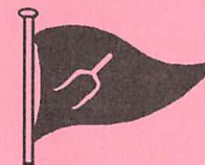




Hooker Saint Patrick returning from Galway with a mixed cargo some time in the 1930s



Old Gaffers Association



*Boan, built Norway 1927 as fishing vessel
Photo: Bill Robinson*

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Frank D. Marchant, P.O. Box 111, Claremont 6010,
Western Australia.



More than 1000 years of evolution have gone into the Faroese skiff, still popular among part-time fishermen. But only a handful now carry sail

Photo: Jay Cresswell

Dear ex -Members or Semi ex-Members,

As all of you who fall in the above categories will know a monster mailing exercise has been going on to re-establish the membership on a sound footing. Your committee sanctioned this very expensive exercise because it was apparent that some 800 recent members were in default. These have been sent directly addressed letters telling them of their payment status and encouraging them to correct the state of things – this the Association can now do with its database running well. The results have been somewhat disappointing.

Should this position remain it will be a very sad affair for the Association as there are 217 members currently paying by bankers order AT THE OLD RATE who have not replied and will cease to be members; there are 113 members who were paid up correctly in 1991 who have not replied and will cease to be members; there are some 250 members who were members in 1989 who have not replied and will cease also : MANY ARE WELL KNOWN MEMBERS WITH WELL KNOWN BOATS. It is a curious situation as those who have replied have been grateful for the reminder and very charming about the fun they have from the Association.

It is important that the Association has a strong membership as it is looked to as the voice of traditional boating and, as regulatory bodies seek to close us in, it is vital that we speak with a strong membership.

SO ... PLEASE, ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE HAD LETTERS FROM THE SECRETARY, READ THEM CAREFULLY AND REPLY. THIS IS FORMAL NOTIFICATION THAT THIS IS THE LAST NEWS THAT ALL DEFAULTERS, OF ANY SORT, WILL RECEIVE – THEY WILL CEASE TO BE MEMBERS AT THE TIME THE NEXT NEWS GOES TO PRESS.

It will indeed be a sad day if many more don't reply.

Mike Burn



Faroese fishing "sloop" Hoganes – August 1992. Vessel built Ramsgate 1888 as a sailing trawler and preserved as motor auxiliary at Saltangara, Faroe Islands. Similar to restored ketch Esther, which was given to Grimsby this year. Both fished more than 100 years.

Photo: Jay Cresswell

ASSOCIATION STOCK LIST

		U.K.	OVERSEAS
<u>Burgees</u>	18"	£9.75	£10.25
	24"	£11.50	£11.75
	30"	£14.00	£14.50
<u>Membership Flags</u>	12"	£9.75	£10.25
	15"	£11.50	£11.75
	18"	£14.00	£14.50
<u>Ties</u> (Multi-Motif)		£5.00	£5.50
<u>Brooches</u>		£3.00	£3.50
<u>Cap Badges</u>	(Small)	£5.50	£6.00
	(Large)	£6.00	£6.50
<u>Sweatshirts</u>		£13.50	£14.00
<u>Polo Shirts</u>		£12.50	£13.00

Both available in Navy, White, Red, Green and Grey. Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL.

Embroidered boat name on sweatshirt or polo shirt (allow up to four weeks for delivery) £2.00 extra.

Special Orders. Please ask about delivery time and price for other sizes and colours.

Prices include postage and packing - surface mail for overseas.

Please send orders, with cheque or postal order, payable to Old Gaffers Association (overseas members can pay by Eurocheque or by a draft on a London Bank) and, if possible, a self-addressed label to:-

Mark Taylor, 5 Hawthorn Close, Colden Common, Nr. Winchester, Hants. SO21 1TW. Tel: 0962 715042.

Orders will not be despatched until payment has been received.

NOTE: Stocks of some items are currently held by -

Peter Broad (0373 823050) (Solent Area) and Brian Hammett (0277 821481) (East Coast Area).



August 1989 – Sea Shanty Festival – Bisquine Le Concalaise leaves Paimpol, Brittany.

One of the 2,000-plus stars of Brest 92.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

THIS summer, David Cade made the long haul north to Grampian to hand over the reins of the newsletter. Here's the first effort, albeit much later than anticipated because of overseas commitments in locations like the Russian seaport of Murmansk – 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle, and the Faroes.

I'm a wordsmith – a journalist who writes for a Scottish daily newspaper and edits sundry marine/commercial publications. It's odd doing something for fun ... I mean the newsletter.

But, having been an OGA member since about the mid 1970s, I felt it was high time I did something useful for the association. And, in any case, taking on the newsletter would put me back in touch with the world of gaff-rigged craft.

Where I live there aren't any gaffers. For that matter, there are few yachts. But what I can see daily are husky Scottish, Danish and Norwegian-built fishing vessels going about their lawful business.

They're tough, no-nonsense craft and many are wood-built beasts of up to 85ft. Indeed, I took David to see one framing up at Macduff. She's 75ft. and scheduled for completion at the turn of the year – just eight months after cutting the frames.

Many of the dumpy Danes – some wearing the Faroese flag – carry sail – a wee mizzen, a "genoa" and main or gaff-headed trysail. Blue, red, green and yellow are favourite colours.

To me they are a constant reminder of my own past working afloat and of "Venture", the nobby I fell in love with and then owned and worked some years before Richard Coles bought her.

They are also a powerful reminder of how little removed North Sea motor fishing vessels are from their sailing forbears, which is why some decommissioned Danish, Norwegian and UK seiners and trawlers have sprouted sailing rigs in the past 10 years or so.

Curiously, however, there is not even one example of a gaff-rigged former motor fishing vessel answering to the above generic description in the Newsletter's photograph library.

WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

EC	BURGOYNE, A.M., 61 Gainsborough Drive, Lawford, Manningtree, Essex CO11 2LF	LINDY 380
NI	CLARKSON, S., 84 Hillisce Road, Donaghadee, C. Down BT21 0LB, Northern Ireland	
SOL	ENERY, R.C., Kebun Greylaydes, School Road, Southampton, Hants. SO3 8BX	MOMENTO
CWL	FIELD, A.G., South Newbald, York YO4 3SH	FIELDS FOLLY
EC	FRASER, J., Staff House 6, Priory Meadow School, St. Osyth, Clacton on Sea, Essex CD16 8PH	HEQEND
NW	GORRY, P.L., 23 Kerrob Coar, Peel, Isle of Man	NORA
EC	HALL, A.C., 'Chevin', Hillside Road, Radcliffe on Trent, Notts. NS12 26Z	SUJO
SOL	HUNT, T.J.L., 12 Queen's Square, Crawley, West Sussex	DEMELZA
SOL	LAMBOURN, T., 79 Anglesea Road, Shirley, Southampton, Hants. SO1 5QA	JANE
SOL	MOODY, B.R., Mead End Farmhouse, 25 Forest Mead, Denmead, Waterlooville, Hants. PO7 6UU	FREDA
SOL	NICHOLLS, J.C.D., 6 Meadowcroft Close, Otterbourne, Winchester, Hants. SO21 2HD	JUS PERFICK
EC	PAYNE, J.W., 18 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex CO5 8EZ	FLYING CLOUD
EC	PHILLIPS, A., 6 The Coverts, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex CO5 8AH	
EC	PROBYN, N., Flat 6, 109 Priory Road, West Hampstead, London NW6 3NP	HARDY
CP	SCOTT BROWN, S., 121 Masons Place, Newport, Shropshire TF10 7JX	
EC	SWIFT, G., Dutch House, 6 Shop Lane, East Mersea, Colchester, Essex CO5 8TR	WINNIE
EC	WILLIAMS, P., 21 Forest Close, South Woodham Ferrers, Essex CM3 5NR	
EC	WINDLEY, D., 4 Ropers Hall Cottages, Assington Road, Bures, Suffolk CO8 5JX	HEATHER ALICE
EC	WOOD, D., 110 Sunnyside Gardens, Upminster, Essex RM14 3DR	
SW	WRIGHT, J.M., Trees, 2 Furze Park, Combe Martin, N. Devon EX34 0AU	SEA KING

Indeed, dredging the files generally, I discovered that many of the photographs are somewhat out-of-date. Moreover, a very large number of OGA boats aren't even in the files.

