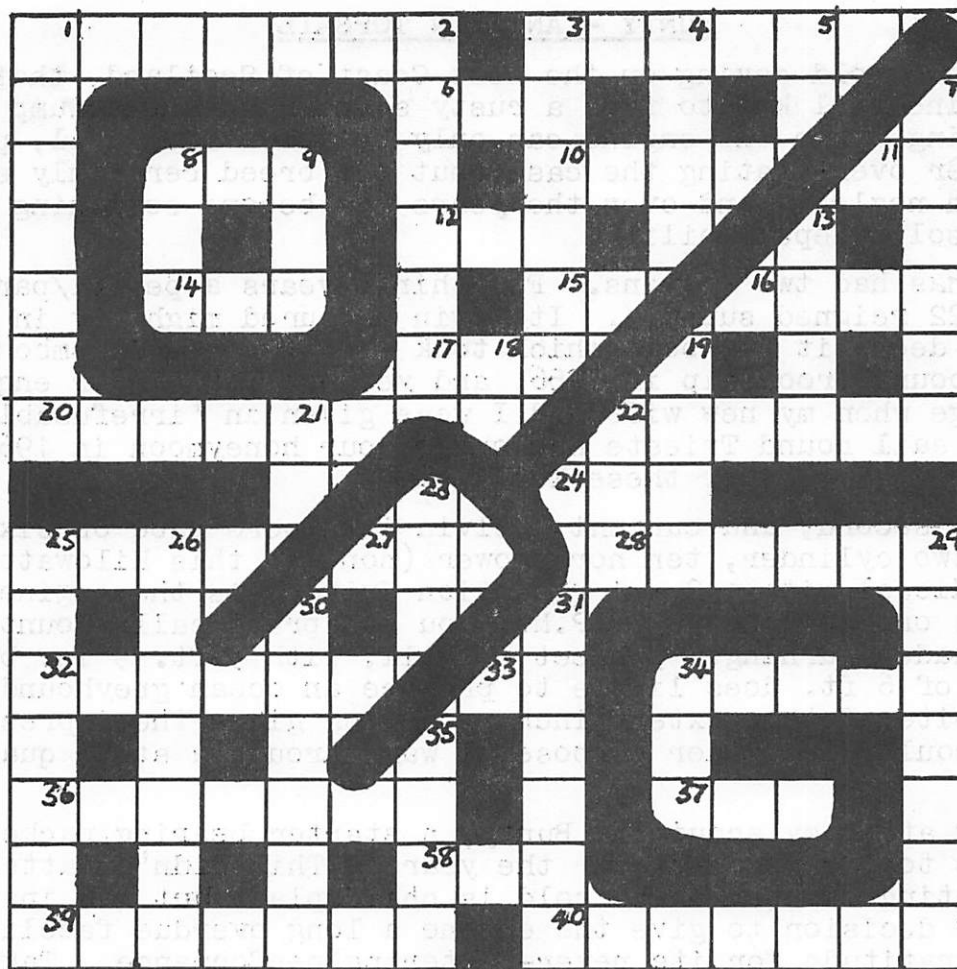
She won the Lamrash Race in a downhill big blow in 1971, being first home as well as first on handicap - the Straight Eight boys and the larger cruisers retired before the Cumbrics. In September, 1974, she came south and we were hit by a vicious sudden storm when off the Longships. On a weekend when Morning Cloud went down and havoc reigned up the Channel, Wender lost most of her sails, her tiller and the mast was badly sprung, but she pulled off a leeshore and took us past the Lizard at a time when 78 mph gusts were being recorded on the bluff. For this she won the Clyde Cruising Club's Seamanship Trophy and our lasting thanks for saving us.

We have since cruised her along this beautiful coast and over to France and the Channel Islands.

Wender is fast enough to satisfy the cruising skipper who likes the odd race, comfortable enough for the Mate (which says an awful lot for the Mate, as Wender only has limited headroom) and easy enough for the 'crew' to do all the work.

We all love her dearly - including the dog who has been keel hauled and now knows the difference between a baltic spar and a rugby post!

Sam Poole.



ACROSS

- 1 & 3 Your grandfather?
- 6 Your reply to a boatyard bill?
- 8 & 10 When I run aground
- 11 Say thanks for the coat
- 12 Make sure the anchor lamp is...
- 14 How you feel when it blows
- 15 And now for classical scholars
- 16 Reduce the danger
- 17 Gangster's fishing tackle
- 20 Sounds like skeletons in the dinghy
- 22 Avian glutton?
- 24 Sound grateful for preserving
- 25 Fall over on an excursion
- 27 It's good to say farewell
- 28 One from the bottle keeps the barges sailing
- 32 & 34 Home from home for an Old Gaffer
- 33 Said before a pee?
- 36 Wet feet if any deeper
- 37 & 29 down. Ends in a shroud
- 38 Repeated by an agreeable cockney
- 39 Went in for the O.G. race
- 40 The skipper thinks he is (3,4)

DOWN

- 1 Sling yer 'looks!
- 2 It guides the grower
- 3 Cleaned fish
- 4 For splicing mainbraces
- 5 For example...
- 7 A wood-butcher's handicap (3,3)
- 8 Slippery customer
- 9 Bend the wave
- 13 Tell the bird to rotate
- 18 Initially you
- 19 Bend the rope
- 21 ...and Behold!
- 22 Hot air
- 23 Repeated with deference
- 25 Would the rigger and seamstress use one?
- 26 Lose your way close to land and have tea briefly (2,5)
- 29 See 37 across
- 30 Blue pencil sharpener
- 31 Frustrate your seat
- 34 Tuck yourself into it
- 35 Cut along smartly

BUNTY - AN IRON TOPSAIL

There's an old saying on the West Coast of Scotland, that if you open an engine tool kit to find a rusty safety pin and a lump of knotted string, then the engine can only be a Kelvin! Well, perhaps that's rather over-stating the case, but the breed certainly seems to thrive on neglect, and over the years has become something of a legend for solid dependability.

Bunty has had two Kelvins. For thirty years a petrol/paraffin model of 1922 reigned supreme. Its twin laboured mightily in the bowels of a decrepit bum-boat which took me ashore in Colombo from a Far-East bound troopship in 1956, and yet another sister engine was in charge when my new wife and I were given an 'irrefusable offer' of a sail round Trieste harbour on our honeymoon in 1961. They certainly get about, these Kelvins!

Bunty's second, and current, Kelvin is a mere babe of sixteen summers, a two cylinder, ten horsepower (none of this Kilowatts nonsense!) diesel with a 2 - 1 reduction drive. As the engine at full chat is only doing 1500 R.P.M., you can practically count the propellor blades turning! 31 feet overall, with 9 ft. 9 in. beam and a draft of 6 ft. does little to produce an ocean greyhound, but the steady bite of the sixteen inch propellor gives the impression that Bunty could cleave her purposeful way through a stone quay if needs be.

Shortly after my acquiring Bunty, a starter bearing packed up, - purely due to lack of use over the years. This didn't matter much, as hand starting either hot or cold is child's play, but was instrumental in my decision to give the engine a long overdue facelift, if only in gratitude for its never-faltering performance. Taking off the bits and pieces and opening her up here and there - more a major check over than an overhaul - required a few bits and pieces from the makers in Dobbies Loan, Glasgow (pronounced as in 'dough', not as in 'dobbin') so, armed with an oil-stained list, I paid them a visit.

I never knew such a haven of good P.R. existed in modern industry! There I was with a piddling little order for a sixteen-year-old engine, and to a man, they were as pleased to see me as if I were ordering one of their supercharged, intercooled, eight-cylinder, 500 horsepower fishing boat engines!

On enquiring about my engine's original performance, the Service Department - between phone calls from Isle of Man, Tromsø and Bergen - looked out its history, and just to be certain, phoned the original installing engineers at Girvan. I don't know what they actually replied to Kelvins' enquiry about sailing trials performance of a 1963 job, but it sounded rather incredulous from where I sat.

