

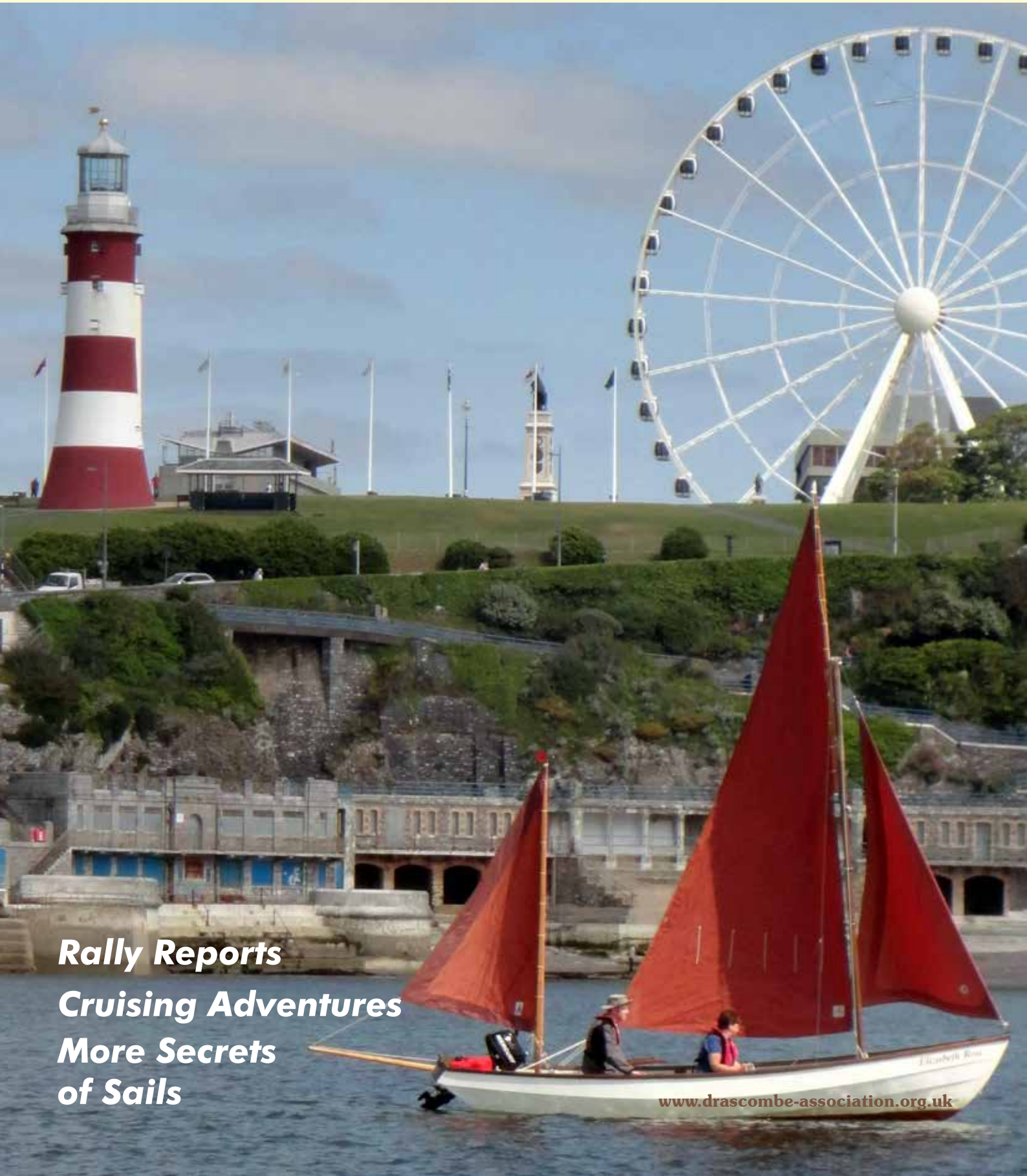
# DAN

Drascombe Association News

ONLINE PDF SAMPLE



No. 107 Autumn 2013



***Rally Reports  
Cruising Adventures  
More Secrets  
of Sails***

[www.drascombe-association.org.uk](http://www.drascombe-association.org.uk)

# The Association Shop

## Association Items

<b>BURGEE</b> Tan Lugger on cream supplied with toggle and eye. 15 inches wide	£15.50
<b>SCARF</b> Hand-made, rolled edges, with appliqued Drascombe of choice. 24 inches (navy)	£6.75
<b>TIES</b> In navy or brown, with Drascombe motif	£9.50
<b>LAPEL PIN BADGE</b> Metal enamelled Drascombe Lugger	£4.00
<b>Drascombe Car Stickers</b> ~ <i>Drascombe - the sail that becomes a way of life</i>	each £1.50 three for £3.50
<b>Drascombe Boat Stickers</b> ~ <i>Drascombe Association Member</i>	each £1.25 three for £2.50
<b>Drascombe Association Badges</b> (washable) suitable for jeans, sweaters etc	£3.00
<b>Drascombe Association Tea Towel</b> It beautifully displays 9 detailed images in dark brown on a cream background, of the most popular Drascombes -100% cotton and machine washable Use it or frame it, it a must for the new season!	£5.95

## Books to Buy

<b>Drascombe 10/30</b> 10 years of the Association and 30 years of Drascombes	£6.50
<b>A Celebration of Drascombes</b> 20 years of the Association and 40 of Drascombes; DAN 20/40/80 celebrates the boats and the people who designed, built and sailed them	£4.00
<b>The Shallow Sea Drascombe</b> a manual of seamanship by Hans Vandersmissen	£15.00
<b>Drascombe Round Britain</b> a circumnavigation in easy stages by Jim Hopwood	£15.00

## Books and DVDs to rent £5.00\* monthly

### Books

**Sail South Till the Butter Melts** by Geoff Stewart - an Atlantic adventure in a Drascombe Longboat  
**Practical Dinghy Cruiser** by Paul Constantine - Advice, tips and experiences for those on a tight budget  
**Australia the Hard way** by David Pyle - England to Australia 1969/70 in a wooden lugger  
**Dinghy Cruising** by Margaret Dye - The enjoyment of wandering afloat  
**Lugworm on the Loose** by Ken Duxbury - Sailing in Greece  
**Lugworm Homeward Bound** by Ken Duxbury - Sequel to ..... on the loose  
**Lugworm Island Hopping** by Ken Duxbury - Lugger Sailing in the Scillies and Hebrides  
**Open Boat - Across the Pacific** by Webb Chiles - First successful Pacific crossing in an open boat  
**The Ocean Waits** by Webb Chiles - Longest non-stop open boat voyage ever recorded  
**Open Boat Cruising** by John Glasspool - Practical advice on preparation and cruising in small boats  
**A Sea Blue Boat (and a Sun God's Island)** by Ian Brook - Lugger sailing around Rhodes  
**The Seagoing Drascombe** by Hans Vandersmissen - 1<sup>st</sup> Drascombe manual by Dutch marine journalist  
**Appuskidu went too** by Douglas and Margaret Hopwood - An amazing account and wealth of experiences of a Baltic and St Petersburg adventure by car with a Drascombe Coaster in tow.

### DVDs

RYA Day Skipper and Competent Crew  
 RYA Coastal Skipper  
 RYA Understanding Navigation

# Drascombe Association News

The magazine of the Drascombe Owners Association

Autumn 2013 No. 107

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## Rally Roundup

From the Pimm's Party People on Puffin in Plymouth to the Stoic Stalwarts Soaked in Storms on Strangford, read about the exploits of this summer's Rally-goers



## Jura ticked off at last

Fulfilling a 40 year old bucket list, Bill Haylock, decides his Drascombe is the easiest and cheapest way to travel for a backpacking trip on the island of Jura



*"Everything that is found is lost again..."*

George Blair rediscovers a lost love on the Register of Wooden Drascombes, bringing back memories and dreams of his Lugger *Lilith* from almost 40 years ago

Cover photo: Elizabeth Rose at Plymouth Hoe

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## Chairman's Log John Christie

Despite a few challenges I have had a good season so far, with lots more to do.

One challenge was that the drain hole fitting mount on the Lugger collapsed and what should have been a simple job of putting it back together again took ages. Steep learning curve, bespoke machined stainless steel plates, taps, tank drills and significant glass-fibre were involved. I ended up with a proper engineering job, completed just in time for the Summer Cruise. See article in the next DAN on the repair.

The Lydney Yacht Club Grand Cruise had very hot, windy weather with Force 6 at times plus thunder and lightning and torrential rain.

I managed to get to Portishead and then onto Bristol for the Harbour Festival. Six of us had a spot of Gig rowing the next day which was a great evening out. We had a day travelling halfway to Bath on the River Avon in the Lugger in torrential rain. We then sailed back to Portishead in sunshine. I then had four days in Portishead Marina but my friends who went on to Watchet via Weston Super Mare had a bit of a rough time. They did however then get to Cardiff but only the larger cruisers (non Drascombe) made Ilfracombe. Still, not a bad record in twelve years, of mainly getting down to Ilfracombe and Lundy. The area really is most beautiful.

The Coniston rally was great, thanks to Chris Beeson for organising this weekend. It was great to meet up with several people I had not seen for several years. The weather was fabulous!



**John Christie presenting Roger and Helen Badcock with a bottle of wine for winning the Cream Tea Contest on the Warwick Avon Rally. John also presented them with a certificate as they had completed all four stages of the Warwick Avon navigation.**

I went to the Pitsford Rally run by Peter Rhodes and beat Julian Merson to the first buoy! I might have not come last in the race if my hat had not blown overboard - at least it did not sink. Roger and Helen Badcock won Robbie's Race.

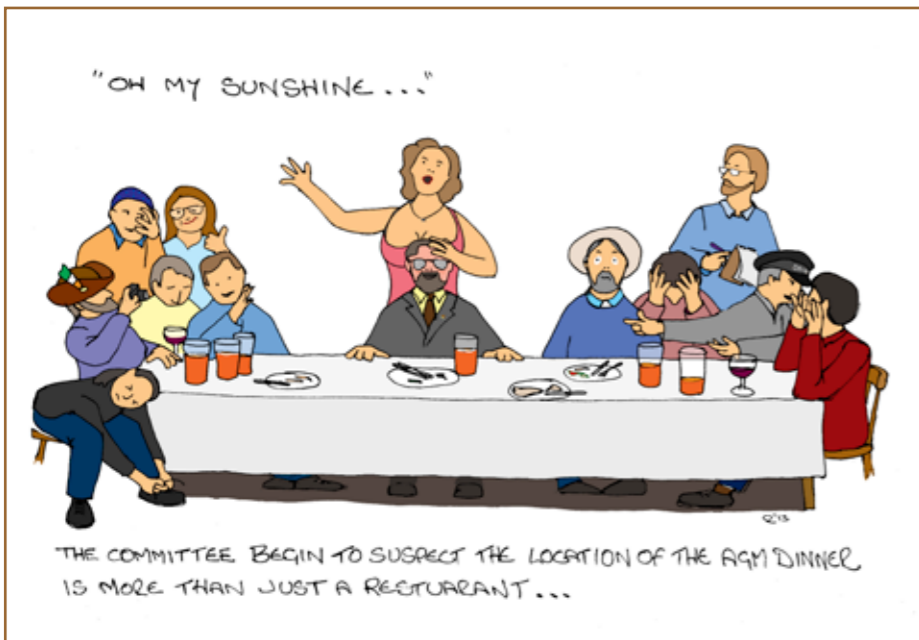
Chris is retiring from the role of Northern Representative before the November Committee meeting. I hope that the North Area is able to appoint a suitable representative. I am pleased to say that

Gordon Harvey has agreed to stay on as Secretary for now.

Please make sure that you have the 29 March 2014 engraved in your diary. This is the AGM of the Association at the Pierhead building at Cardiff. We have given loads of notice this time and the committee and I do hope that you will be able to come. Cardiff is well endowed with great hotels and camping. You could bring your boat to Cardiff Yacht Club and there is a lot to do. I am booking a RIB trip around the Cardiff Barrage on the Sunday morning.

The AGM is the chance to quiz your committee and to contribute to the way the Association is run for your benefit.

I hope we have an Indian Summer and that you sail well into November. I understand that 40 boats are booked for Julian's Hickling Rally at the end of September.



### DAN Deadlines

The deadlines for submitting adverts or articles are:

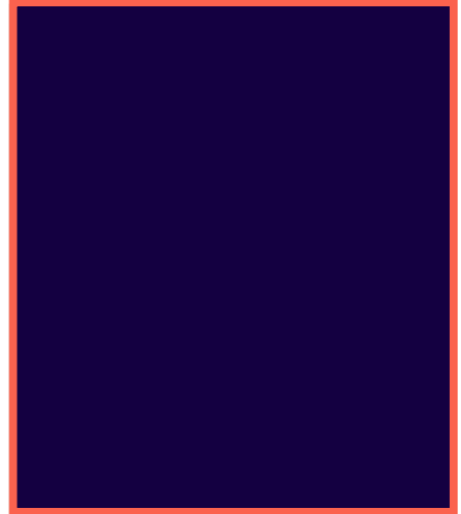
- Winter 2013/14: 15 Oct 2013
- Spring 2014: 15 January 2014
- Summer 2014: 15th April 2014
- Autumn 2014: 15th July 2014

## The Association's Volunteers and Officers: Who's Who

### Officers



### Area Representatives



### The Rest



\* indicates a member of the committee

DAN is published by The Drascombe

As [redacted] d,  
O [redacted] nd  
N [redacted]



## New Subscriptions 1st Jan 2013

There are new subscription levels and a new renewal date of 1st January.

The new rates are:

- UK £15
- Eire €25
- Europe postal Zone £20
- Rest of the World £23

If a second person living at the same address wishes to become a member in their own right, but receive a shared copy of DAN then the combined costs are:

- UK £23
- Eire €35
- Europe postal Zone £28
- Rest of the World £31

If you have any questions please contact [redacted] at [redacted]@association.org.uk

Please ensure that your standing order is changed for the next subscription payment. As standing order arrangements have to come from the payer, we can not do this for you.

## Members Register

Use the following url to get to the members register on the DA Website. You will need to be logged into the forum.

[redacted] Information is only for members' personal use.