I know we all like to hang onto the few half decent pix we ever get of our pride and joy, largely because they were taken by someone else. But please, as David Cade so clearly demonstrated for eight years, photographs and updated vessel descriptions are a vital element of the Newsletter and the OGA archive.

Furthermore, unlike David, I am a long way from the centres of action. Getting to OGA regattas is nigh impossible, so it is doubly important that the Newsletter receives both photographs and reports – no matter how short.

And echoing earlier cries for help, this ed. is also looking for other contributions – history, voyages, off-beat, practical, ditties, cartoons, photographs, even outrageous items are all fair game. Please also keep the letters coming.

Finally, DEADLINES.

All contributions for the third issue of the year have to be with me by November 13th to publish that month ... won't be late this time. So come on, all you closet wordsmiths, get hacking. We need lots of material.

Jay Cresswell

TAFFY

FITTINGS and sales from 33ft. deceased oyster smack "Taffy" – (see pic.)

Alas, poor old "Taffy" had to be broken up last year, but her equipment was salvaged and is eminently suitable for another gaffer to "wear".

Contact:

Ivan Graham
Telephone 0546 602716 (after 7 p.m.)

or write! Fernbank, Park Road, Ardrishaig, Argyll, Scotland.



Taffy

ISLA ROSE

A Tosher built by Gaffers & Luggers 1979.

Dimensions: (approx) 18'9" x 6' c 3'.

"Isla Rose" has had two owners, used by both as a family day sailor and laid up ashore each winter. She has been well looked after and is in good condition.

GRP hull, Encapsulated Ballast, Wooden Decks, Oiled Wooden Spars, Galvanised Rigging and New Sails 1990.

Volvo 7.5HP Diesel inboard, 1983, 3 Blade Prop, 5 Gallon Tank and Battery. Cruising inventory includes Beaching Legs, Fenders, Sweeps, Anchor and Chain, Boat Hook, Electric Bilge Pump, Boom Tent and Cockpit Cover.

Price £3,500. Moored Bembridge IOW. Contact Richard Sibley 081-570 3475.

TESSA

1908 Gaff cutter by Cutts of Cowes.

26'0" LOD plus 6'0" Bowsprit x 8'6" beam.

Pitch pine hull; new Iroko deck and cockpit; 1988 26hp Sole diesel.

2-ton lead keel – fitted new aluminium bronze bolts; newish tan sails.

£3,500 recently spent – surveyed 91. Fitted Decca – new Lavac etc.

Lying Gosport, Hants.

£9,750. Telephone Ron Giddings Day 081 643 7534; evenings 073 781 2286

WANTED

MAINMAST FOR SMACK 26' 62" long, 7" to 8" diameter at the heel.

Contact Alan Glanville on 0865 (Oxford) 57736.

FRANCIS B COOKE TROPHY Every year the OGA award a splendid trophy consisting of a beautiful half model of "Iolanthe" at the East Coast AGM in November for the best account / log submitted. Traditionally there are logs for summer cruises, but all entries will be considered. Apart from a narrative record, judges also like to see the actual log itself, or extracts thereof, a chart showing where the voyage or voyages took place and ports of call.

"I entered last year," said OGA president Rob Williamson. "While the prize was very worthwhile, the best thing is that I have a record of a splendid fortnight's racing and cruising for all time, which I can refer to when I need cheering up."

Entries to Rob Williamson by early November please.



Pam

PAM

Boston smack 52' x 44' x 13.5' x 6.5'

b. Thompson 1915.

Reputed fastest smack to sail out of Boston, with fine entry and very long run.

Refastened, recaulked, refurbished and rerigged, but needs finishing –

hence £18,000.

John Mellor
83 Malthouse Road,
Manningtree,
Essex CO11 1BY

EAGLE

Gaff cutter 30' x 24' x 7.5' x 4.5'

b. Pin Mill 1915. Very fast, with short keel, large cockpit, 4 berths, galley, heads, chart table, Yanmar diesel, terylene sails etc. Good, sound condition but needs a little work. In commission Essex.

£5,750

WANTED – Gaff cutter about 32' long keel, ex-working boat type, deep, narrow and fine, with good sailing qualities. 4 berths, diesel engine, sound and sailable. Up to £10,000.

John Mellor
83 Malthouse Road,
Manningtree,
Essex CO11 1BY



Eagle



Replica French lugger and Eastbourne beach boat Argonaut at Brest 92.

Photo: Robert Simper

BREST 1992

QUITE clearly, Brest 1992 was an astounding success.

Well done to the co-organisers Le Chasse-Maree, the French Navy and Brest City Council. You predicted 1500 boats and 1 million visitors. But, according to one of the reports in this latest OGA Newsletter, you managed to attract a remarkable 2500.

The figures are unimportant. What is, however, is the way the publication Le Chasse Maree, together with Le Marin and Ouest France persuaded the coastal communities of France to build 100 or so replica sailing workboats for the event. The writer saw six under construction in Brittany last year, and witnessed the June launch of the big lugger "Corentin" at Quimper.

A decade ago the French were being criticised for their lack of awareness of their maritime heritage. Judging by the accounts that follow, they have been mind-bogglingly successful at making up for lost time. Read on ...

SLOW BOAT TO BREST

by Elder Gaffer "Bobby Shafto"

IT SEEMS MONTHS AGO THAT the Writer was accosted by a chum who, sidling up to him like a Bookie's runner, whispered hoarsely: "Do you want to come to Brest on this classic shindig? The French birds ... cor!"

He left the rest of the sentence unfinished leaving it to my imagination to picture scenes of licence unbridled and golden opportunities of chatting up the femmes in foreign grog shops.

"OK," says I, "I'll apply for leave and if the trout says yes you can count me in." "There is one qualification however - I'll go if you limit the passenger list to two."

The skipper's bateau is in fact only 27' long but I agreed within myself to accept the dreadful hardships this would bring.

"Who's the first mate?" I asked.

"An ex-gunner R.A." says the skipper. "A pleasant enough chap. Very droll sense of humour. Likes his whisky a bit. He's over the hill in some quarters but we'll look after him."

"Get your gear ready, draw some francs from the bank and I'll see you Tuesday morning at Mylor yacht club I'll be lying along the wall. We depart 10.00 hrs. sharp." Then, as a parting shot he muttered: "It's also the Mylor-Camaret feeder race."

I received this latter piece of intelligence with little enthusiasm. Racing against other yachts in the dark, out of sight of land and no marks of the course to guide leaves me somewhat cold.

We mustered at Mylor Y.C. at 09.00 hrs. Tuesday July 18 as per orders, chucked our gear aboard including "the Decca", a wind up gramophone circa 1929, complete with vintage recordings of the French and British national anthems, a couple of French airs, La vieille rose, Marlene Dietrich singing Lilli Marlene and nationalistic English compositions. How our breasts would swell on hearing these brave chords mid-Channel.

We cast off, full of excitement, and made for Black Rock and the start line. The skipper whacked up the engine to get us there on time.

The sun shone down warming our frail bodies. Skipper noted the weather forecast - winds light variable, much sun and some mist likely later. A total of 52 runners and many more riders assembled at the start between Black Rock and Pendennis Castle, awaiting the gun.

Our wives drove from Mylor to Pendennis Point to join the multitudes, no doubt looking forward to the spectacular start that would herald the rush to France. A second Dunkirk maybe?

The gladiatorial start was not to be. The wind came and went. Two hours later, despite much publicity on radio and T.V., helicopters hovering overhead and the Press taking mug shots of crews wallowing helplessly on the swell, we had barely cleared the Helford - distance 6 miles.