Handed on to the Spares Department, it became obvious that Messrs. Kelvin have a lot to learn about slick cash and carry business. The system is geared to supplying credit customers and the despatch of items by road, rail or sea. As a result, I had the entire office looking in handbags and hip pockets to find change for my banknotes, looked down on the while by stern sepia photographs of the magnificently moustached Mr. Walther Bergius (the German founder of the firm) and his world-wide agents from Stornoway to Hong Kong in the year 1914.

Having paid - Canny Scots at Kelvins - I was directed to the stores for my goods, and as my route wound through the erecting shop, I had a wonderful opportunity to see the beasts actually being built.

Mass production is not Kelvin's way. Each engine is constructed to order and is very much hand built, a fact which must contribute in no small way to many a skipper's peace of mind. The small two-cylinder ten horsepower, and four-cylinder twenty horsepower models are marine designs to the last split pin, are large for their power output, and more pricey than their competitors, but their advantages are such that they never cease being built. They are not really the firms main interest, and would seem to be produced more as a service than as a golden exercise in accountancy.

True to the rest of the establishment, the stores were affability itself, and I was supplied with my needs with some pawky humour thrown in for good measure. I left the works with the all too rare feeling that I had met with a firm who cared! In future years when I press the button and the reassuring rumble commences, I'll remember a service engineer poised between two telephones, one to Ireland and the other to Norway, muttering to himself - 'There must be a b----y engine running properly somewhere!'

J. Richardson.

RAWANAH'S SCOTTISH CRUISE, 1967

Rawanah had a busy winter in 1966/67, with a topside burn-off and a scrape to the wood of the main-mast and some of the deck bright work in addition to the usual maintenance.

The highlight of the season, up to the time of our main cruise, was a seven-day spell from 27th May to 2nd June at the start of which we made the passage from Clynder to Gigha, some ninety-six miles, entirely under power in a flat calm. This certainly was a feat of endurance by our Thornycroft 'Handybilly', and the distance was covered at a speed one knot better than engine cruising speed, thanks to a set of tailor-made tide conditions. In Gigha we visited the gardens, climbed the second highest mountain, then crossed to Craighouse, reached up the Sound of Jura in force 7 or thereby, the weather having broken, visited Eilean Righ in Craignish, then home via the Canal. This circumnavigation of Kintyre realised a long-standing, if minor, ambition.

Early in the season we had almost settled to return to the Irish Coast for our main cruise, but decided otherwise when one regular crew member became unavailable. A substitute, Willie Forsyth, was signed on in his place and the crew then became:-

David Armstrong,
Alan Armstrong,
Willie Forsyth.

Distances in the cruise now described were as follows:-

Made good :	491½ miles
Under sail :	261 miles
Under power :	154½ miles
Under sail and power :	76 miles.

Clynder to Kyles of Bute As seems to be usual, this year's cruise started late on a Friday with the customary panic to get away with a chance of traversing the Canal before the Sunday close-down.

The wind was light SSW, and we conscientiously beat as far as the Warden Bank Buoy where calm set in, compelling us to call upon the Handybilly for the remainder of the passage to the Burnt Isles. Anchored South of the islets at 2300. 'Mingary' in anchorage.

6.

Kyles of Bute to Crinan Under way at 0645 to make a long day of it in the hope of making the canal passage and perhaps putting a mile or two astern on the other side. This was a grey, calm morning so we had to motor to Ardlamont where sail was set to a light Southerly wind fluky and variable in strength at first, but which settled in the SW and became strong with heavy rain soon after we entered the Ardrishaig sea-lock at 11.30.

The basin we found to be crowded and confused, nobody seeming to know who should proceed next. However we ultimately set off with 'Osprey' and 'Morar' on a very slow, mighty wet canal passage, mooring in Crinan basin alongside 'Parella' at 1900. By this time the tide at the Dorus was well on its way, we had had a long day, so the decision was made to remain in the basin overnight. Anyhow it was still blowing and raining from the SW, and experience has taught us that it is possible to commence a cruise with excessive blast-off - sailing night and day - to no ultimate purpose.

A fine vessel from the South, 'Gay Gander', which had been a lock or two astern of us on the canal passage, locked out into the murk. Whither she was bound I know not, but the owner found time as he coned/his way into the sea-lock to admire and marvel at the skipper's dear-stalker which illustrates the educative value of a trip to the North for the Sassenach. We saw 'Gay Gander' later on through the mist in the Sound of Iona. She was beating to windward against the ebb in Force $\frac{1}{2}$ or thereby. Definitely a Keen Type.

Crinan to Tobermory The weather, on this day, was still somewhat dubious with rain and strong SW wind. However, we did not have to make any decisions until the afternoon because the tide would not favour us at the Dorus until about 1600, and this allowed us to lie abed until a decent Sabbath hour. Thereafter we replenished petrol and water, walked all the way to the harbour and back, inspected other people's yachts, gossiped and ultimately locked out at 1600 full of energy and determination to press on regardless.

This proved to be no hardship because the wind settled to a steady breeze from the SW, the rain ceased, the sun came out and we had a truly delightful reach with mizzen staysail set and a fair tide under us past Fladda and up the Firth of Lorne. The water on the other side of Crinan seems incredibly clean compared with the filthy liquid which we now sail upon in the upper Firth, and this gives an added pleasure to a passage such as this. Off the Grey Isle the wind failed and we had to call upon Thornycroft to take us on to Tobermory where we anchored at 0010.

There were a good many vessels at anchor, very few with riding lights. One owner hastened to put up his light when he heard our engine. In a busy anchorage such as Tobermory where yachts come in from the North and the South at all times a riding light might reasonably be exhibited if only to assist the incoming mariner who probably needs a dram and his bunk.

Tobermory to Loch na Beiste Ashore in good time for stores at the well-known emporia of Tobermory, then under way at 1015. Set main and jib to a SW wind, strength 6 - 7. This gave a brisk run in an increasing sea out to Ardnamurchan where we jibed and set off on a dead run for the Sound of Sleat. The seas by then were of a goodly size and at times confused, but no matter, the wind was fair and we were going like the proverbial clappers in the desired direction. 'Donian' came out of Loch Sunart after we passed but took a course much further to the Eastward, possibly bound for Mallaig.

At 1700 we put into Isle Ornsay and anchored to await the turn of the tide at Kyle Rhea. We could probably have made it over the ground by carrying on, but the seas might have been peculiar.

In Isle Ornsay we had a heavy meal then set reefed main, staysl and mizzen at 1900 and set off before the wind, still about force 6, for Kyle Rhea. Here we found the tide in our favour and had a rapid passage on to Loch na Beiste where we had some difficulty in finding reasonable soundings, but finally anchored in seven fathoms at 2130. The SW wind, by this time, had turned itself off and peace reigned. 'This', said Willie, 'is what we signed on for'.

Loch na Beiste to Loch Ewe This was a calm, grey morning and at the gentlemanly hour of 0935, this suiting the tide, we weighed and proceeded under engine. At 1020, when between Kyle Akin and the Crowlins, we set sail to a SW wind, light at first, which increased to about force 6 as the morning progressed. This gave a wonderful run with spinnaker. The sun came out, the sea was blue, on the port hand the Inner Isles came abeam in succession, on the starboard hand the great Lochs Torridon and Gair did likewise, and at 1700 we were off Rudh Re. Shortly before this a small motor ship appeared ahead and kept her masts in line on us for longer than we liked. In fact we took avoiding action before she did. Ultimately the ship passed us starboard to starboard with Radar whirling round and nobody visible on deck.

At Rudhe Re we stowed the spinnaker and came on a reach to the mouth of Loch Ewe, then a close fetch into the anchorage at Camus Angus on the NE coast of Ewe Island where we anchored at 1845 inshore from two moored M.F.V.s. This anchorage was perfectly sheltered in the prevailing SW conditions.