## Editorial Bill Haylock

Earlier this year, I joined the Dinghy Cruising Association (DCA). The idea of an organisation of people dedicated to sailing small boats simply for the fun and adventure of it - rather than to prove they were faster than the next person - appealed to me.

I have never understood why most dinghy sailors are so attracted to racing their boat against a bunch of other people in boringly identical boats, around a pointless course to no obvious destination. I know it takes all sorts, and we should be tolerant of the foibles of others... but where is the fun in it? I mean, they don't even have time to look around and admire the view or pull into an inviting little creek to get the stove out for a picnic - I don't get it at all!

It seems, however, that the majority of the sailing world doesn't get it when it comes to small boat cruising. It may be a respectable pass-time for the yachties, but it is frightfully *infradig* when done in dinghies and day boats. Sailing clubs are dominated by the racers. RYA instructor training seems to assume the ultimate aim is to teach little racers. I well remember the arrogant RYA coach who snorted in derision when I talked about the joy of teaching kids in a Drascombe: "boring old tubs", he said dismissively.

I should say now, that my club, Kielder Water Sailing Club, probably does more for cruising than most other clubs. We have a large Drascombe contingent and regular cruises in company. But at another club where I used to teach youth groups in Drascombes and Wayfarers we were barely tolerated, and

## It's not cool to cruise...?

with ill-grace at that, only because we brought the club income through the hefty fees they charged.

Recent posts on the DCA group mail have raised the question of why cruising has such a low profile in the sailing world and what can be done about it. The Drascombe Association was cited in the prolific postings as one of the rare examples of other organisations, apart from the DCA, which promotes cruising. And one correspondent after another bemoaned the fact that young people are not getting into dinghy cruising. Various ideas were suggested, such as encouraging the RYA and clubs to promote cruising more actively as another branch of sailing of equal value to racing.

One of the best ideas, in my opinion, was to encourage more Duke of Edinburgh Award groups to do their expeditions on water, rather than the usual hillwalking. DofE lists sailing as one of the permitted activities. I have supervised groups doing DofE expeditions by open canoe and supported a girl's group on a (non DofE) expedition sailing the Caledonian Canal in two Longboats and I know that the young people who participated in those activities gained a huge amount from the experience.

But in this digital age of instant gratification, is it no longer cool to cruise for young people? I'm not that pessimistic. My son Tim is as computer addicted as any other 15 year old, but he quite likes his sailing too. But a reality

for young people today is that unless they have parents who are wealthy or into sailing, they are unlikely to get the opportunity to try it. The Outdoor Centre I previously managed has lost its Council funding and dropped sailing as an activity. The same is happening across the country.

So why should this concern us? Well, without putting too fine a point on it, the majority of DA members are of a certain age... What we are talking about is the future of cruising in general and Drascombes in particular. Unless we make our favourite pastime accessible and attractive to young people, the future of Drascombes looks like one of terminal decline. Many of us may not be around by then, but I think it would still be a shame...



Janet Henderson presents the Churchouse Boats trophy to Robbie's Race Winners Roger and Helen Badcock (see Peter Rhodes' rally report, right).

## A message from your Treasurer

I would just like to make a few comments after being in the post of Treasurer and Membership Secretary for the last few months. There are still a large number of members who have not increased their subscriptions to £15, they are still paying the old sum of £10. This increase was introduced on 1st January 2012. Could you please check to see that you are paying the correct amount and contact me if you are not. I would be grateful if you could make sure that emails from

[redacted] first word in the subject will always be Drascombe. I have sent out over 100 emails, that I have had no response to. I cannot believe that Drascombe members are so rude to ignore them, so they must be being directed to the spam box! Finally, please check that we have your correct email address, this is the main way that we contact you.

Thank you.  
Richard Crossley

## Letters to the Editor

From John North (The Dabber with no name):

Dear Editor, I'm looking forward to more 'Secrets of Sails'. We take wing aerodynamics for granted these days but Uffa Fox, in 'According to Uffa', thought the idea heretical. He believed that sails act as deflectors that turn the wind backwards towards the stern of a vessel and that reaction pushes the vessel forwards! I used to sail a Fox designed Albacore dinghy which frequently dumped me in the wet: it knew I was a heretic. Great magazine, it keeps improving.

From Ian Garven, Perth, Australia

Dear Members, If you happen to be travelling in Australia and you are missing your Drascombe, why not give me a bell, or drop me a line, and I will do my best to give you some anti-homesickness medicine in the form of a sail in my longboat - as featured in DAN 106.

The Swan River around Perth and Gage Roads off Fremantle both make beautiful and exciting sailing venues.

From Peter Rhodes

Hope you can find a little space for this:

### Pitsford Rally May 29/30th

Twelve boats attended this popular annual rally held at Pitsford Water, a few miles north of Northampton, where we were guests of Northampton Sailing Club. Eleven boats, ranging from Dabbers to Coasters, took part in the fifth annual Robbie's Race, in memory of that much admired DA member, Robbie Henderson. His widow, Janet, and her family watched the race and Janet presented the handsome Churchouse Boats trophy to the winning crew, Roger and Helen Badcock (Coaster "Bundy Bear").

First place might well have gone to Iain Thomson in his fine new Deben Lugger which was well ahead of the field in a race which began in dead calm and ended amid 20 knot gusts. Sadly, Iain failed to cross the designated finishing line. Ever sadder, two other vessels followed him. But a good time was had by all and the traditional Pitsford Rally dinner was followed by much music and yarn-spinning. We raised a glass to our old sailing pal, John Sheldrake, who died suddenly earlier this year. A small boat jumble raised £15 for Myton Hospice, Warwick.

### Robbie's Race results:

1. Coaster "Bundy Bear" (Roger and Helen Badcock) 52 mins
2. Coaster "Windsong" (John, Gaynor and Amelie Boileau) 54 mins
3. Peterboat "Helena" (Stephen Coulter) 55mins
4. Lugger Fiddler's Green (Tony Brown and Coiln Birchenough) 55.5 mins
5. Jolly Boat "Sally Gee" (Alex Haig) 57 mins
6. Longboat "Serendipity" (Northampton Sailability) 59mins
7. Lugger "Pelican" (Jeff Kerr) 59.5 mins
8. Lugger "Muckle Flugga" (John Christie) 61mins

CONWY RIVER ...  
"... THE TIDE COMES IN FAST. IF YOU TIE YOUR DINGHY TO THE JETTY CHECK THE PAINTER FREQUENTLY ..." (DABBY ORGANISED)



VERNON RETURNS TO HIS PINT AFTER DEMONSTRATING THE SPEED OF THE DISC ...

## Articles for DAN

To help you write an article for DAN, please try and keep these guidelines in mind.

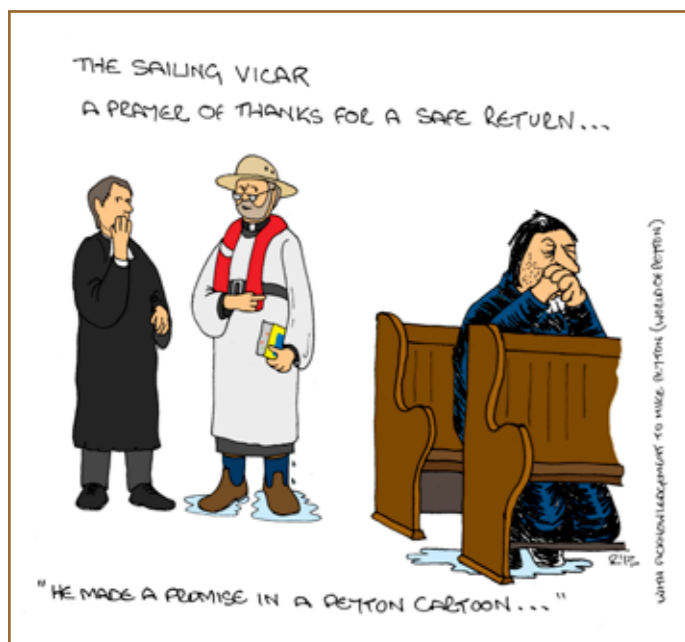
Try to keep under 1500 words for a feature article (most word processing programmes have a word count tool). It is best if you can send files in Word .doc format, but plain text files are acceptable too, but not pdf please. Write your article in a single column layout without any fancy formatting - this makes it simpler to import into the Desktop Publishing software we use. For the same reason, please don't put pictures in your text - send them separately.

DAN is a full-colour magazine so please send a number of good quality photos, that I can make a selection from. The printing process unfortunately means that pictures suffer a drop in quality, so send the largest size and highest resolution pictures you have, in .tif format, if possible, not jpeg (which lose quality). Photos with strong colours and good contrast will look better in print. A flat, dark photo will look dull by the time it appears in print. If you have a lot of photos it is best to upload them to Dropbox, rather than e-mailing them. Contact me and I will tell you how to do this.

If you want to use any copyright material (pictures, charts etc) in your article, please let me know so that I can check the copyright situation - it would be helpful if you could do this for me, though.

I try to use all the submissions sent to the DAN but, due to available space, some articles get held back in reserve for future issues. I'll let you know if yours is going into the upcoming DAN, but please don't take offence if your article has to wait for the next issue; everything received is greatly appreciated!

Please send contributions to:




## 2013 Rally Programme

## Rally Programme 2013

### Drascombe Association Events

SSD - Suitable for Smaller Drascombes; BH - Bank Holiday

Date/Venue	Organiser and Details
September 7th and 8th SSD LOCH LOMOND	<b>Kathleen McWhirter</b> Loch Lomond lies on the Highland Boundary Fault which demarks the boundary between the lowlands and highlands of Scotland's. The fault is the reason for the stark contrast in landscapes between the north and south ends of the loch and it is responsible for a number of the Loch's islands. The planned cruising area for this year's rally is the area of loch to the north and west of Balmaha as this area contains nearly all of the thirty odd islands in the loch. For those wanting to embark on an extended sail the Loch is navigable for its full 24 mile length
Sep 09th to 14th Liveaboard SOLENT CRUISE	<b>Jim Hopwood</b> Assemble at Ashlett Creek on Sunday 8 September, cruise the area between Poole and Chichester for 6 days, returning Saturday 14 September. Tides are right to go round the Isle of Wight if the weather is kind, Solent harbours beckon if not.
Sep 13th - 15th SSD FOWEY	<b>Lynne Barnes</b> Sailing in the beautiful Fowey Estuary and along the nearby Cornwall coast, perhaps as far as Megavissey. Pontoon berths with full facilities available, camping and B&B nearby. Approx £45 for pontoon, launching, harbour dues, car parking for 3 days payable locally.
Sep 27th to 29th SSD HICKLING BROAD *New Date*	<b>Julian Merson</b> Launching, mooring, trailer and car parking at Hickling. Hickling Broad and Horsey Mere provide wonderful inland stretches for pleasant sailing. Superb wildlife, beautiful scenery. Pub meal on Saturday evening at the Pleasureboat Inn. Likely costs will include a launch/recovery (tba), a Broads Authority toll - currently £8.64 for two days and a charge for mooring each evening (tba).
Nov 16th Shorebased SCOTTISH AGM/SOCIAL	<b>Mike O'Hagan</b> We are planning a good party in Stonehaven - come and join us! Walks in woods or along the coast to Dunnottar Castle (or maybe a sail?) beforehand. Good food and company. Expect to hold cost to last year's £20 - confirmation by next DAN. Forum post soon. (oh...and a Scottish AGM while we are all together.)
Nov 22nd Shorebased SOUTH COAST SUPPER	<b>Richard Goldsmith</b> An opportunity to join fellow enthusiasts at Chichester Yacht Club for an informal meal; a chance to share experiences of the past season and, maybe, make plans for 2014! Contact Richard Goldsmith for details and definitely if you plan to attend.
<b>2014</b> May 28-29 SSD Pitsford Rally and Robbie's Race	<b>Peter Rhodes</b> Held on Pitsford Water, Northamptonshire, Robbie's Race is the only organised (?) race in the Drascombe Association calendar. Why not come along and compete for the handsome Churchouse Boats trophy while enjoying good company, lakeside camping, fine food and all the facilities of a first-class sailing club? See FORUM 
<b>2014</b> June 28-29 SSD WELLS NEXT THE SEA	<b>Richard Price</b> Wells harbour dries out so sailing, launching and recovering possible only about two and a half hours either side of HW. Friday 27th arrive and launch from 1730 onwards (HW is at 1946). Harbour Master has again offered pontoon moorings (and showers etc for those sleeping aboard). Reception and briefing at Wells Sailing Club from 1930. Saturday (HW 0804 and 2022) a choice of single tide sailing morning and evening, or a two tide sail East or West from Wells depending on forecast. Evening BBQ on beach. Sunday (HW 0840) choice of sailing or creek crawling (mast down) to see local wildlife (seals, birds) for smaller Drascombes e.g. Dabbers and Scaffies). Shore-based options during the day for those not opting for the two tide sail on Saturday. Further details from rally organiser. Limited numbers. Last minute bookings not accepted.
<b>2014</b> Aug 06 - 10 BALTIMORE	<b>Jack O'Keeffe</b> Baltimore Rally - Preliminary notice of 2014 event

Events that have an associated thread at time of writing are marked with a mouse   
Please see the website for further details: [www.drascombe-association.org.uk/events.php](http://www.drascombe-association.org.uk/events.php)

### Dutch Drascombe Rallies

Date/Venue	Organiser and Details
Sep 06th to 8th. SSD Kager Plassen	<b>Margot Schaake</b> Summer Meeting - Fresh water sailing around Kaag Dorp including a special sail through the historic canals of Leiden, especially suitable for small Drascombes as well, camping facilities ashore.
Nov 08th to 10th Shorebased Classic Boat Show	<b>Michel Maartens</b> Classic Boat Show - Enkhuizen
Nov 13th to 17th Liveaboard TWW Makkum	<b>Antoine Maartens</b> Traditional Wadden Weekend - Makkum. Freezeboards only, traditional end of the season cruise around the by then grey, wet, foggy and cold western Frisian islands. The moon is nearly full by then, so night trips on a rising tide, not for the faint hearted!
Dec 20th to 22nd Liveaboard KorDaTo - Lauwersoog	<b>Bas Suurenbroek</b> Trying to reach Ameland for copious dinner ashore or alternatively retreat to the deserted harbour of Schiermonnikoog to visit the rightly famous vintage Hotel Van der Werff.

