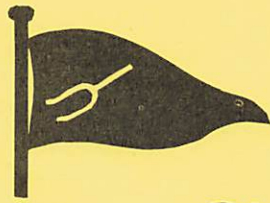


1980/3



Old Gaffers Association Newsletter



COPYRIGHT **THE OLD GAFFERS ASSOCIATION**

Braeside, 2, Greenbank St., Galashiels,
Selkirkshire TD1 3BL Scotland

OLD GAFFERS ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER No. 1980/3

ADVANCE NOTICE:

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Saturday January 17th 1981 at the Cruising Association Rooms, London.

COVER PICTURE: PEGGY-H (127)

Born Borthleven sometime in the 1890s. This is only the word of a fisherman, who sold her to the men on the East Coast in 1936, who 'liked the look of her lines', bought her, and had her made into a yacht by R.J. Priors of Burnham-on-Crouch.

I've enquired of them and they have no records of this undertaking.

I do have a letter from the man who had the work done, however, a Mr. Sartoris, and he retained the two 7 h.p. Kelvin engines which were in her as a fishing boat.

After Mr. Sartoris, history is a bit vague, because she was not registered until the fifties.

I've written to all the owners in the registry over the years, and not one (or his descendant) has had the decency to reply, even to my stamped, addressed envelope.

I have met a man who did sail with one of those silent owners and he recalls some cruises round the East Coast area and the North Sea. 'She were a bit hard-mouthed' he said.

Well now, when we found this sad-looking hulk on her side in the mud at Christchurch, she had no bowsprit, and it turned out that she never did have one from the day she was launched as a yacht at Prior's, not until we put the first one into her in the early sixties. So no wonder 'she were a bit hard-mouthed'!

To tell the truth, the old girl was not sailed for a good many years as she'd provided successive owners with a home.

When we bought her we started to live aboard straightaway and rebuilt a fair amount of her whilst we lived within. I did the work whilst Margy went out and earned the bread. There was a lot of work to be done as she had been treated very badly for some years.

It's good to be thick in the head about sailing! -----
--- We used to sail her out of Christchurch on spring tides when there was six feet on the bar and we needed five. There was always a slight swell and there was always a crunch as the keel thumped the shingle on the bar.

We did take the precaution of taking along bodies in those days and draping them on the new bowsprit when we crossed the bar. We had the impression that this lifted the keel somewhat, but I suppose it made little difference really.

She's a heavy old girl and all her ballast is inside - iron, right up to the cabin-sole. This means that lowering the sole to attain full headroom (for me) under the cabin beams could only be achieved by swapping the iron pigs for lead ones.

I computed that perhaps life would be easier if I ducked under the beams, and much less effort would be spent over the years doing that than humping out all that iron. We did move it all once to look at the planking, section by section, and we've never felt quite the same since.

She then had a collection of clapped out old cotton sails which started life white but had somewhere along the line gone into a very dirty grey shade. We managed an old gaffers race with those sails and fortunately it never blew more than about Force 1. I think we were last to finish but one, 'Girl Stella' (bless her old bones).

We continued to live aboard and sail her and sometimes motor her with one of two Thorneycroft 'Handy Billies', which had replaced the Kelvins when we bought her. All this out of Christchurch, then one day we had an attack of good sense and moved up to Mike Richardson's yard at Bursledon.

It was beautiful there then in the days before the affluent overspill and their new toys filled up the area with marinas. Suddenly Bursledon looked like a week-end gipsy encampment, with the participants all wearing the regulation blue and white (that was before the days of the regulation yellow-wellies!) and would you believe that there were gorgeous marshes there and an abundance of wild life? Not that long ago really.

Sailing from there was better, though it's a long push down the river against the wind for our old 'Handy Billy'.

The time came unfortunately, when we could bear that scene no longer, so we moved all our antiquated boaterie to the Medina at Cowes.

It's better here, there's green grass to be seen, although there's never been such a community of owners living aboard like there was in Bursledon.

Our old mast fell about us in the windy 1977 Solent race. We made a new one from a spruce tree acquired from Parkhurst Forest for £15, plus a whole lot of adzing. It seems to be all right.

There's only one 'Handy Billy' in her now, also only one shaft. We rebuilt the galley where the other used to be.

We've entered every Gaffers race since we've owned her, except about four, two of which we sailed our T.E.O.D. in.

We now have all terylene sails including a new main this year. It will be interesting to see how she performs with a flatter sail. All our other mainsail 'conversions' have been baggy old things really.

'Peggy H', then, 32 feet overall, 12 foot bowsprit, 10 foot 6 inches beam, 5 feet draught. Pitch-pine on oak, iron fastened into hefty 3 inch by 4 inch frames, some sawn, some grown. 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ inch thick pine deck, caulked and left 'natural'. 9 h.p. Handy Billy engine (not enough power really for such a hefty boat).

She has provided us with a sailing home for many years and in winter time she is very snug below, because the semi-open layout down below brings the bogey stove adjacent to the double-bunk area.

I am re-building a Perkins 4107 engine to install, I hope, next winter, we could do with the power but it will be sad to lose the quietness of the old Thorneycroft, not to say the instant reliability.

Ron Crick.

THE EAST COAST OLD GAFFERS RACE

Weather forecasts can be misleading. Before the East Coast Race on July 19 they were happily forecasting anything up to force 8. I actually woke up thinking shall I put in one reef or two. Of course at the 8 a.m. start there was virtually no wind. Most boats seemed to be under canvassed or not get under way at all. Of the record entry of 107 boats only about 75 actually started.

The wind did start to strengthen with the rain, which had been a drizzle, but soon began to fall down heavily. On L'Atalanta no one minded the rain because as the wind freshened we quickly moved up through the fleet. Just a few boats we noticed were East Breeze and Tarka (with Graham and Anthea Balmford crewing). I had intended to keep clear of the other boats and run down the River Blackwater on the Tollesbury shore, but every one was heading very definitely for Bradwell and we were forced to go along. The Amity, which we seem to battle with every year and lose, was trying to get past. Just about every boat went close to the Bradwell Power Station outflow to hug to the edge of St. Peter's flats. We were sailing in 10 feet of water which on an ebb tide may not have been very wise. A furious luffing match developed between Sheila and the new Cornish Trader Martha II and they both went right over near the sands. With so many boats sailing I do not know whether these individual battles are really worth while. While they fought it out we and about a dozen other gaff sailed craft sailed past. However, Sheila and Martha II had enough speed to later move up into the forefront of the fleet again. Both were racing for the first time and the 25 foot Sheila is undoubtedly a very nimble little craft, although Albert Strange designed her in 1905 as a cruising yacht. The Martha II was not particularly fast when running, probably because of her small sail area, but later when the wind freshened she did very well going to windward, without, I believe, having to reef.

Through the drizzle we could see the familiar silhouette of the smack A.D.C., turning at the outer mark. Because of the bad forecast it was thought unwise to send the fleet on the complete seaward course. The leaders turning back from the Bench Head Buoy made an impressive sight. Hyacinth was just in the lead but the other smacks, A.D.C., Charlotte Ellen, and Stormy Petrel were after her like a pack of hounds. On L'Atalanta we all tend to be a bit photo conscious. My own camera lay in the rain all morning and later only produced some rather blurred images of the event. At this stage the smacks were dominating the leading section. The wind had now increased to force 4 S.W., with some squalls up to force 6 and most were sailing their maximum speed. From the Bench Head to Bradwell every one did a close reach up near the St Peter flats, but off the power station the tacking started. The brand new 36 foot sloop Harnser easily took the lead to finish first. The Harnser is a light displacement, cold moulded centreboarder, totally modern in her appearance. She was sailed by designer-builder Arthur Holt and is owned by N. Willimolt. This is the first time that any of the new generation gaffers have managed clearly to outsail the fleet.

For us the fresh breezes and short course meant we were actually in the river tacking up to finish within sight of the leaders! As the wind increased I hung on to all the sail, particularly the huge light weather jib, and L'Atalanta really

started to go. We beat past the two bawleys Helen & Violet and Doris, but to do it the crew were struggling around on the lee deck with water round their feet trying to get the jib in. Several times in squalls the 18 inch high rail was completely submerged, and really it was not sensible to have so much water on deck. These knock down squalls must have actually slowed us down. We talked of taking in the tops'1 but with the finishing line so near and the smack Dorothy (a noted fast one) just ahead we hung on. In the end, Dorothy tacked up first and so did the powerful Kittiwake, and both crossed ahead. As we stowed up the sails, Helen & Violet, Skua, Hypatia, Greenshanks, and Golden Plover crossed and we could see gaff sails spread all the way down past Bradwell.

We had been racing only $3\frac{3}{4}$ hours and never before had we been back in time to eat a midday meal at anchor after this race. The Doggers Bank, a Dutch charter barge, was first back of class 4, which this year was made for vessels over 50 feet long. Speedwell came next and about the same time the 17 foot Laurie came beating up to be winner of class 3. Other small boats were forced to retire and Pelican Jee actually capsized so it is probable that a safer course will have to be devised. Also class 4 will need a course to keep clear of the main fleet.