Loch Ewe to Ullapool, then to Tanera Mor, Summer Isles As no long voyage was proposed for this day we did not weigh until the agreeable hour of 1000. Wind SW, about force 6. We set mizzen and staysail and ran down to Greenstone Point then reached past anthrax bestricken Gruinard Island, Calliach Head, Carn Dearg and Rudha Cadail to anchor off Ullapool in 7 fathoms at 1400. Here there were many fishing boat moorings, so we buoyed our anchor. The wind, by this time, had died away and the sun was shining. Ashore we had baths at the hotel - towels supplied, cost well below the West Coast average. Store facilities were good, petrol was handy to the anchorage, and at 1620 we weighed and set off for Tanera Mor in the Summer Isles where we anchored at 1900. This short passage was made entirely under engine in almost calm conditions.

Tanera Mor we found to be a fine anchorage, well worth a visit although, as usual, we dropped the hook much further out than necessary. After supper we went ashore to explore and take photographs. There are a few croft houses here, mostly deserted, although one near the Cabbage Garden anchorage seemed to be in process of rebuilding.

A large yellow flag with black ball was flying at the jetty in Tanera Mor, but its significance we did not discover.

Tanera Mor to Stornoway The early weather forecast on this day was somewhat gloomy, promising Westerly winds, force 6, which is quite a lot of wind in which to beat one's way across the Minch. In the event there proved to be no wind whatsoever at 0800, and so it remained as we motored West through Dornie Sound. When just past Eil. Mulagrach a light Southerly wind set in, and by its aid and that of the engine at half-throttle we proceeded very pleasantly and easily across the Minch. At first, visibility was none too good, but presently things improved, the sun appeared, and coastal navigation became a joy with Ru Stoer, Ru Hunish, Ru Re and Ru Coigach all in sight at once. Soon after midday, Arnish Point appeared,

8.

at 1400 it was abeam, and at 1445 the anchor was let go near the lifeboat berth opposite the pier in Stornoway. No yachts in the anchorage. At the pier, fishery cruisers 2, fishing vessels 1.

Ashore in the early evening to visit friends who live near Tiumpnan Head. Back on board in heavy rain about 2330, suffering not so much from excessive drink as from a superabundance of food. 'I feel', said Willie, 'like a Strasburg Goose'. And so to bed.

Stornoway to East Loch Tarbert, Harris. Ashore after a middling late breakfast for the usual necessities in the way of water, fuel and food then a visit to the local tweed mills where one or two purchases were made.

At 1340 we were under way with the intention of visiting Loch Grimshader and set sail immediately to a fresh wind from the NNE, ideal for our purpose. At 1430 the loch was abeam and we had a look inside. However, it seemed a pity to waste a good fair wind so we did not disturb the Shader Eels in their retreat but instead coasted down Lewis from headland to headland inside the Shiant and through Scalpay Sound to anchor in East Loch Tarbert, West of the pier, at 2045. Ashore again visiting. Better this time. Less to drink. Not too much food.

Our original intention on leaving Stornoway had been to put into Loch Grimshader so we did not hoist in the dinghy. In Shiant Sound we regretted not having done so because the dinghy carried out some strange evolutions, notably the overtaking trick and another one, new to us, due to the misshapen and lumpy seas which rise up in these waters. At times these seemed to fill the gap exactly between Rawanah and the dinghy with the result that the latter had to burst through, rather than over the seas. In Shiant Sound we had a Northerly wind and a South-going stream, When wind and tide are in opposition there the result must be hair-raising.

East Loch Tarbert to Loch Scadabay On this morning there was little urge to be up and doing, possibly an effect of all this Hebridean fresh air and food. Nevertheless, a store trip ashore was achieved, the dinghy was hoisted in, and anchor weighed at the late hour of 1415. Intention:- to proceed Southwards as far as Lochmaddy or other suitable haven. There was very little wind at first, so we used the engine to leave the loch by the South passage past the Glorigs and the other hazards with which this exit from the loch is liberally bestrewn. When almost clear of the Glorigs we set sail to a freshening SW wind, a dead muzzler for Loch Maddy be it said. With the strengthening wind and the weather-going tide, the sea soon became roughish, and presently visibility shut down in heavy rain. Lochmaddy to windward began to seem an awful long way off so we carried on, port tack, into Loch Grosebay where we identified the entrance to Loch Scadabay, stowed sail in a hurry, negotiated the entrance channel which is in places only 30 yards wide, rounded to and anchored in the pool.

Having done all this we drew breath and looked about us to decide unanimously that we had come upon the best anchorage ever. The surrounding low cliffs and narrow channel with reef at its inner end give perfect shelter. There are croft houses to be seen with crops in the fields and stock at graze, quite different from the melancholy deserted townships all too often seen when cruising North. Some small boys sat in the pouring rain watching our every movement and when we sailed next morning they were there to wave and keep up with us along the cliff-tops by the entrance. Definitely a place to revisit at the earliest opportunity. And so, by not hammering on through the gloom to Lochmaddy, we found a much better place.

Loch Scadabay to Loch Sheilavaig, South Uist By morning the rain had stopped. Soon the sun came out and we were treated to a fine display of blue sky which set off our anchorage to perfection. We dallied awhile exploring in the dinghy and taking photographs then hove up at 1100 and emerged into the open to find a just perceptible SE wind, sunshine and haze. So we had to make a passage under power with small aid from the sails, marking off the headlands as they came abeam and identifying the church at Rodel, the Sound of Harris complete with islands and a landing craft St. Kilda bound probably, the Maddies, Weaver Point and finally Benbecula Landfall Buoy which we used as a departure point for Loch Sheilavaig approaches, and so into the anchorage.

This anchorage gives good shelter, but the surroundings are somewhat dismal with deserted crofts and an air of decay. Peter's Port, on the North side of Benbecula Sound, is a much more cheerful place.

Loch Sheilavaig to Lochboisdale Under way at 0925 in heavy rain, poor visibility and SE wind, force 5 - 6.

In these conditions beating to the Southward in the Minch becomes 'interesting but tough' in the words of Mark Twain, so, after a series of tacks, happening to notice Lochboisdale abeam and the tide on the turn against us, we put in there and anchored West of Sgeir Rock Buoy at 1415. Honour, we decided, had been satisfied - we could, after all, have remained snugly at anchor in Loch Sheilavaig.

Ashore in Lochboisdale we made the usual stores and water fatigues. Baths we found at top prices, negative towels. So we scored out Lochboisdale on our Bath Chart of the Hebrides and West Coast.

Lochboisdale to Lunga (Treshnish) Time, even in the Hebrides, marches on, and as Willie had to be landed in Islay by Saturday, 12th August, we reluctantly decided that the time had come to return across the Minch. Such indeed was our lack of desire to do this that we did not heave up until 1150, motoring out of the loch, setting sail as we went to a gentle NNE breeze. At Mackenzie Rock we set course for the Cairns of Coll, distant some 37 miles. With an 'E' in the wind direction haze is usual in these waters and visibility was none too good. However there were no obstructions between us and the Hyskeir - Cairns of Coll area, so we pressed on happily, practising radio-location with fixes by Heron and Homer on Barra Head and Stornoway Radio Beacon crossed with visual bearings on Lochboisdale and later Hyskeir and the Cairns of Coll to complete the cocked hat. In the early evening the wind fell away completely and we had to stir Thornycroft into life until a fine Easterly wind set in which gave splendid progress close hauled on the port tack.

By late evening we had decided that Lunga in the Treshnish group should be our anchorage, but the fine Easterly wind meant that we should be there much too soon, i.e. while still dark. So, having rounded the Cairns, we stowed the mainsail and jogged along under mizzen and headsails in the direction of the Treshnish group with a spell on the reciprocal course to kill time until we could identify not merely the islands but also the way in. This latter took some time and a certain amount of debate, and we did not anchor off Lunga until 0635. We turned in until 1130 then went ashore to examine this member of a rather weird group. 'Billy Butlin', said Willie, as he stumbled up the ankle-breaking beach of spherical boulders, 'will never open up here'.

Lunga (Treshnish to Bunessan) At 1530 we weighed and motored to Bunessan in calm with drizzle. Incidentally we left Lunga by the Southern approach to the anchorage. This presents simple pilotage compared with the approach from the North and might reasonably be recommended as a less hazardous route.