### Non-Drascombe Association Events

Individual's names are Drascombe contacts, not organisers.

Date/Venue	Organiser and Details
Aug 15th to 18th Cowes OGA Jubilee	This event will be hosted by the Old Gaffers Association to celebrate their Golden Jubilee year and they are keen to invite members of the Drascombe Association to join them in Cowes for a weekend of fun, sea shanties and socialising with other gaffers with boats of all shapes and sizes and vintage. They plan that berthing will be free to all gaff rigged boats. Planning is ongoing, but information will be available from the Solent OGA site and OGA
2014 May 24 - 31 Liveaboard Sail Caledonia	 Norna Hall (Scottish Raid) A fleet of Drascombes is lining up to participate in the "raid" from Fort William to Inverness. This event is a professionally organised annual event, see the website <a href="http://www.sailcaledonia.org/">http://www.sailcaledonia.org/</a>

### 2013 Rally Organisers



### Help your Rally Organiser!!

- Let the organiser know well in advance, if you are thinking of coming,
- Keep the organiser informed of any late changes of plan,
- Inform the organiser if you leave the fleet early,
- Give us your feedback!!

## DRASCOMBE RALLY APPLICATION FORM



Event: .....

Skipper's name: .....

Address:

Tel No:

Mobile:

Email address:

Additional crew will comprise: Adults:  
(please insert names)

Children:

All crew who are not already members hereby apply for temporary membership of the Drascombe Association for this rally/event. (No membership fee applies).

We shall arrive (day/time):

and depart:

By Land /Boat \*

& require parking for Cars:

Trailer:

Boat: Type:

Name:

Hull colour:

VHF Radio carried: Yes / No \*

if DSC unit give MMSI No:

We shall be: Sleeping onboard \* / Camping \* / Booking B&B \* / Other arrangements \*

Please send me details of: (please tick as appropriate)

Details of local camping

Details of local B&B

Declaration:  I am a member of the Drascombe Association and have read and accept the Association rules and agree that boat and contact details may be distributed to other participants. (please tick as appropriate)

My boat is insured for third party claims up to £  million ( ≥£3M required)

with  insurance company

I accept that although events may be organised within the Association, this in no way implies that conditions will be suitable for all craft to take part. It is the sole responsibility of the skipper to decide whether to take part in all or part of an event, taking into consideration craft, fitness and experience of the crew, and his or her own experience.

I enclose:  Completed application (this form) (please tick as appropriate)

Rally admin fee (normally £3, but as described in the rally programme)

Skipper's signature:

Date:

Please complete & return your form in good time. Confirmation will be sent out close to the event. Organisers typically close their entry list 7 – 10 days before the event.

\* please delete as appropriate

## News from the Netherlands Tom Colville

### Drascombes at or below sea level?

Can it be true that pleasant sailing conditions last longer when aboard a Dutch boat? Or does it just seem that way. The NKDE website this summer has been a feast for the imagination. No sooner does one set of event reports and photos appear, than others that resonate even more with the Drascombe ideal shine out.

But it was not a Drascombe that provided the focal interest at the pre-season meeting of the Kring in Muiden at the end of March. The guest speaker was Giacomo de Stefano who enthralled the audience with his account of adventures during his outstanding journey under sail and oars from Henley-on-Thames to Istanbul. Without a motor the 2926nm voyage, in an Ian Outred designed yawl was so close to the fabled drascombe state of mind, that Giacomo's simple mission found many "keep it simple" kindred spirits in the room.

A record turnout of 28 boats had signed up for the annual Smis cruise in May. In the event, perhaps because of an unsettled forecast, the turnout in Den Oever proved slightly less. It proved to be a very social few days. After a late evening crossing to the Posthuiswad by Vlieland, strong conditions next day kept prudent skippers depending on their anchors. Instead of heading further east, before the boats settled with the tide, crews relaxed. Later they wandered off to explore the pristine dunes and wild land ashore. After enduring a very rough period as the incoming tide tossed the boats about, the following morning still brought no sign of an easing of the hefty wind. As the tide dropped the whole party moved ashore again and walked along to Oost-Vlieland village, where within warm and comfy cafes, a traditional restoring selection of Dutch beverages provided a perfect retreat. On return to the boats, the forecast continued unsettled. The only viable course back to the mainland, in face of the now fresh SW breeze, lay south south east across a boisterous Waddensee to the peaceful canal centre of Harlingen. Being Drascombes, of course, all that was then needed was a taxi service to fetch trailers from Den Oever. Everyone home safe. Quite a party cruise!

A few days later - on the Ascension Day holiday - many skippers sailed again from Den Oever. Some went to Texel, others to Vlieland, some headed home-back south to Almere and Edam.

By then an online blog had commenced, as a small group of Dutch sailors, each with many seasons of experience along Scotland's western coast, took their 3 Coasters, Drifter 22 and cruiser longboat aboard the overnight ferry to Newcastle. A day or two later they all gathered at Glendale, to use the most north westerly slipway on Skye. On fair days the peaks of the Outer Hebrides line the western horizon. After a day of mist and rain they crossed the Minch to enjoy 17 days exploring to the south. From hidden inlet, through challenges and exposed waters, they slipped into quiet sea lochs, anchored by long deserted islands. They

headed all the way south, as days passed from North Uist past Benbecula to Castlebay on Barra, and the beautiful beaches of Vatersay. Then after weathering a severe gale, cruised quietly north again. They became enthralled by the charm of those islands; they also discovered that blue skies and blue fingers are not mutually exclusive! But what magnificent Drascombe moments that blog shared with everyone. The best of the pictures taken on the CCOH voyage are now to be found in an album on the NKDE website.

As the summer advances, fresh reports keep appearing. At time of writing a new adventure is emerging in an online blog. NKDE editor Gijs de Kemenade and his wife Henriette have trailed south to explore Greek waters with their Coaster 'Antarist'. We follow with interest...

The next NKDE event is the summer 'bijeenkomst' which, this year, will take place between 6th -8th September, on the Kagerplassen, just east of Leiden. This family event is popular each year, bringing together the smaller Drascombes with those who sail wilder seas.

Later on, of course, will come the early winter cruise - the TWW. This annual freezeaboard cruise will leave Makkum on 13<sup>th</sup> November for undisclosed destinations across the Waddensee. An ETA of 17<sup>th</sup> November should see them mooring back at the start point.....in Makkum ??

There is currently no mention in the present NKDE agenda of the infamous 'Icebreaking' pre Christmas cruise, towards the Friesland Islands. Unfortunately due to 'unforeseen' circumstances! Sub-arctic weather led to it being called off last year. Maybe even a Drascombe has some limits after all. But who can be definite about this? In this remarkable year for NKDE members. Perhaps not.

To keep an eye on Drascombes in Holland: [www.drascombe.nl](http://www.drascombe.nl)

Below: Dutch Drascombes at Barra



## Unravelled - the Mouse's Tale Tom Colville

A regular look at chat on the Drascombe Association forum

Each time this column is prepared for a new DAN, I glance back through my PC's records to the things I wrote a year or more ago. The dangers of 'navigating' again and again in well charted areas are ever present!

A year ago much of England was experiencing the wettest summer since records began. This July, as I write, the hottest days this summer are being endured, while not so far away much of central Europe is clearing up huge damage caused by unprecedented floods. There seems no rhyme or reason to it.

One bonus available to all with broadband today, is almost instant access to really accurate weather forecasts. Projections can be freely found online, drawn from supercomputer analysis of a fabulous complexity of data ...from satellites, weather ships, shore stations, aircraft presently in flight and so on.

Stumbling around looking for jetstream forecasts earlier this year, I came across [www.netweather.tv](http://www.netweather.tv). What a huge resource this website is. Not only are standard 3 hourly forecasts available for any place in the UK, but these local or area projections can be run out for 14 days, with decreasing accuracy (obviously).

Projections of wind speed and direction are a vital navigational tool. In the olden days mariners would rely on barometric pressure movements to give a few short hours advance warning of possible weather events. Online, each day now, it is possible to view sequences of weather maps: wind speeds, probable precipitation hour by hour, cloud cover, humidity and so on, data extrapolated for several successive days. It is uncanny to see that within a few hours some change should occur...and it does, right at the predicted moment.

On the water some favourable forecast for later in a day can be used to justify a more comfortable track early in the passage. Precise advance knowledge of timings for wind increases and shifts will allow a reef to be set early in anticipation. It is an extraordinary age we live in.

Not being prepared to accept this source at face value I have spent many weeks, this summer, comparing these online forecasts against our local weather events here.

Earlier in May I did use the [netweather.tv](http://www.netweather.tv) predictions to assess the practicality of a prolonged exposed passage. The website revealed that the most favourable moment to leave port would be just before 2 am. (Even without the almost full moon that day, by mid May it is seldom really dark for long this far north.) But this early departure led on to one of the most memorable day sails of my life. Whisper and I voyaged for many hours, ending exactly where I needed to be, well before a force 6 wind shift occurred right on cue. Had I left any later the threatened wind shift, as a frontal system came through, could have really spoilt things. But the predictions were accurate that day, and have remained largely accurate almost all summer since. When later that May afternoon the change came through, the anchor was well dug in, sails furled away and the brew on. Quite uncanny.

On the forum we enjoy many links now to the digital age phenomenon of personal blogs. The capacity to set up your own personal broadcasting space is open to anyone today who possesses the know-how. It is wonderful to follow Drascombe crews day by day in real time as they film their voyages far and wide: East Anglian estuaries, Scottish and Greek islands and so

on... allowing us to share their daily happenings. Of course on some Youtube offerings watching paint dry can occasionally be considered more amusing! A small red triangular blob far out on an otherwise empty seascape...as I have said here before... does not inspire us all! Never the less the variety of sailing locations visited by so many Drascombe crews this year continues to be very special: technology that permits the experience to be shared so simply and so widely, just gets better and better, and our forum hosts it too.

Regular DAN readers will have their own opinions about the safety question marks that still hang over marine energy turbine projects, planned for or already constructed in coastal waters. Early this June three people had to be rescued after their small yacht was swept against the tidal array in Strangford Lough. This frightening  $\pm 100$  year statistical event, which was reported on national news, serves to forewarn us all. Whether we choose to believe idealistic statistical analysis, or wait to witness what actually happens, every intertidal turbine in any fast moving navigable channel does represent a real risk to the lives of people aboard leisure craft. Statistics should never blind us to the deadly consequences implicit in any collision between a small boat and a static tidal energy turbine array. Talk of vhf broadcasts, extra buoys, padded pillars or segmented lights placed adjacent to it to provide early alerts and warning, disclose only that too many marine engineers today seem to lack much practical experience aboard small craft.

When all is right in the world, and so many well tested systems perform well, there are always those that will hope that by fiddling around they might improve things. The DA forum always reveals this 'disquiet' among boat owners. Imaginative discussions continued this summer: improving buoyancy arrangements— as so many times in past years. But when confronted with practical marine calculations will any new flotation scheme still perform as it should? Discussions about improved sheeting arrangements: one definition of reality has to be the shock discovery that loadings within some altered rig are too great to restrain. Should some free-running, minimalist sheeting scheme be constructed, will it work as safely as what has been proved over decades?

On many vehicle forums people seem to be busy continually trying to re configure some original component or setting. They appear to discount tens or even hundreds of thousands of highly skilled hours at the design stage. Of course it is interesting to study variations in performance based around the same standard item. Variations aboard the Drascombes sailed by DA members at rallies, always confirm that no two craft will have remained identical once a new owner steps aboard! Nevertheless keeping the thing as simple as possible remains the key to its reliability and appeal. The proportions of buoyancy to deadweight, the ratio of sail area to beam,  $dwl$  to  $clr$  and  $C$  of  $E$  (no, not that!) did not come about by chance. Only by thorough calculation, itself based on huge small boat experience, did these boats emerge. Anyone who imagines they have the skill to improve on this concept and yet keep the timeless elegance and style must (here I adopt a hackneyed phrase to close) ...first...." do the math!"

All this, and much more, on the DA forum. <http://www.drascombe-association.org.uk/forum.php>

# Rally Roundup

From the Pimm's party people on *Puffin* at Plymouth to the Stolic stalwarts soaked in storms on *Strangford*, DA members have been out in their boats together in this summer's rallies.



Above: Rafted up on Strangford Lough ▲



On the following pages, in their own words, are tales of their adventures and experiences on some of the Rallies that have happened so far in 2013...



Above: Pimms on *Puffin* at Plymouth ▲

Above right: *Liberty Jane* at Wells ▶

Right: In the Gulf of Morbihan ▶



## Rally Roundup

A few years ago, before I took up the gentle art of sailing, I had camped by the Golfe du Morbihan, and thought – “what a beautiful, huge stretch of sheltered water” - words which are all accurate, but at the same time, misleading. When Steve Maynard suggested we might take my Coaster *Pamela* out there, I jumped at the chance, and would like to share my experiences with anyone thinking of doing likewise.

Firstly, Steve, in his role as “Ancient Drascomber” and having been on several previous trips to Morbihan and beyond, admitted the conditions had been challenging. I would add, at times, downright terrifying, but that’s probably my inexperience talking. I don’t want to put anyone off, and will endeavour to give a realistic view. These are definitely waters that demand respect, and I would say that at least one member of a crew, preferably the skipper, should be a very competent small boat sailor. That said, I think (hope?) I learnt more in the seven day’s sailing than my previous four years sporadic attendance of Drascombe rallies in the UK.

Now to the good bits. Morbihan (meaning “little inland sea” I believe) is just made for Drascombing. Loads of slipways, trailer parking, secluded beaches, quays, anchorages and “foraging” opportunities – one of Steve’s specialisms. We ate a lot of cheese, ham and fresh baguettes, and very nice they were too. When the sun was out, it was beautiful. When the stormy wind blew and the rains descended, we were safe on a mooring or sheltered pontoon – also abundant. Breezes were variable, but often brisk. I would avoid the usual Drascombe habit of rafting up on a buoy though, unless you find the sound of squeaking fenders and straining warps restful. There are big stretches of open water with plenty of depth. Think of Poole Harbour, and enlarge by a factor of about twenty for both area and depth. All the French seemed to use the NAVICARTE pre-laminated folio A3 chart of the area, which would have been much more suitable than the tablecloth sized Admiralty chart I used, and which rapidly deteriorated



## Semaine du Golfe: a Beginner’s Guide

6-12 May  
John Boston

into a soggy, many folded mess.

