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THE MAGAZINE FOR WOODEN BOAT OWNERS, BUILDERS, AND DESIGNERS



Pilot Cutters: The State of the Revival
RÆDWALD: Turbocharged Gaff Rig
Schooner WHEN AND IF
Completing the Church Mouse Skiff

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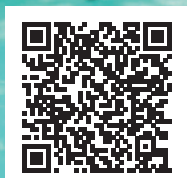
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Cover: The Bristol Channel pilot cutter EVE OF ST. MAWES sails in the 2025 Pilot Cutter Review, an event that revives a 19th-century tradition celebrating the British type.

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*Photograph by
Nic Compton*



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Beauty, Good Handling, and Relevance

In his article beginning on page 22 of this issue, Nic Compton notes that the last sail-driven working Bristol Channel pilot cutter, CARIAD, was retired from her trade in 1922. These vessels were developed for the singular purpose of placing pilots aboard ships negotiating the Bristol Channel, and the qualities that made them so good at this job—speed, weatherliness, seaworthiness, ease of handling—also made them ideally suited for ocean voyaging. This was proven in the 25 years following CARIAD's retirement, as she logged 30,000 miles around Europe as a cruising vessel. It is also proven to this day in the popularity of these boats.

Incredibly, more than 100 years after CARIAD's retirement, eight pilot cutters—plus one pilot-cutter-inspired yacht—sailed in the Pilot Cutter Review, an event just for these boats at St. Mawes, England. Three of the contestants were originals and five were built relatively recently, well after the heyday of working sail. One of these recent ones, EVE OF ST. MAWES, was launched by Luke Powell in 1997, and appears on the cover of this issue. I've been mulling lately why such breathtaking boats, which could be obsolete, instead thrive into modern times. I've boiled it down to three factors

First, they're beautiful. Even to someone casually acquainted with sailing craft, pilot cutters exude an air of timelessness, romance, and history. This is self-evident in Nic's photographs.

Second, they handle well. Nic notes that their rigs are "deliberately simple, and says that their "advanced functionality, fine-tuned through decades of real-world development...was ultimately their saving grace, at least for a lucky few. As steam replaced sail...the old pilot cutters were snapped up by discerning sailors who realized they would make perfect cruising boats."

The third factor is relevance—a milieu in which to express all of this beauty and functionality. The Pilot Cutter Review, Nic writes, was important to the "revival of the old boats' fortunes." The event, which is based on historical gatherings conducted at the height of working pilot cutters, was reconstituted in 2006.

A few other boats in this issue survive for reasons similar to pilot cutters. Consider the Fife-designed and -built MARISKA (page 74). The yacht fell into disrepair during World War I, when her greatest relevance was to donate her keel to munitions manufacturing. Today, she is in pristine condition and operating with the dual purpose of sailing in classic-yacht races and carrying passengers on charters.

Likewise, the existence of the Alden schooner WHEN AND IF (page 38) hung in the balance three decades ago after she grounded in a November gale. A visionary rebuilding saved her; an active charter program keeps her going now.

The bluefin-tuna-fishing boats built by Phil Fessenden of the Massachusetts North Shore are beautiful and functional and never went out of style; the survivors have never lost their original purpose of carrying parties on fishing excursions. Conti Coluntino, who is quoted in the article beginning on page 60, is the owner of the 38' Fessenden-built FLYING SORCERESS. He had a career in the Merchant Marine and in tugboats and recalls first encountering FLYING SORCERESS when he was just eight years old. "If there ever was a moment in my life that crystalized my destiny, that was it," he said. Such is the power of good, timeless boats.

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LETTERS

Tribute to John Harris

Dear Editor,

We love our boats. Every time we cast off, it's a new adventure. We love our boats even more when we construct them. Boats are shells, and some are more complex than others. Time and materials change: along come epoxy adhesives, marine plywood, computer-aided design, and stitch-and-glue joinery. And then along comes John Harris (see WB No. 309), a talented young man with a lifetime love of small boats. He puts it all together so semi-skilled boatbuilders can now assemble precut components in a fraction of the time required to build a plank-on-frame craft. With his knowledge and love of small boats, Harris has produced a range of designs to appeal to everyone. Add marketing skill and hard work, and it's a formula for success. We who love our boats owe a great deal of thanks to John, and wish his company, Chesapeake Light Craft, continued success.

C. William Rich
Rockingham, Virginia

Still Going Strong

Dear *WoodenBoat*,

I appreciated the article "Aging with a Boat" (WB No. 309), which is exactly what I have done. I have owned a 41' ketch since 1975, when I first subscribed to *WoodenBoat*, and have kept it in Bristol condition. I'd started sailing in 1958 and fell in love with the breathtakingly beautiful boats of that era. I have no children, so my ketch is truly part of my family. I have lived aboard and cruised extensively along the East Coast of the United States and Canada, to Bermuda several times, and back and forth across the pond. I have always cherished the ancient Phoenician proverb, *The gods do not deduct from man's allotted span, those hours spent sailing*. It seems to have worked for me. I'm 86, still going strong, and have never missed any of your issues.

Arthur Kramer
East Hampton, New York

Broads Memories

Dear Editor,

I have just read with delight your article "Sailing the Norfolk Broads" in WB No.

310. I grew up in Norwich, England, and learned to sail on the Broads in the late 1960s. I sailed with the Sea Scouts on Decoy Broad—a private waterway on the River Bure near Horning—and later with a school at Thurne Mouth where the River Thurne meets the River Bure. Those were happy days, sailing a fleet of Leaders, Wayfarers, and Enterprises.

On these sailing courses the school would hire two half-decker lugsail boats from Hunter's Yard—WOODCUT 1 and WOODCUT 2—for backup and carrying spare kit during the sailing day. There is a photograph of WOODCUT 2 in Richard Johnstone-Bryden's book *Hunter's Fleet*, plates 3 and 4.

I still sail today. I jointly own a Squib-class keelboat called MONKEY BUSINESS at Medway Yacht Club in Kent and build strip-planked boats at Greenwich Yacht Club in London; the first of these, GREENWICH JACK, appeared in *WoodenBoat's* Launchings. The second is a 16' Melonseed Skiff still under construction.

Gerry Amies
Greenwich, London, England



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Still rolling on the river

by Tom Jackson

Too often, people think about rivers only in casting a glance out the driver's-side window while crossing a bridge and on the other side wondering casually what river that was. A traveler with time and a taste for getting off the freeways can get a deeper sense of a storied river—Mississippi, Missouri, Columbia, Shenandoah; the list is endless and reads to some like poetry or song.

One way to savor a river is to cross by ferry. Such boats are rare these days, but finding one presents an urge to take it. An unusual example is found on another famous river, the Susquehanna, the longest river on the U.S. East Coast, which rises in New York and passes through Pennsylvania and Maryland on its course to Chesapeake Bay. In **Millersburg, Pennsylvania**, about 22 miles north of Harrisburg and Interstate 81, the **last two wooden-hulled stern-wheeler ferries** still operating in the United States continue to **make this crossing during summers**. They are also the last ferries on the Susquehanna.

Ferries have made the crossing here continually **since at least 1817**, and possibly much earlier, Tom Mallonee told me during a visit in spring 2026. He holds a U.S. Coast Guard 100-ton master's license and is one of five licensed captains for the boats, which are certified to carry 55 including crew and passengers. **"These particular iterations** of the Millersburg ferryboats were **built in 1920**," he said. They've been rebuilt many times, and annual winter haulouts always involve spring refits to make repairs and freshen them up for the season, which runs from May to early September.

I saw the ferries during their refits ashore on the riverbank in March 2026, and work was well under way for a May relaunching. **ROARING BULL V** is 83' long and **FALCON III** is about 80', and both are **double-paddle stern-wheelers**, meaning that the wheel has port and starboard sections that operate in unison from an amidships drive chain.

Above—ROARING BULL V, left, and FALCON III, right, both built in the 1920s, are the last stern-wheeler ferryboats in the States; they operate seasonally on a bucolic stretch of the Susquehanna River in Millersburg, Pennsylvania. Inset—Tom Mallonee is one of five licensed captains for the Millersburg Ferryboat Association and volunteers his time in administrative roles.



COURTESY OF MILLERSBURG FERRYBOAT ASSOCIATION (BOTH)

The barge-like hulls draw only about 15", and the paddle-wheels turn well above the level of the bottom. They also have long, horizontal sweep rudders aft of the wheels; the steering chain runs along both sides to connect in the wheelhouse forward to the helm, which is a vertical wheel on **ROARING BULL V** and a horizontal one in **FALCON III**. The boats take **walk-on deck passengers**, some of whom are destined only for a campground on the western shore of the river. **Barges chained alongside** have loading ramps at both ends and can carry **up to four vehicles**, perhaps 20 motorcycles, or the occasional horse-drawn wagon. One-way walk-ons are \$5, and a car and driver is \$10 plus \$5 per passenger.