Bunessan to West Loch Tarbert (Jura) This was a calm, hazy morning and we were under way at 1020 to catch the ebb in the Sound of Iona.

Approaching the Sound we found the haze thicker with mist patches here and there. However, the middle ground buoy and the more Northerly of the two conical buoys were identified without difficulty as were the Cathedral and Free Kirk to give the leading line to the Southward. When the second conical buoy was abeam, distant about 3 cables, the mist shut down, the leading marks vanished as did everything else. There was just time to take a swift bearing on the Western end of the Earraid group before these islands disappeared and course was set to leave them safely to port. Speed was reduced and the radar reflector hoisted in case the K.G.V. came whizzing round the corner. After an estimated distance run to bring Eil Dubh abeam course was altered to the Eastward to pass close to Dubh Sgeir. Estimated is stressed here because conclusions reached from log and compass could not be guaranteed with the engine at slow in a tidal area with unknown sets. In the event, a swift alteration of course had to be made to avoid two unidentified islets which loomed up dead ahead. Soon after, Dubh Sgeir was picked up fine on the port bow and course was set to pass South of Sgeir Caillich and Eil Chalmain. When one mile West of Eil Chalmain we came round to 152 for North point of Colonsay. As we drew away from Mull the mist cleared somewhat, the North point of Colonsay came into view, a Westerly breeze set in, sail was set and, having brought Meal a Chuilbh abeam we came on a reach for West Loch Tarbert. At 1715 the loch entrance could be seen. We entered under engine and anchored in one of the bays on the starboard hand beyond the narrows.

Ashore later to admire the scenery at close range.

Moral: Pilotage at the South end of the Sound of Iona in dense mist is not a piece of cake. On the one hand lie Mull, Earraid, etc., etc. On the other Bogha huna Choil and all the Torran Rocks.

West Loch Tarbert (Jura) to Craighouse (Jura) Under way at 1015 to suit the tide in the Sound of Islay with rain of monsoon intensity, mist well down on the hills and no wind whatsoever. These conditions persisted throughout the passage, although there was a clearance shortly after we anchored off the old pier in Craighouse at 1400. The only incident of note on the way was that a pair of vintage, black oilskin trousers worn by a crew member split across the seat and had to be committed to the deep. This was no great loss because the cut and style of said trousers had never been a credit to the vessel.

Ashore in Craighouse we were most hospitably received by Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson who invited us to their regatta party on the next evening. The regatta had taken place the Saturday before and therefore a week intervened between regatta and party. Of such is life in Jura, and the arrangement suited us admirably.

At Craighouse (12/8) On this day a terrible thing happened. One of the crew, who shall be nameless, poured $1\frac{1}{2}$ gallons of water into the petrol tank which already contained 15 gallons of petrol. Skippers have been known to do a Captain Bligh for less than this, but such was the bonhomie on board that the contrite crew member

found himself being assured that this sort of thing was always happening in yachts, in fact, if anything, it added to the fun, and that its rectification would be no trouble whatsoever. Drums, jugs and buckets were then borrowed from the shore, the tank was emptied via its outlet and by syphonage, final drying being achieved with surgical gauze stuffed down the filler pipe. Mercifully the rain stayed away while all this petrol was ranged about the deck.

Willie departed on the afternoon steamer to join his parents in Islay, and the ship's company, reduced to two, went ashore later to the party which was excellent.

At Craighouse (13/8) This was a pleasant, calm, sunny day, and what with one thing and another, attention to the social side and so forth, no move was made to weigh anchor. In the evening we hoisted in the dinghy and turned in early with a view to a brisk start the next day for the Clyde via the Mull or Crinan, depending on the weather which was forecast as likely to be none too good.

Craighouse to Crinan Under way at 0615. Wind NNE 5-6 with heavy rain and gale warnings in being for the whole South and West coasts of the U.K. as far North as the Irish Sea. This being no weather for the local Cape Horn we headed for Crinan. This meant a beat to windward with the tide, which runs strongly in the Sound of Jura, and these conditions, especially near Skervuile Light we found to raise a considerable sea which made windward work difficult, but which was bearable as the tide swept us over the ground in the right direction.

The rain lasted all day, and we were quite happy to tie up in the canal basin at 1600.

Here, to all intents, our cruise came to an end, because nothing remained of our outing but a leisurely bumble through the canal in pleasant company and so back to Clynder via the usual ports of call.

Tail-piece (or, in a log, should it be bumkin? In Tarbert we met the American yacht Freya. She had come from the U.S.A. via Labrador, Iceland, the Minches and the Crinan Canal. The crew paid us a visit which we think was enjoyed by all, and the owner assured us that he had never, in all his experience, come across a cruising ground to equal the West Coast of Scotland.

Alan Armstrong.

THE GAFF ERA

It seems to me that the owner of a gaff rigged yacht is in close touch with a history of sailing going back many hundreds of years, the owners of work boats particularly so. My own little yacht was built as a gentleman's pleasure boat in 1932, but her origins go back to the 'Tosher's', small mackerel fishing boats of the south Cornish coast.

The origin of gaff rig goes back 300 years or more and my wider interest was quickened by the purchase of a book of photographs by Beken with a commentary by Uffa Fox, under the title of 'The Beauty of Sail'. Many of the photographs belong to the turn of the century when the gaff rigged racer was supreme. The great racing schooners and cutters caught my imagination. Monochrome heightened rather than diminished the excitement. Just try to

imagine them! for there is nothing like them today. The S.T.S. Schooners may come near them for size but they seem to lack the excitement of those great gaff racers. Even the old J class were dwarfed by them, and 12 metres are piddling things by comparison. To define the excitement is impossible. The Steam locomotive compared with the diesel; those stamping shire horses compared with the prancing show horse; the roaring overshoot mill wheel compared with the fussless electric motor. I suppose size has much to do with it.

My own boat is 24 ft. on deck and if I scale her to - let's say - 'Britannia' at 121 ft. overall. I would be a little less than 15 in. tall. By modern standards the old racing yachts appeared grossly overcanvassed. Britannia could set 10,327 sq.ft. of sail, 5,165 sq.ft. of this in the mainsail alone and it was all handled by a crew of 33 men. No winches, save for the anchor, block and tackle, the manifold purchase, luff on luff. Britannia was surely a most perfect combination of hull and rig. But the origins of this great racer go back to another century; to the days when there were no pleasure yachts, just fishing boats and small cargo vessels that sailed from countless ports and havens around our coast. They had a need for speed and handiness too. Not speed for its own sake, but to make a port and market its cargo ahead of a rival. Not handiness to outmanoeuvre a competitor, but to beat off a lee shore or make to windward in a rising gale.

Their builders studied the lines of their boats, and of rivals from other shores. Modified their own moulds, striving with every artifice to improve the hull without sacrifice of load carrying capacity. They had no scheme of naval architecture; they drew no plans; mathematics hardly entered into it, only a few builders' rules passed from master to man like the secrets of some medieval wizard kept them from building unbalanced hulls. A half model was carved - carefully and skillfully - discussed and mulled over; a little more pared from the run, the entry fined a little, but not so much that it ran into the mid-section that above all must carry a load. Then the half model was cut into sections, the sections measured, scaled and lofted - the work begun, using those empirical rules that dictated the size of timbers, the placing of weights and the balance of the rig. And what of the rig? Tradition almost dictated its form. Some parts of the country favoured the dipping lug sail, some the sprit sail rig, others something resembling a square sail.

Just when the sliding gaff mainsail was introduced is rather uncertain. A few claim that it developed indigenously from the sprit sail rig via the standing gaff, others that it evolved from the dipping lug. It is easy to imagine that the crews of those early luggers cursed the unhandy rig when tacking to windward in a lumpy crossgrained sea. No doubt it stood well with a bowline to the stemhead, but to dip and haul it around the mast every tack was a labour. Then, to meet up with one of the handy little Dutch traders making two or three tacks to their one must have put the inventive minds amongst them working.