The day after the race we set off back to the Deben motoring in a flat calm. In the Wallet off Clacton we met the Woodbridge yacht Try Again, towing the gaffers Sheila and Gipsy. We took Gipsy in tow as we gaffers were supposed to be the main part of an historic sail past in Woodbridge Regatta later that afternoon. All went without incident until we were crossing the Harwich approaches, then the engine briefly poured out black smoke and stopped dead leaving us drifting on an oily sea in the ship channel. Coming in from seaward throwing up an awesome bow wave was the Tor Britannia, the largest ferry in the North Sea and capable of 23 knots. I need hardly say that we cast Gipsy off and had the sail up in record time!

There was no time to look at the engine (later it proved to be water in the fuel line) and we decided to go into Harwich and up to Levington Marina. The Tor Britannia was too close for my liking and we could see another ferry passing Felixstowe Dock. The wind was barely giving steerage way and we got the inflatable into the water with the object of towing us clear of the main channel, but at this moment the wind sprang up. Gipsy decided to go on to the Deben and had a real battle getting there on the last of the flood.

As we had had such a success with the big light weather jib the day before, I decided to keep it set to give us maximum speed for manoeuvring in Harwich harbour as three more ferries, two dredgers and coasters were coming out. The trouble was that on the race day I had eight crewing, but only Bob and my teenage family were left, handling the big jib, which was just about all they could cope with. Then near the Guard Buoy in a squall the sheet jammed on the cleat as we tacked. In effect we became hove-to under the bows of the oncoming Norfolk Ferry.

'The sheet's jammed', they shouted, 'Shut up and free it', I bawled and to add weight to this point the ferry's bow came towards us. They soon freed it.

It would have been very difficult to beat L'Atalanta up the narrow channel into Levington Marina. So I asked the skipper of a modern yacht to tow us. The yacht owner was not really

very keen. 'You have got that thing sticking out in front which is in the way' he protested. I explained we called it a bowsprit and it was always in the way and threw him a rope. Entering Levington Marina was really a complete cultural shock. We had come from a Gaffers Race with smacks, winkle brigs, Victorian yachts and even the 75 foot Baltic Schooner Stina, into this modern marina where wooden hulls were rare and the gaff sails almost totally unknown.

Robert Simper.

DRAKE 400 - 1980 :

Some extracts from the President's diary.

Saturday 16 Aug: Made it! Battersea to Drake View Hotel in 4 hours dead - signed in, asked to be pointed in right direction for food, was, found it - on emergence after eating (etc), heavens opened and was drenched on way back to hotel.

Sunday 17 Aug: Went exploring to establish geography; found Millbay Dock (only two boats in so far) and RWYC; hotel almost exactly half way between them. Snoozed after lunch pending arrival of Mike Shaw at 1500. No caravan this time so rigged Mike's car with OGA and Bell's bunting to create 'office'. A few more boats arrived. Dined with Mike at local; tum rather queasy so settled for omelette.

Monday 18 Aug: Boats arriving spasmodically all day, complaining of nasty conditions in channel en route. Spent some time p.m. working out T(H)CFs for those not declared or listed. Skippers' briefing at RWYC 1700. Sam Poole gave general briefing. I announced T(H)CFs for whole fleet - some gasps of dismay, but no actual disputes! Then on foot over the Hoe to The Council House for Lord Mayor's reception - all very formal with much hand-shaking etc., but relieved by Mr. Bell's liquid contribution. Some of our crews turned up latish, almost dripping, in sweaters and jeans, having only just docked in. His Worship didn't turn a hair (too busy looking at watch to see if he would be in time for Union meeting) but some of the Council House minions raised the odd eyebrow. Had to persuade dispensers that departure of Lord Mayor need not deprive late-comers of their fair share of Mr. Bell's goodies. As the city is providing a substantial contribution towards expenses for the whole event, must pay tribute, but thank goodness it is all over. To food and to bed.

Tuesday 19 Aug: Golden Hind Trophy Race round buoys in Sound. Went with Mike Shaw to inspect and count fleet in Millbay Dock. While there, Lloyd Foster arrives in RWYC dory with loud hailer to announce that start might be delayed due to arrival of large tanker at critical time; no special signals published for such an event; play it by ear and eye. Back to Club. Tanker due at breakwater 1000 which should get her clear of our start line by 1100 for our start. Tanker does not arrive at breakwater till after 1030. We reckon we can get the Race under way before tanker blocks the start line - we were wrong. Gave 10 and 5 minute guns, but tanker + tugs completely blocked line at 1100 with half our fleet one side of her and the rest beyond. Recommenced starting procedure at 1110 for start at 1120 and everyone seemed to get the message - good start with the R.M. Gig in front leading Nepenthe, Iseult, Spica, Chloe, Sea Widgeon, John Young, Little Millie, Wender, Ripple, Lucie Waters - then we rather lost track of what must have included Roxana, Nerak,

Shamrock, Risør and Solwig - Owara and Olive Mary we never saw, but they were there somewhere. Risør was nobly carrying a deck cargo of BBC TV who apparently caused no problems while getting some splendid shots which were broadcast same evening. First round crossing line from 1313 onwards with the dreaded Ripple in front. Wind very fickle, should we send them round again? Decided yes, but took times on first lap in case. Missed Roxana (who had no identification other than very small red racing flag). Second lap justified as all finished by 1703 except Sea Widgeon who took the wrong buoy and never crossed the line. Splendid day except that 100% sun burnt my forehead something chronic. Worked corrected time results with aid of Lloyd Foster, but based on elapsed time from 1020 start instead of 1120, thus all balls. Unfortunately circulated same before error discovered by Jane Hiley. Reworked the lot and republished. Only four boats affected in overall placings and none in Class prize lists.

Wednesday 20th Aug: Described somewhere as 'fun' day; may have been for some of entrants but not so funny for us. For starters, promised MFV committee boat did not appear; Lloyd Foster very nobly lent us the RWYC launch as a substitute, complete with mast to hoist OGA flag. Drake's Drum event in three stages with overall self-timing; object - test of navigation and seamanship; first leg to Cawsand Bay where to anchor and subsequently get under way under sail only, meanwhile to get ashore to Boatel to collect sealed instructions for next leg of course; those who started too early (self-timed start) got there before opening time and had to waste time before could collect their envelope. We got there in good time to lodge all the envelopes with the landlord who we believe took pity on some of the early arrivals. Quandary for single-handers: rules state clearly the skipper must collect the envelope, but all boats must leave 1 man aboard as anchor watch; this also posed problems for crews consisting of one man (skipper) plus a collection of women and children; there must have been a lot of cheating, but we were not there to see it. Hared across to Wembury Bay to anchor on prescribed line before first competitor arrived. During this passage they were supposed to have created six inches of baggywrinkle which they were to present to the committee boat together with 'gifts according to their station': some of the baggy was immaculate, some hairy, some hilarious. We gave marks for 'almost anything' according to the rules for the event, and this included the degree of bribery shown in the 'gifts' (from which we made quite a good lunch). Impressed by two crews who properly rigged their offspring and sent them off in inflatable dinghy to deliver the loot - equally impressed by the respective offspring, wind against tide conditions now getting nasty. Observed Wender pitching at anchor so that first the whole bowsprit then the whole counter went under. We were sheering about like lunatics and rolling the gunwales under at times. Wind still rising SW, tide still a lot of ebb to go; decided to get the hell out of it, abandon the rest of the Wembury exercise, round up rest of fleet on our way back and tell them to go straight back into Sound and up river to Cargreen; great pity but better than allowing a dangerous situation to build up. Rounding up proved very wet exercise; got most of them but missed Roxana who had chosen to go five miles out to sea for no apparent reason, Risør who had elected to remain at Cawsand for the day (extra marks for seamanship), and maybe one or two others but as records all now dissolving and motion of launch making writing impossible, gave up struggle and headed home ourselves. Competitors had to sail up to Cargreen with penalties

for any motoring, but as we had been forced to abandon any timing aspect of the event this did not matter. We had to return the launch to RWYC so there was no committee boat at Cargreen for declarations to be handed to; Mike Shaw and I motored there and set up shop (sort of) at the pub. Received remainder of baggywrinkle, gifts, loot, bribery and other goodies. Cargreen arrangements not as promised: no specific mooring arrangements, no launch for shore-going, but as ever Old Gaffers managed. Barbecue followed. Returning by road to Plymouth passed Millbay Dock: to our horror discovered ginormous ferry occupying berth to which our boats were supposed to return in morning. Too late to do anything tonight so reported to Lloyd Foster, had nightcap and to bed.

Thursday 21 Aug: No events today. Ferry still occupying Millbay Dock; our boats ambling down from Cargreen having to find berths wherever - being Old Gaffers, they do. Spent much of day with Mike Shaw fiddling the marks for the Drake's Drum prize list so that everyone got something. Formal prize-giving in evening at RWYC by Deputy Lord Mayor and his Lady - he at least knew what sailing was all about having done some, she was heard to remark that this was the best formal function she had attended as everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves; this was true - Bell's had a hand in it somewhere. Prizes duly dispensed; slight pause before showing of teletape of the Golden Hind race on Tuesday; Deputy Lord Mayor and Lady still with us; he stood at rear and peered over shoulders, she elbowed her way through the crowd to get a good view and enjoyed it.