"We have extra maintenance this year—more than normal," Mallonee said. The hulls have vertical sides built-up of heavy Douglas-fir timbers and bottoms cross-planked with 3"-thick white pine. This year, the work has included an experimental replacement of longitudinal timbers in one of the car barges with marine-grade glued-laminate beams instead of Douglas-fir, and if successful the same technique may eventually incorporate such laminates into the stern-wheelers themselves. For **ROARING BULL V**, this year's work has also involved replacing some side timbers with Douglas-fir.

The engines are **Deutz air-cooled four-cylinder diesels** of about **57 hp** running **hydraulic drive systems**.

TOM JACKSON (BOTH)



Left—Hauled out on the riverbank each fall, **FALCON III**, left, and **ROARING BULL V**, right, and their associated car barges undergo refits each spring before relaunching in May. **Inset**—The boats have dual stern wheels and long, horizontal sweep rudders

A crew of two or three paid carpenters typically work five days a week for four to six weeks beginning in March to make necessary repairs and get the boats ready for the season. About 40 volunteers help launch them in the spring and retrieve them in the fall, using planks, 6" well-pipe rollers, and a tractor-trailer.

Mallonee said that the reason the boats survived so long—they were run by a private business until 1990—has to do with bridge construction. "There were **hundreds** of these along the **Susquehanna River** between New York and Havre de Grace, Maryland. When the bridges came, the need for the ferryboats diminished." But the fact that from Millersburg the nearest bridge to the south is 20 miles distant, and to the north 30 miles, meant that for a long time travelers still chose the ferry crossing. "They would run them up until there was slush on the river," Mallonee said.

After the business closed, Mallonee said, "One of the banks in town bought the boats and gave them to the **Millersburg Ferryboat Association**," a nonprofit organization formed to accept them (see www.millersburgferry.org). "These boats got adopted with a lot of love from the community. We couldn't do this without the community here."

The boats ran seven days a week during the season up until about 15 years ago. After Covid-19, the runs diminished to two or three days a week. Now, however, with a full complement of five captains, Mallonee anticipates that the boats can run six days a week this year.

People come from all around to help during **fall haulouts** and **spring relaunchings**. "It's a pleasant sight," Mallonee said. "There's a young couple that comes from Pittsburgh," more than 200 miles west, "because they enjoy the camaraderie, and they want to keep the boats going, too. And everybody that comes on the boat when we're operating always has a smile. Because you're out in nature. We'll see eagles. And twice since I've been running the boats, we have actually had fish jump onto the boat."

And you can't see any of that from the freeway.

Tom Jackson is WoodenBoat's senior editor.

Around the yards

■ **Three boats** at the **Port Townsend (Washington) Shipwrights Co-Op** boatyard this spring proved—in case there was ever any doubt—that an **astonishing variety of wooden boats** come to the facility for work each year. The lineup in April provided a prime example:

- **RIPTIDE**, a **1927 bridge-deck cruiser 47' LOA** and built by Schertzer Brothers in Seattle, Washington, has been owned since 2015 by **Pete Leenhouts**, formerly the executive director of the Northwest School of Wooden Boat Building (and earlier a student there). Leenhouts has brought her **back to the Co-Op** for restoration and upgrades **every year** since acquiring her. "When the boat first got here, we ended up doing a lot of planking above the waterline, sistered some frames, and put a new engine in," said Jeff Gale, a principal builder on the projects. She has been repowered with a 210-hp Cummins diesel; "I remember lifting the engine up and the oil pan stayed in the bottom," Gale said. She also has "all-new systems, all-new decks, for the most part all-new cabin, pilothouse deck, foredeck, side decks, a new transom, new bulkheads. Every year we do another good-sized project."

This year has been a little different. She has had some cabin joinery, but the only hull work involved the **replacement of a delignified stern knee** and the installation of a **new stern tube** to prevent the deterioration from recurring. The boat's systems have been upgraded over the years, and this year a new radio with an AIS transponder was added to help make the boat ready for an Alaska cruise this summer, her first in many years. Fuel filters have been repositioned to improve accessibility, making them easier to service when under way. Next year—her centennial—the after cabin will be the yard's focus. A new cookstove has already been installed, and in the next round new sole planking and improved cruising accommodations are likely.

- **DEFENDER**, a **26' U.S. Navy whaleboat of 1940s vintage**, has also been in the yard **off and on for some 15 years**. She has been essentially rebuilt, faithful to the original. "It's like

TOM JACKSON (ALL THREE)



Left—**DEFENDER**, a 1940s-vintage 26' U.S. Navy whaleboat (in the foreground) and **RIPTIDE**, a 47' 1927 bridge-deck cruiser built by Schertzer Brothers (in the background), have been substantially rebuilt over 15 years at the Port Townsend (Washington) Shipwrights Co-Op. **Below left**—Arren Day has rebuilt and installed a 1960s Saab Model G engine, with hand-crank starting, in **DEFENDER**. **Right**—**WESTERLY**, a 65-footer built in 1922 in Poulsbo, Washington, and in the same family for three generations, has been substantially replanked and reframed over four years.



a new boat built in the space occupied by the old boat,” Tim Lee said. The principal builder, **Pete Rust**, said DEFENDER has been **replanked** almost entirely with **sapele over mostly new steam-bent white-oak frames**. “There are a couple of planks left,” he said, and a few earlier sister frames. The keel is original, but the keelson and forward and after stems are new. “I kind of left whatever wasn’t bad,” Rust said.

This year, Arren Day’s part of the project has been to **install a 1960s-vintage, 10-hp Saab Model G engine** that can run on diesel or kerosene; the original was a Lathrop gas engine. Day had a Norwegian manual from the 1960s translated online to inform his work. The engine starts via a **hand crank**, which is **still functional**; however, an electric starter has also been retrofitted.

Day was still working out a conversion from raw-water to freshwater cooling, which involves replumbing and reworking pumps. The engine, originally intended for lifeboats, is designed to run while the boat is flooded—interestingly, its air intake is through the hand-crank shaft to remain above likely water levels. “I think the hardest thing is parts availability,” Day said, “because it’s an antique engine and European; there was not a lot of support in the United States for them. We’re going to have to make brackets for the heat exchanger, and we have to make all the controls for the forward and reverse and the throttle. Those were mail-order parts in 1950, but now we have to make them.”

The engine uses variable-pitch propeller feathering not only for throttle control but also for shifting into forward or reverse. A new propeller shaft was machined in-house.

• **WESTERLY**, a classic **fantail yacht 64’ LOA**, built in 1922 in Poulsbo, Washington, has been the subject of **extensive**

hull work over four years. This year, the port forward section has been **replanked with Port Orford cedar**, which has been the yard’s planking stock of choice in recent years. “We started with the stern rebuild, with 4”-thick timbers,” principal shipwright **Brad Seamans** said, adding that he “could see daylight” through much of it. “Then we did the starboard side, and then the port side from amidships to the stern, and now we’re doing the port forward section,” with extensive sister-framing along the way, using Garry oak from Oregon. “We’re doing some centerline work right now, as well as drive-train work, because last season he [the **owner, Willard Cox**] had one of his bearings let go,” with the attendant vibration from her Gray Marine 6-71 and propeller shaft. “He’s putting much-needed love into the boat now.”

Cox, the **third-generation owner** of the boat, said his family has cruised extensively in Puget Sound and the Inside Passage to Alaska since his grandfather bought her, much altered from her original configuration, in 1963. She had been serviced in various shipyards, including Jensen Motor Boat in Seattle. “They were good, but then they went away [closing in 2019], so I started this relationship with Brad. These folks are fantastic,” he said.

Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-Op, 919 Haines Place, Port Townsend, WA 98368; 360-385-6138; www.ptshipwrights.com.

■ At **Adam Henley’s** boatyard in **Port Townsend**, Washington, a **new chapter** in a **family’s history** with a racing yacht is opening. The boat is **ANNIE TOO**, a **45’ sloop** that the California yacht designer Bill Lapworth had **built in 1956** for his own use. **Ted Pike**—a longtime fixture on the Port Townsend waterfront who worked for wood supplier Edensaw Woods and

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as an advertising representative for *WoodenBoat*—bought the boat in 1994. Pike died in 2016, leaving the boat to his son, **Adrian**. Henley, who raced with Pike for decades, is doing the extensive refit for Adrian, with a view to relaunching **in time** for the 10th annual **Ted Pike Memorial Race** in August. A longer-term goal is to reprise ANNIE TOO's history as a 1963 Transpac Race contestant.