The Lizard seemed as far away as Valparaiso. Our wives had evaporated, sick to the eye balls from waving us off. The fleet stuck to each other like tea leaves to the rim of a cup as we drifted.

The bonhomie that pervaded our vessel now began to dry-up. Nightfall - and the Lizard flashed its mocking white light till the small hours of Wednesday morning.

03.10 hrs. ship's time "Sees us mid channel or thereabouts", said the skipper, for the log was full of weed and idle. Should be near the Brittany coast in a few hours.

Half an hour later. "What shall we do lads - start up the donk or what?" said the skipper. We had an immediate council meeting between sips of tea and tobacco (for it was now getting cold and the damp was chilling our mouldy old bones). Crew's councils are "democratic" in so much as the skipper puts the questions and replies in full himself thus relieving us of tiresome decisions.

The skipper, no doubt with his mind's eye on the main chance when he reached Brest and the femmes, decided to give democracy the go-by. He drew himself up to his full two fathoms, hit his head on the cabin roof, cussed and said looking down on the cabin boy (your correspondent) "You agree then?" fired up the engine and off we went at five knots Brittany bound.

The cabin boy, a callow youth of barely 60 years and an ex-member of a not too exclusive corps of army engineers, had to give the skipper best in this vexious matter. For he, the skipper, being ex-Royal Navy, carried more weight than the ship's "lad".

Despite muted protests about playing the game and carrying on sailing I was summarily dismissed by Jimmy the Mate and the skipper and told to go below and feed the parrot. I slept 'till 06.00.

Land ahoy! Wake up mate! Land dead ahead!

The cry came filtering through the bed-clothes and silken Noel Coward dressing gown pulled over the head.

The skipper's voice seemed to carry with it a shrillness that scarcely concealed hysterical relief generated by actually seeing land.

I shuffled up hatchwards, gazed around like a U-boat commander at the foggy surrounds and sure enough there it was ... a grim heap of evil looking rocks surmounted by an anonymous white tower.

"Where are we No. 1?" said I (the cabin boy).

The mate looked dumbfounded, muttered "Not sure" and retired behind the defences of a large pair of binoculars. He swept the horizon in an aloof fashion, cap back to front. On being asked again he repeated even more dolefully "Not sure."

"Where are we please skipper?" I pleaded.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From: Foxgrove End,
32 Foxgrove Lane
Felixstowe
Suffolk IP11 7JZ

Dear Editor,

Our Burgee

I am rather surprised there has been no reaction to my letter in the 1991/2 Newsletter about the erroneous description of our burgee in the Rules, and the inaccurate design of the gaff jaws on at least my copy of the burgee.

The latest comment I have received questioned "is it a tuning fork".

Yours sincerely,
T.M. Felgate

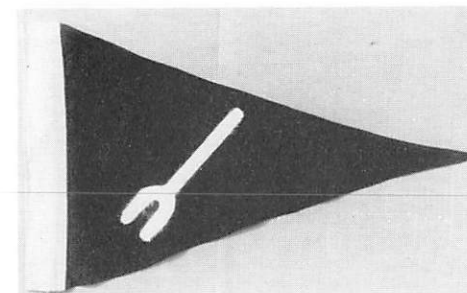
ED - More letters would be appreciated etc.

ADVERTISEMENTS

All advertisements are published in good faith and, subject to editing, as received from contributors but we cannot guarantee or accept responsibility for their accuracy of description.



Alicia



The debate of the OGA burgee appears to have flared up again. Is this a set of gaff jaws, or an inverted boom crutch?

ALICIA - Much loved and admired day boat by Tucker Brown.

18'0" LOA, 6'0" Beam, 1'0" / 2'9" draft, Clinker built, teak on teak, bamboo mast and spars, Gunter sloop rig, sail area 140 sq. ft. approx. Steel centreplate, copper buoyancy tanks, bronze fittings. On road trailer with cover, winch and electrics.

£600.00

N.B. I don't really want to sell her, but have to, as I can't sail two boats! So please, get in touch only if you're genuinely interested in a bargain of a classic boat.

Jim Bell
Telephone 0207 545419

Little gaffing was found there but we did have a trip on the restored 165ft. T.S.S. "Earnshaw" built in 1912 with twin triple expansion steam engines across Lake Wakatipo. We also flew in a light aircraft to Milford Sound in Fjordland, where Cook had difficulty anchoring because it is so deep. Sides rear up 3000ft., and the water is often 1000ft. deep!

We flew from Christchurch to Sydney and there had a wonderful day sailing with Honorary Member Bill Gale on his gaff sloop "Ranger", designed by his father and the basis of a class which provides close and exciting racing to this day. Bill has encouraged enthusiasm for gaff rig and races are now held regularly from the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club at Cremorne and every four years there is the big Sydney Harbour Gaffers Day.

Bill also arranged for us to visit the National Maritime Museum in Darling Harbour, at long last open after many delays. It was worth waiting for. Displays are housed in a very modern building tall enough to have rigged 12 metres inside and with floating exhibits adjacent.

The next leg took us to Perth and Fremantle. Unfortunately our visit did not coincide with any O.G.A. events but there is an active association on the Swan River and it was a great pleasure to meet again Frank Marchant, who ably runs gaffer affairs there. Fremantle now has an annual Wooden Boat Show, not entirely gaff of course, but with a big input from Frank and his members.

We also visited Barry Hicks who originally founded the O.G.A. of Western Australia. Alas now boatless, Barry has a small private museum at his house in

Cannington and he and son Robin are much involved in rigging, block making and the like for large vessels.

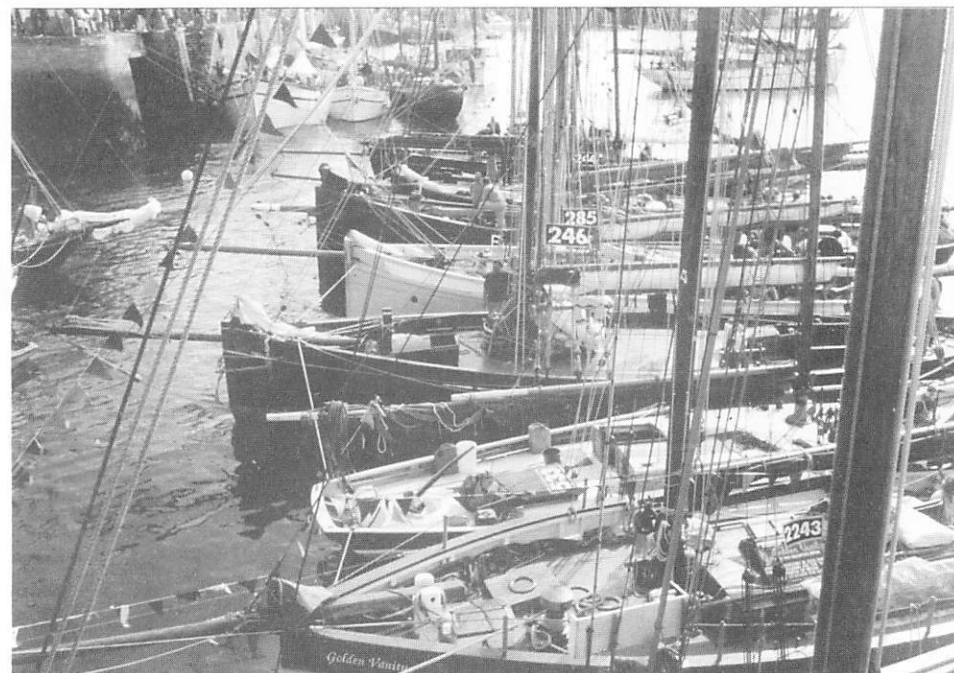
They did the rigging on the Western Australian sail training ship "Leeuwin" and made over 600 wooden blocks for the "Endeavour" replica. The replica project had run into difficulties with the collapse of the Bond empire, but is now going ahead again as a trust, with the Duke of Edinburgh as president and Greenwich Maritime Museum as a major partner.