Friday 22 Aug: Passage race to Dartmouth. Lloyd Foster had armed the RWYC launch to act as committee boat for the start at the breakwater, so the MFV committee boat turns up and Lloyd doesn't have to turn out. Mike and I watch from our hotel window as there is nothing for us to do. The fleet go out in ones and twos; they are short of the Royal Marines' Gig, the Frenchmen in Solvig, and Risør, but have gained Duet. Mike spends morning (with only occasional harassment from me) settling up with RWYC; we inevitably fetch up in the bar with Lloyd to thank him, and through him the Club, without whom the event could not have happened. Glance at watch shows that if we don't get our skates on the dreaded Ripple is going to get to Dartmouth before we can and we are supposed to be timing in the race. Panic - to car - fight your way out of Plymouth - exceed speed limit to South Brent - dangerous driving to Dartmouth - find hotel, book in - dash off to find Mike - do so - agree to meet at RDYC hut at finishing line - lose one another (my fault) - he gets there first just in time to clock in Spica ahead (for once) of Ripple. As the RDYC hut was demolished and the replacement not yet installed (an MFV wheelhouse which the RAF had offered to lift out to this bleak spot by helicopter but had failed to find a chopper with enough lift to do so), we perforce had to sit on some rather knobbly concrete while clocking in the rest of the fleet. Worked out most of the corrected times as they came in; hope the arithmetic is better this time. All finished - though Owara took a heck of a time about it - in time for us to repair to our respective hostelryes and get cleaned up; failed to make contact with Sam Poole, so to bar, to dinner, and to bed.

Saturday 23 Aug: No events today. Collected other half of prizes from Mike's car, and took the whole lot over ferry to RDYC where the steward kindly undertook to nurse them until Sunday evening. Return to Dartmouth took seven times as long

to get to ferry due to queue; took as long again to find hole to park car (moral: don't take a car into Dartmouth on a bank holiday Saturday). Inspected moorings and noticed an encouraging intake of Gaffers to augment the fleet for the Sunday race.

Sunday 24 Aug: South West Area Race. Organised and managed by S.W. Area Committee, aided and abetted by the RDYC with apparent efficiency by both. Went up to Blackstone Point (direct route this time) to see if the line Team needed any help. They obviously didn't; three of them there, with families making a picnic of it; decided I'm not needed so sat back to enjoy the scene. Action stations as finishers start to appear. Identification tricky as usual especially at this range; had to wait for some to round to after crossing line before we could be sure who they were (and between us we had some pretty good binoculars); some only identified by elimination; our Piratical Individualists still won't all play the game. After indecent wait between first and last, finally timed them all in. Back to hotel for clean up, then across on ferry to RDYC to help sort out prizes for passage race; S.W. Area doing their own prizes praise be. Usual formalities before prize-giving: welcome by RDYC Commodore, mercifully short address from Alliance Building Society (sponsoring S.W. Race), then Sam Poole explained(?) how we had fiddled results so that everyone got a prize, then realised that I had to give the hardware away, so did (Ripple's Black Pete seemed to keep coming back for more). By now Mr. Bell's contribution to the refreshments seemed to be having some effect. Glad to find that Bernard Gibson was looking after the prizes for the S.W. Race. Intended to give brief close-down address, but was foiled by others saying all the things I had intended, so had to settle for a boost for the OGA as an Association as distinct from separate Area Associations which they are not. Splendid not-enough-chairs-so-sit-on-floor supper in RDYC rounded off things very nicely; had to leave before closing time to catch ferry back to Dartmouth. Home tomorrow if sober.

Monday 25 Aug: Was; did.

Michael Millar.

THOUGHT DITCHCRAWLING

It all started at the Solent A.G.M., back in January. All these spectacular photos (including some from the States!) and yarns of far off places made Robert (Karekiet, 16 foot Drascombe) and myself (Thought, 19 foot Memory) feel distinctly small and unadventurous.

So we thought of the only thing we can do better than the Gaivotas and Moyas of this world: crawl up ditches. A quick glance at tide tables, a couple more pints, and it was all arranged. The Sloop at the top of Wooton Creek on the Isle of Wight looked a promising venue and there were no problems with Harbour Master or Landlord. Chris Waddington, Solent Secretary, provided the administrative basics and we managed some publicity via the Newsletter.

Robert and I had agreed to start from Fareham (my home base) and succeeded, after several distractions, in leaving before the tide totally disappeared. Karekiet creamed away, setting a precedent which was to be underlined even more embarrassingly later. We thought we were doing reasonably well, with several 25 - 30 footers looking quizzically at the silent Seagull as we joined the Saturday convoy down Portsmouth Harbour. Robert was still well ahead, on the normal fine reach of this particular channel.

Once clear of the harbour mouth we chose to stand off down the main channel to clear Spithead, while Robert found an incomprehensible fair wind up the Inner Swatchway. That set him a good two miles up tide, and with wind on the nose and a foul tide the proposed rendezvous at Cowes for lunch looked a challenge.

Now, dear Reader, if you took part in last year's Solent race you will recall that an East going tide kills all wind. Off we went, eastward and windless toward Bembridge. When eventually a little wind did shake itself out it very rapidly developed teeth that had us tucking in the first reef. We had given up all hope of getting ashore for lunch, so the wine and turkey salad were broached and duly consigned to a watery end. No problem for Ivan and me; more of a problem for Hilary. The Bucket is indeed an instrument of many talents. By this time we had carved our initials in Ryde sands but were at last making some progress Westward. A brief interlude standing by a capsized dinghy single hander being very competently sorted out by one of the joint services training Nicholson 55's, and we made Fishborne, and after a short motor, Wooton Bridge.

As we approached the Sloop our welcome began to materialise. We had already contacted Dave Baggett and he and several other local Gaffers met us, sorted out moorings and generally made us very much at home. Karekiet was in well before us and busy exploring the creek, and we were soon joined by Adele (Neil Dick) and a Cornish Crabber. Between ourselves and the local crews we had a whale of an evening, with the landlord of the Sloop taking a personal interest in our well being.

Sunday morning was spent consuming vast breakfasts, visiting boats, and generally putting off the evil moment when moorings must be slipped. Nevertheless slipped they were, and an idle motor to a comfortable anchorage up the coast saw us idly reading newspapers, eating yet again and watching silly people trying to control spinnakers designed for 40 foot keelboats on 18 foot dinghies (Sidney Harbour Raters, we later discovered).

A glorious run back to Portsmouth again embarrassing the triangular boys, and the mandatory dead noser up the final leg to Fareham. No matter what wind is set elsewhere in the world, it's a dead noser up Heavy Reach.

We felt, and I think everyone else involved might agree, that the venture was well worth while. Clearly there is fun to be had from a rally, whatever the excuse. I suppose it's just that Gaffers are good to be with.

Garry Flashman.

A letter concerning the SOLENT RACE:

I am sure that like us everyone who took part in the 1980 Solent Old Gaffers Race must have thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The force 4 - 5 breeze provided a welcome change from the alternating gales and calms which seem to have become a feature of this race and a mostly downwind course provided some exhilarating sailing.

It also meant that the fleet of 50 odd boats stayed fairly close together and I am sure most crews will have a tale or two to tell of 'near misses' with another boat or a buoy. Certainly in our experience was typical it was remarkable that there were no serious collisions.

The first incident could not have been more straightforward. On the first and only beat we found ourselves on a converging course with another boat. She was on port tack, we were on starboard. We hailed her twice, she was obviously aware of us, but she just kept on coming. At the very last moment we had to bear away and go under her stern. The boat concerned was one of the prize winners.

The second incident was not quite so clearcut. On the reach up to the Coronation Buoy we had gone up too far to windward and had to bear away quite sharply to round the buoy. A boat which we had overtaken came up astern on a more direct line and when we were virtually rounding the mark she called for water. In our firm view she had not established an overlap before we were two lengths from the mark. In the interests of our insurance company we gave her room. This took place within sight of the committee boat.

The third incident, I am pleased to say, did not involve us. One of the bigger boats arrived at the Hillhead buoy for the second time on starboard tack at the same moment as a smaller boat rounding for the first time on port tack. As the larger boat gybed the two became entwined and went charging up the Hamble together. Eventually they separated without any apparent ill effects although I would imagine that the crew of the smaller boat were somewhat shaken. Neither boat retired.

I would have thought that it was so obvious that it should not need to be said that it is vital in the interests of safety that the rules be carefully observed and if people are uncertain of the rules they should simply keep well clear.

Should we have protested in connection with all or any of these incidents? We did not and would be most reluctant to do so because we do not think that the Old Gaffers race should be treated that seriously.

I would be most interested to read other people's views.

R.H. Jefferson (Patsy)

OLD GAFFERS 'ROUND THE ISLAND RACE' 1980

The day dawned rather dull and grey, and soon after 0530 Skipjack slipped her Hamble moorings and began motoring down the river for the start of the race.

The Old Gaffers section of the race was due to start at 0700 and once we were in Southampton Water, we set working canvas and tramped off on a close reach at a steady $6\frac{1}{2}$ to 7 knots towards Cowes, whilst taking the opportunity for some breakfast. The wind was the good old West South West and was, at that time, fairly moderate, although the forecast was for more.

We were lucky to be the right side of the starting line at the gun. Once we were out into the Solent, the wind had freshened considerably, and was reported later to have been about force 6 at the start of the race. We hove to, and took in a reef in the mainsail, and handed the staysail altogether. Then one of our crewmen let go of a halyard, and was dispatched, in high dudgeon, to the top of the mast to retrieve it. By the time all this had happened, the tide had taken us past the line some considerable way. We gybed, and ran back over the line and were eventually about fifth over 1 $\frac{1}{2}$, when the race began.