We arrived at Larmor Baden on the first day available for launch and registration, (Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>) fresh from a couple of overnight stops at F1 (one star) hotels at Boulogne and Vannes. These are good value, with “help yourself” Continental breakfasts I particularly enjoyed and took full advantage of. The only cheaper way (not much though) would have been to camp, or just park in one of the huge

supermarket carparks en route, which we did of necessity on the return journey. After our registration, the slipway and quay area began to get busy with the construction of marquees, desert islands, catering tents, bars and a stage. *Pamela* was allocated her own mooring buoy just near the slipway, and after several hours of faffing about, unloading, fettling, and parking the trailer, we were bobbing peacefully on the water enjoying the scenery. Hooray!

I was amazed at the large scale of the event, which is spread over most of the ports and marinas adjoining the Golfe. If you apply, you will be allocated to a flotilla, in our case “3 bis” for small boats with overnighting capabilities. Our sister Flotilla 3 was for open boats, and included several Luggers and Dabbers as well as many other types. Arrangements are made for those camping ashore to be transported to their camp-sites. Given the scale of organisation involved, I was glad we were self-contained. Opportunities for the ingestion of food were legion, but harbourside toilet (one) and washing (none) facilities were farcically inadequate for the number of sailors and public members involved. It is probably possible to keep clean and answer the calls of Nature, but be prepared to smell like a tramp and use primitive toilet facilities on occasion. It’s also worth asking at cafes, showing your badge.

Reporting for the initial skippers’ briefing (usually these were half an hour late) for Flotillas 3 and 3 bis on Tuesday evening, I was armed with a little speech on the lines of, “Hello I’m John, etc” (to be delivered with Rowan Atkinsonsque facial expressions to cover limited French skills) only to be lost in a herd of 200 plus other skippers straining to hear and understand the verbal flow and Gallic shrugs of the 2 Flotilla leaders. After half an hour, I gathered the essence of the message to be always to wear our brassieres (life jackets) and to be off our moorings before a certain time as other fleets would descend on our home port while we were elsewhere. Don’t expect any advice such as “watch out for the 9 knot tidal race you will have to cross at point x” or “let’s all drop anchor and raft up for lunch at point z”. You applied to join the festival, you

have been given the programme. If you don’t keep up with the fleet, safety boat cover can’t be guaranteed.

I can no longer avoid further mention of the tides, which are both fearsome and exhilarating, depending on whether you have negotiated them to advantage and without mishap. Tide tables alone are of limited help, as it would be useful to know the local flow directions round islands, and that low water in Vannes for example is about 2 hours behind the datum at Port Navalo. (I found these details on returning home hidden in the bump handed out at registration). Like anywhere else in coastal waters, you plan to sail with the tide. In the Golfe, if you don’t, you will go backwards, even with full throttle on your 6hp Mercury. In our pre-festival reconnaissance sailing we were whisked out the harbour mouth (intentionally) like a train to fuel up at the posh marina at Port Crouesty. Sailing back in with light winds astern and the incoming tide, we lost steerage and spun gently round at the edge of the tidal flow. I felt my panic to be justified, but Steve advised me to just let the boat settle and point in the right direction, and off we went again. On another occasion we

were returning with the flotilla from Arradon. This had been a fabulous exciting sail in a stiff breeze, but now involved crossing the outgoing rip near Larmor Baden at the southern tip of Ile Berder. I wasn’t too worried as we had crossed a couple of times already, and as long as you ignore the roaring noise and the sudden feeling of a giant trying to rip the tiller out of your hand, it’s not as bad as you thought. I hadn’t reckoned though with the presence of about 50 other boats trying to do the same thing. It was madness. Having dodged behind the ten man rowing gig being tossed frantically about, then avoided family man in his bathtub sized single master apparently going down the plughole, I had set myself up for a brilliant diagonal plunge under full sail past the point of the island and into safe waters. At this moment, a large catamaran with the crew desperately trying to dislodge a jammed sail loomed. I got past - I really can’t remember how - and emerged still on course but a bit too close to the point. The world then spun rapidly through 360 degrees, during which time I saw that the island point was crowded with spectators eager for action. Safety boat man was shouting at me and pointing in the direction I was already

desperately trying to go, and suddenly, all was calm and under control. Phew!

Being part of the festival is a mixed blessing. Downside is the crowded water at certain bottlenecks. On the plus side, everything is free. Registration will get you launched, moored, taxied to and from shore, safety boat cover, entertained and occasionally fed, all gratis. With our official badges we even wangled a preliminary free night at the posh marina in Vannes, into which we had followed the Bristol based *Matthew*, a replica of Cabot’s ship in which he landed at Newfoundland in 1497.

It would be possible to plan your own less crazy sojourn in this lovely place. Personally, I would avoid festival week, base myself at Arradon marina (slipway, pontoons, basic facilities – need to check on trailer parking), then plan a series of trips within the main basin which would not involve shooting the rapids with dozens of other boats. If you did want to sail up the lovely River Auray, you could always cross the tidal stream under motor if nervous. Finally, learn some French phrases and vocabulary – I was surprised how few locals speak a word of English. Bon Voyage!.

## Wells is so bracing...! Wells Rally 7-9 June Cheri Crosley

Our thanks must go to Joe Ellison who has organised the Wells Rally so well for the last few years. Organising a rally is never an easy task, but Joe always managed to make them enjoyable for all who attended. Our thanks go to him for all his hard work over many years.

Despite Joe’s best efforts though, the Wells rally has been less well attended in recent years, short tides and bad weather have tended to put off all but the most hardy. The day of this year’s rally dawned after a week of very cold weather with chilly north winds and a forecast of more wind plus rain, so we wondered if it would go ahead at all. Perhaps several years of poor weather everywhere has meant that Drascombers are tending to be more willing to take the risk, as this year we had a new rally organiser in Richard Price, (ably assisted by Peter Rainsford) and nine visiting boats. Richard had put together an exciting programme, a two tide trip up the coast to neighbouring Burnham Overy, then back on the evening tide to a floating BBQ on a beach in a harbour.

Meeting and greeting was well organised, →





## Rally Roundup



with local day boat users helping visitors with launching and guiding them to their pontoon berths, before an evening briefing on the quayside and a hot meal in one of the local hostelry.

Sadly the two tide sail had to be abandoned as the strong north-easterly winds would have made it more than bracing, especially for the smaller boats. However, our most stalwart Drascombers were all ready on the pontoons at 0600hrs for an early sail out into Holkham Bay and what a sail it was! Winds were a consistent north easterly F4 and we managed some quite exhilarating sailing, reaching backwards a forwards across Holkham Bay. It was very cold and everyone was bundled up as if we were sailing in December, but this lovely sail was enjoyed by all. It is always amazing to me how three hours can disappear when we are afloat, but before we knew it we had to return to our berth and retire to the land for the day.

Those who felt less inclined to be buffeted and bumped at sea, followed the creeks, travelling through the salt marshes. This marsh, at over 1000 ha, is one of the largest in Britain and a site of major importance for wildlife, including common and grey seals. The search was on. The only problem was that the best route through the creeks to the nearest sandbank on which seals can be seen, passes under a low footbridge. Of course, raising and lowering the mast, a major exercise for most sailors, is routine for Drascombe people.

However, for this trip we needed enough water to get through the creeks (and back of course!) but with too much water you cannot get under the bridge. Timing was critical, but Drascombes like a challenge, so it was that

three Dabbers and a Scaffie set off, mastless, from the pontoons. Pushed by the tide the group were quickly up to the footbridge and through the narrow space between the supports, needing only to crouch low in the boats to clear it. Clearing the creek into more open water they were delighted to find themselves of considerable interest to several seals which bobbing up and down in the water around them. They anchored in the lee of a small bank, rafted up and, in true Drascombe style, put on the kettle.

Courage boosted by a steaming hot cuppa, they headed north for the sand bank on which

**Much needed sustenance was provided by the floating barbeque!  
Photos by Cheri Crosley**



there were at least one hundred seals. Cruising up and down, being careful not to go too close, while all around inquisitive seals popped up to have a look at, wonderful!

There are lots of things to do in the area and Richard had given visitors a comprehensive list of ideas to fill the day – as I am local, I went home and after a warm up, I did some gardening! Surely at the beginning of June we should have had some warmth and sunshine but the day remained cold and windy. 1700hrs saw a convoy of tan sail boats heading out to the harbour for more sailing; crews warmly dressed in readiness for the floating BBQ organised by Peter Rainsford and his team. The wind was still NE force 3/4, so the Drascombes performed at their best, offering beach users a real treat as they were joined by other Wells Day Boat Association members, with about twenty tan sailed boats skipping around the harbour for a couple of hours before coming to land on the opposite beach for some much needed BBQ sustenance. The wind never completely relented during the evening so a number of boats were able to make sail back to the harbour in the ever decreasing light, again showing the versatility of our boats and their crews.

Sunday dawned with continuing brisk winds. Some took the opportunity for another early sail others joined local John Mitchell for a different creek crawl from the inner to the outer harbour in a circular route, before de-launching and heading back to their normal sailing grounds. It was tremendous to see so many tan sails on the water and our thanks are extended to Wells Day Boat Association for all their help in making this such a successful and enjoyable rally.

## Rally Roundup



### A Drascombe Initiation at Plymouth Rally

7-9 June Valerie Jordan

We had sailed our lugger, *Elizabeth Rose*, on just six occasions before attending the Plymouth rally. Prior to that, we had both done our RYA levels 1 and 2, sailed a Laser 2000 on Grafham Water a couple of times and crewed for John Christie once (thank you for the benefit of your experience, John!). We are both, however, familiar with the sea – Dave having served with the RAF air-sea rescue at Culdrose and Val having worked at sea as an environmental scientist for several years.

Our home (and *Elizabeth Rose's*) is in Wilcove, just up the Hamoaze from Torpoint, so we decided to travel by water to the Plymouth rally and arrival in time for evening drinks was a very important priority for us. This meant that wind and spring tide were against us throughout our journey, so we left the sails firmly furled and motored down the Hamoaze and through the Narrows to the venue at Plymouth Yacht Haven. Our genial host, Chris Murray, was there to meet us at the marina and supervised our efforts at mooring to the pontoon. We were invited aboard *Puffin*, where Nicky proffered a welcome Pimms and introduced us to our fellow Drascombers. Things were looking good! Later on, a short stroll found us all on a warm, sunny beach in the lee of Mount Batten Point for a convivial barbecue and more drinks. Here, we were joined by Lynne and Chris Barnes and Graham

Whiteland, who unfortunately had to stay on dry land for the weekend. Clearly Drascombe rallies are about more than just the sailing!

Saturday morning saw the skippers and crews of the fleet of six Drascombes attending



the skippers briefing. Dave and I were a little wary of the wind gusting to Force 6 and were relieved to find that nobody seemed to feel any urgent need to start the day's sailing too early. Better to enjoy the sun on the pontoon and take a leisurely lunch, whilst waiting for the wind to drop as forecast. Only Mike Lloyd and Dick Holmes braved the winds for a brisk trip out onto Plymouth Sound in Mike's lugger, *Creekhopper*. Meanwhile, Dave utilised his time with examining how Jeff Kerr reefed *Pelican's* mainsail and I was invited onto *Bonne Amie* to see the additional comfort that could be afforded to an overnight stop in a

Coaster by a tent covering the afterdeck. Just after lunch, the wind had decreased to a level suitable for *Elizabeth Rose* to venture out on jib and mizzen, under the watchful eye of Chris and Nicky in *Puffin*. By mid afternoon, as the wind eased further, all of the six-strong Drascombe fleet could be seen under full sail, having a wonderful time on Plymouth Sound, beneath clear blue skies.

In the evening, all the crews, including those of the absent *Quest* and *Capricorn*, gathered for more good conversation and an excellent meal of fish and chips at The Bridge restaurant. Afterwards, Dave and I enjoyed a nightcap on board *Bon Amie*, whilst purchasing a range of Drascombe goodies from Sandy Parfitt. We had decided not to try sleeping on board *Elizabeth Rose*, but opted for the relative comfort of the Mount Batten Centre, where we were serenaded by a wedding disco until midnight and then woken the next morning by scuba divers preparing for their day of sport, which started at 0600h!

Sunday morning found us slightly weary, but bolstered by an excellent breakfast at the Centre. We were eager to take advantage of the much calmer day, with patchy light wind in Plymouth Sound and stronger wind further offshore. Out on the water, *Elizabeth Rose* could be seen intermittently becalmed, with crew scratching their heads, trying to work

## Rally Roundup

out why all the more experienced sailors were nearly at the first rendezvous off Cawsand. *Avice Irene* had even been doing a bit of mackerel fishing – with a catch of two fish for dinner that night. *Elizabeth Rose* finally made it to the breakwater, to find much stronger winds and some pretty lumpy seas. We could see the odd tan sail or two seaward of the breakwater and attempted to follow. However, discretion proved to be the better part of valour and we turned back, apparently much to the relief of the ever watchful Chris and Nicky! With a pleasant run into the calm of Jennycliff Bay, five of the boats rafted up for lunch, which was washed down with some delicious ginger beer, kindly passed across from *Bon Amie* by John and Sandy Parfitt. The sun shone warmly and the Drascombe fleet was in no hurry to move off – relaxing with good company over an extended lunch seemed much the best way of passing the afternoon.

All good things must come to an end and we had to depart after untangling anchor warps, which had spiralled like the ribbons in some sort of marine Maypole dance. But it was not over yet! The final delight was the sight of a dolphin playing under *Elizabeth Rose's* hull, before leaping off to find another boat to befriend.

On arrival back home, we were fortunate to be saved from post-rally blues by the summer edition of DAN waiting in our letterbox, showing a perfect illustration of the “Drascombe Raft” on page 3. The anchor warp arrangement was exactly as we had experienced ourselves at lunchtime. We surely must now qualify as proper Drascombers!