The decks were being payed when we visited so the hull is well advanced. If all goes to plan, the launching will be in May 93. "Endeavour" should be in Sydney for September 93 and will set sail for the U.K. after Christmas via Cape Horn, Ascension Island and Madeira.

She will spend some time at Tower Pier in the Pool of London before going on to Whitby, where the original "Endeavour" was built. The vessel is expected to return to Australia via New Zealand during 1995. Meanwhile some 3million dollars are still needed to ensure a viable project so if you know any likely sponsors ...

Our final stop was in Bangkok where we did not see any sails but the "long-tailed boats" are something else. These are long narrow open boats with a lorry engine mounted aft driving a propeller on a long straight shaft angled into the water without gearing.

Speeds are phenomenal and water transport either in the city or countryside tends to be wet and exciting. A few sampan hulls were seen in use as houseboats or stores but none were in sailing condition. The lorry engine has clearly taken over on the klongs.



Pilot cutter and smacks including Hirta, Baroque, Alpha, Peggy, Sunbeam and Golden Vanity at Brest 92.

Photo: Sam Bayliss

"France!" said the Great One. "That's the Stiff light house that marks the finishing line of the race I'd better log it."

"How do you know it's the Stiff, skipper?" said I.

"Stands to bloody reason it's the Stiff", said the skipper. "Can't you see it's flashing?"

"No," said I "Can you see it flashing?" I asked Jimmy the mate. "Well not actually," was the reply. "... But it could be."

Total confusion - alarm and despondency. Ushant - white tower - no markings. Miles off course. Log not operating half the night. Panic! We're lost. Low muttering among the crew! "Let's ask the next vessel that comes along. Skipper's lost, won't admit it."

"I'm not bloody lost!" he roars from the warmth of the cabin. "I know exactly where I am - let's take a look around."

So off we motor and find two westerly cardinal marks about a mile or two to the west of the white tower. Deduction:- America lies further west Portugal and the Azores lie dead south.

No friendly copper to ask le route to Camaret or Brest. No reconciliation with our D.R. position. Swirling waters. Rocks like Marble Arch.

Total doom and worse, we stand a good

chance of missing the free scoff in Brest if we don't get a move on in the right direction.

Tempers become frayed. Cabin boy (me) suggests asking the next passer by for our position. Skipper becomes unbearable.

Behold - out of the fog looms a ketch going south, if our compass is to be believed, and she's flying the French flag. Cabin boy takes matter in his own hands and flashes "V" on the ship's hand lamp.

As we close the question is asked: "Oo eh le Four light 'ouse m'sur?"

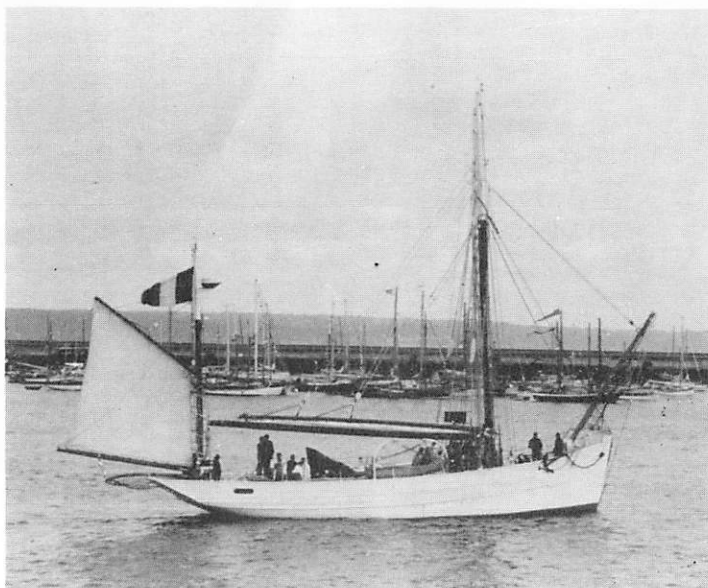
"Follow me," says the skipper in a Parisian accent.

"How far?"

"Five miles," he replies and belts off into the gloom.

Sure enough, in an hour or so the Four light shows on the port bow. Jubilation all round. Skipper apologises gruffly "Must have been the fog," he quips. "I know exactly where I am now."

Brest and its feminine attractions lies about 20 miles due south. We'll make the free scoff after all. We play the Marseillaise for our good French skipper as a gesture of thanks - then put the kettle on.



French tunnyman (dundee) Plutin. One of the few genuine workboats at Brest 92.

Photo: Robert Simper

WHAT WAS THAT THING CALLED BREST '92

by Robert Simper

"What is this thing you want to go to?" my son demanded when I suggested we took his lugger by road to Brest 92. Good question, and I was not quite sure of the answer.

It was rumoured that the French city of Brest had spent four years and £3million promoting the world's largest traditional sail festival. More important, people who had attended the two previous Brittany festivals at Douarnenez had nothing but praise for them.

Trailing "Pet", Jonathan's 15' 1902 Suffolk beach boat, took about 30 hours by road and ferry and our arrival at Brest gave us a taste of things to come. We headed for a huge marina just up river of Brest where, quickly and effectively, a huge crane appeared and lowered "Pet" into the clear Atlantic water. Very different from the grey waters we were used to on the east coast of England.

We were impressed by the friendly welcome and way most things were organised. In a few minutes the little lugger was rigged and my Elder Gaffer flag fixed to the mizzen. We sailed

round to the main port in a gentle westerly breeze.

The whole water front from the Penfeld River along through the commercial docks and part of the city had been closed off to cars and the public, mostly French, had to pay £8 a head to visit the water-front.

From a distance I saw the sprits of Thames barge against the skyline clearly marking the basin provided for British traditional craft. In this 1er Banire Tradionnels anglais we found our way through tiers of craft.

There were Bristol Channel pilot cutters, Essex smacks, Cornish luggers, Irish hookers – splendid craft where crews seem to live mostly out in the open, Falmouth work boats and, in the inner berths, were the smaller boats.

Among them were the Whitby cobbles "Gratitude" and "Gingernut" and the Eastbourne beach boat "Aganaut", which had come from Exeter Maritime Museum by road. The cobbles were splendidly traditional, particularly Dave Whatton's "Gratitude".

The traditional craft were superb but the success of Brest 92 was the whole atmosphere. On arrival we started to meet people we knew from the east and south coast and even Cornwall. By the second day the crowds on the quays became so thick that it was almost impossible to move around.

People stood listening to folk singing or moved through marquees and warehouses looking at the exhibitions. They stood on the quay watching the continual procession of craft which were encouraged to sail, through the harbour.

Finding a seat in a cafe was difficult, particularly when it rained. This did not stop either the folk singers who had been paid to perform or the impromptu singers. It was one huge street party.

The French smiled and tried to speak

ration dominated the sailing scene in San Diego with constant working up and boats towing in and out of the harbour. On the morning we left we just saw the start of the first elimination heat to determine the challenger.

All too soon we had to fly on to Auckland to be met by nearly all Margaret's relatives, including an elderly uncle and aunt she had not seen since they emigrated in 1950, quite a moving occasion. We spent a week travelling around North Island staying with several cousins, but also managed to drive up to Bay of Islands which must be one of the most beautiful sailing areas in the world.

The R Tucker Thompson, which had been one of the First Fleet re-enactment, was doing day trips out of Opua, and in Keri-Keri we spotted Paul Johnson's

"Venus" but alas he was not on board.

In Te Atatu, Whangerei, Opua, Tauranga and later in Dunedin we visited people building Wylo II class steel boats, sisterships to our own "Brilleau" here in the Solent and to John Strutt's "Sparky" on the East coast. It is fascinating to see how the design has evolved, some now sporting wing keels, and the minor variations to suit individual owners.