The seas, with wind against tide were fairly boisterous, and Moya, Iseult and Patsy (amongst others) provided a marvellous spectacle.

We began the task of beating down to the Needles, and initially, decided to stay roughly in the middle of the Solent, where the tide seemed strongest. We were ecstatic when, after half an hour and a few shouts of 'starboard!', we were the leading boat, and despite our mere 26 feet were beating at about 6 knots.

Then, disaster struck when our terylene mainsail suddenly tore. By the time we had luffed up, it had developed a two foot tear in the leach, just above the first reefing point. We took in the second reef and set the staysail, duly reefed, to make up for the lost canvas, but the whole operation cost us about 15 - 20 minutes and, by then, we were lying third, Iseult and a white double-ender having got away from us. We later discovered that the stitching was rotten.

By then, most of the other 1,000 competitors had started out, and the two and a half hours beating provided many moments of worry as we tried to pick our way through the mass of boats which were by now all concentrated on the Isle of Wight side in the best tide. By the time we were abeam of the Needles, we must have tacked about sixty or seventy times, and seen two or three collisions, several dismastings and had put Edward Heath about - much to his disgust! Quite a lot of the modern yachts seemed to be over-canvassed in the conditions, and few appreciated that a gaffer could not tack as quickly or point as high, as they.

So far as the Gaffers were concerned, the positions at the Needles did not seem to have altered much, and Iseult and the double-ender were soon off on a reach down towards Saint Catherines and, as we freed the sheets, Patsy, Moya, Gaivota and others could be seen astern.

The sail down towards St. Catherines was absolutely perfect gaffer sailing; blue sky, sunshine and a free point of sailing, with a fresh wind. As the morning wore on, we really began to miss having the full size of our mainsail, and, as we approached St. Catherines we set a rather larger jib, which made a considerable improvement to our speed.

The wind was still quite strong and we were amused to see that the large yacht, which had just torn past us setting its 'tall boy' spinnaker, was suddenly on her side about 30 yards ahead of us as she completed the most enormous broach - it must have scared the living daylights out of her crew, who wasted no time in handing the tall boy.

Just past St. Catherines, first of all Moya and then Gaivota raced past us, looking absolutely superb in the conditions. We thought we could hear Ron Francis bellowing at his crew to row harder! Then we gybed, took in the big headsail, and began a close reach up to the Forts, and started what was for us the most frustrating part of the journey - beating up to Cowes against the tide. The wind fell relatively light at times, but we were always on the look out for gusts, which seemed likely. These, however, did not often materialise, and we rather envied the bigger boats which had cleared the Forts earlier in better conditions.

Eventually, we crossed the finishing line at about 1720, after ten hours of hard, exhilarating sailing, and were, as you can well imagine, exhausted and hungry. We certainly slept well that night after a good supper and the inevitable trip to the Folly Inn.

The results of the race were as follows:

OLD GAFFERS (Jubilee Trophy)

<u>No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>T(H)CF</u>	<u>Elapsed</u>	<u>Correct</u>	<u>Posn.</u>
5904Y	Toucan	.861	10.52.34	9.21.52	1
1506Y	Skipjack	.925	10.23.28	9.36.42	2
1000	Earendil	.987	9.56.00	9.48.15	3
583	Iseult	1.013	9.44.18	9.51.54	4
459	Patsy	.908	11.01.22	10.00.31	5
2334	Moya	1.075	9.56.23	10.41.07	6
2286Y	White Moth	.975	Time expired		
314	Gaivota	1.039	Time expired		
4	Black Joke	1.171	Scratched		
804	Dorothea	.923	Scratched		

Iseult, first Gaffer home, won the Shamrock Trophy.

ADVERTISEMENTS

FOR SALE

SNIPPET (543) Humber yawl, aux. gaff. 28' + bowspt x 22' x 8'6". Draft 2'9" - 5'6" with centreplate. Built Smith of Goole 1913 to G.F. Holmes designs. Carvel, 1" larch planking on 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 1" bent oak frames at 6" centres. Pitch pine keel with 25 cwt iron keel, 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ cwt inside lead. 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ " yellow pine deck, teak cabin sides, covering boards & rails. Yellow pine coach roof. Wood spars, galvanised rigging. Roller reefing jib, slab reefed main & mizzen. Cotton mainsail (red); Cotton staysail (tan); terylene jib; flax storm jib; terylene mizzen. Volvo Penta MD1 diesel 7 h.p. Fuel capacity about 10 gals. New heavy duty starting battery fitted 1980.

Forecastle with toilet & chain stowage to starboard. Space for small berth if required. Saloon with settee berths to port & starboard. Folding table with oil lamp over in centre. Galley to port. Full length berth to starboard of engine box. Saloon also lit with three electric lights. Large self draining cockpit aft with detachable terylene dodgers. All sails & booms can be handled from cockpit inc. centreplate & is well rigged for single handed sailing.

Compass, Seafarer echo sounder, CQR & fisherman anchors, approx. 20 fathoms chain, electric bi-colour nav. light; paraffin p. & s. lights, stern light. Grounding legs, pvc boat cover. Fire extinguishers, all necessary warps & ropes & general sailing equipment.

Very fine example of the Humber yawls & apart from one other vessel on the Hamble we understand from the Humber Yawl Club that she is the only Humber Yawl left in existence. Club itself does not have one and they would very much like to see her again, partic. as they have their centenary in 1983. During past year she has been restored with great care & due to her exceptional condition it was not necessary to replace a single piece of wood. This must have been the case over the years as she is completely original, with exception of centreplate box which is now marine ply. Engine has been very well installed in space provided in original design. Sails very well & has proved to be good sea boat & enjoys Brest to Elbe insurance limits.

Because of her condition and history Snippet is a difficult boat to value and for this reason I am prepared to negotiate a fair price with any interested purchaser.

A.H. Ridett, Binfield House, Mill Lane, Binfield, Newport, IOW.
Tel: Newport 524495

M/S MAREN of Odense. Sailing ship with engine, elliptical stern. Oak planking on heavy oak frames. Built S.J. Kjeldsen, Esbjerg, Denmark, 1934. Brt. 32,57 - Nrt 11,04. LOA 14.94 Breadth 4.83. Machinery: Tuxham, Copenhagen 67HP - 1 cyl. 2 stroke, 7 knots, consumption: 13 - 16 litres per hour.

Trading Certificate in force until 17/7/1990, Area: East for the line Texel & Northsea, English Channel, East for the line Start Point - Cape de la Hauge. Complete overhaul 19/6/1980. VHF: Dancom - S.P. Sailor 46 TD.

Very well maintained overall - fitted for sail - can be used as trainee vessel/yacht, or as circumnavigator of the globe. Can be inspected Denmark or North Germany after appointment. Price idea: Dkr. 315,000; DM 100,000. Captain E. Larsen, Ananasvaenget 14, 5270 Odense, Denmark.
Tel: 45+9-189264

EILEEN MURIEL (783) Gaff cutter. 19' (+4'6" bspt) x 6'9" x 3'3". Larch on oak, teak coamings & doghouse. GRP sheathed decks. 8 h.p. Stuart-Turner 1952, rebuilt by factory 1975. New mag & carb 1979/80. Decoked 1980. Electric start/dynamo.

2 berth, sea-toilet, galley/table. Lots of lockers. Terylene sails: Mainsail; jib; staysail + 1 other. S/S rigging. Major structural refit over last 5 years, inc. keel bolts, cockpit, new rudder, floors & internal joinery. New spars. No electrics. 2 Whale bilge pumps, 15lb CQR, 120' chain; Sestrel compass. Good seaworthy condition. Must sell, due to expanding family. Afloat R. Exe. £2,750 o.n.o.
R. Shirley-Smith, Western Cottage, Blackborough, Kentisbeare, Cullompton, Devon. Tel: Kentisbeare 420.

PETREL I Gaff cutter. Built 1890 Whites of Looe. Pitch pine on oak. Rebuilt 1975, rerigged 1977. 22' +12' bspt x 8' x 3'10". Ford Marinised engine. 4 berths, toilet, calor 2 burner & grill. No renovation required & in very good condition. Lying Portchester. S. Mooney, 70 Castle Street, Portchester, Fareham, Hants.
Tel: Cosham 384589

SHAMROCK CK 174 (474) Built Aldous, Brightlingsea 1900. 44' x 37' x 11'6" x 5'6". Regarded as a classic smack conversion, maintained to highest standard. Constant renewal & restoration 1970/80. Over £6,000 spent on maintenance & improvements since 1974, inc. new 70 h.p. Ford diesel, new boom, bowsprit, running rigging. Excellent survey May 1980. Refastened & recaulked 1970. 6' headroom. Sleeps 7/8 in open plan accommodation. Immaculate condition for her age. Fully equipped for extensive cruising. Winner class 1 1980 S.W. Old Gaffers Race. Based on the Exe.
£15,000

Tony James, 13 The Beacon, Exmouth, Devon. Tel: Exmouth 77939

BICHE (1019) 15'5" x 14'3" x 10" x 2' - approximate measurements of Gaff cutter rigged dayboat. Built 1955 Fairey Marine of hot moulded teak for use by Royal Marines as a beach storming boat (Surf Boat). Completely refurbished with new sails by Whitmores, standing & running rigging & new fittings, 1980. New Mariner 2 h.p. outboard & roadtrailer. Excellent sailer. Advertised at £1,400 locally, £1,200 o.v.n.o. to loving Old Gaffer. W.A. MacGregor, 87 Ranelagh Road, Felixstowe, Suffolk.
Tel: Felixstowe 6034

FARIA 3 tons. 18' x 7'6" x 3'6". Built 1935. Hull excellent, rebuilt Stuart 1979. Currently being returned to gaff rig.