The hull was strip-planked with 1½"-thick and 1½"-wide Philippine mahogany. "Amazingly enough, that's what kept the boat together over its life," Henley said. She was built for light weight—20,000 lbs compared to a 37,000-lb boat of the same length that Henley used to own, and a sister built in Europe was 9,000 lbs heavier. Henley has replaced almost every 1⅞" × 1⅞" frame, using steam-bent white oak matching the original ones. Strip-planking poses repair challenges, he said, because the planks are not only glued but edge-fastened with ring-shank nails, making them difficult to caulk or repair by splining. Henley decided to clean out the seams as well as possible and fill where necessary with G-Flex epoxy. The premise has been "to replace and rebuild in keeping with how she's constructed. She wasn't constructed as a dockside prima donna. She was meant to go get raced hard, get beat up, take some punishment, fix it, and keep going. And so, in keeping with that, it didn't make sense to do the 'gold plate'—it just wasn't what the boat was meant for." Still, he has a 50-year horizon in mind: "That has kind of driven everything we've done."

"Phase 2," projected for a couple of years out, will involve **renewing her rig, installing an electric auxiliary** to replace her Perkins diesel engine, replacing **floor timbers** in way of her maststep, and **reworking the accommodation**. Some work

The 1956 Lapworth 45 ANNIE TOO is being substantially refitted in Port Townsend, Washington, with hopes of racing in August in the Ted Pike Memorial Race, named for her longtime owner, who died in 2015, and possibly a future Transpac Race.



TOM JACKSON

being done now anticipates the future round, for example lengthening chainplates and installing stout blocking for those and the genoa tracks. Her rig and interior will remain much as they are now, but thorough refits for both will come in the next phase.

With the planking repaired and framing redone, Henley turned to the **deck and deckhouse**. The original Douglas-fir plywood deck was rotted at the sheer. It was sheathed, but the sheathing stopped short of the sides, so the deck-to-sheerstrake joint allowed water to penetrate the underlying structure.

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After **replacing deckbeams**, he **replanked** with 15mm (about $\frac{5}{8}$ ") okoume plywood. The entire deck was **sheathed in 6-oz fiberglass** cloth set in epoxy extending over the sides as low as the covestripe.

Henley said the cabin trunk would have taken more effort to fix than to replace—"and then we'd maybe get 10 years out of it." Instead, a large slab of sipo from Edensaw Woods was resawn into two new **cabin sides**, with enough left over for coamings. A new after bulkhead, two layers of plywood for a total thickness of $1\frac{3}{8}$ ", has the companionway amidships rather than offset to starboard, as it was originally. "We're setting it up to be bright-finished for as long as humanly possible," Henley said.

"That'll be my kids' problem," Adrian chimed in. He was grinning when he said it.

Adam Henley, 2972 Eddy St., Port Townsend, WA 98368; 360-301-1835; ahenley1968@gmail.com. See also www.annietoo.com.

■ In WB No. 309, Lawrence Cheek's article about adapting **boats for aging sailors** included a sidebar about the prototype construction of the **Old Salt 15**, a design collaboration by Josh Colvin of *Small Craft Advisor* magazine and **Brandon Davis** of **Turn Point Design**, both of **Port Townsend**, Washington. By spring 2026, a **veritable fleet of the boats** was coming together at the **Northwest Maritime Center**, also in Port Townsend. Joel Arrington, the lead instructor and program developer for the center's workshop for the past seven years, said in mid-April that **seven** of the boats were in **various stages of construction**.

"We did five in the first batch, and we picked up two more builders," he said. The builders—some from as far away as



TOM JACKSON

Five 15'3" Old Salt catboats were in various stages of construction at the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend, Washington, this spring, following two already completed since the prototype was built.

California, Chicago, and eastern Washington—collaborated in the early phases of building kits from **Kit Boats Company** (www.kitboats.com), which Colvin and Davis founded after earlier collaborating on kit-boat production for, among other things, the John Welsford-designed 12' mini-cruiser SCAMP.

The boats are **15'3" LOA** with a **7'6" beam** and a **draft of less than 7"**. At 450 lbs dry, they are easily trailerable and have water ballast tanks and an offset centerboard. The catboat rig uses a square-headed, loose-footed, horizontally battened, single sail that sets on a two-piece carbon-fiber

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mast. The boat is intended for easy launching and handling, as its name implies, by aging sailors. The wooden components, which are all of **okoume plywood**, are CNC-cut at Davis's facility. The bottom panels are a combination of ½" and 9mm, and elsewhere 6mm is used, including for tabbed bulkheads. Foils and a few structural pieces are of ¾" ceiba. (Cheek has a full review of the boat in the April 2026 edition of *WoodenBoat's* online sister publication, *Small Boats*; www.smallboatsmonthly.com)

Working collaboratively, assembly-line style, the class participants see boats come together quickly. "For every hour you're putting in, you're getting two-plus hours of output," Arrington said. "You have extra hands, you have more proficiency, you are able to eliminate wasted time. When it's time to fillet, you start on one boat, you've got one guy cutting tapes, one guy running fillets, one guy's mixing epoxy, one guy's putting epoxy in, and you're able to just kind of keep that work going. And it really does streamline the efficiency of time used in the space."

Only as things come together do the participants start to view one hull in particular as their own, the one they'll take home to finish off.

One of Arrington's first courses focused on the 6'10" Portage Pram, dozens of which were built at home with Zoomcall support during the Covid-19 shutdowns. Since then, his programs have launched up to 50 boats per year in 20 to 25 courses.

Northwest Maritime Center, 431 Water St., Port Townsend, WA 98368; www.nwmaritime.org. Turn Point Design, 2320 South Park Ave., Port Townsend, WA 98368; www.turnpointdesign.com. Small Craft Advisor, www.smallcraftadvisor.com.

■ **ARGONAUT II**, a 73' double-ended power cruiser built in 1922 in Coal Harbour, British Columbia, Canada, has been undergoing **extensive hull work** in Port Townsend, Washington, this year under owner **Nicholas Verrochi**. She was expected to relaunch in late May 2026, but much work remained to be done, and Verrochi foresees a full deck replacement—about a \$300,000 proposition—in two or three years.

The boat was built as a private yacht but is better known for having served many years as a missionary vessel. Verrochi found her in Seattle, Washington, and bought her to live aboard and take cruises up the Inside Passage, where she was well known.

ARGONAUT II, built in 1922 in British Columbia, Canada, has been substantially replanked in sipo. A complete deck replacement is envisioned in two or three years.



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"This boat started for me as just a small two-year project to do a little bit of work on it and live on it." It was the middle of Covid, and Verrochi had come to the Northwest from his native Massachusetts for graduate school. In college, he and friends had bought a business teaching kayaking skills, which they parlayed into seven locations with "a couple thousand boats" before selling it in 2016. In **Seattle**, he became smitten by the **liveaboard community** and by ARGONAUT II, especially for regular Inside Passage cruises.

In 2023 he replanked part of the starboard side in a "super-budget project." He more recently **founded a nonprofit** organization, **ARGONAUT II Historic Boat Foundation**, and geared up a social media presence inspired by Leo Goolden's TALLY HO restoration (see WB No. 302), with some of the same shipwrights. "At the start of this project, the first three months, I was spending \$12,000 a week," he said, while bringing in only \$1,000 to \$2,000 a week. "I was like, 'You know what, there's a very strong chance that this is *it* for the boat; if I run out of money in the first month, maybe this boat's going to go to the crusher. I didn't say that out loud, but that was my framework. I did run out of money the first month, but then I just got a **ton of support** at the same time," with YouTube advertising income and Patreon donations rolling in. By mid-April, the **port side** was **replanked in sipo**, some of which was 35' long, and he turned to the **starboard side** again, **replacing eight strakes** below the hull's ice sheathing.

"Everyone working on this project knows my financial situation, and they had other projects that they could go roll off to, and they did for a couple weeks. But right now, we're in an almost steady state. I also am really passionate about trying to get young people involved, and there is a network of young

shipwrights in this yard that are top of their field. They are very flexible and adaptable."

See www.argonaut1922.com, which has background and operational information, plus links to the YouTube channel.

■ **"Mike Corrigan, at The Wooden Boat Shop in Gananoque** on the **Canadian side** of the **St. Lawrence River** in the Thousand Islands, has taken on an interesting **repair project**," Bruce Kemp writes from Ontario. "He's spent this past winter getting a **1928 Paul Thibeault workboat** ready for another spring launching. The 28' boat, a type popular on the river for more than a century, looks similar to a **sedan cruiser** with its big, open afterdeck, but those looks are deceptive. Owned by Ken Larson and his daughter Anna Van Muellen, who live



BRUCE KEMP

At The Wooden Boat Shop in Gananoque, Ontario, Canada, Mike Corrigan has been restoring a 1928, 28' power launch.