The second week was spent in South Island, different altogether being wild and rugged and just as beautiful as those tourist posters. The ferry entrance to Picton is up a long channel between tree lined islands with many inlets that must be a fascinating cruising ground. Further south are snow capped mountains, bright blue lakes and waterfalls but that is another story.

(L to R) Kathleen Gillett, Akarana, John Louis (Broom pearling lugger) and Thistle (Couta boat) at National Maritime Museum, Sydney

Photo: Sam Bayliss





White Seal off San Diego

Photo: Sam Bayliss

AREA NEWS - OVERSEAS

AUSTRALASIAN ODYSSEY

by Sam Bayliss (Overseas Liaison)

IN February Margaret and I flew to New Zealand and Australia to visit relatives, but this did allow us some time to see a little of the traditional boat scene en route.

First stop was in San Diego where we visited Mark and Meta Stevenson who live on "White Seal", a 25ft. Maurice Griffiths designed gaff cutter built in Ipswich in 1931. She is a sister ship to Bob Gingell's "Olive Mary" and some Solent members may remember Mark and Meta attending an O.G.A. rally at Wicor Marine some

years ago, not in their boat but during a cycle tour of Europe. Mark has now left the Marines and is doing a PhD degree in oceanography at the Scripps Institute.

We also met with Peter Benton, father of the Solent Area Hon. Sec., and his wife Leslie who also live on a boat in a San Diego marina. They are leading members of the Ancient Mariners Sailing Society which holds an annual regatta and other events for traditional craft in the area.

Their hospitality to us included taking us into the San Diego Yacht Club to see the America's Cup, very impressive but not very pretty and massively protected by electronic alarms. At that time Cup prepa-

English, we smiled and just about understood French. Around 1.5 million paid to come to Brest 92 but it remained cheerful and friendly despite the vast crowds.

The second evening was the great crews' supper which was the one occasion when the sheer numbers defeated the organisation. This was an open air sit-down meal, for 15,000 people in the Naval Base beside the Penfeld River.

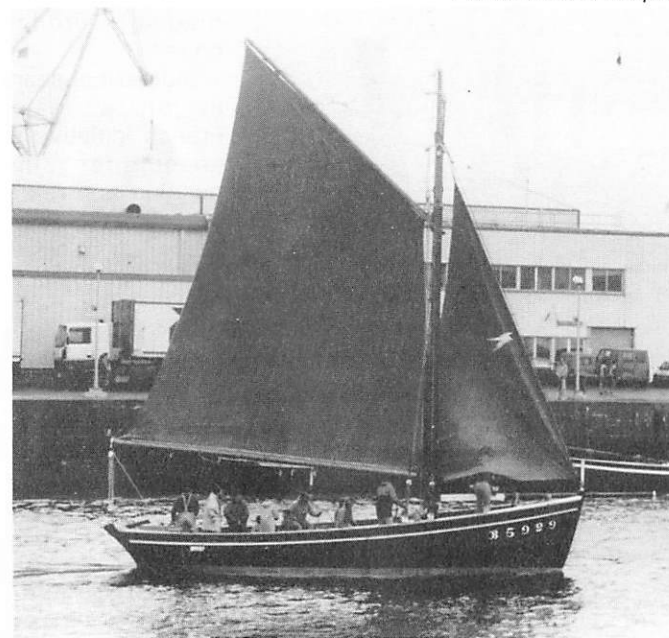
For reasons best known to themselves the French organisers did not tell all crews where the food was to be found. There was a vast crowd at one place, while further up the river there was a mass of food. People who could not understand each other's language united in good humour in the scrum for a piece of chicken and a bottle of wine.

For most of the time at Brest 92 a fierce westerly breeze, with rain at times came in from the Atlantic. We only once went outside the port's breakwaters and poor "Pet" was unable to make any headway against the tide. With spray driving across the little lugger we returned to port.

I had wanted to out to the race area. Jonathan said it was a democratic decision to

French fishing cutter at Brest 92

Photo: Robert Simper



go back, which I said in some circles would have passed as mutiny. To be honest those who did take part in the races said they were very informal.

No one was quite sure who was racing who. It did not matter because the atmosphere ashore was so good that the sailing took second place.

The organisers were particularly keen that there were always boats sailing as a public spectacle, when a particularly attractive craft went past, the public applauded. All day an amazing collection of craft passed before the public.

Portuguese fishing boats, Viking replicas, Dutch barges, Swiss lake boats and all the craft you ever dreamt about and never thought you would see were actually there sailing. Well over two thousand.

The French have, in the last decade, completely built up a large fleet of traditional craft. All new wooden craft, not messed about converted to yachts, but sailed under the working rigs.

Huge two or three masted luggers glided past the quay looking as if they were bound for

a day's oyster dredging or out after sardine. Little clinker beach boats, all new, rowed past by young men in traditional clothes. Lateeners from the south of France braved the Brittany winds while endless crowds trooped past.

Over the loud speakers the shanty men sang once more about the delights of Liverpool town and Irish fiddlers played the tunes of far away Galway. Silent Russian sailors, who seemed to have no common language with anyone, watched it all in quiet astonishment. All Europe seemed to be there in one vast cheerful mass.

What was that thing called Brest 92? I have been all over the world looking at traditional craft and have never seen anything like it before. It was overwhelming.

THE MUSCADET WAY TO BREST

by Barry Mellor

RALLIES of traditional boats are held from time to time in various ports in Brittany and elsewhere, including a famous one in the fishing port of Douarnenez. Indeed some friends of ours participated in Douarnenez 1988.

When I heard there was going to be a much larger festival of traditional boats based in the port and naval base of Brest, followed by a parade of sail across the open sea to Douarnenez, a distance of some 30 miles around the Crozon peninsula, I thought we had to be part of it and lost no time in getting in my registration application.

Through the post came a vast amount of information to whet the appetite and our Cornish Shrimper was classified as a "sloop à corne avec roufe" or more simply

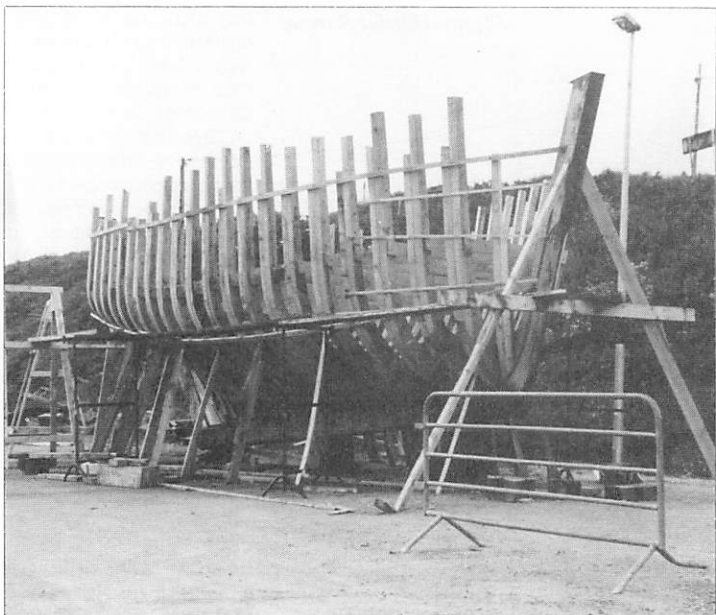
as a "gréement". We were astonished at the sheer size of the festival, with boats of every kind and size, including tall ships like the big Russian sail training ship "Kersones". And there were other tall ships and sail training ships including the "Belle Poule" a pretty topsail schooner.

Most of the boats had traditional gaff-rigs of one form or another. The smallest boats were open fishing boats, usually propelled by a single gunter or latine rig sail, but some propelled only by oars. Indeed several of these boats were towed from Brest to Douarnenez.

There were also some very unexpected sights, including a genuine Chinese junk and look-a-likes of Christopher Columbus' ships, including the "Santa Maria". There were also several Viking ships complete with 20th century Vikings; flat bottomed river craft from the Netherlands with beautifully decorated and varnished lee-boards; and a whole variety of traditional French boats.