£2,000

R. Brooke, 6 Trevisson Court, Flushing, Falmouth, Cornwall.

Tel: Penryn 73687

WANTED FOR CREWING One person wanted on 35 ft. ketch, lying Spain. Preparing for 1981 trip Greek Islands. Share expenses. Write: K.A. Horne, 'Sea Witch of Los Angeles', Berth 844, Puerto Jose Banus, Marbella, Spain.

Our usual welcome to the following new members:

D.R. Medway, 4 Pengelly Park, Wilcove, Torpoint, Cornwall
Talisman 1018
W.A. MacGregor, 87 Ranelagh Road, Felixstowe, Suffolk
Charity 1022
J.F. Mellor, Monkmoor Farm, Monkmoor Road, Shrewsbury.
Ospray 1020
Sally Barnes, Balaclava, Mylor Downs, Falmouth, Cornwall
Alert 2002
F.S. Evans, 3 Old Hall Gardens, Brooke, Norwich, Norfolk.
Wendy 388
M.W. Hope, Ivybank, Milford, Lymington, Hants.
The Anna Pink 1021
G. Mackie, 22 Polwarth Street, Hyndland, Glasgow.
Mist 370
D.A. Rendle, Houseboat 'Swift', Barge Lane, Kite Hill, Wootton, I.O.W.
Sundown 561
W.C. Towell, 18 Turnaware Road, Boslowick, Falmouth, Cornwall
Alioth 1427
A J Savory, 51 Boston Road, Ipswich, Suffolk
Cherub 1023
D.R. Rockall, The Croft, Hampton Fields, Wick, Littlehampton, Sussex
Three Brothers 847

APOLOGY Secretarial apologies are offered for the lateness of this issue and for the lack of detailed Race Results. We've held on as long as we dared for the results to be sent in, but (apart from the Clyde Race in the last issue) we've had no results lists sent in yet. East Coast results have been sent direct to all participants.

Apologies are also offered for the curvature of the printing on some pages - the duplicator drum has developed a peculiar habit of shifting the stencil sideways.

J.A.S.

EAST COAST

The A.G.M. of the East Coast Area of the Old Gaffers Association will be held at Maldon Little Ship Club on Saturday 29th November from 7.30 till 11.00 p.m. Any volunteers to help with the refreshments and any nominations for the committee to me, please, preferably before 1st November.

NEXT YEAR'S RACE will be held at Stone Sailing Club on Saturday 25th July 1981. The start will be at approximately 9.30 but this and all other details of the race will be decided by next year's race committee, so if you have any views to express, or can offer any help, come to our A.G.M. and make yourself known. Hoping to see you racing next year.

Jane Hiley,

7 Buckingham Gardens, Hurst Park, E. Molesey, Surrey KT8 9TH.

AT LAST

On Friday, March 13, 1970, I went to the local bank and, by virtue of much fast talking, persuaded the manager to part with some money on a temporary basis. The reason for the transaction was to enable me to build a boat that I was very definitely enamoured with, and must have.

On Saturday, July 14, 1979, my little daughter (age 8) swung the bottle at the bowsprit and recited:

'I christen this vessel KARAKAL. May God bless her, those who built her, and those who sail on her. May she sail through deep waters to safe harbours with the Lord as her pilot; and may fair winds escort her.'

The reasons for the nine year and four month delay are as varied as they were frustrating to live through. Suffice to say that my picking of a boat was more astute than my choice of a builder. But she's now sailing, and she does sail well.

Karakal is twenty-two feet long on deck, a bit over seven feet in beam, and she draws three feet. The hull is that of a slightly widened and deepened dory; the keel is a long fin with generous skeg for the rudder which hangs outboard on the transom, and her rig is gaff ketch. She has a cabin that sleeps three, seats five, and has a small but workable galley with an Origo alcohol stove. Headroom is slightly less than four feet (and I'm 6'2") but it is still possible to get around with care. There is a bit of interior fitting out to do yet, and I do want to do more interior painting before she hits the water next season. But at the end of a hard day's sail, with the light of the brass cabin lamp flickering, she looks very homely and cozy.

The name Karakal gets lots of queries. A friend in Florida has pointed out that a 'karakul' is a Turkish goat, so the one letter change to 'Karakal' must mean that it is a Persian lamb. However, it comes from James Hilton's novel, The Lost Horizon. It was the name of the mountain on which the lamasery of Shangri-la was found and, as Shangri-la has passed into our language as a synonym for peace and rest, I think the logical association of ideas is obvious. Less obvious is the way it fits into two old nautical superstitions or customs in this part of the world. There are those who point out that it is lucky for a vessel to have a vowel in the name three times and doubly so if that vowel is 'A'. A second custom, which I picked up in Virginia from yacht designer Tom Colvin, is that seven letters in a name is considered lucky. As the boat has gaff rig and clipper bow, and as I am a great admirer of many of the old traditions, the name fits well. It seems to have worked, for she has proved herself very well this summer. Although in a change of jobs and location, so I was unable to sail as much as I would have liked, the few times I had her under sail were most illuminating. She sails better than a lot of people expected, including myself.

My first sail in her was on the day of the launching, from the dock where we rigged her to her mooring about a mile away. It was a dead beat to windward (isn't it always?) - a heading that a gaff ketch is supposed to get murdered in attempting. To rub salt into the wounds, a nice modern fin keel fiberglass sloop of the same length was just getting away from her mooring and I just knew we were in for a bit of a shellacking. She was about a hundred yards ahead, going down harbour as we were - but at the end of the mile, we were less than twenty yards off her transom

and closing. I guess miracles still happen. In subsequent sails, we were quite surprised to see how well she held up with an International 14 (he beat us, but not disgracefully). And then there was the day we sailed over to watch the races at Chester. A big, modern thirty footer sailed up out of his harbour and, to windward, tromped up on us pretty quickly. But as we got up out of the lee of a small island and the breeze started to freshen, we were able to ease sheets a little. Twenty minutes later, the big sloop was still on our quarter - having gained nothing in the time. I began to look at my little sailing dory ketch with new respect. She is a complete antithesis of the modern sailing vessel - wood, hard chine (what dory isn't?) and gaff rigged. To compound the felony, I rigged her in the old style with dead-eyes and lanyards and set the lanyards up kind of slack - 'fisherman style'. This prompted one new boat we met to call over 'Your shrouds are kind of loose' - to which I helpfully pointed out, 'Only on the leeward side'. I can't understand the strange looks I got for that piece of helpful wisdom. There was the large, new, fiberglass racer/cruiser that we met near Indian Point. The owner called over 'Pretty boat' to which I replied, with the characteristic phrase of many of our small fishing villages, 'Some nice!' I don't know if the laughter and waving was due to the dialect or because they had the name 'Some Nice' written on their transom. Maybe they never heard someone read before.

And there was the day we went out in a little more breeze than expected. The forecast was for light airs, and the morning was light; but about 1100 hours, the breeze settled in. I was busy enough watching what I think was a small pilot whale in my wake. The first gust hit us and heeled her down almost to the rail, but then she settled in and started to sail. Dragging the dinghy and all, we were making in the range of six knots and she was tramping the white caps of the wavelets on their pointed little heads with her chine. The breeze was later reported as about twenty-five knots and I understood that this design likes to be reefed at about fifteen. But one thing came of it - she certainly inspires confidence. In a gusty breeze that went from ten to forty knots (or so I'm told by those who have a means of measuring) I sailed her under jib and mizzen and she seemed to love it. I was obviously more nervous than the boat was - she seemed to keep telling me to stop worrying. 'After all, I'm a dory, aren't I?'

Karakal carries no engine and, so far, I have not had any great need for the oars. If the air is moving, so is she - and she takes the gusts well too.

But perhaps her greatest virtue is the way she gathers friends. Everyone has a good word for her; even those who sail much larger and grander fiberglass yachts have come out of their way for a closer look and an admiring comment. I'm having an awfully hard time staying properly modest about her - although I didn't get much fun out of the man who was calling out questions all through my mooring run on a rather flukey day. I could have wished that he didn't like boats. We got the mooring buoy on the first pass, as usual with her so far, but it was dramatic for a couple of minutes. But her manners are good and she has few bad surprises - except for a small and very persistent leak, which we plan to have cured next season, if we can ever find it.

Was she worth the nine years? I believe so, although I am not sure if I would do it over again. I think there must be an easier way. But Karakal has been a fine start and is an excellent little vessel on which to learn. She is pretty enough to get all the attention while my amateur mistakes go unnoticed or are pardoned because of my obvious good taste in boats.