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in New Hampshire but summer on the St. Lawrence at Grindstone Island, the boat has been used to transport people, supplies, and building materials from Clayton, New York, to Grindstone since its construction.

"Corrigan reports that, 'For being two years short of a century, the Thibeault is in pretty good condition. It's been well looked-after, and I think it was stored in a boathouse for most of its life.' Its engine was replaced in the 1940s and again in the 1980s. A new bottom installed about 20 years ago by Mike Mahoney of Wooden Boat Specialties in Clayton remains in good condition.

"This winter, Corrigan, who was chief conservator at the Antique Boat Museum in Clayton until 2014, replaced a **starboard sheerstrake** damaged in a minor collision. The entire boat was bronze-fastened, but a bad repair sometime in the past used steel screws that not only failed but also caused localized wood sickness. He also **repaired** the boat's **dashboard** and replaced a **windshield corner post** before renewing the paint and varnish in time for a spring relaunching.

"Corrigan is also restoring five St. Lawrence skiffs and starting to build a new one. The skiffs, double-enders developed in the mid-19th century, were popular among Thousand Islands fishing guides and summer residents alike and are still revered today. Fast and stable, they were lapstrake-built with frames of either elm or oak and planking of eastern white cedar.

"Corrigan was also preparing to **move his shop** to his cabin at nearby **Horseshoe Island**, where he grew up, to specialize in building and repairing skiffs and other small craft."

The Wooden Boat Shop, 695 Stone St. N., Ganonoque, ON, Canada, K7G 1Z4; 343-333-1569; mikecorriganwbb@gmail.com.

Offcuts

■ **Matteo Cigainero** writes from **Udine, Italy**, with news of a new venture for **boatbuilding classes**, with an emphasis on **skin-on-frame adaptations**: "I've been restoring and building wooden boats for 25 years now, and for just as long I've been looking at the sea through the eyes of someone who respects it and loves it. My background (growing up in the Venice Lagoon) and my pockets (always full of sawdust) led me to appreciate the small traditional boats that are accessible to everyone and easy to handle. When I first started in other boatyards, I would spend weeks finishing



COURTESY OF MATTEO CIGAINERO

Matteo Cigainero, a native of Venice, Italy, discovered the joys of owning lightweight skin-on-frame boats and now teaches the skills in Udine in the northeastern part of the country.

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the details that make wooden boats so captivating. Unfortunately, I often saw inflatable dinghies replacing wooden tenders, so I felt the need to design a **practical, lightweight solution.**"

The solution, he felt, could be found in skin-on-frame construction. "I designed my method **using bamboo** for the structure, blending traditional techniques with my knowledge of modern boatbuilding. At the time, I built myself a small skin-on-frame Norwegian pram, which I would carry on the roof rack to

sail and row on the lakes and coasts of my region. Although small, the pram weighed around 40kg [88 lbs.], which was still too heavy and turned out to be more of a struggle than a joy before and after sailing.

"In 2016, while living in **Palma de Mallorca** and after years of study, I **launched the project** www.a-mare.es, which I have recently reimagined for an even lighter boat. I **wrote a manual** to teach people how to build these boats skin-on-frame, a technique which is

accessible to everyone. In addition to being low-cost, the skills needed are not as demanding as for traditional boats. They weigh as little as 20kg [44 lbs], which is such a relief for my back. In winter, the boat becomes something like a rice-paper lamp in my living room, awaiting warmer weather.

"In Italy, I'm **organizing courses** with colleagues to spread the knowledge of this fantastic construction technique and make it accessible to those who think it might be difficult. My step-by-step book is *Navigare Leggeri*, available in Italian and I hope soon in English."

Matteo Cigainero, Via Roma, 116, 33055 Muzzana del Turignano, Udine, Italy; +39-333-286-9651; www.a-mare.es and on YouTube and Instagram.

■ Word comes to us that in the Currents report in WB No. 310 regarding U.S. Coast Guard boat restorations in Michigan, the location mentioned as the home of **motor lifeboat 36500** was incorrect. That lifeboat, famous for its 1952 rescue of the crew of the tanker PENDLETON off Cape Cod, is **based in Orleans, Massachusetts**, not in Hyannis. Our apologies.

■ The proposed **expansion** of the **Friend Memorial Library in Brooklin, Maine**, as reported here in 2024 (see WB No. 296), is a step closer to reality; the **groundbreaking** for the construction was started in **April 2026**. The building will house, among other things, *Wooden-Boat* founder Jon Wilson's 6,000-volume library and Benjamin Mendlowitz's archive of photographic slides in what will be known as the **Anne and Maynard Bray Maritime Research Center**.

Across the bar

■ **Sam Johnson**, 81, March 22, 2026, Astoria, Oregon. Among Mr. Johnson's many deep interests was a fascination with boats and boatbuilding, starting at a young age while growing up on his family's ranch in Santa Clara Valley, California, south of San Francisco Bay. His formal education was in the sciences; he held a bachelor's degree in geology and a PhD in marine biology from Stanford University. Later, while serving for a time as an assistant professor at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, he often went to Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut, where he was inspired by John Gardner's work in small-craft research and education. He also served as a researcher at the Bermuda Biological Research Station (renamed the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Science in 2006) before returning to the West Coast.

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Boatbuilding and maritime history remained two of his key interests; there were many others—most notably, late in life, botanical illustration. A job with The Nature Conservancy took him to Oregon in the 1970s, and Oregon remained his home for the rest of his life, except for a couple of years when he lived aboard a small floating wood-working shop off the Lake Washington Ship Canal near the Fremont Bridge in Seattle, Washington.

A charismatic and engaging conversationalist, he became an exceptional and gifted fundraiser for nonprofit organizations, starting with The Nature Conservancy. In the early 1990s, amid his other duties while working in that capacity at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland, he led a crew of volunteers for two years working with the boat historian and designer Greg Foster of British Columbia in building three replicas of ship's boats—one American, one British, and one Spanish. The project commemorated the threads of the 18th-century European exploration of the Pacific Northwest, timed with the bicentennial of the first entry into the Columbia River, accomplished by the American merchant Robert Gray in 1792. Mr. Johnson went on to serve the Oregon Health & Science University Foundation in Portland in a planned-giving program. He also served on numerous state boards.

All the while, he maintained his interest in boatbuilding. He favored small, traditionally built craft such as his 12' Providence River boat, AGASSIZ. He also worked to restore a vintage 26' powerboat; however, he very much favored the woodworking involved in new construction. He became enthralled with casting custom bronze boat hardware, and he led workshops in the subject for many years, including at The Center for Wooden Boats in Seattle and Wooden-Boat School in Brooklin, Maine. He was an inveterate collector of vintage woodworking and boatbuilding tools and also had an impressive library of some 4,000 volumes of American and European boatbuilding and maritime history.

In 2009, his interests and experience fused anew with his appointment—at the age of 65—as executive director of the Columbia River Maritime Museum in Astoria (www.crmmm.org). He served in the role until retiring at age 79 in 2023. On his watch, he raised prodigious funds—said to be \$40 million for capital improvements and \$14 million in endowments—for a wide array of projects, all accomplished without incurring debt. Among those was reworking a derelict former railroad station into what is now the

Barbey Maritime Center (see Currents, WB No. 232), which includes a well-equipped woodworking shop named in his honor.

Also on his watch, the exhibits underwent their most thorough overhaul since the museum's founding in 1963, including a gallery devoted to the native peoples of the region. On the grounds, a pool was built for pond-yacht sailing, a former hardware store across the street was acquired and repurposed as a vast hall for boat and collections

storage (including the three boats built at the Oregon Historical Society), and a retired Columbia River Bar pilot boat was installed in an exhibit ashore. The crowning achievement, a new Mariners' Hall exhibit building of more than 24,000 sq ft, is scheduled to open in fall 2026. He saw the building's construction under way but didn't live to see the fulfillment of his vision for its primary exhibit objective: more boats.