Indeed it appears to be a major French initiative to encourage the building and refurbishing of the different kinds of traditional boats which are found around the French coast and on the canals.

It was very remarkable that, out of the 2,500 boats, around 800 were flying the British flag and most had sailed over from West Country, Solent and the East Coast ports. Also,



Replica fishing vessel under construction at Audierne, Brittany a year ahead of Brest 92

Photo: Jay Cresswell

carrying safety and camping gear.

Almost as seaworthy despite her small size is J. Huggett's "Susan". Designed by John on the lines of a smack's boat, she has the deep chested hull and looks to have the heavy clinker construction. Actually, she uses modern timber-engineering techniques, and has a lightweight hull, which is brought down to its marks by a heavy steel plate and lead ballast. Thus she has a terrific ballast ratio and is self-righting, making her the logical choice for the EC Secretary to crew on.

One boat new to EC racing, which looked traditional, and was positively traditional, was the skiff "Barnacle", a surprise late entry by Brenda Jago. Setting a Lug mizzen from "Anna Louise", she was very ethnic.

With the EC Commodore's boat Gem as committee boat, the line was formed at the entrance to the Mersea Quarters, and instructions issued to the fleet. Some 23 boats started in light NW winds and, despite the rotten forecast, it was not raining.

The course was both interesting and intricate, going along the Mersea Shore, across the estuary to Bradswell, then up the Salcott channel before emerging in the Quarters again to finish. With the flooding tide, special skills were required to judge the angle of set, and there were situations where some boats trimmed sails for a boat to be overtaken by others flying a shy kite on a beam reach. The wind added to the interest too, swinging from one point to another, giving many options on tacking as well as tide.

With "Native" and "Pewit" taking the first two places the flying Mersea brigs dominated the results as expected, although "Phoebe" did keep amongst them. The under 12s were won for the third time by "Susan", although she was made to work hard by the Commodore in "Meg" and the youngest helmsman Andrew Phillips in "Swallow".

The second race was a pursuit, the last boat finishing in the morning starting first, and the rest following in reverse order at one minute intervals. They circumnavigated Packing Marsh, Cobmarsh and Sunken Islands – very tricky on a falling tide. As

sails and/or oars could be used, Commodore Arthur Keeble and crew in "Meg" opted to row, and their speed and stamina caught all other competitors by surprise.

The day was rounded off with a prize giving and dinner at the West Mersea Yacht Club.

Sue Taylor (OGA Mersea Rep)
Jon Wainwright (EC Sec)

Open Boats Rally Results

Class: Over 12'		
1.	Native	1.36.07
2.	Pewit	1.39.31
3.	Phoebe	1.40.46
4.	Natterjack	1.41.18
5.	Goldeneye	1.42.41
6.	Winnie	1.43.30
7.	Taffy	1.46.24
8.	Jack	1.48.32
9.	Wildgoose	1.51.12
10.	Lizzie	1.52.04
11.	Heather Alice	1.53.28
12.	Grenlin	1.55.12
13.	Linnet	1.55.56
14.	Kate	2.01.42
15.	Mischief	2.19.36
Flying Cloud retired		

Class: Over 12'		
1.	Susan	1.52.58
2.	Meg	1.58.34
3.	Coluna	2.13.31
4.	Barnacle	2.23.50
5.	Dabchick	2.24.25
6.	Swallow	2.46.12

Over 12' America's Trophy Holder: Phoebe

1. Native
2. Pewit
3. Phoebe

Under 12' Tadpole Trophy Holder: Susan

1. Susan
2. Meg
3. Coluna

Pursuit Race 'Seabird' Trophy Holder - new race

1. Meg
2. Coluna
3. Flying Cloud

Cadet Prize for youngest cadet member:
Andrew Phillips

Skiff Trophy (Sail and Oar) Holder: Meg
Coluna

AREA NOTES

EAST COAST

by Jon Wainwright

CROUCH RALLY May 23 - 25

Once again the Crouch Rally proved a great success. Superb easterly winds brought a large and varied fleet to the new venue of the Royal Burnham Yacht Club on the Saturday night.

Coincidentally, the Royal Burnham One Designs were celebrating their 60th anniversary, and '30s regalia was the order of the day.

Sunday saw the gaffers in action. Most unusual craft in attendance was the three masted junk rigged craft "Renegade", but the sleekest must have been the 1890's classic racing cutter "Hardy" (ex-"Kittiwake"), sailing for the first time after a 20 year refit.

Representing local traditional craft was the smack "Dorothy". The Gravesend bawley "Vivid" should have been there but she found the mud leaving West Mersea. Several new Gaffers were present, including the Falmouth workboat "Molly Oxford" and no less than three Cornish Pilot Cutters.

Racing was interesting, as much of the time was spent beating against wind and tide to the Outer Crouch mark. "Teal", "Aussie II" and "Jaunty", led by Blackwater sloop "Adelle", quickly took control of the favoured North shore.

Several times the EC Secretary in "Deva" tried working the shallows. "Teal" was able to establish a huge lead up front, where even the flying "Blue Hawk" could not catch her.

But Tollesbury boat "Pelican" took first position at the seaward mark. For some reason, the Crouch River seemed to suit her. However, she was eclipsed on the way back by "Hardy".

The day finished with the traditional visit to the normally restricted island of Foulness.

4.	Blue Hawk	1524
5.	Mary	1526
6.	Adelle	1535
7.	Molly Oxford	1537
8.	Aussie II	1540
9.	Deva	1543
10.	Lady of Rock	1551
11.	Jaunty	1555
12.	Greenwitch	1601
13.	Sauntress	1615
14.	Dorothy	1629
15.	Lucinda	1631
16.	Renegade	1640
17.	Mole	1643
18.	Francesca	1650
19.	Alice & Florrie	1800
	Reid. Sheba, Cygnet	

Classic Hotshots	Storm	1500
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OPEN BOATS RALLY - West Mersea July 4

A new venue and a new event co-ordinator might give issue for concern, but not at the Open Boats Rally. West Mersea is Mecca for open boat activity on the East Coast, with its famous brigs, whilst Sue Taylor and husband Richard as "brig" sailors themselves know what is required to make such an event tick.

But it is always a worry staging an OGA event for the first time, especially when the elements threaten to conspire, and Sue is to be congratulated for such a successful day.

As with all OGA events, the mixed fleet was an interesting one in both rig and hull form. Cruising dinghies, workboats and tenders were all in evidence, every boat with a story to tell.

The Mersea winkle brigs are a very interesting development of the gaff-rigger. Whilst the hulls of these robust little craft are essentially the same as they were for servicing the oyster layings, the sail-power has changed considerably.

They are gaff sloop rigged still, with mostly wooden spars, but the similarity ends there. Nowadays these craft set sails in a way which would not disgrace a modern racer, with powerful kicking straps, kevlar ropes and sails etc. Taking the traditional sag out of gaff rig works wonders.

Two cruising dinghies which regularly attend events up and down the East Coast are "Gremlin" and "Natterjack". Both are partially decked, and are capable of coastal passages in reasonable weather,

not to be forgotten, were the hookers crewed by the noisy and thirsty Irish, who made handsome contributions to the musical events as well as assisting the locals with their bar profits.

To see the flotilla drawn up in Brest roadstead was a magnificent sight, especially as many were "dressed overall". Similarly, the view of all these fine boats locked into the river at Douarnenez massively enhanced the town's vision of creating a living museum of traditional boats.

Ashore it was a different story. If there were 2,500 boats, some of which were of considerable size, there must have been 10-20,000 crew members all fighting for a limited number of shower and toilet facilities, as well as eating and drinking arrangements. On our first evening in Brest, the organisers had laid on a dinner for all crews. It was one of the most chaotic events one could imagine. However, none of the crews appeared to go hungry or thirsty.