David Keith

THE GAFF RIG ERA

4. The Coming of the 'America' (Part I)

The American revolution left the eastern seaboard of the continent in chaos. Thousands who had sided with the English colonial army feared reprisals, and with the withdrawal of the combined English and Hessian garrisons from New York in 1783, twenty thousand people fled to Canada, Bermuda and the Bahamas. The remaining ten thousand of New York's people were barely enough to keep the city alive, and the contrast between the few rich and the very many poor was stark. Fewer than three hundred families provided the financial backbone and social society of the city. Their condition is described by Edwin P. Hoyt (The Vanderbilts and their Fortunes):

'The poor infested the town like the rats which overran their tumbledown shacks. The poor haunted the churches, the almshouses and the public gaols. They were ill clothed and worse fed, subsisting on rotten vegetables and consoled and anaesthetised by cheap gin or plain spirits that was enough to take the skin off a strong man's palate. New Yorkers had no system of garbage disposal or refuse collection. The slaves and the indentured servants of the rich carted the household offal to the common dump every day in wooden barrels. The poor flipped their waste through the nearest window to the woe of the unlucky passerby. The excreta, the mud and the garbage piled in the roads, where it was squashed by the feet of humans, cattle and horses. The poor lived in lean-to's and rickety huts near the tannery of Jacob Roosevelt on the west side of the city, an area bounded by swamp and river, an area the sniffing physician called 'the courtyard of the pillar of death'. Every disease was endemic in the filth - the French disease perpetuated by the whores who crowded the streets, and pushed their way into the cribs, typhoid and typhus and more mysterious fevers, the dreaded yellow jack, and the vomiting disease that is called cholera. The poor sweated and itched in their dirt in summer. In the winter they ached, froze and died in the humid cold - those who were not dying in the debtors' prisons. For in the poverty of the town and its port free men slipped slowly into debt. Fully one seventh of the grown males of New York sat in debtors' prisons, unable to work to pay their debts, unable to gain their freedom until the debts were paid.

By and large the depression continued year in and year out, and the port of New York starved with the city's poor. There was not a private hotel room in the city. The last guest climbed into the last empty bed in the common room of the public house or, if no beds were available he found the one least occupied and shoved his way in among the sleepers. The common men of the town frequented the cheap taverns and

stood outside on windy days, hopefully watching the ladies with their billowy skirts and praying for a breeze. If a wind came and the ladies skirt was blown above her head, the view was extreme for pantaloons had not been invented to cover ladies limbs. New York's harbour was cold and green and empty.'

In the thirty years to 1810 New York had grown to a population of 80,000 and was the largest city in the United States, its wealth built upon trade and its harbour now busy.

'Canal Street was still a stinking brook, full of sink holes that ran all the way across prickly huckleberry fields to the Hudson. What is now Center Street was part of a ten acre lake, sprawling over the marsh that would be filled by the grey approaches to the Brooklyn Bridge. The Northern end of Manhattan Island, not yet part of the town, was still full of country houses and great estates, a hangover from the Dutch boweries that had dominated the island culture in the past decades. Cattle grazed placidly along the East and Hudson rivers and in the tall green grass of the upper island. Across the Haarlem River lay old Jonas Bronk's original farm, now whittled by the progress of the city below, although the Bronx was still largely pasture land.'

This was the setting for the birth and early development of yachting in America. In their book 'The America's Cup Races', H.L. Stone and W.L. Taylor state that:

'In America there had been some yachting - in the literal sense of the word - meaning the use of privately owned vessels for pleasure, since colonial times, but few men had the leisure, time or money to indulge extensively in sailing as a sport until around 1840. By then there were enough yachts and yachtsmen for clubs to be formed in the leading cities like New York, Boston, Charleston S.C., New Orleans and others. Most were short lived, but the New York Club formed in 1844 with Col. John C. Stevens as its first Commodore survived and has been the country's most prominent club ever since.'

Colonel John C. Stevens was the eldest of three brothers and lived on Hoboken (the family owned most of the place). To cross the Hudson River by ferry was a slow and uncertain business, so the Stevens brothers each had his own boat by which he crossed either under sail or by rowing. The first craft owned by John C. of which there is any knowledge was the 'Diver', 20 ft.o.a., and built in 1809, then in 1816 he had built 'Trouble', a pirogue type of vessel very much in vogue then. She was 56 ft. long and rigged with two masts, one in the extreme bow and one just aft of midships. There was no jib or bowsprit, the hull very wide and flat floored, and with a full bow. Stevens was an experimenter and in 1820 built a catamaran called 'Double Trouble', but it was not a success. Then came 'Wave', 65 ft., and very fast. In 1839 the schooner 'Onkahya', 91 ft. w.l., 250 t. A novelty in that she had an iron keel and a long fine bow. 'Gimcrack' was a schooner built by William Capes of Hoboken in June 1844 and designed by George Steers. Although no lines of her now exist, she was known to be 51 ft. l.o.a., 49 ft l.w.l., 13 ft.6 in. breadth, 5 ft.2 in. depth and drew 7 ft.6 in. She was fitted with a plate iron keel rather like the fin keels of today but with no added ballast. This keel was 4 ft. deep and 15 ft. long. She is famous in American yachting history as the birthplace of the New York Yacht Club. This club was Corinthian in outlook and a prime rule was, 'None but members to sail and handle their yachts'.

In the winter of 1846/7 Stevens, in collaboration with George Steers designed the 'Maria' and had her built by William Capes. The original sloop was of the conventional 'cod head and mackerel tail' form and 92 ft. w.l. After two years he tired of this form and had her altered by the bow to 110 ft. w.l. 116 ft. o.a. She became such a radical departure that in many ways she 'out America'd' the 'America'. On a beam of 26 ft. 6 in. (giving a B/L ratio of 4.15) she was 8 ft. 3 in. in depth of hold, 5 ft. 2 in. draft at stern, and 8 in. forward. She had two centreboards, one near the stern to aid in steering, and a large board 24 ft. long amidships. This board was of iron ballasted with lead and weighed over seven tons. When first launched the board worked in a vertical line and its weight was partially counterbalanced by two large spiral springs which extended when the board was lowered. The mast was 92 ft. 32 in. dia. at deck and 23 in. at the hounds. It was a hollow spar being bored out. For the first 20 ft. the hole was 12 in. dia., for the next 20 ft. it was 10 in. dia. and above that the bore was 7 in. The main boom was 95 ft. long, 31 in. dia., 28 in. at the slings; it was built up from staves, like a barrel, and inside was a system of trusswork with tension rods reaching almost to the ends. The staves were hooped with iron bands which were keyed together with iron wedges driven into mortices. Its cost was about 600 dollars. All the spars were made by Fish and Morton of New York. Length of gaff 61 ft., 26 in. dia. The bowsprit, also a hollow bored spar was 38 ft., 24 in. dia; it entered the hull below deck leaving the foredeck free. There was also a jib-boom which brought the jibstay attachment some seventy feet from the mast. In the mainsail the cloths were placed parallel to the boom instead of the then conventional vertical seam. The total sail area was 7,890 square feet.

During the first years of her racing life she usually beat all comers, her few failures being due to the breakage of her many experimental devices, for the Stevens were always trying something new. At one time the lead ballast was placed on the outside of the planking, being about two inches thick at the rabbet reducing to a half inch thick halfway to the turn of the bilge. 'Maria' had several test matches with the 'America' and it is said that one day, in conditions well suited to her, she sailed three times around the America in a comparatively short time.

The appreciation of the weight reduction of spars by the American designers gives a clue to their success in yacht racing during the next one hundred years. The technical problem posed to the spar makers was formidable. There were no reliable waterproof glues available and the only mechanical power - steam. The designing and building of a steam driven boring machine capable of extreme accuracy must have been a challenge in itself. Even with the insertion of plummer blocks to support a boring bar some 30 to 50 feet long, the last few feet must have been an exciting business, and I must admit that I would travel a long way to see a tree trunk 92 ft. tall and suitable in every way for such a mast.

The pilot schooner was a type well developed and particularly American. Their historians claim that a colonist named Robinson built the first schooner ever seen, in Gloucester, Maine, in 1713. According to the biographers of Captain Andrew Robinson, it appears that he regarded the lateen sail of the Mediterranean as the progenitor of all fore and aft rigs, and contended that the main and jib sail of a properly rigged sloop represented the

three cornered sail of the lateen; divided by the mast at the exact point where the yard of the lateen would depend from its traveller. Captain Robinson, it is said, carried this division further; dividing the mainsail of the sloop and adding a mast for the new sail so created. Caleb Goodwin of Baltimore developed the Baltimore clipper, which had low freeboard and broad beam. A sharp bow at the waterline arched out to form a full deckline forward, deep draft aft and a raking sternpost, creating a model for many designs both large and small, the most notable being the American pilot schooner. And they came to be regarded with the same respect as the English pilot cutters, fit for any work or weather. These schooners which cruised from the Nantucket Shoals to the Delaware Capes competed for trade and were often sailed short handed. It was largely the fame of these schooners, whose praises were sung by the masters of returning ships, that persuaded some New York yachtsmen to build a yacht and send it to England in time for the first of the great trade expositions then being built at the Crystal Palace.