Historians tell us that pleasure yachting began with royalty way back in 1660 when the Dutch East India Company presented King Charles II with a small 'Jaght' of about 20 tons. The king became an enthusiast, and his brother, with others, caused boats of a similar size to be built and to race against him. This royal enthusiasm is often referred to in the diaries of Pepys and John Evelyn. But these yachts were in reality small cargo vessels with the square rig of the day, fitted out for pleasure and entertainment, their hulls built upon the lines suggested above.

With the passing of years royal interest in yachting declined but did not entirely die out, for there are references to yachting amongst the nobility in the society journals of the late 17th century. That there were men interested in the improvement of sailing vessels cannot be denied, but few of them amongst the boat-builders. If they had much to gain by being bold and imaginative, they had less to lose by being traditional and conservative. The impetus came from the wealthy amateur or the naval officer with private means. In the Gentlemans Magazine of 1773 we read of the performance of a yacht owned by the fifth Earl Ferrers. The Earl was a seaman by profession and an Admiral of the Blue.

'Sept. 26th 1773. Earl Ferrers arrived at Deptford in his yacht from a cruise of about three weeks, which he undertook to make trial of his new method of constructing ships; and we are informed by a person who has conversed with one of the officers belonging to her that nothing that ever was built answered all purposes so well, as they say she is a surprising fast sailer, but also carries her sail so well and has every good quality that a vessel can possibly have in the utmost perfection, and more particularly in a large head sea. What, says our correspondent, is very extraordinary in this vessel is that in turning up to windward from the Downs to Blackwall, where she arrived on Sunday evening, she beat every vessel between three and four miles an hour, right in the wind's eye, though there were at least an hundred sail of different sorts coming up the river at the same time, and what is still more extraordinary, though the wind blew very fresh and right down the river, yet on Saturday evening she turned up from about two miles to the Westward of the Isle of Sheppey to the mouth of the Thames within four hours against the tide, though at the height of springs, which it is imagined was never done before, nor can be done by any other vessel.'

However, this paragon was apparently well beaten within three months. And what of that philosopher and political economist Sir William Petty? As early as 1660 he showed Samuel Pepys a model of a vessel he built 'upon two keeles' (a bilge keeler?) which won a wager of £50 in beating the Paquet Boat between Dublin and Holyhead. She was apparently of thirty tons, had a crew of thirty men and carried ten guns.

Although the 18th century saw the formation of the first yacht clubs on the Thames, and in Ireland, for we may read of the rules of the Water Club of Cork, already well established by 1720, they were not yacht clubs as we understand them today. Organized racing was unknown, although it is sure that wagers were struck on the abilities of various yachts, their function was largely social. Sailing was confined to formal manoeuvrings, the firing of salutes and hoisting of signals. The chase and rout of an imaginary enemy was oftentimes indulged in.

During the first half of the 18th century the sailing of pleasure yachts quietly spread. Principally upon the Thames. (Possibly the only city in the land with a sufficient number of wealthy, though not necessarily aristocratic members to encourage it.) August of 1749 saw a regatta patronised once more by royalty. The young Prince George gave a silver cup for a race from Greenwich to the Nore and back. Twelve vessels took part and the cup was won by a yacht called the Princess Augusta, which was purposely built for the race. Although the boatbuilder was now freed from the constraint of building a cargo carrier his conservatism was such that he failed to fully appreciate the situation and continued

building full bodied and bluff bowed yachts; their 'cargo' consisting of tons of ballast, interior furnishings more seemly in a country house and quantities of food and drink for the entertainment of friends and family. (Yes, my friend, we all know of yachts like that today.)

Soon after the Prince succeeded to become George III his brother the Duke of Cumberland became the great patron of Thames yachting, and from the Public Advertiser of July 11th 1775 we read:

'A silver cup the gift of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, is to be sailed for on Tuesday 11th inst. from Westminster Bridge to Putney Bridge and back by pleasure sailing boats from two to five tons burthen, and constantly lying above London Bridge. Any gentleman inclined to enter his boat may be informed of particulars by applying to Mr. Roberts, Boatbuilder, Lambeth, Anytime before Saturday noon next.'

And from this first meeting came the Cumberland Society, the forerunner of the Royal Thames Yacht Club of today. A contemporary drawing shows a regatta of the day, with Blackfriars Bridge crowded with spectators in the immediate background. The yachts appear to be about 20 - 22 feet long, double ended and undecked. The rig is of a gaff cutter, the jib being tacked onto a bowsprit about 8 feet outboard, the clew coming down near the stemhead. The staysail is tacked on the stemhead and the clew coming just foreward of the mast. Both sails being cut low the foot parallel to the deck line. The mainsail has a very long luff, around 25 feet, as near as I can make it by scaling. There is a boom, terminating at the stern, with the foot set loose upon it. The sail well peaked. A high narrow mainsail by our modern standard. There are two pairs of shrouds terminating at a mast band just above the raised gaff, but no spreaders. A pair of running backstays are also shown. No running rigging is visible unless the halliards serve as shrouds also. There is a crew of two in each boat, one in the eyes tending the jib. Rather oddly, there is shown on four of the boats the foredeck man using a forked pole about five feet long which he either helps pull the sail across during tacking, or perhaps holds it aback to help the head around. The headsails would otherwise appear to be self tacking. The hulls are very beamy and flat in the floors, apple-bowed almost, with a similarly shaped stern. The sails being of handwoven flax canvas would be their worst feature. I imagine these boats to be upriver craft, larger, decked yachts being used below bridges.

One of the first centreboard boats built in England was built to race for the Cumberland cup and by 1781 the society felt secure enough to open the contest to '... all gentlemen and proprietors of pleasure sailing boats within the British Dominions to join them in the contention.' The racing became exciting. 1786 ... There was an attempt at foul play against the 'Prince of Wales' by other boats getting in her way, but she got clear by liberal use of the handspike. 1795 ... The 'Mercury' got foul of the 'Vixen'. The captain of the 'Vixen' cut away the rigging of the 'Mercury' and fairly dismantled her. 1797 ... The 'Blue Dragon' was disqualified for booming out her jib. Sponsorship was not unknown in those early days of Thames racing. The proprietors of the various tea gardens soon saw the benefits to trade when the racing set came ashore for food and entertainment. Mr. Smith's Tea Gardens at the Surrey end of Vauxhall Bridge was a favourite, '... a pleasant spot, with small groves and arbours'. The proprietors of the Vauxhall Tea Gardens became the chief patron of the Cumberland

Society when in 1786 the Duke of Cumberland presented his last cup. Later the new Ranelagh provided a cup, when others failed, until 1812 when the Society began to provide its own.

The closing years of the 18th century saw a more 'scientific' approach from the amateur yachtsman. In 1796 we may read in the Sporting Magazine, July 23rd ... the 'Atalanta' belonging to a gentleman at Vauxhall and built by Hodges upon a plan intended to unite the qualities of a long vessel as well as a wide one, which in this miniature of a cutter is most successfully accomplished, her bottom being so formed that in a light she is a mere slip, and when it blows hard she seems to possess uncommon power to carry sail. The other boat was built at Rotherhithe named 'Ann Sarah', rather the larger of the two. This vessel was formed pretty much after the old school, and is certainly a very clever thing. All floor from end to end, shallow body, deep keel, very full bow, straight sheer, and a pretty airy stern. Her extreme breadth is before the mast, but being blacklead did not appear to so much advantage as the other, whose bottom was bright rosin and tallow.

It may fairly be claimed that organized yacht racing began during this closing decade, and the idea was spreading rapidly - outwards from London and into a new class of citizen, for the industrial revolution was under way. There were men with leisure and the money with which to indulge it.

M.E. White.