We had launched the Shrimper on the Aulne River at Port Launay (near Chateaulin), and had a delightful trip down the river to join the other boats in Brest. On the river, we met up with craft from the Loire that were coming down the Aulne from the Nantes-Brest canal. When we learned one was carrying barrels of Muscadet wine, you can be sure we followed in close pursuit.

At Brest, we found there was to be a programme of races, "outings" and parades of sail. As we all know, sailing is very weather dependent and, unfortunately, we had some rain. But to compensate



A bunch of hookers at Brest 92

Photo: Sam Bayliss

we enjoyed excellent sailing winds nearly every day.

Living on a small boat can be cramped and it was therefore a pleasant change to get away from the crowded moorings and enormous crowds of people on shore to sample the delightful coastal paths around the headlands of Finisterre.

Indeed, it was doubly interesting for us to walk around these paths and look from the cliffs above at the jagged rocks and swirling currents in the knowledge that we would have to tackle these seas ourselves possibly along a lee shore on the day of the great regatta.

We thoroughly enjoyed the experience, despite the fact that a small boat like ours was dwarfed by the other boats, and we had a struggle to get round the activities on shore because of the crowds.

Having run the gauntlet of the French truck drivers strike to get to Brittany and, having evaded hostile French fishing boats (about which we had heard a great deal in the weeks preceding our visit), we felt the whole experience was very worthwhile.

Results

1.	Hardy (Ind Coope & Allsopp OG Trophy)	1504
2.	Pelican (Skua Trophy)	1508
3.	Teal (Teal Tankard)	1521



The Allingtons shorten sail on Crystal Stream

THE STANDING GAFF – Part 2

by Pete Allington

PETER ALLINGTON CONTINUES HIS HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STANDING GAFF AND HOW HE APPLIED THE CONCEPT ABOARD HIS KETCH "CRYSTAL STREAM".

... This point emphasises the prime disadvantage with the standing gaff that is permanently carried aloft, one could only reef the sail insofar as the crew could reach upwards from the deck to tie the reef points or remove a bonnet.

In the case of "The Great Britain", and many other large vessels built later that had several masts carry standing gaff sails, so long as the gear was strong they did not have to reef individual sails, only set those that balanced the vessel, helped steady its motion, and gave some assistance to the engine.

If the problem of reefing could be overcome, then this type of gaff sail was well

worth considering as it has the advantage of ease of handling compared with the hoisting gaff, and a lot less gear. I also considered the absence of a boom to be, on balance, an advantage.

With a triangular-shaped mainsail some form of wishbone or boom is essential to hold out the clew, except perhaps with a storm trysail, and to make do without one is not even considered by most sailors I have met. But four years on a sail training ketch that carried a prime example 36ft. long and solid pine set me thinking there must be a better way.

A rough following sea and strong wind with the ever present possibility of a gybe kept me hovering next to the helmsman, one eye on the burgee, the other on the boom and sail watching for the first sign of it lifting. Most of our trips were cross Channel from the Solent to France or the Channel Islands.

In such circumstances a boom foreguy is an added encumbrance when weaving through the traffic, and should the end roll under at high speed the ensuing damage could be worse.

On the plus side is the ease of setting and furling of both main and topsail, no need even to bring the vessel close to the wind. The gaff topsail can be set independent of the main and in the words of the crew "its magic". The mizzen staysail becomes a more important and useful part of the rig. The main can be carried close hauled with both runner backstays fully set up and an accidental gybe is less dangerous. There is also a lot less gear associated with the sail. The single part vang – essential if one is to set the topsail independent of the main – prevents the gaff from sagging off to leeward, giving a better trim to the upper part of the sail. The main can be 'scandalised' very easily by letting go the head outhaul and taking in the inhaul, reducing its area by nearly half in a few seconds.

It is commonly believed that a boomless gaff sail is less efficient 'close-hauled'. This may have been true in the past on working vessels due to the shape – a long head and near vertical leach, and the difficulty in sheeting the sail 'flat' enough to allow the vessel to point up well.

However, I have found that, provided the sail, is well proportioned, provided the angle between gaff and mast for those craft carrying a topsail is a shade less than 45° and, most important of all, provided the sheet lead is correct, a boomless sail will stand on the wind as good as any with a boom.

Inevitably there are drawbacks.

The problems associated with deep reefing the main I have overcome by using the mizzen staysail instead, and the weight and windage of the standing gaff can be reduced by lowering the spar as described.

But a boom is far handier when it comes to bearing away smartly and it holds the clew farther outboard than a bearing out spar. It allows for finer adjustment as, not only can the sheet purchase be trimmed, but also the foot tension by using the outhaul. In the gaff cutter rig the mainsail clew can extend to the transom or beyond if required without resort to a

bumkin.

The sail can be reefed by rolling it around the boom if the foot is laced to it which may not give a very good shape but is powerful and secure.

The square sail, which gets over the problem of squaring away the main beyond the limits of the bearing out spar on "Crystal Stream", creates more windage and weight aloft as does the extra mast compared to the gaff cutter. Moreover, the cost of having the special fittings made for her was a lot more than the simpler hardware of the hoisting gaff. If compared with the bermudian rig the extra expense would have bought a radar set.

Would I change anything? There have been several minor improvements over the years in the light of experience but, if I were to start from scratch, the only fundamental change would be in the proportions of topsail to main. I would increase the luff length of the topsail to be slightly longer than the main, close in fact to the topsail to main ratio on a spritsail barge.

In the final analysis, despite yachts being looked upon by some as large holes in the water into which money is poured, they should in fact, despite the expense, satisfy whims, afford pleasure to those on board, and hopefully be the realisation of their dreams. To the sailorman, the rig and sails are in no small way part of this total experience.

The "Standing Gaff" and boomless sail have been around a long time and cargoes are still carried under this rig off the coast of Indonesia by the "boogeymen" and, up to the Second World War, were a common sight in the Baltic.

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though not in all cases.

As rigged, "Crystal Stream's" roller gaff topsail could not be easier to work and has been carried on a dark night full of thunderstorm, shifting wind direction and strength varying from near calm to force 6, having to be set and furled many times. Each time it only took a few seconds as the squalls came and went.

The gaff topsail can also be set independent of the main, which is very useful when getting under way and in other situations in the same way as a spritsail barge's topsail.

Furling lines have been known to jam up and 'sods law' says it will happen when it is least expected, or in the worse possible circumstances. I have therefore rattled down the starboard shrouds so should it ever go wrong I can get aloft quickly. It is also very handy to be able to check the gear regularly, the crosstrees are a nice perch in fine weather, and you get a different view and perspective of the sails.

The bearing-out spar has a fork at the outboard end to engage the main clew cringle and is rounded off on the inboard end to fit in a socket near the heel of the mizzen mast, one on either side. This ball and socket arrangement allows sufficient movement for the spar, which is not very great in either the vertical and horizontal planes as, once engaged and the sheet hardened in, the pole cannot come adrift. The clew then is held at a nearly fixed position outboard. Here the boom clearly has the advantage as it can be trimmed by easing the main sheet as required and when tacking will look after itself – one of the reasons for its introduction.

On "Crystal Stream" the sheet has to be transferred from the close hauled position to the alternative lead block when reaching, the next stage being to rig the bearing out spar to withwind on the quarter.

This is necessary to maintain the most efficient sail shape, but of course the vang and sheet can be eased from the close hauled position at any time to bear away but the sail will not develop its full potential. Even with the bearing out spar rigged,

the clew is not as far outboard or the sail squared away as much as if the foot were stretched out with a boom.

At this point, approaching a dead run, I usually set the square sail and if the conditions allow, the rafee over it. This does not involve going aloft as both sails can be set and handed from the deck. Thus the boomless gaff sail which is at a disadvantage downwind is more than compensated by the square sail which, compared with the parachute spinnaker, is far easier to handle. Its centre of effort is in the right place and virtually static in relation to the vessel and close to the centre line. It can be reefed and there is no problem with gybing.