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	Introduction to Boatbuilding: Skiffs & Dories with John Karbott	The Art of Shaker Box Making with Bill Jordan	Introduction to Woodworking with Jim Macdonald	Paddle Making with Eric Schade	Introduction to Woodworking for Women with Becca Levi	Build Your Own Skerry Daysailer with Dillon Majoros	Woodstrip Canoe Construction with Alan Mann & Rose Woodyard	Runabout Repair & Restoration with Gary Lowell
		Coastwise Navigation with Jane Ahlfeld	Elements of Sailing with Annie Nixon	The Art of Marquetry with Jim Macdonald	Elements of Sailing for Women with Jane Ahlfeld & Kim Walther	Build Your Own Apprentice Tool Chest with Joel Senger	Build Your Own Plank Constructed Pond Yacht with Bruce Richter	Building Half Models with Reuben Brown
			Elements of Coastal Kayaking with Rebecca Daugherty	The Art of Monotype Printing with Kate Emlen	Traditional Sailing & Seamanship with Annie Nixon	Rigging Small Boats with Jose Hernandez-Juviel	The Art of the Sailor with Jose Hernandez-Juviel	Lettering & Leafing with Bob Emser
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				Craft of Sail onboard NORA with Kim Walther		Craft of Sail onboard NORA for Women with Kim Walther	Craft of Sail onboard ELSKOV with Andy Nadolny	Open Boat Expedition with Annie Nixon
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The Celebration of a British Revival

Racing among pilot cutters new and old off Cornwall

Text and photographs
by Nic Compton

It was a cloudy day with gusts of up to 28 knots for the last leg of the Pilot Cutter Review in St. Mawes, Cornwall, England, in May 2025—more like a chilly autumn morning than late spring day. Racing would have been canceled had this been an AMERICA's Cup challenge, but of course pilot cutters are famously hardy boats, designed to be sailed by “one man and a boy” in any weather. The Pilot Cutter Review would go ahead come what may.

My ride for the day was the 1904 Bristol Channel pilot cutter ALPHA, looking stunning after her recent restoration by Ben Hopper Traditional Boats in Falmouth. Although one of the heaviest boats there, she had a secret weapon: her cutaway forefoot, which is unusual for a traditional Bristol Channel pilot cutter. In theory, this makes her more nimble than her contemporaries, and her heavy displacement means she can stand up to a strong blow.

ALPHA had done well on the 23-mile passage race from Fowey to Falmouth two days before, finishing second, but not so well in the two Saturday races (finishing seventh and fourth), so the pressure was on to do better on the Sunday race, known as “the long one,” the last race of the series. After checking the forecast and consulting with ALPHA's owner, Willem Scholtes, Ben briefed the crew on the race ahead. “We'll fly the medium topsail, which has a topsail yard but no jackyard, and full mainsail,” he said. “If the wind increases any more, we'll take a roll in the main and fly the medium topsail over a reefed main, rather than try to change the topsail. Let's focus on trim, sailing the boat fast, and making perfect maneuvers rather than lots of sail changes and any mishaps.” Given the strength of the wind, the strategy seemed a good one to me.

“Remember, mobility can win the race on these boats,” Willem added, with what turned out to be uncanny prescience. He himself was having the day

ALPHA—one of nine pilot cutters racing in the Pilot Cutter Review off Cornwall, England, in 2025—was built in 1904 in Lancashire in North West England. Her cutaway-forefoot keel profile is very different from that of most pilot cutters built for working on the Bristol Channel.



Left—TALLULAH, a 44-footer, was the sixth of nine pilot-cutter-inspired yachts that Luke Powell has built at his boatyard in Gweek, Cornwall. **Bottom left**—Sail handling aboard ALPHA, such as hoisting her powerful gaff mainsail, is done by manual labor.



off and watching the race, having just completed a 24-hour passage from Cowes to Falmouth in his new steel-hulled boat.

The Bristol Channel on the West Coast of England, where ALPHA plied her trade for two decades, is a notoriously dangerous stretch of water. It has the second largest tidal range in the world—up to 46', beaten only by the Bay of Fundy in Canada—with currents of up to 8 knots. On top of that, its V-shaped coastline acts as a funnel for the prevailing southwesterly wind, channeling big seas straight in off the Atlantic. Add to the mix shifting sand banks and a remarkable shortage of all-tide harbors on either side of the channel, and you'll see why ships negotiating these waters are well advised to have a pilot aboard—which is exactly what they've done for the past 500 years or so.

According to legend, the first pilot to guide a ship out of the Bristol Channel was one George James May who, in May 1497, piloted John Cabot's MATTHEW out of Bristol at the start of his voyage to Newfoundland just five years after Christopher Columbus stumbled across the Bahamas. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution some 200 years later and the growth of the British Empire, the volume of shipping on the channel increased dramatically, and the type of vessel needed to carry the pilots to and from the ships developed accordingly.

The requirements were clear: the boats had to be seaworthy enough to take whatever the Bristol Channel might throw at them, for days if not weeks at a time. To be economical, they had to be easily handled by a crew of two or three: the skipper (aka the "westernman"), "a boy" (usually an apprentice pilot), and the pilot when he was aboard. To be competitive, they had to be fast, for the first boat to reach the incoming vessel got the piloting assignment. An extra half knot of speed could make the difference between winning a job or having to continue "seeking," the local term for staying out at sea until finding another ship that needed a pilot.

The boats that evolved to meet these demanding criteria were gaff cutters, usually between 40' and 50' long. Their hulls were built of oak, elm, and pitch pine, and their interiors were made of mahogany or teak. The rigs were kept deliberately simple, with no running backstays or crossrees to get tangled up, just oversized spars that were strong enough to withstand the forces imposed by heavy flax sails with minimal standing rigging. The mainsheet horse had big buffers at each end, the better to take the impact of a standing jibe without having to haul the sheet in. It's no coincidence that roller-reefing (aka Appledore gear), another labor-saving device, is said to have been invented on Bristol Channel pilot cutters.

At their peak, in the late 1800s, up to 300 pilot cutters are estimated to have been at work in the Bristol



Despite gusts of up to 30 knots off Pendennis Point, ALPHA hung on to all sail, including a topsail.

Channel. Predictably, there was intense rivalry to reach the incoming ships. One pilot even went as far as having a tan topsail made so his cutter could pass off as a fishing boat and sneak ahead of her rivals undetected. Another cutter is said to have had a head built into a corner of the cockpit in case the crew got caught short while at work.

Once a ship was spotted, a price would be negotiated for the job, and the ship would heave-to. The cutter would sail into the lee of the ship and the punt—usually a clinker-built (aka lapstrake) boat about 13' long, often painted white to be more visible at night—would be hoisted over the pilot cutter's side. The boy would then row the pilot over to the ship, while the westernman managed the cutter on his own until the punt returned and was hoisted back aboard. The cutter then sailed to port in company with the ship or, if she were carrying another pilot aboard, went seeking another job.

It was dangerous work, and many men were lost at sea during the transfer. Capt. George Buck, a pilot from Pill, recounted that when he was an apprentice his "skiff" (as the pilot cutters were often called) was swept onto a ship while he was picking up the pilot and was almost swallowed up by the churning propellers. When the cutter was dried out and retarred a few weeks later, the crew found scour marks $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep in the underwater planking, made by the offending blades.

"When boarding ships at night during dirty weather," Capt. Buck wrote in a trade magazine called *The Pilot*, "we were always glad when we had the punt back on board. In the daytime we took little notice of the weather and it had to be very bad when we could not

board, and it was not very often we had to run for shelter. The skiffs were fine craft and in bad weather would heave-to with the foresheet to windward and the helm lashed a little down, and they would work to windward off a lee shore."

It wasn't all work, however, as gatherings called "reviews" were held at all the major ports on the Bristol Channel throughout the summer. There, the pilot cutters raced not only among themselves but also against yachts, which they often beat, especially if it was windy. Their exceptional performance didn't go unnoticed by other sailors, particularly those yachtsmen who gazed at their elegant elliptical sterns after being overtaken during a race. And it was this advanced functionality, fine-tuned through decades of real-world development, that was ultimately their saving grace, at least for a lucky few. As steam replaced sail—notably after the amalgamation of Cardiff pilots in 1913—the old pilot cutters were snapped up by discerning sailors who realized they would make perfect cruising boats.

The last pilot cutter to work under sail was CARIAD, which was relieved of her duties off the Breaksea Lightship near the port of Barry by the steam cutter QUEEN MOTHER on December 12, 1922. She was immediately converted into a yacht, including the addition of a 14-hp Kelvin petrol-paraffin engine, and in 1923 was bought by Frank Carr. Over the next 25 years, Carr (a future director of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich) sailed the boat 30,000 miles around Britain, the Baltic, and Spain and wrote the book *A Yachtsman's Log* about his experiences.



One of the oldest surviving original pilot cutters, the 1889 MARIAN is still raced hard. She finished third overall in the 2025 Pilot Cutter Review.