MEMBERS' LETTERS

From H.F. Aitken, Helston:

We are now sailing out of Mylor Creek on the Fal River. 'Lufra' was transported down by Deben Yacht Deliveries, whom I would not hesitate to recommend to anyone requiring a similar service. We fully intended taking part in the 1977 Clyde Race and were at Rhu Marina the previous night but the rising forecast and conditions outside the Gareloch did not sound suitable for a Cherub full of cruising gear. So we watched from the shore. 'Lufra's' main has been cut down slightly and a longer bowsprit fitted to give her cutter rig, reducing the heavy weather helm of the original. Also a topsail is carried in winds of Force 3-4 or less and acts as the first reef. After the Clyde Race we had to leave the boat at Inverkip for a week, a friend and I sailed her home to Girvan the following Sunday with a quartering breeze and all plain sail plus topsail and drabblar. We left Kip Marina at 0730 and entered Girvan Pierheads at 1530. Not bad for a Cherub. Here at Mylor there is talk of organising a Falmouth Gaffers Association. Whether this is to be within the O.G.A. :I do not know but the area abounds with gaffers of all sizes.

From B. Allen, Parkstone:

A great deal of water has ebbed and flowed since I last wrote to you, but now I am back in the fold with a genuine old gaffer, details of which later in this letter. First, there is another boat here in Poole in urgent need of a sympathetic owner and I hope you can find space in the next Newsletter to make mention of her. (See Advertisements.)

My 'new' boat is named 'Moana' (O.G.A. number 880) - ex 'Zitella' - I don't know which name to use - Registered number 128429, built by Thomas of Falmouth in 1910 as a yacht. She last appeared in Lloyds in the 1920s. Dimensions: LOA 23', LWL 20', Beam 7', draught 4'6". She is similar to a Quay Punt but has a

counter stern. Originally she was open and rigged as a yawl, now she has gained deck and cabin and lost her mizzen. A previous owner hoped to re-register her and has a list of practically all her owners up to the present. She seems to have spent all her life in the West Country and from 1935 to 1970 was owned by a lady, Kitty Hall, who cruised in her single handed and without an engine out of Fowey. Between 1970 and 1974 she was extensively refitted, being given a new stern, deck and coach roof, was refastened with monel grip nails and had some new keel bolts fitted. She has been laid up ashore for the last two years so I am busy repairing the ravages of wind and sun and hoping to have her sufficiently water-tight to be launched in a few weeks time. Spars and sails are all quite good, the mainsail being new terylene. There is a Vire 6 h.p. engine with Watermota stern gear, but none of it works so I shall probably abolish it all and do without an engine for the present. There is a sculling crutch however, so I shall probably get a fair bit of exercise!

Shrouds are set up with dead eyes and lanyards, which is a nice traditional touch - another of which is backstays set up by hauling aft along horses on the side decks - not so nice!

Construction is reputed to be pitch pine - though it doesn't look it - on grown oak frames at about 12 inch centres and the keel is a massive lump of ironmongery. Having been sailing centreboarders for the last five years I shall have to revise my habits once she is afloat.

2 weeks later Have now launched - no leaking to speak of - and she sails like a dream. I'm hoping to make it to the Solent Area Race in September.

And from A.N. Wakeling:

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that I have sold my Bermudan sloop 'Sunseeker' and am now the proud owner of a little gaff cutter named 'Ha'penny Breeze' (O.G.A. number 879). She is 22ft. LOA, 7ft.6in. beam and 2ft.6in. draft plus centreboard and was built at Leigh sometime in the 1950s, by the Estuary Yacht Co., who went out of existence some years ago. Of course compared with many of the old gaffers in the Association she is only about 25 years young.

The great thing is that I now feel that I am a proper member of the O.G.A.

NOW FOR SOME MORE LIMERICKS (and we should welcome others)

An old Gaffer who sailed from Southend
Set out from the shore with a friend.

He said 'never fear,
We turn left at the Pier,
And keep going till we get to Ostend'.

A certain old Gaffer from Hayling
Ran aground with a girl friend while sailing.

As she heeled on her side
In poured the tide,
So they used her 'C cups' for bailing.

A.N.W.

An old sailor, a true Nova Scotian
 Set sail in his gaffer 'cross the ocean.
 But she stopped for awhile,
 Grounded on Sable Isle;
 So he gave it up as a bad notion.

An old salt liked sailing with gaff,
 Though the modern boys gave him some chaff;
 But in a wind the tall sloopers
 All blew out their bloopers
 And gave the old boy the last laff. D.K.

ADVERTISEMENTS

TEAK - Second hand. Limited quantity for sale. Ex-floorboard, polished one side, sawn the other. Holds $3\frac{1}{8}$ " x $15\frac{1}{16}$ " with T & G stripped. Random lengths. Max. 7ft., min. 2ft. Suit hatch covers, lockers, etc. £1.50 per foot run. Buyer inspects/collects. Information from: M. White, 80 Kilmersdon Road, Radstock, Bath. Tel: Radstock 32237 (0761 STD.)

ANTHEA Cutter, 8 tons T.M. Built Camper & Nicholson, 1927. Last appeared Lloyds in early 1930s. Good Brit 2 cylinder petrol/para. engine, assortment of sails, good space below & urgent need of new owner. Lying Holes Bay. £1750 o.n.o.
 R. Banks, 21 Brixey Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset.
 Tel: Parkstone (0202) 733173.

RHODA GOSTELOW 38' x 31' x 11' x 5'6" gaff cutter, 6/7 berths. Massively built in 1938 in Lincolnshire fishing boat lines, $1\frac{7}{8}$ " pitch pine on oak, Lister 18 h.p. diesel, 7 terylene sails, Interior rebuilt 1975, full headroom, well equipped with life raft, echo sounder, R.D.F., clinker dinghy, solid fuel stove, etc. Just returned from 5 months cruise Mediterranean, mainly single-handed. Lying ashore Hamble. £13,500.
 A.J. Richardson, 18 Raymond Road, Southampton. Tel: 28897.

LOON 30' x 27' x 9' x 3' centreboard up or 5' centreboard down. 9 TM Aux. Gaff Cutter built J. Miller in 1931 to design of Maurice Griffiths. Pitch pine on oak, pine decks painted Trawler Red Decolay, varnished teak coachroof & cockpit, oiled gunwhales & covering boards. Perkins 4.99 36 H.P. diesel, rebuilt 1973 with TMP hydraulic gearbox, overhauled 1978. Accommodation includes 4 berths, Sou'west Marine toilet, gimballled gas cooker, chart table. Excellent inventory. Extensively refitted over 4 years & in lovely condition. Shallow draft double ended hull makes her ideal for creek hopping, whilst giving excellent motion in seaway. Lying Mitchells Boatyard, Poole Harbour. £8,250.
 J.G. Bibra, Flagstones, 66 High Street, Langton Matravers, Swanage, Dorset. Tel: Swanage 2407.

PRUDENCE MN97 Good home wanted for 'young gaffer'. Winklebrig, 15' OA. built 1974, Cook & Sons, Maldon. Excellent condition, most gear traditional except terylene mainsail, jibs & topsail. Reason for sale - unsuitable for getting much sailing with one year old young gaffer crew called Sam! £950 o.n.o.
 Road trailer, 4 years old, V. good condition £100.
 Seagull silver century plus (not used on Prudence) Almost new condition, (10 hours running). Long shaft, without clutch. £95 o.n.o.
 A. & G. Balmford, 35 Winstree Road, Burnham on Crouch, Essex.
 Tel: Maldon 783089.

18.

CHARM II Aux. Gaff yawl. 40 ft. LOA. Built Cantley, Great Yarmouth, 1925. V. good condition, maintained by current owner regardless of expense. Lying Tucker, Brown, Burnham-on-Crouch. £12,000.
Tucker Brown, & Co. Ltd., Coronation Road, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex.
Tel: Maldon 782150.

CLYTHIE (239) 9 ton Gaff cutter. 33.7' x 28' x 9.2' x 4.5'.
Built Robertson, Woodbridge, 1913. Former entrant in E.C. Races - won three cups in five races. Needs work & devotion. £750 o.n.o.
J. Ambrose, 106 Maldon Road, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex. Maldon 782267.