Thank you Chris for your excellent organisation and wonderful hosting. You must have contacts in very high places to have arranged such wonderful weather for the weekend!



## A different experience!

### Strangford Lough Rally 21-23 June

John Parfitt



**S**andy and I are attempting to experience a different Drascombe Rally each year, our normal sailing waters being in the South West of England. This year it was to be in Northern Ireland, a big adventure!

John Stanage, the Vice Chairman of the Association, who has organised Rallies for the past 8 years at Strangford Lough had invited us to join him on his Coaster ‘Cardinal’ - the idea was planted and a plan was hatched! We would fly from Bristol to Belfast and crew for John.

Strangford Lough is a tidal sea lough about 4 miles wide and 15 miles long, there are 8 yacht clubs around the sides of the Lough and the Rally would be based at East Down Yacht Club, near Killyleagh.

And so it was that we met the other Rally participants at EDYC, on the west shore of Stangford Lough, just 1 mile from Killyleagh County Down where we’d rented a wee cottage for the duration of our stay. John’s coaster was already on the pontoon alongside David and Lucy Camlin, Coaster *Delta* Phil Beattie, Coaster *Tarkwa*, David Bruce, Lugger *Saol* and Michael and Ann’s Longboat Cruiser

**David Camlin and crew in Delta**

*Sgaimhach*. Soon when the tide was right, many others started to launch and the good natured banter began! A dozen or so of us retired to the clubhouse for locally fried fish and chips with Guinness of course! We wished John and our new found friends a goodnight on their boats, tents and camper vans, but we were glad we had a snug bed in Killyleagh for the wind was beginning to blow up.

Saturday morning saw a steady force 6 from the south with heavy showers forecast and clouds scudding across the sky. Skippers briefing suggested using only jib and mizzen. We then slipped away between Dodds Island and Island Taggart before heading across the Lough towards our destination – ‘The Dorn’. The crossing was a perfect broad reach for jib and mizzen and all 12 craft (4 Coasters, 6 Luggers, 1 Longboat Cruiser and 1 Longboat) raced across the choppy water looking beautiful. We were even more impressed with the rally organiser when the Red Arrows streaked across the sky in front of us. What planning! Whilst squinting at these mechanical

birds we saw gannets diving in the distance as if not to be outdone by the aerial display.

A procession of Drascombes sailed into ‘The Dorn’. The Dorn is an almost circular tidal pond approximately 200 metres across with fields and trees and hedges down to the water’s edge. A lovely quiet haven. Our party included 2 members of the cloth and The Elder, Mr Stanage, so it was fitting that after beaching and kedge anchoring we all (27 of us) climbed a couple of hundred metres through a corn field to the abandoned “Christ Church” of Ardkeen. Originally built in the 13th Century, but after several severe storms and rebuilds it was finally abandoned in 1884. The Reverend David Bruce gave us the history and interesting points of the church whilst The Lord gave us a really good shower! We further scaled the little hill to the ruins of a castle to obtain a great view of the southern half of the Lough. Further dark clouds awaited us between the sunshine.

The tide waits for no man, so we quickly returned to our Drascombes and motored back through the entrance of the Dorn to glide over the large and ghostly white limestone rocks that act as a bar at low tide. Once over these we rafted up in 3 parties to enjoy our lunches in the lee of Ballywollan where we saw the biggest rabbit I ever did see watching us with great interest. A hare actually!!

So once again across the Lough passing Long Island to starboard, and again with jib and mizzen a good 5 knots saw us shoot across between Dunsy and Green Island before heading into the wind for the last stretch through Islandmore and Pawle Island.

Now it is a fact of life when on the water one must be ready for anything --- be prepared! A half an hour motoring home into the wind can be as banal as can be - or not. The sky suddenly darkened and then darkened even more. The wind increased and became more westerly and colder and before we knew it, a tremendous squall with hail and extreme torrential rain hit us. It was essential for our mizzen sail to come down, for the boat was difficult to handle and the sail in danger of blowing out. I crawled aft and struggled to get it in whilst being soaked and battered. Visibility was no more than 50 metres at times.



The group on the ruined castle

Earlier, we had passed several of our party holed up in a bay off Pawle Island and they had started off again just before the squall struck. One of the Luggers engine had cut out and was being blown onto the rocks. Another Lugger went to assist but also got into difficulties before Phil Beattie in his Coaster ‘Earthy Mangold’ managed to float a line to them using a fender, he was then able to pull them off. What an excellent idea and one we should all remember. The squall lasted 20 minutes with 35knots of wind. Now being cold and wet (the first time rain had penetrated my sailing suit)

Wallace, Carney and Ring hills to the North of us above Killyleagh. We anchored off Gibbs Island and some of us rafted up for lunch. A truly beautiful setting surrounded by islands with the Killyleagh Yacht Club across the bay. A seal came up to inquire who had disturbed his peaceful existence, a great Drascombe moment. Once again we motor sailed into the heavy wind to return to EDYC and to assist the fleet out of the water and transfer ‘Cardinal’ to

“The Dorn”



the sailing club was a welcome sight.

The evening festivities included a great D.I.Y. B.B.Q. local steak and chicken, washed down with copious draughts of beer, whilst listening to a Jazz Pianist and Singer, what more does an old Drascomber want!?

Sunday’s forecast saw a complete wind direction change - a northerly force 8 possibly gusting 9!! Skippers briefing included the simple instruction: “Reef jib and mizzen and keep close to the lee shore of Killyleagh and then anchor off Gibbs Island”. Sure enough the water conditions were acceptable and we had a splendid reach. We were protected by

John’s mooring. The wind blew even stronger that afternoon and we were glad to be on land.

The Rally proved inspirational. John’s calm influence on others, their constant smiles and gentle joking of or with one another, was uplifting and kept us both laughing, all week end. EDYC were very good hosts and the facilities offer a wide slipway and an accessible pontoon with use of changing rooms and showers.

The friendliness of the Irish Drascombers made us feel most welcome and Sandy only had to shout ‘John, ‘David’ or ‘Paddy’ and smiling faces suddenly appeared!

A big thank you to everyone and especially to John Stanage for organising the Rally. 🇮🇪

# A Scandinavian

## Skive, Denmark 2011

Hope Bay has not been in DAN for some years, but we've been busy in many directions: In 2011 we took her by road and ferry to Skive in Denmark. The aim here was for our children to attend "Barnlek 2011", a Nordic folk dance festival for a few days, but the opportunity was taken for a family holiday for a week. We took day trips on Skivefjord, an arm of Limsfjord. In comparison to Oslofjord with its frustratingly light winds and crowded waters, this was a place for exhilarating steady winds and calm water devoid of power boats.

## Helgeland, Norway 2012

We had one of our more ambitious holidays in 2012, when we trailed north to the Helgeland coast in Nordland county. I'd always wanted to sail here, ever since the Norwegian Navy treated me to a transit of the coast at 30 knots in a squadron of 6 Fast Patrol Boats (5 survived the transit intact, but that's another story). They say there are 80,000 islands along the relatively flat coast here, situated between Brønnøysund and Bodø. This is the mid-point of Norway, which took 2 long days of driving from Oslo to reach; a reflection on just how large this sparsely populated country really is. We had a week of good weather in which to visit the local peaks and islands - Dønnaman on the marvelous island of Dønna, and Løvund. Løvund is a sugar loaf mountain 10 nautical miles across a skerry garden from the northern most point of Dønna. We set off quite late in the day with 4 adults and 4 children onboard, tied up at the public quay and walked to the top of the mountain at 623m. We were rewarded with a view to Træna, even further out in the sea and many seabirds. The children had hotdogs on the quay as we were back after the restaurant had closed.

We sailed past the main seabird colony (puffins, gannets, cormorants, sea eagles..) and then had a twilight passage back to Dønna. The navigation was interesting: the authorities had not switched on the lighthouses and navigation lights, presumably as near midnight sun didn't warrant it. A tanker outbound from, and large oil supply ship inbound to Sandnessjøen crossed our bows, there were islets and fishing boats everywhere and no clear view from the tiller to the navigation chart. The children were unconcerned, all being in the cabin watching a Tom and Jerry DVD. Eventually the leading lights to our harbour came on and we entered safely before disembarking to drive back to our rented cottage by a pink rising sun at 1 am. I bought a Garmin chart plotter shortly after this experience and find it an excellent device when sailing under marginal conditions.



Ingelil Mitchell and Yngvil



Nesna

# Scrapbook



Lindön

## Skagerrak, Sweden 2013

The same weekend we drove across the Swedish border and 2 hours out of Oslo were able to launch at Grebbestad. The wind was steady at about 10 knots NE, the sea was calm, the islands uninhabited, the waters devoid of other boats; not like Oslofjord at all. Unlike Norway, Sweden doesn't cover the coast with holiday cottages, and so this littoral is an unspoiled sailors' paradise. It's almost as if the archipelago was purpose built for Drascombes, and this one received admiring glances in the small villages visited.

Håvard (10), Ingeborg (12), Yngvil and Chris Solheim-Allen  
Strømsborgveien 41d, 0287 Oslo, Norway

## Norway 2013

Our celebration of a significant anniversary has been a reflection on what we've enjoyed doing with our children these last few years - adventures by mountain and sea. Ingelil, a cousin of Yngvil made 2 paintings, and I share one of these here.



# Jura ticked off at last Bill Haylock

I've never been a train-spotter, or a Munro-bagger or a collector of things in a conscious way (although I have accidentally accumulated 14 camping stoves, 6 watercraft, 5 tents, 4 pairs of skis and 3 bicycles) - but I am intent on collecting Scottish islands. By that I mean I have a mental tick list of islands I have to explore before I shuffle off...

The habit of collecting Hebridean islands started 40 years ago when I visited my first - Colonsay - and I was hooked by the breathtaking beauty of that landscape of dark rock, turquoise sea, silver sand, green flower-studded *machair* and ever-changing light. That same summer I explored Mull for the first of many times. Standing on the shore of Carsaig

bay, I looked across to the shapely Paps of Jura and mentally added it to my brand-new list of Islands to Visit. Other islands were soon added and later visited - some again and again - but I never got to Jura. Forty years on, I decided I really must get there this year.

The first plan was to take mountain bikes on McBrayne's ferry, but none go directly to Jura. With overnight stops on Colonsay on the way to Islay and then another ferry from Islay to Jura, a week's holiday would only give two days on Jura. The alternative was a boat

from Tayvallich via Loch Sween, but the £40 return fare for a noisy, uncomfortable ride on an overgrown RIB made it very unappealing. The answer was obvious - sail across in my Longboat.

I've been continuing with fitting out *Ruhba Dubh* for extended coastal cruising, including electrics, a fixed DSC radio linked to a →





Garmin GPS72H, waterproof stowage and a commodious canvas cabin (i.e. tent) and I was eager to try it all out.

As the date approached, the forecast looked good, with moderate easterlies, so I planned to launch at Carsaig Bay (not the one on Mull) just a mile from Tayvallich - as this gives access directly into the Sound of Jura, rather than having to sail the length of Loch Sween first. Even the tides were fitting into our schedule. By the time we arrived late afternoon, the 2 knot tide would be running south and so steering a course more or less due West would take us WSW to our planned anchorage at Lussa Bay on Jura, I calculated.

Everything went to plan - at first, anyway. We arrived at high tide and launching from the short slip was smooth and easy - which was fortunate as we had an attentive audience of splashing, swimming children and their holidaying parents. A teenage lad with an unruly shock of black hair and a ring in his nose politely offered to take our mooring lines and then chattered away to us about his life in Glasgow. Eventually we made our excuses and cast off.

The weather was glorious, with a calm sea and a steady breeze to push us along at four knots. The wind soon dropped and so did our speed, but we enjoyed the tranquility of a golden evening as we ghosted towards the dark hills of Jura. Eventually the tranquility had to be shattered by the motor as lack of forward speed meant the South-going tide would sweep



us past our destination. As we crossed the turbulent eddies into the calm water of Lussa Bay a new breeze ruffled the water. I cut the motor and we sailed onto our anchorage in the sheltered North of the bay.

The flaw in my planning only became apparent the next morning when I stepped into the "tender" to go ashore. The inflatable kayak bent alarmingly in the middle. I had left that job to my crew while I rigged the boat the previous day. Having never having done it before, she had not put enough air in. "Lin, where's the air pump?" I enquired. "Oh, I put it back in the car," she said. Ticking myself off for failing in my duties as skipper and not double-checking, I reassured her we could easily go back and get it. The plan was to do a couple of days backpacking on Jura, but there was no rush. We could sail back across to the mainland, get the pump, sail back to Lussa Bay and still start our walk in the afternoon...

A thunderstorm was rumbling in the distance as we headed out, under motor because of the sultry, uneasy calm that had fallen on the Sound of Jura. Two-thirds of the way to Carsaig Bay, lighting split the clouds ahead. After the first sharp crack, a growling rumble echoed around the misty hills and the deluge fell upon us. Fat raindrops pockmarked the glassy sea in the bay as we approached the jetty. It had now taken on a grey, desolate aspect - so different from the vibrant, sunny, holiday mood of the day before. With the pump retrieved from the car and the rain still pouring down, we huddled in the dubious shelter of a shallow cave by the shore, lit the camping stove and cooked sausages for lunch.

Back out in the Sound the rain stopped and a freshening breeze brought the boat alive. The weight our camping gear and supplies in the bottom of the boat stiffened her and she felt swift and secure. What must have been about 6 knots through the water only made us three-and-a-half over ground as the tide was now north-going, and this time our course was

**Above: crossing Jura. Left: Passage planning. Right: Leaving Jura behind. Photos: Lin Cartwright**

South-West to compensate for the northwards drift. Close to Jura, the tidal stream became faster still and the sea was full of sharp, choppy, confused waves that dumped gobbets of spray over the gunwhales. So different from the evening before... It was a relief to break out of the tidal stream and back into the calm of Lussa Bay.