Even the gaff sail, especially any with a long boom squared well off and near dead before the wind, requires some canvas set on the other side of the mast to help counteract the tendency to hook up to windward.

I have rigged "Crystal Stream" in such a way that the yard can be braced round sharp, and with the square sail tacked down to the stem, it can be carried with the apparent wind well forward of the beam, along with the rafee.

There have been occasions when we have set seven sails – jib, square sail, rafee, gaff mainsail, topsail, mizzen staysail and mizzen. The versatile square sail can be used to give the vessel sternway when set aback so an anchorage can be left under canvas by 'backing' out a far safer option at times if one is inclined to 'do it under sail'.

"Well, does it all work?" It is difficult to be really objective about something you have developed from first concept, then designed and built, but the short answer is "Yes, it does". As already pointed out, it would work well on the mainsail of a gaff ketch or the foresail of a schooner, especially in the larger size where sail handling with a small or inexperienced crew can be a problem.

In the past it was not uncommon to find working vessels so rigged – 'hoisting' standing gaff equipped with brails and often boomless.

Despite all precautions, that ketch was subjected to a few uncontrolled gybes and it is a tribute to the stoutness of spar and gear that nothing carried away. Only the deep scars on the side of the boom where it clouted the runner backstay mute bore testimony to past adventures. A safer option in these conditions is to 'Dutch tack' downwind.

Exactly when the boom first appeared does not really matter, but the reasons why have some bearing on the subject under discussion. The earliest evidence of a boom I have come across is dated about 1632.

The earliest gaff sails were probably developed from the spritsail and were of similar proportions, with a long head in relation to the foot did not need a boom. However, the shorter the gaff the more important a bearing out spar or boom becomes for sailing downwind, and this could be one explanation for its introduction.

I venture to say another reason was the quest for speed. The lawless gentry who roamed the seas and those that chased them have always considered the fleetness of their vessels to be of prime importance. This can only be achieved in light winds by carrying as much effective sail as possible over a well shaped and clean hull, trimmed to best advantage, the potential speed related to waterline length.

Good windward performance and manoeuvrability was also essential and this basically dictated a single masted fore-and-aft rigged craft – the gaff cutter. Although some of the luggers were just as swift I think the gaff cutter has the edge when going to windward all other things being equal.

The question of speed related to waterline length would dictate a bigger vessel that in turn would accommodate a larger crew and more guns, too big in fact for the sail to be handled with a bearing out spar, which of necessity would increase with the size of the vessel so as to become unmanageable.

One could only extend the sail plan vertically within the limits of stability, and

the technology and materials of the time. The sail area therefore had to extend horizontally. This led to longer bowsprits and jiboms and more headsails, which in turn could only be balanced by more sail aft of the mast.

Thus the gaff cutter's mainsail would have to extend beyond the transom. Sheeting it out to a bumkin lugger-style was a less efficient solution than the introduction of the boom. Revenue cutters adopted booms in the mid 18th century quickly developing longer and longer spars until perhaps one third of their length was outboard. The trend was copied by many working craft though a high proportion managed for one reason or another without a boom as did most lug sail and spritsail rigged boats.

The foregoing reason, among others, for the introduction of the boom does not apply to the mainsail of a gaff ketch or for that matter the gaff foresail of a schooner, both can be sheeted within the vessel, provided that the bearing out spar can be easily handled. Once established among yachtsmen the boom has become a normal part of the rig and in most cases its desirability is self evident, but one must pause and question its use on every type of vessel.

The boomless gaff sail did suffer from a potentially serious problem in the way it was sheeted. This required on all but the smallest craft, a single block at the clew and, if of any size, a second block a short way up the leach used in conjunction with the block on deck to give enough mechanical advantage.

But this type of sail is prone to flogging badly in stays and being hit on the head by a large lump of wood is on a par with being clouted by a boom. To get over this problem on "Crystal Stream" I have two single part sheets rigged as for a headsail with a bowline at the clew and led through deck blocks to a winch each side of the cockpit. In fact there are two lead block positions on each side, one for close-hauled work, the other for reaching, sited just outboard of the bulwark.

Back to the history. The absence of a



Seagull's eye view of Crystal Stream

boom on the gaff mainsail opened up other possibilities, particularly with the ketch rig. For one thing the mizzen mast could now be rigged with a standing forestay but, unlike "The Great Britain" where the stay led down to the heel of the mast ahead, this would be secured on deck a short way aft of the mainmast. This allowed sufficient gap for the mainsail to clear it when tacking in the same way as a large jib or headsail comes across an inner forestay.

In practice, the main looks after itself when going about, as the gaff and upper part of the sail which are in the clear drag the lower portion across the mizzen

forestay, and once the clew is over, the sail can be sheeted home.

The mizzen staysail (now correctly named) was therefore hanked to this stay, like a headsail, and is considered part of the sail plan when close hauled. All other vessels I have sailed on with ketch rig have looked on the mizzen staysail as a reaching and running sail, set flying and tacked down to weather of the mainmast.

Essentially the sail plan can best be described as a boomless gaff cutter, closely followed by a bermudian sloop – if you see what I mean.

Carrying the mizzen staysail to windward increases the total amount of 'leading edge', which gives the rig added power to help overcome the windage of an extra mast. However, I have found by experience if I want to point up really sharp it is best to hand the mizzen staysail and continue under main alone.

As mentioned earlier in this article, reefing a standing gaff sail presented problems. "Crystal Stream" has only one line of reef points that can be reached from the deck and, if the weather dictates a further reduction, the main is brailed in and the mizzen staysail takes the place of a deep-reefed main. Moreover, for the same sail area it presents a longer leading edge and although its centre of effort is slightly farther aft, this is no bad thing.

Any vessel with a long bowsprit, high bow and headgear will present a considerable proportion of the total windage forward, her head tending to blow off when closehauled in bad weather. I think it is sometimes forgotten what a part the actual windage of the hull and superstructure play. A boat or rubber dinghy carried aft in davits will have a decided effect on the balance. Thus for heavy weather she can be snugged down to the main staysail, which has a boom, mizzen staysail and, if required, full or reefed mizzen.

Another disadvantage of the standing gaff, is carrying the spar aloft at all times even when the sail is furled. Weight and windage can at times be a problem. I have got over this by designing a gooseneck fitting at the lower end of the gaff to allow

the spar to pivot and hang vertically abaft the mast, the brailed in sail sandwiched between the two. The outer end can be reached from the deck and lashed securely to the mast. This also gets over the problem of the single vang parting, allowing the gaff to swing about out of control. Similar problems can be experienced with the wishbone rig.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the rig on "Crystal Stream", and one that excites most comment, is the gaff topsail carried permanently aloft on a luff spar rigged between the mast cap and the cross trees, and controlled by roller furling gear. This was made possible by using twin gaff topping lifts – I hesitate to use the term peak halyards – as their function is similar to twin topping lifts on a boom.

The lifts are rigged as two single part lines from the end of the gaff through blocks on each side of the mast in such a way that they will not foul the luff spar, then down to the deck just aft of the main shrouds. Viewed from above these two gaff topping lifts form the sides of a triangle with a narrow base at the mast.

If the gaff now moves so as not to lie in line fore and aft, for example if the sails were set close hauled, the weight is taken only on the weather side, the leeward topping lift goes slack. In fact, the more the

gaff is allowed to traverse away from the centre line the more slack it becomes. It means there is no crease across the topsail and it is allowed to take up its correct shape.

The furling line is led off the drum at the lower end of the spar, through an adjacent lead block and down the mast. Thus the topsail is controlled in seconds by just two lines, furling and sheet. I have always believed that, if a sail is difficult to set or furl for one reason or another, it is taken in too early and there is a reluctance to reset it as soon as the weather shows signs of moderating, more especially at night. This applies to gaff topsails in general,

Crystal Stream enters Lyme Regis. Note cockbilled yard