The full seagoing potential of the type was perhaps best demonstrated by the explorer Bill Tilman, who sailed three Bristol Channel pilot cutters over the course of 23 years. It started in 1954 with MISCHIEF, which he sailed to the Arctic and Antarctica before she was crushed by ice off Greenland. She was followed by SEA BREEZE, which he sailed around Greenland for three years before she, too, was lost to the ice. His last boat was BAROQUE, which he also sailed around Greenland before his (presumed) death on another ship en route to the Falkland Islands.

ALPHA was unusual among her contemporaries for not having been built by a yard on the Bristol Channel. Instead, her first owner, William Prosser, had his first pilot cutter built by William Stoba of Fleetwood, Lancashire, north of Blackpool in North West England, an area better known for building speedy Morecambe Bay prawners. ALPHA's cutaway forefoot made her so fast that Prosser worked her successfully in the Western Approaches for 20 years, and she won the Cardiff Regatta in 1905.

Renamed BLACK BESS, she was converted to a yacht in 1924 and sailed hard for many years under the Royal Cruising Club burgee; in the 1930s, she was renamed again, this time ALPHA. She was extensively rebuilt in Gweek in 2007–10 by boatbuilder David Walkey, designer Ed Burnett, and rigger Tommi Nielsen. Despite their expertise, the larch for the planking proved to be flawed, and just 13 years later the boat had to be replanked again. It's to Willem Scholte's eternal credit that he didn't just give up at this point.

Instead, he commissioned Ben Hopper to carry out a second rebuild at his boatyard (www.hoppertraditionalboats.co.uk), this time with oak planking, a heavier but safer choice than larch. Ben also used the replanking as an opportunity to return the counter stern to its original shape.

A hundred or so years after CARIAD dropped her last pilot on the Bristol Channel, a mixed fleet of pilot cutters—three originals, five replicas and one pilot-cutter inspired yacht—competed in the final race of the 2025 Pilot Cutter Review in St. Mawes. With so many boats taking part, I was looking forward to a busy start, with lots of shouts of “starboard” as the crews jostled for position. I was to be disappointed. Since a particularly hairy start a few years ago, when 35 knots of easterly wind created potentially dangerous conditions in close quarters, the organizers have staggered the starts. This makes for a safer race but, like handicap racing, means you don't really know who has won until the awards are presented that evening.

We left our mooring 17 minutes before the gun and managed to raise all sails just in time to cross the starting line on starboard tack, well ahead of our main rival, the 1889 pilot cutter MARIAN. The 12-leg course was surprisingly complicated for such big boats, with roundings of 10 buoys spread across Carrick Roads before finishing back at St. Mawes. Luckily, our tactician was reading the course on an iPad.

Although ALPHA was recently completely rebuilt and has had huge amounts of money thrown at her,

At 38' LOD, EVE OF ST. MAWES was the smallest boat at the event. She was the first boat of the type that Luke Powell built and helped launch a pilot-cutter revival in the late 1990s.

in other ways she was at a disadvantage compared to newer boats: she has no winches, so the sails were all sweated up by hand and sheets were all adjusted using block-and-tackle. Although Ben is a professional boat-builder and skipper, he was there in an unpaid role, while the rest of the crew was made up of amateur sailors, mostly local boatbuilders and friends, nearly all of them in their 20s.

The first three marks were a beat to windward, taking us around Black Rock, across to St. Anthony Head, then out to the Hine Downing buoy off Pendennis Point, heading out to sea. Next stop: the Lizard Peninsula, aka “the graveyard of ships.” It was one of the windiest legs of the race, with the leeward rail awash repeatedly, and it occurred to me that we were possibly overcanvased—I mean, how many yachts fly a topsail in almost 30 knots of wind? But ALPHA was built to withstand much worse than this, often for days on end.

“I kept thinking, we could take a roll in the main on the next downwind leg,” Ben said later. “Then we would go around the mark, and I didn’t want to reduce sail as we were going downwind and wanted as much canvas up as possible. When cruising, I set sails for the gusts not the lulls. When racing, I set sails for the lulls, not the gusts.”

Sailing a 36-ton boat might seem a brutal affair, but it was a subtle change in wind direction that gave us our first advantage. Ben spotted the lift as we headed past Pendennis Point and turned early, clearing the bow of the pilot cutter replica EVE OF ST. MAWES and rounding the buoy while the rest of the fleet headed out to sea for an extra half mile, wasting valuable minutes. Pilot-cutter racing might not call for fine-tuning as much as dinghy racing, but a few degrees on the wind can still make all the difference.



By the late 1990s, only 18 original Bristol Channel pilot cutters were left. By then, a whole industry had grown up around restoring old wooden boats, including pilot cutters. The 18-year restoration of KINDLY LIGHT in Gweek from 1993 to 2011 was one of the most noteworthy. But no new ones were being built. One man determined to change all that was Luke Powell. With barely enough money to pay for the necessary wood, he embarked on building the first new wooden pilot cutter the world had seen for several decades. His inspiration, however, was not the legendary Bristol Channel boats but the less well known pilot cutters of the neighboring Scilly Isles. Although built to perform the same job as their Bristol brethren, the Scilly boats tended to be a bit chunkier and beamier, with higher bows. The result was more internal volume, which enabled them to carry cargo during their working lives and conveniently provided more accommodation when reimaged as yachts.

Someone who was having a similar idea but with a very different outcome was the author Tom Cunliffe (see WB No. 309). Tom and his wife, Ros, had sailed their 1911 pilot cutter HIRTA (ex-CORNUBIA) extensively from 1982 until 1997, including two transatlantic crossings. He had written several books about his travels and was at least partly responsible for the resurgence of interest not only in gaff rig but also in pilot cutters. After selling HIRTA, he decided to commission a new cutter based on the hardy workboats he knew so well. But unlike Luke, whose boats were built

ALPHA has been rebuilt at least twice since her launching in 1904, most recently in 2023–24, when Ben Hopper restored her original fantail counter stern. Her huge rig is faithful to the original and handled without any winches.



ALPHA's main rival during the final race was the 1893 Bristol Channel pilot cutter MARGUERITE, seen here off St. Mawes Castle on Pendennis Point.

traditionally, Tom had his strip-planked and epoxy-sheathed to minimize maintenance. He chose the yacht designer Nigel Irens, best known for his record-breaking multihulls, to draw him a gaffer that took full advantage of modern materials to produce a fast and extremely powerful hull.

In 1997, two pilot cutters of very different types were launched: Luke's delightfully traditional 38' EVE OF ST. MAWES and Tom's 40' "rocket ship" WESTERNMAN, built at Covey Island Boatworks in Nova Scotia, Canada. Four more boats of the same design were built by Covey Island in short order. Meanwhile, over the next 23 years Luke steadily produced carvel-built boats, culminating in the 68' PELLEW in 2020, the biggest pilot cutter to be built since the heyday of the type. At least two of Luke's boats ended up in the United States: the 46' AGNES (later bought back by Luke and now based in Falmouth) and the 44' HESPER, which has been based in Maine since 2015.

They weren't the only ones. No doubt inspired by the success of Luke's boats, other boatbuilders followed suit, including Mark Rolt in Bristol, who built one pilot cutter; Dave Cockwell in Falmouth, who built two; and John Raymond-Barker in Bristol, who built three. The designer Ed Burnett, who worked with Nigel Irens on the original WESTERNMAN, designed several of these boats, including an accurate replica of Bill Tilman's MISCHIEF. The peak of this wave of new boats came in 2008, when an astonishing four new pilot cutters, including MISCHIEF, were launched, followed by three more in 2009.

An important factor in this revival of the old boats' fortunes was the Pilot Cutter Review, revived in 2006 by Adam and Debbie Purser, the first owners of EVE OF ST. MAWES, who also run the Classic Sailing charter company (www.classic-sailing.com). The event usually

takes place at the end of May and attracts an eclectic mix of old pilot cutters, new pilot cutters, and pilot cutter-inspired craft.

Out on the race course, it didn't much matter whether the boat was old or new. The race is run using the Old Gaffer's Association handicap rules, which make no allowance for age. And yet the results of the previous days' racing showed no consistent pattern of new versus old, or even big versus small, with the second-oldest boat there, the 1899 MARIAN, winning the feeder race from Fowey and the dainty EVE OF ST. MAWES, the smallest boat in the fleet, winning the first two round-the-buoys races off St. Mawes.

ALPHA caught up with MARGUERITE on the third leg of the final race, a 2-mile reach from Pendennis Point up the Carrick Roads to a buoy off St. Just. There was a great deal of pretending not to gloat as we gradually overtook her just before the mark, followed by an equal amount of pretending not to care as she sneaked past us to leeward beating toward the next mark.