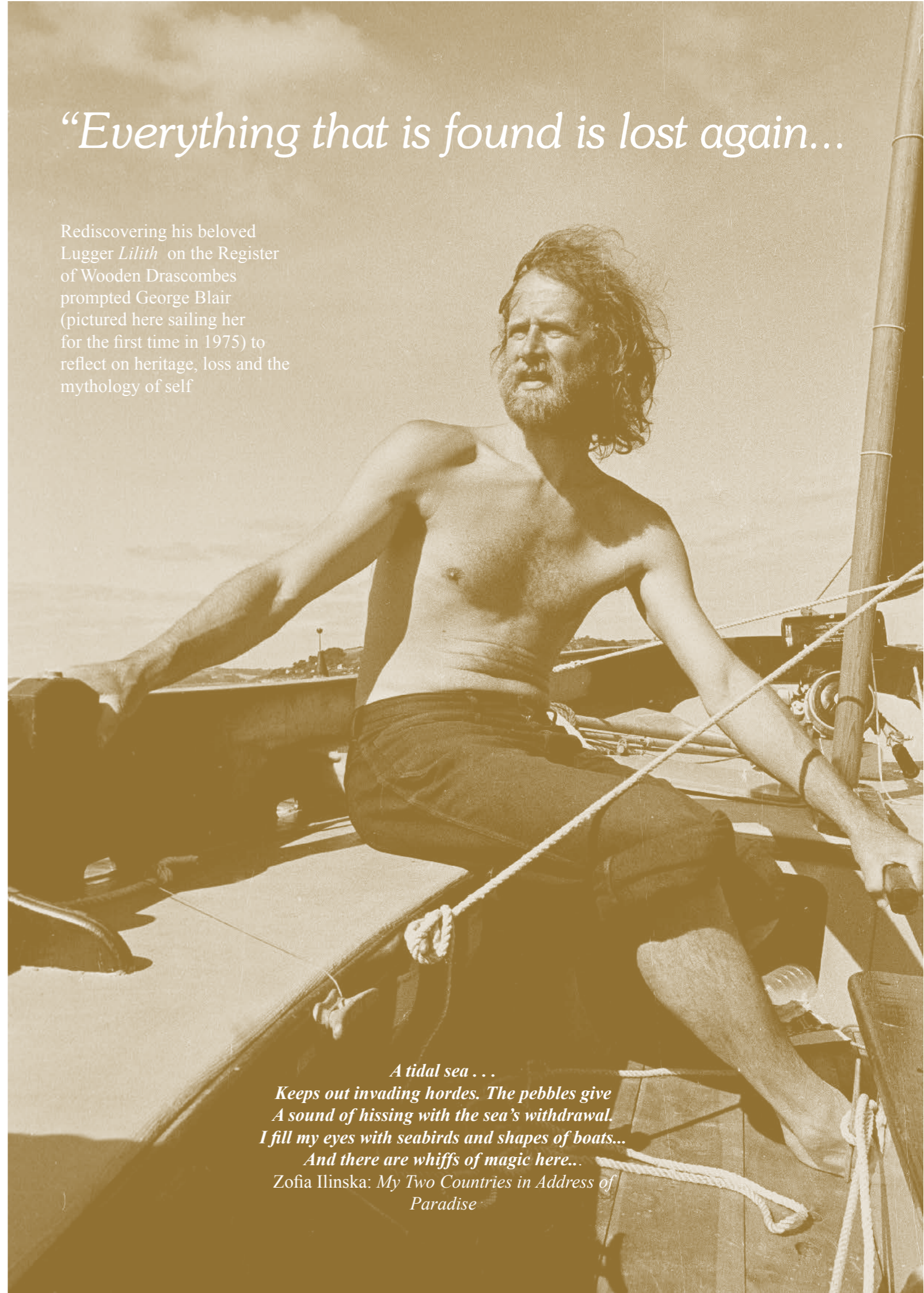
With the kayak now properly inflated we could get ourselves and our backpacks ashore. A woman in scruffy clothes with a posh English accent and a fishing rod was talking to Lin. The sea trout were boiling in the bay, she said, but they weren't biting. We told her our plan to walk across the island to the West coast at Corpach Bay. The OS map showed a stalkers' path we intended to follow. Helpfully (I'm sure that's how it was intended) she gave us advice on our walking route. "Don't follow

**continued on page 32**



# "Everything that is found is lost again..."

Rediscovering his beloved Lugger *Lilith* on the Register of Wooden Drascombes prompted George Blair (pictured here sailing her for the first time in 1975) to reflect on heritage, loss and the mythology of self



*A tidal sea . . .  
Keeps out invading hordes. The pebbles give  
A sound of hissing with the sea's withdrawal.  
I fill my eyes with seabirds and shapes of boats...  
And there are whiffs of magic here...  
Zofia Ilinska: My Two Countries in Address of  
Paradise*

## ...and nothing that is found is ever lost again” George Blair

Nostalgia is not altogether a bugbear; it reminds us of time and our ration of it. That’s got to be salutary, unless because of it we do not come to the joy of the present. I have just seen Baz Luhrmann’s adaptation of *Great Gatsby* with an old friend whose dedication to Fitzgerald’s Jazz Age is bound to his lost youth as if it could be recaptured. Sometimes I think he has got his needle stuck. But who am I to speak! . . . drawn by a similar (less literary) Proustian yearning for *temps perdu* to search the web for traces of my love affair with a beautiful boat which was once [a true love of] mine. And thus I stumbled upon the Drascombe Association and there down a list on a Register of Wooden Drascombes was a Lugger named *Ma-Belle* built around the right time and clicking on it, to my delight, I came across a reference to myself. I told my elder daughter Caitlin and she put it up on her Facebook page immediately. My younger daughter Sophie spotted it and said, “You’d know it was dad saving himself ninety-nine pounds.”

Quote from Cecil Mitchell:-

“Just picked up a wooden Lugger and thought you may be interested. What is interesting is that I have a folder containing all the letters sent from John to the original owner- a Mr R G (sic - actually L G) Blair of Edinburgh - from the time the boat was ordered in Feb’74 to completion in August 74. The letters are all hand written and show how concerned the builder was that his client should be completely happy with the boat, so unlike modern methods of selling. He continues to write and offer advice up to Aug ’75 giving full details on how to complete the painting and fit various parts. The owner saved £99 by taking the boat unpainted; masts rough planed; spars ready for varnishing and floor boards rough cut. The invoice shows the boat cost £585 +vat but extras including engine and trailer make the final invoice £929.85 inc vat. The name of the boat was *Dulcinea*. She was insured by a Mrs Wooley as ‘Beetle’ from ‘96-’99 and I purchased her from a chap yesterday when she was called ‘Swallow’.”

John Elliot was a gentleman and his brother too. They were supportive of me on the way to my first very own boat. It was as if these two talented men were concerned we should have maximum pleasure from the craft they would build for us, not only at the beginning but with ready advice on running repairs and maintenance.

Of course a boat is just a thing.... oh yes? - ah no!.... a she, a spirited creature. Cecil Mitchell’s notes reminded me I had thought

of calling my boat after Don Quixote’s fantasy damsel *Dulcinea*, but she turned out to be a foul-mouthed drudge. I plumped for the apocryphal *Lilith*, the woman who insisted on being on top. My granddaughter’s middle name is Lilith ‘not after the boat’ [of course!] Sophie assured me returning me to the mythology . . . and the traits of the lovely four-year old Myrtle certainly fit that middle name of hers.



Once named and launched Lilith gave us great pleasure over the ten plus years we sailed her in Cornish waters . . . and finding her again on the web . . . I felt *une si douce peine*. Hey, ho, the wind and the rain!

We almost lost my recently finished craft on the motorway. I had loaded up the boat with gear but not adjusted the fulcrum of the trailer properly. Barbara was at the wheel and experienced a very frightening example of snaking. Adjustments made and after a very uncomfortable night for me and my son Jamie on the floor boards in a car park (which saved money!) we got Lilith down the slip into the water at St Mawes where I had first set eyes on a Drascombe Lugger.



“tarred with the same brush” Polvarth 1981

Barbara and I had a few sailing lessons that summer of 1975 from the ‘skeely skipper’ Les Ferris, late of St Mawes, a man of few words, and a very safe pair of hands.

Lilith wintered for a good many years at Polvarth Boatyard which was run at that time

by a great character Bert Hamling, a marine engineer, a most friendly and helpful man of the sea with a good sense of humour. He told the girls they were ‘tarred with the same brush’ (marine reference!). He did not know at that point they had different mothers. Bert died in 2008. It was he who found a buyer for Lilith when I had to sell to help pay for the training I had undertaken.

The most memorable person from those days was Mrs J Mosely who owned and ran *Braganza* the lovely big old house above the harbour where we stayed sometimes when the parsimony relented. Her late husband had at one time owned most if not all the St Mawes hotels. I knew her as Zofia Ilinska, a Polish aristocrat deposed by the communists. She was born in 1921 in Kresy on the borderlands of Poland now divided between Belarus and Lithuania. The family fled the Red Army in 1939. Her poems *Address of Paradise* are, according to Philip Marsden, in part an attempt



Braganza

to understand the baffling distance between her first world and her life in exile, and lead up to her last year with *I Talk to my Cancer*. Her grown-up son was killed in a car crash. That deep wound and her mourning form the core of her deeply moving poems in *Horoscope of the Moon*. I consider myself fortunate to have been a friend of such an expansive and creative personality, this lovely woman who, for me, stands for femininity and truth. She died in December 1996. Her gracious daughter Kryisia wrote me from France and assured me “there will always be one of us there” her or one of her two children Natasha and Ghislain to keep the home fires burning at *Braganza*. In the year of her death Zofia wrote to me: *Le temps s’en va, madame, le temps s’en va. Non, c’est nous qui nous nous en allons.* (and she translated for me: ‘Time vanishes, madame, time vanishes. No, it is us who are vanishing.’) What she meant put less emphasis on nostalgia, but rather more than anything stressed the value of mourning. “I find that this kind of feeling of sadness goes with the passing of time’ she wrote.



Above: Barbara and Caitlin, first family sail in the completed Lilith 1975

### Reflections on heritage

In contrast to a personality like Les Ferris who studied to cover every base, an adolescent part of me looked for things to make life dangerous. My brother Alastair and I have a



My elder daughter Caitlin at St Mawes with Lilith off the Idle Rocks

shorthand way of referring to this tendency: ‘Peasholm Park’ We need only to whisper it at an inappropriate moment to get the message. It’s in Scarborough, where our mother used to take us on holiday, a shallow boating pond for rowing boats, canoes, pedalos etc. and there in a rowing boat in two feet of water we discovered the extent of our mother’s terror

of being on the water. And later, on a family fishing trip in the Highlands, we experienced to our delight and the consternation of mother and aunt how a certain uncle of considerable academic standing could play more exciting games with the odds out in the bay. Perhaps on account of experiencing my struggles with wind and tide, not to mention my unruly nature, neither of my sons have taken up sailing.

The comparison between my experience of sailing Lilith and a blue water ketch is great. The latter satisfied something in me that would go to sea. It also provided an opportunity to bond with my brother, a year and a half younger than me. I developed a respect and affection for him that more than counteracted my sibling rivalry. There is nothing to compare with a night passage ten miles offshore in a boat designed for the high seas. It is like being in a place and time that no one else has been and to stand watch while the other sleeps or climb up into the bunk while he is at the helm.

Or again running before a south-wester with the remains of the day far behind to the west and ahead the loom of the Needles light, turning in on confused waters as the breakers appear out of the darkness. These are unforgettable moments as alas, is the navigational error I made on a brisk morning out of Brightlingsea on a passage to Ramsgate that put us on a bank on a falling tide. Lucky we were to get off.

It was one night sailing off the South Coast with Alastair when he said to me, “Isn’t it strange being out here together when our father died at sea!” and I thought it as if we were out there seaward of the Eddystone Light looking for him. My father Surgeon Lieutenant Lyon Ramsay Blair MB., MBChB aboard a hospital ship with a North Atlantic convoy lost his life in his early thirties when his ship was torpedoed some two thousand miles off the Butt of Lewis.



But neither is there anything to compare with the joys of a Drascombe Lugger. In face of the Peasholm Park hang-up it was so refreshing to go sailing with a Canadian woman friend who simply loved the water and had no sense of danger. Once when I was suddenly aware I was about to get into a scrape because I hadn’t sufficiently calculated wind and tide and just in time averted going on to the beach she quite unaware of anything amiss gazed up at a particular way the sun was coming from behind the clouds and wondered if God →

would be looking down. It was the antithesis of Peasholm Park.

In that small and heavy boat of timber made my favourite point of sail was on a declining swell with a light following wind. You sit so close to the water. It is such a joy. We used to do the trip from St Mawes to round Gull Rock off Portscatho or we'd anchor off Pendennis Point and cook salmon patties on the primus.

And now I think of these days as a search for father and mother figures. Mrs Mosely was certainly one such. Knowing her enriched me.

*Does it matter? As long as you hold*

*This acre of space and freedom*

*To stretch your stiffness in and breathe the wind,*

*Muttering to yourself: I am alive*

Zofia Ilinska: *Walks, Meditations in Horoscope of the Moon.*

After she was gone, I used to dream about Lilith. It was a recurring dream. She became a symbol for me of neglect and loss. In these dreams my boat would either drift off or she would lie rotting in a mud berth gradually becoming beyond repair. I would stand on the cliff edge and scan the horizon or mount a fruitless search of distant shores. Here is an example noted at the time: *How long do things remain present with the dead, dreamed forward with decreasing momentum or static and diminishing, seen from the caboose of a*

*speeding train? For instance, the old man gave me a boat once. I told him how beautiful it was, black with bottle green topsides and called her Lilith. I neglected her and she fell into disrepair and was lost. The old man looked at me. His look said, do you not think we are aware of it; are you going to accept it? These dreams seemed to persist during a period of my life when I had not registered how much the need for change was making itself felt.*

Perhaps the discovery of *Ma-Belle* has



**On the Percuil River looking from Polvarth Point NW to Trewince on the Roseland Peninsula**

something of that feeling that all is not lost which can be implied by the word 'nostalgia'. Russell Hoban said something like this in his novel *The Lion of Boaz-Jachin and Jachin-Boaz*. I found a notebook in which I used to write down quotations that particularly struck me, and in it was the sentence copied down in

tight handwriting with a fountain pen thirty years ago exactly, on February 9, 1983.

'[E]verything that is found is always lost again, and nothing that is found is ever lost again'.