TRADITIONAL FITTINGS FOR GAFFERS (quote from letter):

Living as I do in an area with many traditional craft and as a keen gaff sailor I have made many special steel fittings, i.e. gaff jaws, boom jaws, stem head fittings, mast bands, special eye bolts, etc., etc., for a wide range of craft.

As I am somewhat of a specialist in the design and manufacture of such fittings I would like to draw my work to your attention. I would also mention that early in 1979 I shall be offering a range of traditional iron bound wooden blocks.

In view of the foregoing I would like to offer to bona fide members of the Old Gaffers Association a 15% discount on any work undertaken on traditional fittings. Quotations by post are possible provided sufficient information is provided.

V.L. Archer, c/o Dixon Kerly Ltd., Downs Road, Maldon, Essex.
Tel: Maldon 53330.

The usual welcome to our new members:

R.H. Dawson, 98 Markfield, Courtwood Lane, Croydon, Surrey.

P. Watkins, c/o 138 Mapledene Road, Hackney, London, E.8.

Pierrette 475

Pat Walton, 'Little Mint', Ferry Quay, Woodbridge, Suffolk.

Madeleine 84

M.R. Burn, Grove Farm House, Little Bealings, Woodbridge, Suffolk.

Sheila 877

Gaye Townsend, 151 Jerningham Road, New Cross, London, SE 14.

G. Benton, Avon Cottage, St. Catherines Hill, Christchurch, Dorset.

Tee Jay 987

J.P. Ingram, c/o Ferry Hard, Hamble, Hants.

Zephyr 878

K. Kerr, Strawberry Hall, Magdalen Laver, Ongar, Essex.

J.R. Dunn, 3 Temple Road, Dorridge, Solihull, West Midlands.

J. Redgewell, 47 Elysian Gardens, Tollesbury, Maldon, Essex.

Alan 147

R.B. Hadlee, Palace Bothy, Much Hadham, Herts.

Lucky Star 881

I. Langston, 16 Dungannon Chase, Southend, Essex.

The following have changed their address since our last issue:

H.F. Aitken, 21 St. Peters Way, Porthleven, Helston, Cornwall

P.D. Blackman, 32 Khartoum Road, Highfield Road, Southampton, Hants.

R.I. Carlton, 41 Mill Road, Tollesbury, Maldon, Essex.

D.J. Howard, 14 Conifers Close, Amberley Grange, Horsham, West Sussex.

M.J. Little, M.S. Stina, Fullbridge Wharf, Maldon, Essex.

Changes of address:

M. Riddihough, Hayes House, 11 South Town, Dartmouth, Devon.

J. Ward-Hayne, c/o Channel Islands Yacht Marina, Beaucette, Vale, Guernsey, Channel Islands.

A. Bradfield, 'Woodwind', Semere Green, Pulham Market, Diss, Norfolk.

J.P. Harvest, 'Rockfield', 7 Station Road, Buckfastleigh, Devon.

M.S. Langfield, 15 Linkfield Lane, Redhill, Surrey.

MORE LETTERS.

RE- RACE ENTRANCE FEE: All that patter in the last Old Gaffers notes: why not make the subscription £5 per year (£5 per Entry). (Free entry for races in regions for members): save a lot of problems. Most of them spend £5 on beer afterwards, so they can afford £5 for membership!

John Ambrose.

OPEN LETTER TO C.R. WILLIAMSON Writing as Hon Treasurer, I like the basic idea outlined in your letter in the last Newsletter, for giving a discount to members who race. After all, they are the people who make the news that we can read about in the Newsletters. At £1 a head it would mean a yearly charge on Main Funds of, at a guess, £200.

Writing in September, before I have had a chance to cook - er, pardon, balance the books, I would say our funds could stand that.

My only provisos would be that at no time in the future would our reserves be used to pay this discount and that it would not apply to sponsored races and rallies.

L.J. Warren.

SECRETARY'S COMMENTS

This issue is the fourth of what I think all members will agree has been our best set of Newsletters yet. It is a long time since I've had to hold over as many articles as I have this year - and I've still got a couple of short ones to start next year's issues. We've not had so many limericks this year, but we've had our first crossword - the solution for which will be published in our next issue.

Cover photographs have been accompanied by good articles, and we've had a nice selection of technical articles, humour, cruise accounts and accounts of events.

Please, all of you, help us to keep up this high standard. Don't think you can't write - in a Newsletter like ours, it is WHAT you have to say that matters, not HOW you say it - and I know that most of you own interesting boats and visit interesting places, not to mention undertaking major re-fits, restorations and reconstructions. The major need at the moment is for cover photographs PLUS technical articles about the boats concerned.

I wonder how many readers will believe that it is pure coincidence that Len Warren's cartoon has ended up backing Sam Poole's picture of Wender ashore for a scrub. Both unsolicited pictures arrived on my desk within a couple of weeks of one another!

Contributions for the next issue should be sent to me by mid March 1979.

Our ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held in London in just over three months. Please do come along - not necessarily to make it a long drawn out business evening, but to help to make it a good SOCIAL event.

One item of business which will be discussed at that meeting is Rob Williamson's proposal that Area Secretaries reduce a member's race entry fee by £1, and then recover this £1 from central funds.

So far only a couple of members have written in to give their views on this quite major point.

As Secretary of the Association, I am against this proposal. There are three main reasons why I believe we should reject such a proposal to subsidise races from main funds.

Firstly, in 1975 the Association Committee did a lot of work in setting the rate for a revised subscription, taking into account the costs of producing and distributing Newsletters; the needs for capital equipment; some guard against future inflation, and provision of funds from which we could buy photographs, films, etc. for our records (income from the O.G.A. insurance scheme was disregarded in this work). A proposal to divert one third of a member's subscription to paying for his race entry suggests that this work done by the Committee was incorrectly done. In fact, I think the accounts will show that our estimates of 1975 were correct, and unless inflation drops substantially, we shall be needing significantly large reserves to avoid a further increase in a few years time. Remember - we deliberately fixed the rate at £3 instead of £2 to enable us to build up a good reserve so we can run on the same rate for some years after our outgoings overtake our subscription income: and as I'm still dealing with hangovers from the last Subs. increase, I don't want to see another one for a LONG time!

Secondly, at the 1976 A.G.M., a proposal that overseas members should be allowed a reduced rate subscription was defeated because '... the main funds of the Association are not normally used to subsidise Races, Rallies, or winter events, all of which are expected to be self supporting or to show a small profit'. (1976 A.G.M. minutes.)

Thirdly, I am against any proposal to subsidise race entry fees from membership subscriptions because I can see NO good reason why the majority of members should subsidise a minority in their sport. There are already what might be regarded as 'hidden subsidies' for the races in the printing and distribution of race entry forms, pre-race details, race results, etc., and race entrants should remember that they can enjoy their sport on race days only because others are NOT sailing, but are spending their day ashore or on a committed boat. Do the race entrants really expect a financial subsidy as well?

If we do have any member who is so hard-up that he can not afford to pay a realistic race entry fee, perhaps we could consider a whip-round - but to judge by post-race bar takings (not to mention beer etc. consumed during races) the indications are that owners can afford to pay a realistic entry fee.

I am therefore against Rob's suggestion that main funds should be used to subsidise race entry fees, and I suggest that race finances should continue to be the responsibility of the area organising the event (with the main funds available 'for emergency use' as and when required). As called for in our rules, non-members who enter the races should pay a 'subscription surcharge' (which could remain as Area income instead of being transferred to main funds). Thus members WILL benefit financially from their membership

over non-members, but those members who do not own boats or do not race will not be subsidising those who do.

I would like to offer for consideration an alternative proposal, which could have a substantially similar end effect, but which would not affect our budgetted finances or result in overseas or non-boat owning members subsidising those who enter races (and incidentally would remove all administrative problems such as what do we do about members who enter two, three or more races).

My proposal is that our Treasurer should divert to Area funds the income we receive from the O.G.A. insurance scheme; making the allocation as nearly as practicable proportionately to the value of boats insured in each area; the Treasurer's decision on such allocation to be regarded as final; and Area Secretaries to use their best efforts in ensuring that this extra income is used to benefit O.G.A. members who enter their main Area Race.