Being a foot longer overall, it was only natural that MARGUERITE, built in 1893, would be a bit faster than us, but what we lacked in length we made up for in cunning. With both boats on starboard tack, MARGUERITE couldn't tack until we did, or she'd end up on port tack having to give way to us. Even though she was nudging ahead, the ball was in our court, and Ben was more than happy to play some mind games with our competition.

"With two short tacks to go, I knew this was our chance," he said. "We watched MARGUERITE's crew setting up to tack, and I told our team to prepare for a tack but not to move yet. I could see MARGUERITE's helmsman looking over and watching for the moment we tacked. One of our crew started to stand up to get ready to release the jib, and I told them to sit down.



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Ben Hopper, who rebuilt ALPHA, skippered her during the 2025 pilot cutter race, with his partner Evelyn Hull (right) among the crew.

“As we got closer to the lay line, MARGUERITE’s helmsman looked away to check for boats to leeward. I pushed ALPHA into a tack, and everyone scrambled into their positions. Despite nobody being in the right place, we made a perfect tack, which opened enough room for us to then tack back shortly after and end up clear ahead of MARGUERITE’s bow going round the windward mark.”

Caught by surprise, MARGUERITE made an awkward tack and stood dead in the water for several moments, while ALPHA kept her momentum and slipped easily ahead. It was a remarkable moment, not just because of Ben’s psychological tactics but because of the smoothness of our amateur crew’s maneuver, with ALPHA barely losing any way from one tack to the next. Willem’s words at the start of the race, that “mobility can win the race,” couldn’t have been more apt.

It was then just a case of keeping the boat moving as fast as we could, as we headed back toward St. Anthony Head with MARGUERITE in pursuit, sailing a big figure-eight between St. Mawes and Falmouth. There was a moment of nervousness as we spotted MARGUERITE heading toward a different buoy on the penultimate leg, and we briefly thought we might have got it wrong, but the tactician double-checked the race instructions and confirmed we were on the right course. We later overheard MARGUERITE on the VHF realizing their mistake.

Despite the staggered start, we crossed the line at St. Mawes first, followed a few minutes later by MARGUERITE and the fiberglass-hulled ERAN MOR. We had won the race, followed by EVE OF ST. MAWES and MARGUERITE in second and third place. The overall winner of the three St. Mawes races was EVE OF ST. MAWES,



Luke Powell’s first-born. ALPHA was second overall, followed by MARIAN, proving that the heavy older boat could still perform well, particularly when the going gets tough.

Old boats, new boats, lookalike boats. Working boats, charter boats, cruising boats, racing boats. The pilot cutters have proven themselves versatile and adaptable over three centuries. What will be their next incarnation? 

Nic Compton is a contributing editor for WoodenBoat.

Despite being the smallest cutter in the fleet, EVE OF ST. MAWES was the overall winner of the three-race series.



CIRRUS

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COMING SUMMER 2026



Harnesses, Tethers, and Jacklines

There are nearly nine billion people on Earth, and not one of them is identical to another. Three-quarters of the planet is covered with water, which can be whipped into waves, ripples, or tsunamis—and neither are any of those identical to the others, nor predictable.

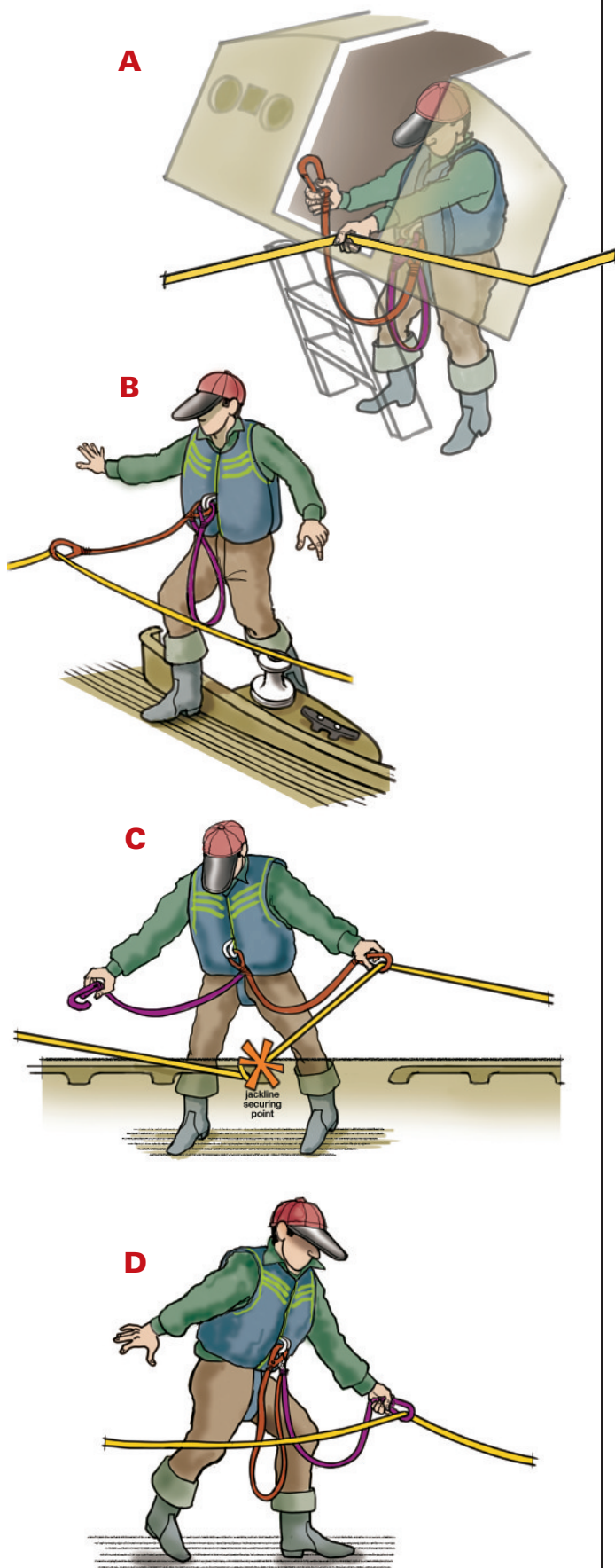
You and your boat respond to unpredictable waves and weather categorically: with hatches down, sail shortened, eggs in the galley secured. But you must be prepared to respond momentarily, too. You cannot predict the ever-changing action of the coming waves because they are packets of energy; their dynamics interact constantly to amplify, decrease, nullify. One wave is not like the next wave. There will come a time when the foredeck will require attention for reasons you cannot now predict. The security of your first step out of the cockpit, and the steps that follow, will change momentarily. Secure yourself in the moment.

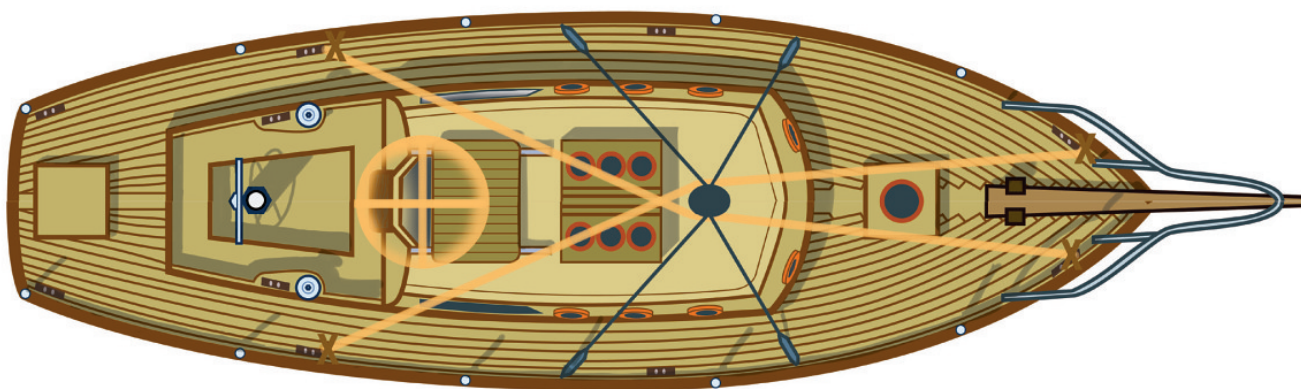
How can you secure yourself and still move? In stages, along **jacklines** strategically strung fore-and-aft, moving from one affixed section to another with *two tethers* working in tandem.

Clip into the jackline with Tether One (A) from a secure place, ideally from the companionway. Move out of the cockpit and forward to the boundary of the jackline segment (B). Clip Tether Two into the farther jackline (C); *only then* can you afford to release Tether One (D).