Why I noted that down, I think, was because although I could not understand it I had a sense that in time its meaning might reveal itself to me. Opportunities are lost and we sail close to the wind. But to know what is lost is to find a way to value the present. And writing this I have found Lilith. Her present owners who by the looks of it maintain a happy ship, I ask to indulge me for using her maiden name, for I do so out of familiarity, respect and sorrow and the wish to make reparation if I may have neglected her. But, like the question of my granddaughter's middle name, the question of neglect lies in the use my dreams made of my little ship to illuminate the mythology of the self.



**Caitlin, George, Ralph and Jamie off Black Rock in 1975**



## Part 2: Making a mainsail: Dick Hannaford



In the first part, I explained the various theories and concepts about designing a sail. In this article I will show how the sail is constructed.

A Drascombe mainsail is made from a roll of flat sailcloth. Depending upon the sail-loft there are a number of methods for creating a three dimensional sail from a two dimensional roll of cloth.

In a modern high tech loft, the individual panels are designed, using suitable software on a computer. These are cut out on a laser cutting table, ready to be sewn or assembled by a machinist. In this modern age, the designing can be completed in this country, while the cutting and machining is completed the other side of the world, where labour costs are much

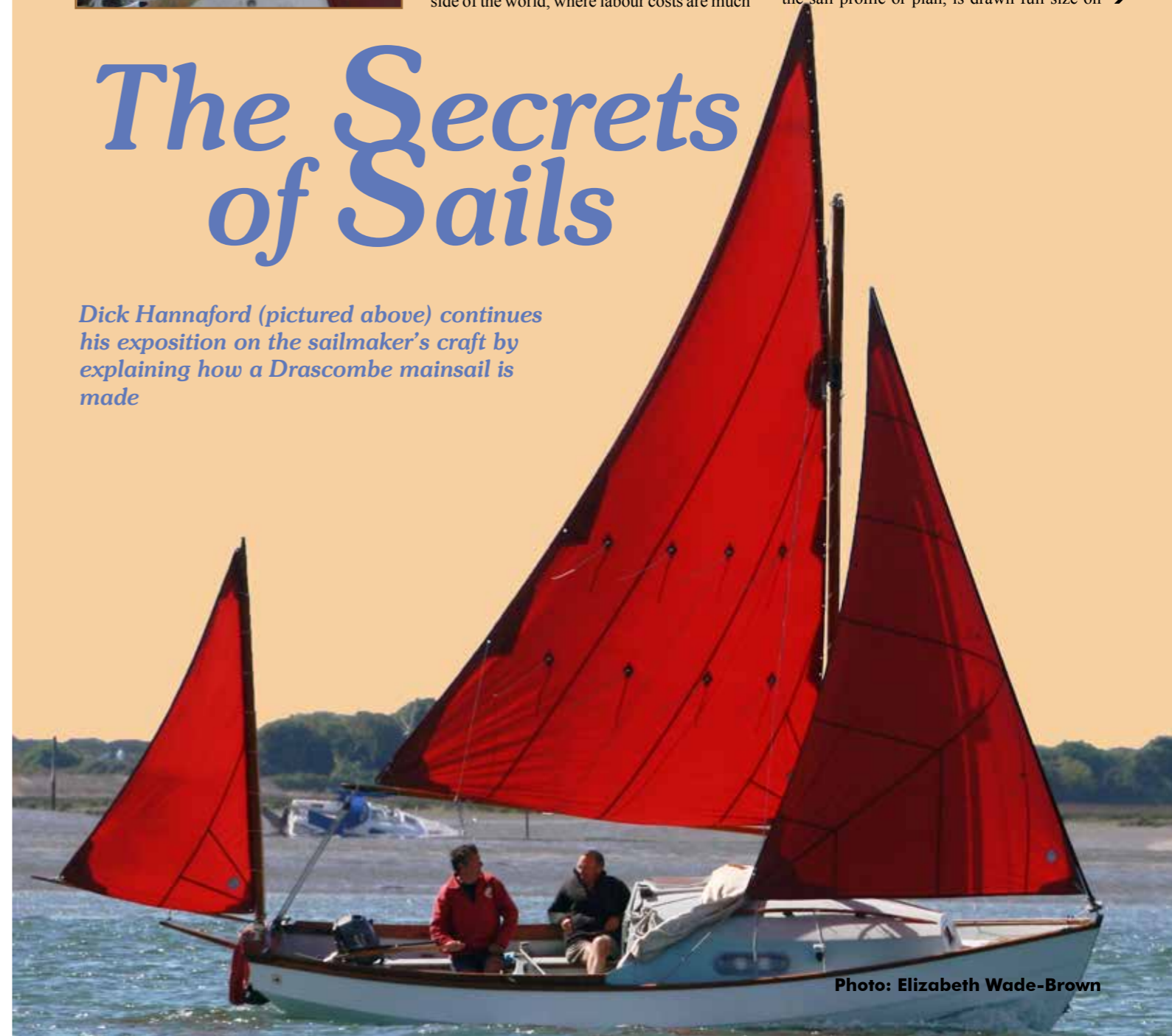
lower, often as little as £2 or £3 per day.

The above method, is the modern equivalent of the traditional method which was often used for large sails, or where floor space was limited. The sail was drawn to a suitable scale, usually 1/12 full size ( 1" to 1 foot ) Much easier in metric at 1/10<sup>th</sup> full size, just move the decimal point. There is an excellent example in the Appledore Maritime Museum, where the sailmaker has drawn out the mainsail, for a large trading ketch, on the rear page of an old calendar. By using simple geometry, the sail-plan was used to mark out the individual panels ready for cutting, and sewing together.

The final method, is the one probably recognised by many readers. This is where the sail profile or plan, is drawn full size on →

# The Secrets of Sails

*Dick Hannaford (pictured above) continues his exposition on the sailmaker's craft by explaining how a Drascombe mainsail is made*



**Photo: Elizabeth Wade-Brown**

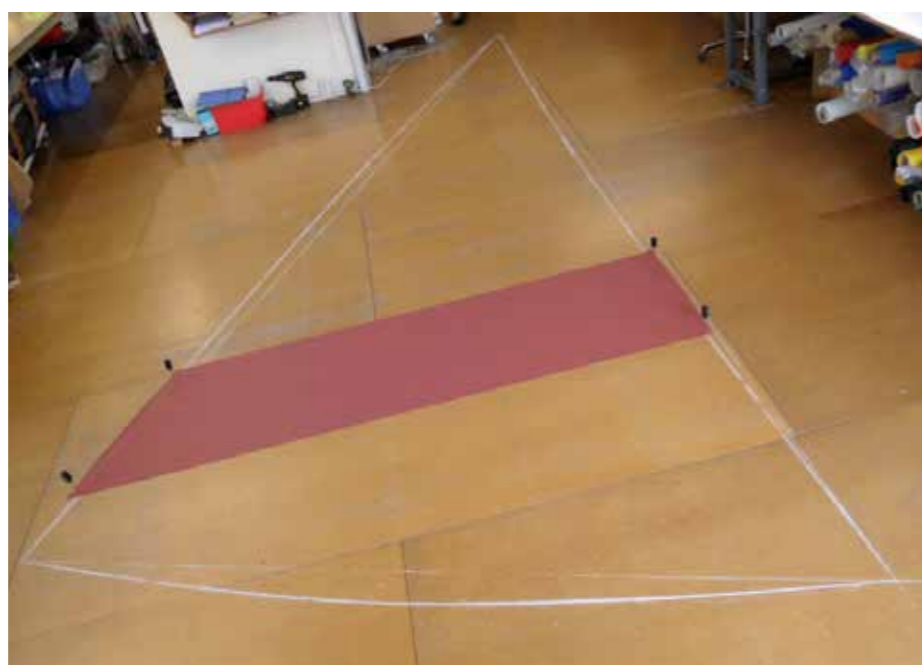
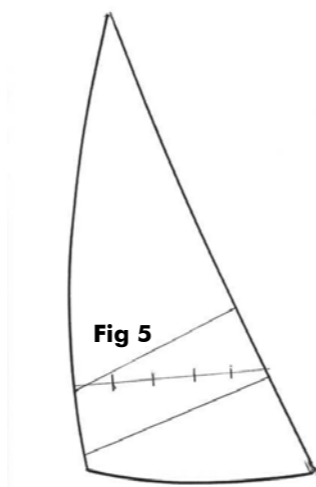
## Secrets of Sails Part 2: Dick Hannaford

a floor. This is used as a template to lay out the sail panels, and also to mark the edges of the sail. Fifty years ago this was the standard method for making sails. Like many sail-lofts, the Gosport branch of Ratsey & Lapthorne's large floor, was covered with sail profiles or plans. Each one carefully drawn, with notes written on the floor to help the sailmaking staff. This was often called "the first spreading". After sewing the panels together, the sail was again laid over the sail profile for the "second spreading" to mark and trim the edges. At the same time, further along the coast at Bosham, Rockall Sails had recently opened their purpose built loft, where rather than using the floor, suitable sized triangular tables were used, this was much easier and less tiring than kneeling on the floor.

Gradually, the need for consistency and productivity saw the introduction of patterns to streamline the task of the "first spreading". Today the use of computer aided cutting for this stage is fairly standard, with some smaller sailmakers sub-contracting out this stage of the process.

For the purpose of this article I will explain, how a Drascombe mainsail is made using this traditional method. The first stage is to draw the profile on the floor, although it is not always the best method when making a tan coloured sail, I still prefer to use chalk for this task. However, the younger generation of sailmakers often use string and pins for this stage. See Figs 1 - 4 below:

At this stage I also draw in the line of the reefs, as their position can influence the position of the sail panels. Before the sailcloth is rolled out, other decisions will have to be made. The most important is the choice of panel layout or how the seams relate to the leach edge of the sail. Very often I will mark out the position of at least the first panel, as shown in FIG 5, where the sail is being made in the modern (horizontal or cross cut) method.



Above: the first panel of sailcloth is laid over the outline

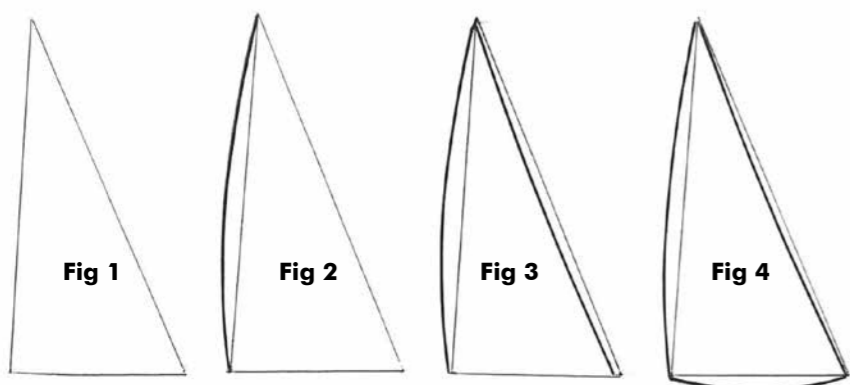


Fig 1. The basic triangle of the luff, leach and foot is drawn full size, with allowance made for stretch and seam tailoring. Most often, luff to the left, leach to the right.

Fig.2 Using experience together with data calculations, the positive luff curve is drawn outside the straight line

Fig.3 On the battenless Drascombe mainsail, to help prevent flutter and vibration, the leech is cut with a slightly negative curve.

Fig.4 Lastly, the foot is given a positive curve to form the foot round or skirt

This may seem a lot of preparation, but this early planning is more than compensated for in the later stages. The cloth is unrolled over the profile, allowance being made for the individual methods for finishing the edges, plus sufficient for fairing or trimming in the "second spreading"

The sail profile or sail-plan is now covered with panels of sailcloth. Before being removed from the floor, all items which can be sewn onto the panels, before they themselves are sewn together, are marked out. For a Drascombe mainsail this would be the position of the intermediate reefing pennants, the sail-label and the position and limits of the seam tailoring.

The individual panels can now be removed from the floor and placed on the bench. Double sided tape is not only used in Blue Peter projects, but has helped to transform sailmaking. Before sewing the panels together

the seams are glued with double sided tape. Therefore, at this stage on the lower edge of each panel, double sided tape is applied. The seam tailoring and its subsequent trimming is amalgamated into this task (see photo below).



Now that all the preparation has been completed, the sail is ready to be sewn together. The reefing pennants are glued in position, sewn on, and the grommet inserted. The sail label is also sewn on.

Depending on the sail-loft, the seams are first glued and sewn together, either working from the head to the foot or vice versa. Traditionally each seam was sewn with two rows of zig-zag stitching, although to save time many sail-lofts sew with one row of triple stitch.

After sewing the panels together, the sail is laid back over the sail profile and held under tension by sail-prickers or sail-spikes pushed into the floor. At this stage all the measurements are checked for accuracy. Using long flexible battens the edges are marked onto the sail. Depending upon the construction of the edges, these are either cut with scissors or heat sealed with a hot knife.

Whilst on the floor, the corner and reef reinforcing, or patches as they are technically called, are cut out and their position marked on the sail. Visitors to the sail-loft are often surprised at the complex construction of these reinforcements (see below). Their cutting and assembling, takes much longer than sewing them in position. Depending on their position and application, there are between 5 -8



underlayers of sailcloth. Care is always taken, as in traditional practice, to align the warp and weft of the cloth with that of the sail.

It is now time to return the sail to the sewing machine, working methodically by gluing and sewing the reinforcements onto the sail. When this has been completed the hems, or tablings as they are technically called, are sewn on.

Once this stage has been completed, the sail is ready for finishing and receiving the eyelets. Each sail-loft will have its individual method for finishing the corners, from quick heat sealing, through to simple hand sewing with waxed thread, or to the more skilled protection using leather (see below).



Lastly the main structural eyelets are inserted. For the past 30 years stainless steel hydraulic sail rings have superseded the more time consuming task of traditional hand sewn rings (see below).



Finally, the completed sail is visually checked and inspected, before being packed for delivery, or personally collected by the customer.