Rob raised one other point after this year's East Coast Race - that is 'What is the correct collective noun for a number of Gaffers? Surely the answer must be an overhanging of gaffers - whether it be the boats prior to a race or the owners and crew the morning after!

Finally, from Secretary and Family, Very Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all members. J.A.S.

NOTES FROM THE UPPER CROUCH

WITH SCULL AND CATAPULT THROUGH DEEPEST ESSEX

The scull? A ten-foot sweep with plenty of whip in it, ideal for sculling in the transom rowlock-chock that had been hastily bolted on. With the sleeve-valve Kelvin acting as ballast until vital parts arrived, the scull supplied the motive power for the Southend beach-boat 'Coronation' during her usual Autumn cruise.

The catapult? Our back-yard was disputed territory for a couple of old 'toms'. Tiring of hopping out next morning to retrieve the other slipper (usually rained on) I had bought a catapult. Pending a supply of dried peas, I salvaged some reject ball bearings and by the end of the week could make a seagull jump back with raised eye-brows and ruffled feathers as the shot plopped into the mud just ahead of him.

On the mooring at Brandy Hole I objected strongly at sculling against the tide. The skipper pointed out that it was a dead flat calm, so I pointed out that there was time for another cup of tea before the tide turned. As the ebb started, I sculled through the moorings to clear water. In hot sunshine, sweat started to bead the brow, blisters started to form and wrists began to ache. But the tide was under us now and a slight breeze came up so the scull was thankfully stowed.

It was a head wind so we had to carefully time our tacks to miss all those expensive-looking boats crowding the moorings at Farnbridge and Burnham.

Domestic commitments would confine us to the Rivers Crouch and Roach for the week. Adjusting our minds back to pre-engine days we sailed past our usual anchorage in the Roach and brought up in the lee of the windward bank.

This set the pattern for the rest of the week - working the tides, predicting the wind shifts, and always working up to windward. Luckily such tactics reduced the sculling to a minimum - just a couple of early morning sessions to leave small creeks so we could anchor in the mainstream and breakfast while waiting for the new flood.

All this extra exercise whetted appetites, and our short excursions ashore were spent foraging for food - in either liquid or solid form. At anchor our time was spent in cooking, eating and sleeping. Each time we sailed we made adjustments and improvements to the rig and our sailing techniques, until, by the end of the week we had the old boat and crew tuned up to maximum performance. So we became too cocky, and ran aground within sight of the mooring.

I still cannot understand why the skipper, who is so capable in other respects, should remain so inept and incapable of learning the rudiments of sculling - it was pitiful to watch him, the cunning old gaffer!

L. Warren.

GAFFERMANIA - A PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Although dedicated ocean racers or keen one-design sailors might be reduced to helpless mirth by the mere idea, Old Gaffers Races form a thriving and growing part of the sailing scene. Every season it seems that a new event appears on the calendar in places as far afield as the Clyde and the Channel Islands, so in keeping with modern practice this phenomenon should be subjected to an in-depth, state of the art analytical process. The East Coast race attracts 80 or 90 starters each year, the Solent and South Western events around 50 and last year a dozen English boats entered the St. Malo regatta to race against 20 locals. What on earth motivates so many people to indulge in such a fruitless pastime as trying to race an 80-year-old boat that was designed to catch fish in the first place?

The average fleet consists of such old fishing boats, pilot cutters, open day boats, converted life-boats, the occasional elderly racer and modern replicas of the above types fitted with such anachronisms as metal spars and heads that actually work. The fact that the rating rule used dates from the turn of the century and succeeds in bringing in such a diverse fleet with remarkably close corrected times should make the RORC computer blow a fuse in disgust. The majority of races are sailed in a flat calm, with the odd half gale thrown in once in a while to add spice to life, so that little boats tend to be overall winners, with the big boys only getting a look in when it blows.

Although all gaffer owners stoutly maintain that they are only there for the beer, these airy statements are belied by the glares of concentration as starting time approaches. It is a point of honour to hang canvas from every possible point, and in a breeze the sound of the start gun may be drowned by the crack of snapping top-masts and the flogging of blown out sails. In a big fleet with a start line less than five miles long, the start is a hair raising business, since once committed to a course a 50 ton trawler with a bowsprit reaching halfway to the first mark is not easily deflected, and presents a formidable obstacle to anyone with ideas of occupying

the same piece of ocean. Certain skippers labour under the impression that a cry of STARBOARD delivered in an aggressive enough tone will magically clear a path, but since most of the rest are in too much of a tizzy to distinguish port from starboard, this is not a policy to be pursued beyond the point of no return. However by the grace of providence serious bumps are rare, and the majority of the contestants usually cross the line in the right direction within a few minutes of the gun.

The starting gun is the signal for the majority of crews to settle down to such important tasks as brewing tea, pouring whisky, feeding the cat or finding a spot to curl up where the skipper cannot see them. On a few boats there will be energetic types who thunder around the decks gleefully hauling and easing ropes with total disregard for what they are attached to. Topsails are smartly hoisted upside down, headsails flutter bravely in the breeze with no sheets attached, and the skipper wishes he had spent a quiet weekend digging the garden. If you can spot the boat where sails go up smoothly and crew gaze at them with rapt attention, sheet in hand, you are probably watching the eventual winner. There is one in every race.

If it is blowing hard, those crew members not prostrated by seasickness will have to be put on pumping duties, as the unaccustomed speed washes the mud out of the seams, which open and close in unison like the mouths of Kings College choristers singing Silent Night at Christmastime. In light airs all minds and hands will be employed devising new and unusual ways of hanging up anything that might catch a breath of air. Apart from the ban on modern spinnakers like starcuts and tri-radials, anything goes, and some highly original sailplans appear which would make the boats' original designers spin like gyroscopes in their graves. Once all this is set and admired on the downwind leg, the gin is usually broached. One crew was observed on the morning of a hot windless race day searching Dartmouth for a cafe table with sunshade to go with their deckchairs, but this is not common practice. Distracting the opposition by sending the cook topless to the bowsprit end is a despicable piece of gamesmanship, except in French races where the sight is too common to cause comment.

Eventually most of the boats cross the finish line and results are computed. The prizegiving at the club rash enough to host such an event is the scene of much ribaldry and low humour, as embarrassed skippers collect prizes they know they only won because their rivals made even more of a Horlicks of it than they did. The serious business of the day then commences, with ale and food to be consumed and yarns and wives swapped as the race is resailed in minute detail round the bar.

The morning after, while nursing the hangover and totting up the probable repair bills, the mind tends to return to that question of motivation. The only conclusion to be reached is that human nature has a limitless capacity for dottiness; and long may it remain so.

J. Ward-Hayne.

1979 EAST COAST RACE will be held on Saturday 28th July, starting at 0730 at Stone, River Blackwater. PLEASE enter early.

24.

In a letter from Jay Cresswell, he mentions the following points:

I should like O.G.A. members to rethink Tarbert, it's a great little venue for an event, the very best small port on the Clyde.

I have just completed a spell as relief harbourmaster, during which time I noted that an appalling number of yachts hang on to fishing boats and each other without even thinking of running warps ashore. This is very sore on the inside man especially with four or more vessels in a breeze of wind. Perhaps a wee note in the next journal to that effect might jog a few memories next summer. One gets fed up with ordering them to comply, it's for their own good!!!

SOLENT AREA DATES.

Wed. 17th January 1979, 8 p.m. Local A.G.M. at The King's Head, The Square, Wickham, Hants.

Sat. 16th June Round the Island Race, Island Sailing Club

Mid July Solent Area Summer Rally/Meet, to be advised.

Sat. 15th September Solent Area Old Gaffers Race

Sat. 6th October Autumn Meet, Cowes Corinthian.

N.B. Don't forget that on every third Wednesday of the month local Old Gaffers foregather at the King's Head Hotel, Wickham.

C.M. Waddington.