A syndicate was formed consisting of John G. Stevens, Hamilton Wilkes, George L. Schuyler, James Hamilton, J. Beekman Finlay and Edward A. Stevens. They made a contract with William H. Brown to build the yacht in his new yard at the end of 12th Street on the East River. The price was agreed as 30,000 dollars fully equipped, and delivery to be on April 1st 1851. She was to be tried out by the syndicate and if not up to their expectations they need not accept her, further if they took her to England and she was not successful they could still return her to Brown. She was launched on May 3rd, and although still not ready the syndicate purchased her for 20,000 dollars. She was finally delivered on June 18th. After considerable correspondence with the R.Y.S. they received a cordial invitation from Lord Wilton, the new commodore, to join in the racing season. No specific mention of prizes was made but the inference was that there would be plenty of races on offer. Cash bets and wagers were a normal part of the 1850s racing, and the Americans were encouraged to believe that they would at least cover expenses and perhaps show a modest profit. As Herbert F. Stone commented: 'Alas for the plans of mice and yachtsmen'.

The dimensions of the new yacht, the 'America' were: L.O.A. 101 ft. 9 in.; L.W.L. 90 ft. 3 in. B. 22 ft.; Draft 11 ft.; Main mast 81 ft.; Foremast 79 ft. 6 in. They were stepped with a strong rake aft characteristic of the pilot schooners. The bowsprit 32 ft., Boom 53 ft., Sail area 5263 sq. ft. The sails were made of machine woven cotton cloth by R.H. Wilson of New York and were far superior to anything in the British Isles at the time. Below deck there was a large main saloon running aft from the mainmast around the sides of which were six built in berths with transom seats in front. Forward of the saloon were four staterooms, then the galley and pantry, and a large fore-castle for the fifteen crewmen. A bathroom and clothes locker flanked a passage that ran aft: from the main saloon to the cockpit, under which was the sail locker. On June 21st, with her sea-going rig set she was towed clear of Sandy Hook and sailed for Europe. On board were thirteen men. Captain Dick Brown, a Sandy Hook pilot in command, Nelse Comstock, mate, six sailors, a steward and a cook. The designer, George Steers, the son of an emigrant Devonshire shipwright, and his fifteen year old nephew Henry Steers. They made a good passage of twenty days to Havre including a day's run of 284 miles. Commodore Stevens joined at Havre and three weeks were spent in fitting out for the English season.

M.E. White

RAPUNZEL (753)

I feel a little guilty as being listed in the Newsletter as owner of Rapunzel. The truth is, that I own only one third, TD and GV being the other partners. The partnership has been going for three years now, and as we had entered three Old Gaffers Races, we thought that one of us ought to join the Association so that we would know when next year's race is.

Our partnership is based on our miserable salaries, and the upkeep of seven children, three cats, three wives, two rabbits and a dog, and has worked very well. TD is a social worker, so knows how to direct our efforts, and is usually our front man in dealing with river bailiffs etc. I am a scientist, so am useful at mending centre boards and other such high technology. GV is an architect, and is responsible for the impeccable water line and paint scheme of Rapunzel.

Rapunzel was built by Walter Cook in 1934, as a barges boat, we believe there were races for such boats in those days. The previous owner rescued her from rot and decay in Heybridge, and gave her her present gunter rig, and the name Mewgull.

In the 1976 Old Gaffers Race, which was our first, she was so slow, that we didn't complete the course, although we were first across the starting line, in the mist. So in 1977 we had a reappraisal. First of all we tried re-proofing the sails with ochre and fish oil, but that didn't do much for her speed, although it did make us unpopular at home. Off to Taylors, and a nice new set of terylene sails. A new centre plate, real anti-fouling paint and a boat with transformed sailing qualities. The old jib does beautifully as a water sail, while a hideous blue lug sail makes our Irish Jig sail.

That collection took us to a magnificent seventh in 1978 and twelfth in 1979. Next year I plan on getting the old mainsail up as a mark 2 Irish Jig.

Incidentally Rapunzel was the only Class 3 boat with three-up this year, and the psychological warfare effect of frying bacon and eggs on the run down to St. Peters nearly caused early retirement from some of our near neighbours! Certainly we were very well placed on the run out to Bradwell and Mersea, but the crew were too drunk to see the second buoy, which caused us to finish later than was necessary. Anyway it was a splendid day out, those quiet days might not make for exciting sailing, but it gives you time to appreciate the other boats on the river!

J.R. Howorth

WE ARE OFTEN being asked 'What constitutes an Old Gaffer? The following (somewhat unhelpful) definition was sent to us by one of our American members in the form of a press clipping:

That question on everybody's lips: What is a gaffer?

by Tom Dowling, Washington Star Staff Writer.

As a movie critic I am often approached for information by my adoring public. Far and away the most frequent question posed is: What in the hell is a gaffer? Or, barring that, a key grip?

I have become quite expert in forfending this line of inquiry: the pitying glance for the effrontery of so elementary a question, the hearty one-cineaste-to-another chuckle followed

by a rapid change of subject, the standard pompous lecture on film as an ethereal art form as opposed to a technical craft.

The fact is that until quite recently I hadn't the foggiest notion of what a gaffer might be. As a fisherman, I knew that a gaff was an instrument inserted into a fish's gills to boat the monster. As a journalist given to an almost daily quota of blunders, I knew that a gaffe was a mistake which, however malicious or ignorant, was nevertheless too minor to correct with a retraction. Yet this did not entirely explain why every movie credit list contains a reference to an employee called a gaffer, not to mention another one called a key grip.

Was the gaffer a man armed with a hook who pulled floundering actors out of waters beyond their depth? Was he the fellow who thought up the various boo-boos and anachronisms with which every film is amply endowed? The man, say, hired to put wrist-watches on the arms of battling Norsemen in 'The Vikings'? The fellow who selects locations for Westerns after ascertaining that the mountain scenery in the background feature high voltage towers and the desert in the foreground be imprinted with automobile tire tracks?

On the whole, these explanations seemed inadequate. I could, I suppose, have phoned a colleague in the movie reviewing business and asked straight-out to resolve this perplexing matter:

'Hello, New Yorker. Give me Pauline Kael. Pauline, this is Gary Arnold of the Washington Post speaking. Say, I know this is silly and please don't let it get around that I don't know, but could you tell me what a gaffer is exactly. I mean, naturally, I've got the general idea, but precisely what is it he does? I see, you don't know either. Thinking of putting a call in to Dowling of the Star, were you? Oh, there's no question he knows the answer, but I believe he's on vacation this week. In any case, he doesn't even have a telephone.'

The more I thought through this scenario, the more it seemed advisable to find out what a gaffer was. You never could tell when the possession of this trivial piece of lore might come in handy. If, God forbid, I ever found myself interviewing some powerful studio mogul I could compliment him on the excellent gaffering so abundantly in evidence in his pictures.

So, what the hell IS a gaffer? I have, accordingly, consulted H.L. Mencken's monumental study, 'The American Language: Supplement II'. I am pleased to report that the sage of Baltimore has not let me down. A gaffer, you may be interested to learn, is so crucial a member of the Hollywood movie team that he is surrounded by assistants called 'best boys' and 'juicers'.

But let me not prolong the suspense. A 'gaffer' is the head electrician, the man who tells his ace deputy, 'the best boy', what their grubby troops, 'the juicers' are supposed to be doing, electrically speaking, on the set. On reflection, I cannot avoid the suspicion that electricians are called 'gaffers' for reasons analagous to garbagemen being called 'sanitary engineers'. That is to say that the tasks performed by studio electricians are so mundane that in order to secure greater dignity and mystery for its membership the electrician's union insisted that some term such as gaffer, boffler, trugger, or heggler be invented to impress movie credits watchers.

For, as Mencken points out, Hollywood in general has not been derelict in coining fancifully precise words to describe the odd duties entailed in moviemaking. It was Hollywood that thought up 'cobra' to describe a full grown man-wrecking woman of what Mencken terms an 'aphrodisical' inclination, 'finger-wringer' for a star given to emoting, 'beef' for laborer, 'cow-waddy' for a he-man in a western, 'bulber' for a photographer, 'lens-louse' for an actor who tries to dominate a scene, 'skull doily' for a wig, and 'horse-opera' for a Western.

But gaffer? Surely, that one sprung into currency on one of Hollywood's off days. And this is not to mention key grip. What does IT mean, you wonder. Damned if I know. Mencken provides a leading hint in his summary of theatrical slang when he defines a 'grip' as 'one who assists the carpenter and second hand. But key grip? Why I may yet have to call Pauline Kael, or better yet, her best-girl stand-in.

WATERPROOF COVERS FOR CHARTS

We have been sent a sample of MICROMAX MAXCOVER. The accompanying press release says: 'Maxcover, a permanently bonded transparent matt skin, has eliminated the problem of protecting charts from damage by water and wear. However, they can still be written on with a lead pencil and the resulting marks may be erased with an ordinary rubber. More important still, Maxcovered charts can be permanently corrected either with ink or by block correction. As a result of Maxcovering, charts are safe from hot or cold water when in use, or from damp when stowed. Even in heavy weather Maxcovered charts are no problem - wipe them dry when there is time, and pencilled notes and course lines will remain intact.

'This concept has been met with encouragement by all the chart publishers. A great deal of attention has been paid to the details of updating and block correcting, and indeed a large sheet of double sided adhesive paper is included with each Admiralty chart to cope with the largest likely block correction. Micromax are thus able to supply all Admiralty, Stanford and Imray charts Maxcovered to order, either direct to the public or via selected agents and chandlers, and we are also pleased to cover existing folios of charts.'