## Gumotex Helios inflatable kayak Bill Haylock

What small boat to get as a tender for my Longboat for coastal cruising? That question niggled for a while before the start of last year's sailing season. An inflatable is really the only option that is compact and light enough to carry or tow with a Drascombe. But, most small inflatable rowing dinghies I saw in action seemed to make erratic progress - like a cat with a paper bag over its head (amusing to watch, but an unwarranted indignity to purposely inflict on any feline).

So, I started to look at inflatable canoes and kayaks. As a canoe coach and keen paddler, the aesthetics of these ancient craft have always been important to me. I realised that no inflatable could ever compare with a cedarstrip Prospector open canoe for beauty, but the cheaper inflatables are made with PVC air bladders zipped inside a textile outer skin - like plastic beach balls stuffed inside a holdall. *Zéro pointes* for style.

Then on canoeing forums I saw mention of Gumotex, a Czech company which makes canoes and kayaks out of the same kind of rubber-coated material that RIBs are made from. The advantages of this are that it is far tougher, more slippery in the water (and hence more efficient) and it doesn't need to be dried for hours before packing it away. I started looking on ebay and before long up I had bought an unused, second-hand Gumotex Helios 1 single-person kayak at a big saving over the new price.



I was impressed with it from the start. It comes in its own rucksack, with instruction manual and repair kit, feels very sturdy and inflates quickly through well-engineered valves with a device to prevent over-pressure. It inflates to 3psi - twice the pressure of the bladder types - which makes for a more rigid, and thus more efficient



and controllable hull. Propelled by a twin-blade kayak paddle it is fast and effortless compared to any inflatable dinghy. The longest distance I have done in it so far is about 6 miles, but I felt like I could keep going all day. Paddling a straight course in a wind, as with any canoe or kayak, can be tricky for beginners, but a skeg and a rudder are available as options. There is an elasticated net over the foredeck and elastic decklines on the rear deck which are handy for carrying smallish items and there is also stowage space under both decks. Once inflated at the start of a trip, the kayak tows behind my Longboat effortlessly. Of course it is more tippy than a broad-beamed dinghy, but I find it quite easy to get in and out from the Longboat by supporting myself on the gunwale with the kayak alongside, stepping into the cockpit, sitting on the rear deck and then sliding forwards. Of course, it can take only one person, but there is a tandem version available.

The only other downside is that it is relatively expensive - now about £400 (but I paid much less on ebay). For that money you get a tender that is more versatile and easier to propel than a dinghy, and that is a pleasure to use in its own right.

## The Drascombe in Art

by

Bob Heasman



## What's Your's Called Graham Whiteland

Once again few new ones - come on, surely you are proud of your choice of name, and want to share your erudition, skill and humour with others? So, from a choice of 23 years, I offer some of the oldies, whose appeal today is no less than when first appearing.

**ELIZABETH ROSE** : Dave and Valerie Jordan came to the Plymouth Rally in June with their pristine Lugger bearing this name, given by the previous owner. As often, this honours the donation from a kind relative, (Auntie Elizabeth?) which enabled him to buy the boat. Valerie says "We thought of renaming her 'Moocher' but decided that the existing ladylike name suited her too well and couldn't bring ourselves to change it." Research via Stewart at Churchouse Boats revealed an earlier owner, who experimented with additional sails, had called her Moor Madness - perhaps he lived on Dartmoor.

**TORRIDON** : A Coaster bought by Adrian Kneller bore this name, which puzzled him. Not "Torrid One" surely? Or was the boat used "to ride on"? Not so, the previous owner had been on a sailing course at Loch Torridon on the West Coast of Scotland, and when he bought the Coaster named her thus to remind him of the skills he had been taught there.

**GRACE** : A little gem from Felix Neville-Towle. "I named my Dabber thus, Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come, 'tis grace that's brought me safe thus far, and grace will take me home."

**MONTBRETIA** : Peter Bullivant used to holiday in Southern Ireland where Montbretia flowers abundantly. His granddaughter (then aged two) was fascinated by the flower, learnt it's name and was always pointing to it. When he bought his Lugger, planning to sail in Southern Ireland, the family thought this a suitable name. [I am easily distracted from the task in hand but wanted to check the spelling of Mon(t)bretia. The dictionary confirms two 't's and tells us the plant is named after A.F.E.D. de Montbret, a French botanist who died in 1801. Not many people know that. . . . .]

**PRIDE OF THE FLEET** : Long serving members will know this as the name of Hans Vandersmissen's Cruiser Longboat. He was a great Drascombe enthusiast and collected his new boat from Honnor Marine at Totnes. No trailers or Channel Tunnel (just a dream then) for him - he stepped aboard and sailed home to Holland. One of his projects while under training in the Dutch Army was to study the Battle of Jutland and the tactics of Jellicoe. The Admiral's favourite grog was called Pride of the Fleet, consisting of hot water, honey, 50% whiskey (70% in cold weather) and lemon. Hans thought this a suitable name for his much loved boat.

**CNUSPA HASLI** : A most unusual name for David Manze-Fe's Lugger which needs explaining. He tells us it is German-Swiss for a crunchy little hare. Not so interesting, but the slang version is - "a bright intelligent young lady" which reminded him of his boat, so named her thus. (My cnuspa hasli has just gone into town to have her hair done).

**LADY BESS II** : Jim Asquith, a long serving member sadly no longer with us, bought his Drifter in Christchurch. He put into Lymington to refuel and was pursued by two men in a small dinghy. As he went alongside the pontoon one chap said "That used to be my boat." He told Jim a previous owner had named the boat after his dog. The Drifter is still in regular use, for it was bought by Brian Dixon from near Plymouth. He was looking on the net for a Drifter, and I knew Jim had decided to sell and I was able to put Brian in touch with someone not 500 yards away! Brian has done the chivalrous thing and named the Drifter after his wife, Avice Irene.

**CERWEN** : We've all heard of the superstition that it is unlucky to rename a boat but several have done just that without tragedy befalling boat or owner. One such member is Mike Humphrey who was not happy with the name Turtle when he bought his Lugger. Much to the delight of daughter CERYS (aged 2) and son OWEN (aged 6) he renamed her CERWEN.

**LA BARCA VERDE** : I print verbatim the exchange of emails between myself and Tom Maver without comment:

"Hi Tom, Welcome to the Association. You will see that I edit a regular feature in DAN called "What's Yours Called?" and invite you to send a piece to say how your Lugger got it's name. I presume it is a green boat, but then not everyone has a School Certificate Credit (that shows how old I am) in Spanish. Looking forward to hearing from you, Yours, Graham."

"Hi Graham, Many thanks for your prompt and warm welcome and my 30+ year old Lugger is a lovely green. As I have been trying to learn Italian for 10+ years, I thought I would be motivated by giving my wee boat the title La Barca Verde. She has a berth in the harbour of Maidens in south Ayrshire and I would love to hear of other owners in the area. Ciao. . . . Tom"

I close this edition suitably humbled, but not without leaving you with an appropriate question - why might you name your Lugger CYMBYFORM?

More contributions always welcome (so I'm told) direct to me at Number Seven, Hazel Drive, Elburton, Plymouth, PL9 8PE or to graham@whiteland.net


## Jura ticked off (continued from page 22)

the path on the map”, she said, “there’s a new track up to a recently-built dam across the burn.” Local knowledge can often be gold - this was fool’s gold. The new “track” was a scar over the bog left by tracked machinery burying a pipeline from the dam. We followed the line of black, soggy, churned-up peat - and then it ended. In the middle of nowhere. And dusk was approaching. Dispirited, we decided to camp there for the night, on the windiest hillock we could find because the midges were massing.

Next morning we pressed on across trackless ground - an ankle-breaking obstacle course of 18 inch high tussock-grass separated by squelching pits of bog. And then in the distance I spotted the stalkers’ path and the walking became hard rather than impossible. At the summit of the pass the blue Atlantic shimmered ahead and the dark outline of distant Colonsay, punctuated by the pale dashes of its pristine beaches. Down on the machair, the flower-rich, deer-cropped turf that grows on the wind-blown sand above the shore, we dropped our packs. The walking had been hot and strenuous and we’d already been roughing it for two days. The stream, that had tumbled down the steep valley we had just descended, now paused in deep, inviting pools before sluicing across the sand and into the sea. Stripping your clothes off and easing yourself into cold mountain water, knowing there are no other people (or horses, for that matter) to take fright at the sight, is one of the greatest pleasures of wild camping. More accurately, it is the warm, all-over tingling that comes once feeling is restored to your limbs and nether regions after you get out, that is one of the greatest pleasures...

The wild west coast of Jura is world-renowned for its fine raised beaches, a post-ice age shoreline left high and dry after the Scottish landmass heaved upwards from the sea as it shrugged off its melting ice caps. The impressive fields of pale, sea-smoothed cobblestones are now stranded at the top of the cliffs. Spending an evening in that wild landscape, watching the sun set over Colonsay and the last sunlight fade on Mull’s lonely Munro, Ben Mor, was worth all the struggling through bogs and tussock grass and all the midge bites.

Our return to the relatively civilised east of the island brought relief from more than the midges. During the night before our return from the West coast, I had lain awake as the wind viciously shook the tent like a terrier shaking a rat, and worried about the boat. “Is this wind from the South?” I wondered - the one direction from which Lussa Bay did not give shelter. Rounding a bend in the lane back to the bay, there through the trees was the boat - just where we had left her anchored. The tide was out. I retrieved the inflatable kayak from its hiding place and paddled the few metres to the boat. Releasing the anchor warp and rowing backwards I brought her almost to the beach. Lin waded out and stepped aboard, watched by curious Dutch tourists drinking tea at the beachside cafe tables set up by an enterprising islander.

It felt like coming home, back in our floating tent. We still had to make the passage back, South to the McCormaig islands and then North East the length of Loch Sween to Tayvallich, and a short walk to retrieve the car from Carsaig. But for now, we relaxed in the late afternoon sun and brewed tea on the stove. And searched for the stowaways we needed to evict with handy tweezers - the deer ticks that had hitched a ride and made a meal of us as we struggled through the rough vegetation on Jura. Yes, after 40 years, I could say Jura was now ticked off... 

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To protect and inform buyers, small ads for all boats should declare the brand (i.e Drascombe, Devon, Deben etc.), hull material and original build year and / or hull number where these are known. Pre RCD boats which do not have a Craft Identification Number usually have a number stamped on the stemhead or written on the back of the builder’s plate.

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How much does it cost? £11.00 for 25 words plus seller’s name, location, telephone number and email address.

How to pay: Send a cheque for £11.00 payable to “Drascombe Association” to the address below, or go to the web page [www.drascombe-association.org.uk/adverts.htm](http://www.drascombe-association.org.uk/adverts.htm) where you can pay by Paypal – note you do not require a Paypal account to do this.

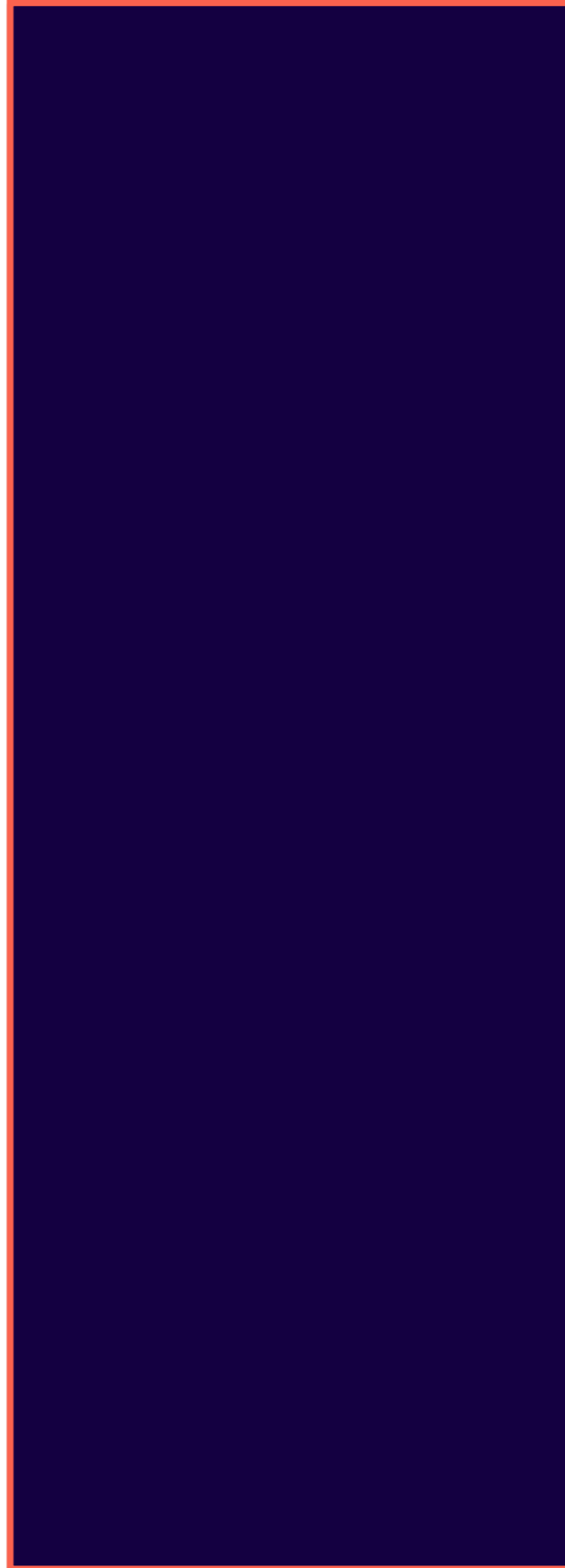
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## Churchouse Boats Ltd News

Drascombe by Churchouse Boats

### Musings from the yard

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### CHURCHOUSE BOATS ON FACEBOOK

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### SAIL FURLING GIZMO

The sail furling gizmo is back in stock. £47.88 including VAT & postage.

See our Facebook page for the video!



### IN THE YARD

We are still busy doing all the things we usually do, building & re-furbishing boats, but no new gizmos to share.

### BOAT SHOWS

We shall be at Southampton Boat Show from Friday 13th September to Sunday 22nd September.

Once again, we shall be exhibiting at London Boat Show from Saturday 4th January to Sunday 12th January 2014.

Do come along and visit us at either of the Boat Shows.

### LOOKING AHEAD

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LONDON BOAT SHOW 2014**

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