Any owners interested should contact: Micromax,
51 Fore Street,
Cullington, Cornwall.
05793 3450

SPENCER THETIS WHARF LTD.,
Medina Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight (Cowes 296743)
have sent their list of blocks, mast hoops, deadeyes, cleats and belaying pins. From the illustrations on the leaflet, these appear to be excellently made traditional fittings.

PLEASE NOTE We have no practical experience or knowledge of the above firms, but both appear to be the sort of thing O.G.A. members often need.

THE SOUTH-WEST RACE 1980

For the first time since its inauguration the South West Area race suffered a postponement this year and very nearly a cancellation. As the days drew on to 19th July there seemed no end to the succession of lows coming in and many owners realised they had been wasting their time preparing light weather gear (the South West race has a reputation for being held in light winds). The organisers became alarmed at the low entry and the reports of boats weather bound at their home ports or cruising plans disrupted, making passage to Dartmouth uncertain.

By Friday evening, however, there was an entry of twenty-six, Benbecula, The John Young, Tern, and Tom Tit all safely in port after fine passages from Cornwall. Dilkusha and Tee Jay endured a difficult and stormy beat from Poole but were also safely in and there was the usual splendid gathering at the Dartmouth Yacht Club. The Dartmouth leading lights being out of action, true to form, Shamrock arrived in the middle of the night, in a rain squall.

Saturday dawned dark and overcast, with dismal forecasts of gale force South Westerlies. The coastguard at Berry Head said they had force 7 and Prawle Point reported 7 gusting 8 and they were expecting 9. There was a hasty meeting of committee members with the Race Officer and a very reluctant decision was made to cancel the race. Postponement, of course, had been discussed but it was felt that conditions were so bad that even the trip to the start line presented an unacceptable hazard, particularly for the smaller and older boats. Accordingly, before any boats had left their berths, the committee boat hoisted flag 'N', and cruised up and down the river until the whole fleet had acknowledged. There was some muttering among the crews but owners were generally unanimous in agreeing that the decision had been correct.

During the morning a proposal for an up river trip to sample the beer at Dittisham was well received. An alternative suggestion of a sports meeting for crews in Coronation Park was unaccountably turned down. Most boats made it to Dittisham and enjoyed a very jolly session. The inconsistency of conditions on the Dart were well illustrated when Spica and Ripple, both engine-less, found too little wind to carry them over the strong ebb, abandoned the attempt and returned to Dartmouth only to find the pubs already shut.

Somewhat under false pretences the social gathering and supper party at the Royal Dart Yacht Club went ahead as planned and although in the absence of a race and prize-giving there was a slight feeling of cheating, the evening was a great success. In the latest forecasts there had been the hint of a veer and the party broke up with everybody optimistic about holding the race on the following day.

They awoke to a torrential downpour but the wind had gone round to North West, and as the fleet ran out towards the start line the rain ceased and the sky assumed a somewhat lighter grey. Conditions were ideal, the offshore wind making for a calm sea. The wind was a bit fluky inshore, varying between three and five, but steadier and occasionally stronger further out.

Only sixteen boats came to the line and this coupled with the absence of Class I, in which Shamrock was the sole representative, made it an easy start. Tern was first across closely followed by Ripple, Spica and Benbecula, then all the rest practically together with Little Millie and Tom Tit well up with the leaders. A fouled staysail sheet hove Sea Wigeon to as she came about to cross and the moment's delay was sufficient to put her astern of the majority of the fleet. Lonely, at the lee end of the line, her lovely rig etched black against the grey sky, Shamrock executed manoeuvres of her own around the Committee boat.

The first leg was a close reach to the Western mark, demanding close attention, slight lulls in the wind alternating with quite strong gusts. As skippers got the feel of it one or two tops'ls appeared. Swift, well up and going nicely set a jib tops'l. The fleet streamed out, Tern held and increased her lead, Ripple and Spica stayed close together. Spica found she had to tack to weather the mark and let Ripple through. Several boats further back, seeing this, tacked early and gained a little by sailing free for the mark. Round the mark it was a run to the Skerries Bell Buoy. Boats began to make more sail and private battles took place between individual boats. Tern fled ahead and her position was now unchallengeable. Ripple and Spica, never more than a few yards apart, exchanged places more than once. Then there was a gibe round the Skerries Bell Buoy and a reach back inshore to the Committee boat. This was exciting sailing. With a nearly flat sea and a whole sail breeze, most of the boats were travelling at or near their maximum speed. Benbecula came up to second place and Tom Tit and Swift were close behind the leaders. Positions changed little after this as the course led round the Committee boat, down to the Western mark again and back to the finish line. Competitors had a fine spectator's view of each other's boats as they passed on the penultimate leg or came up to the finish. The small gaps between the elapsed times will give some idea of the excitement of this very fast race. Tern's and Benbecula's times for this 16.1 mile course will no doubt stand as a record for a long time. Also unique, no doubt, was Shamrock's win in Class I and the distinction at the same time of gaining the Plodder's Pin!

The generous hospitality of the Royal Dart Yacht Club was further extended when the prizes were presented there by Tony Soper, an enthusiastic gaffer when he is not engaged in making his delightful nature films. As usual after a good race there was a happy atmosphere and the organisers were grateful for the cheerful way everybody had accepted the disappointments of the day before.

Prize list and results on next page.

A young fellow, really not hoary,
Sailed a gaff rigged and clipper bowed Dory.
In a gusty great breeze
He got knocked to his knees;
So he prayed and told God the whole story.

D.K.

SOUTH WEST RACE PRIZE LIST

Charlotte Rhodes Bell	First Class I	Shamrock
Boan Boom	First working boat	
	Class I	Shamrock
Whelker Trophy	First Class II	Tern
Dartmouth Dead Eye	Second Class II	Benbecula
Pin Rail Trophy	Third Class II	Ripple
Scrimshaw Trophy	First Class III	Tom Tit
Sheave Trophy	Second Class III	Little Millie
'Marie Mahon' Trophy	Third Class III	Dilkusha
Dittisham Trophy	First Overall	Tern
Kingswear Trophy	First local boat	Ripple
Victory Trophy	First Solent boat	Tee Jay
Lewthwaite Trophy	First Cornwall boat	Tern
Oyster Ring	Most effort	(Tee Jay
		(Dilkusha
Plodders Pin	Last boat in	Shamrock
Royal Dart Yacht Club Trophy	Line Honours	Tern

<u>PLACINGS AND TIMES</u>		Corr. time	Elap. time	Class
1	Tern	1.59.26	2.01.00	II
2	Benbecula	2.00.39	2.07.48	II
3	Tom Tit	2.01.40	2.22.38	III
4	Ripple	2.03.25	2.13.25	II
5	Spica	2.03.46	2.12.56	II
6	Little Millie	2.09.25	2.29.26	III
7	Tee Jay	2.10.30	2.28.38	II
8	White Kitten	2.10.45	2.29.46	II
9	The John Young	2.15.55	2.26.09	II
10	Swift	2.19.53	2.22.09	II
11	Dilkusha	2.29.42	2.57.10	III
12	Sea Wigeon	2.34.44	2.56.02	II
13	Aceituna	2.43.06	3.11.40	III
14	Eileen Muriel	2.59.09	3.34.48	III
15	Pleione	3.16.05	3.41.34	II
16	Shamrock	4.08.14	3.51.21	I

SHEEL DOOE! (ASK THE CROOE)

A smuggler in a gaffer from Looe
Trimmed his sail as the wind harder blooe,
The stronger it grooe
The less water she srooe,
And the crooe, trooe-blooe, really flooe.
His wife bach at home, Salty Sooe,
Felt the wind as it harder blooe,
She said 'It's quite trooe
That down here at Looe,
We knoee, throoe the crooe, that she'd dooe!'

(Sorry about the English, it's difficult for
a Cornishman!)

M.W.

**TRADITIONAL MARINE SERVICES
BURNES SHIPYARD
BOSHAM
WEST SUSSEX**

(0243) 573624

(0243) 573534

.... THIS IS NOT AN ADVERTISEMENT

It's an offer of help from two guys who've been (and are still going) through it! - Restoring Traditional boats, that is!

Harry Smyth owns Chloe II, a Hillyard 4-ton Gaff Cutter, built c.1934 (OGA 1004) and Adrian Moss, to his eternal shame, owns a Burmudan Rigged 2-ton Harrison-Butler.

Having experienced the difficulties of finding services, parts, facilities, etc., we've decided to set up an operation down here to offer the benefit (dubious) of our experience (if we do it right we might even make some money) to other traditional boat owners.

Amongst the services we can offer are the following:-

Restoration of Brass, Bronze and Gunmetal fittings

Regalvanising

Fittings made to pattern or special order

Galvanised rigging and wire work

Rope work

Carpentry and joinery

Engine repair and overhaul

Slipping, scraping off, etc.

Also on sale in our shop will be a wide range of high quality and traditional chandlery items, both new and second-hand, including such rare items as hammocks, ropeladders, canvas buckets, etc.

The above list is far from exhaustive - there's probably much more we can offer that even we don't know about yet!

We try harder - if we haven't got it, we'll get it!

For the moment we'll be open all day Saturday and Sunday from 10 - 5 - come and see us or call Harry Smyth on 573624 or Adrian Moss on 573534 any time.

..... Mail and Telephone Order Service

..... A Complete Service for Traditional Boats