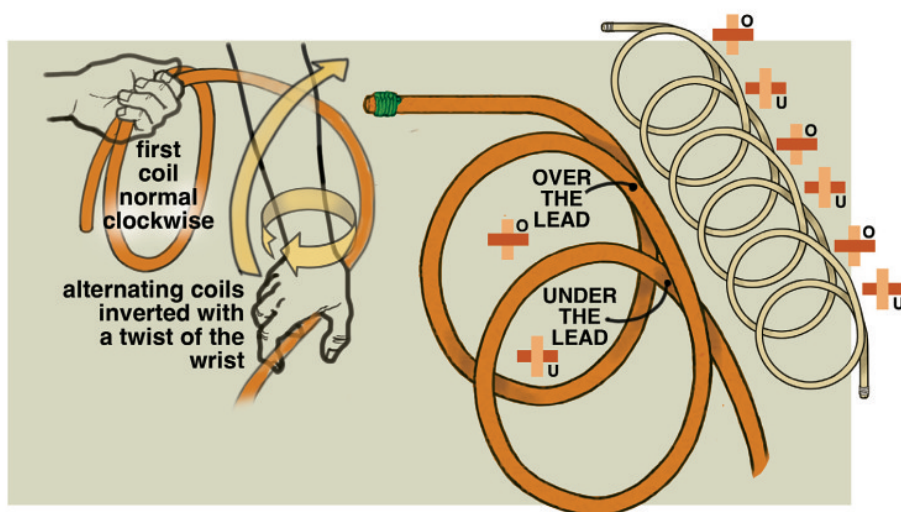
Move forward on Tether Two to the next affixed jackline segment.

When the foredeck calamity is resolved, return to the cockpit *constantly clipped sequentially* by tandem Tethers One and Two. Acknowledge unpredictability; stick around.

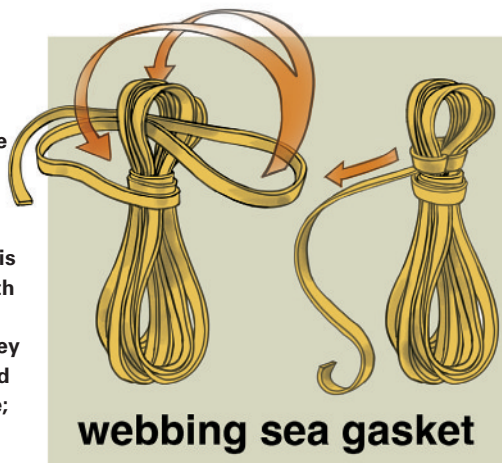




There is no single way to run your jacklines. The pattern in this illustration is used by Vince Todd (see WB No. 310), who is a Bermuda Race inspector, and it's particular to his boat. The best pattern for *your* boat's jackline will be suggested by its layout. Might you need additional padeyes to keep the jacklines central and the distance-to-overboard short? Perhaps.



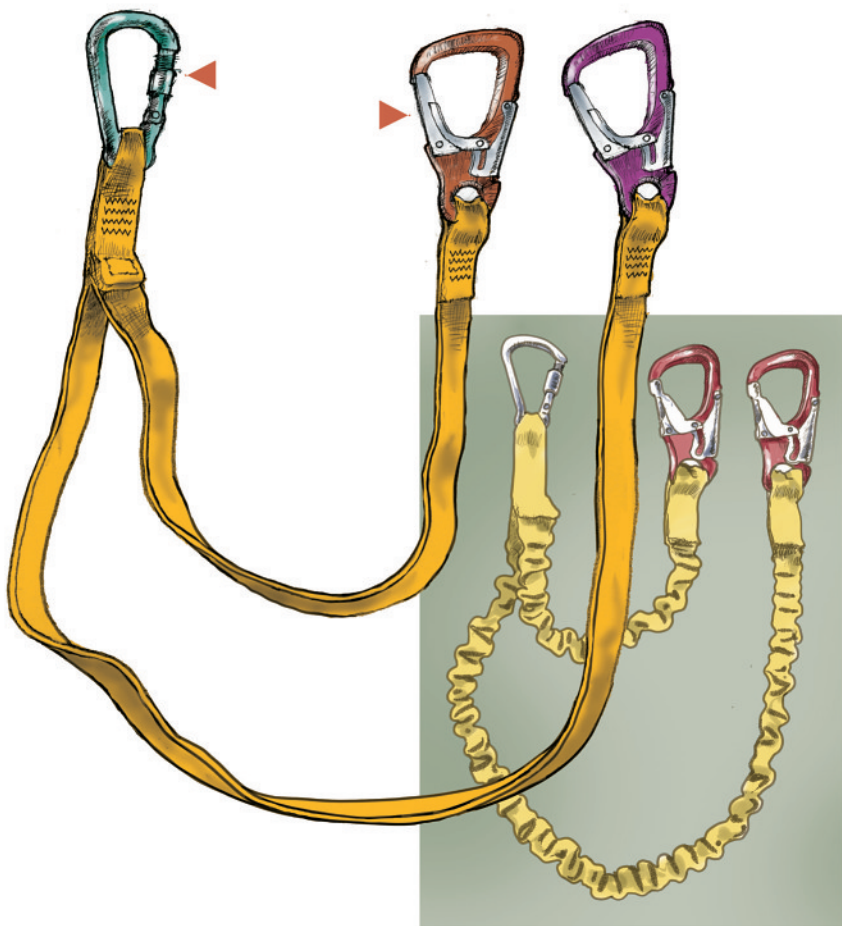
The jackline is customarily made of tough webbing of prodigious strength, more than 4,000-lb test. It's acknowledged that tether carabiners slip more easily on slick, malleable webbing than on rove or braided line. Some canny sailors rotate their jacklines into curls that stand; these are easier to pick up, provide smoother travel for the shackle, and the practice results in no change in strength. Webbing is interesting cordage. Unless you are singlehanded constantly, you will probably coil your jacklines for harbor sails and genteel jaunts. Because jacklines can be demanded quickly by weather or sea conditions, take special care in coiling them down. Once confused, webbing is devilishly difficult to unsnarl. We recommend large, regular coils secured with sea gaskets. Coiling webbing is best done with alternate coils: as a forward loop, then as a backhand loop. Some jacklines have end fittings, but since they should be set up *all a tanto* (taut, in old sailor's tongue) they can be tensioned and snugged with familiar cleat hitches. Jacklines are subject to sun damage; regular testing and replacement on a sensible schedule is essential.



Traditional webbing safety harnesses were often handsewn and simple. Presently, however, outfitting yourself with a high-performance Personal Flotation Device (PFD) that doubles as a harness is a crucial investment in your own longevity. Current PFD technology yields a remarkably comfortable rig that won't cramp your movements; these devices are easily donned, and easily hung below. They're not cheap, but you're betting your life; think of them as a sailing tax. Look for a self-inflating mechanism that operates with hydrostatic pressure (in 3" or 4" of water). There are manually inflated rigs, but you won't be able to inflate one of those after you've been knocked unconscious by a boom. There are rigs that inflate if their triggers get wet; we assume you're on the foredeck in lumpy weather being soused by wave action and having your PFD suddenly turn you into a large balloon is contraindicated. Good PFDs have integral lights to make you visible to a spotter at night and a reinflation tube so you can keep the pressure up. The best rigs have a crotch strap that ties you and the PFD together vertically but needn't be uncomfortably tight. Newest PFDs have a *spray shield* you can pull over your face; surface waves and hard spray in high winds can be deadly.



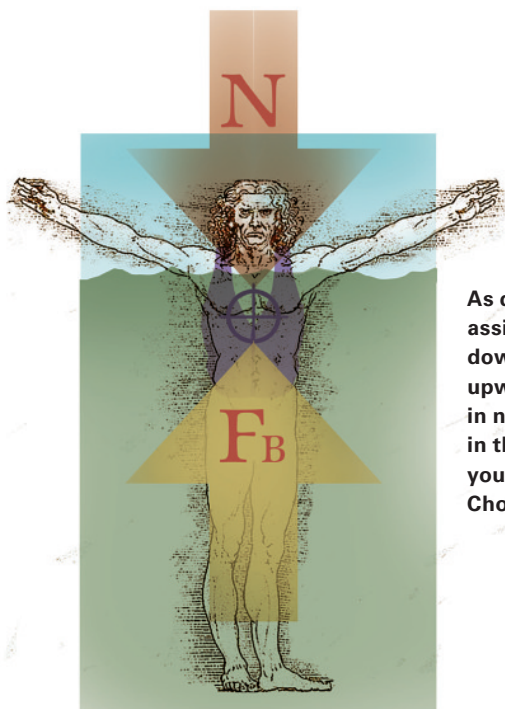
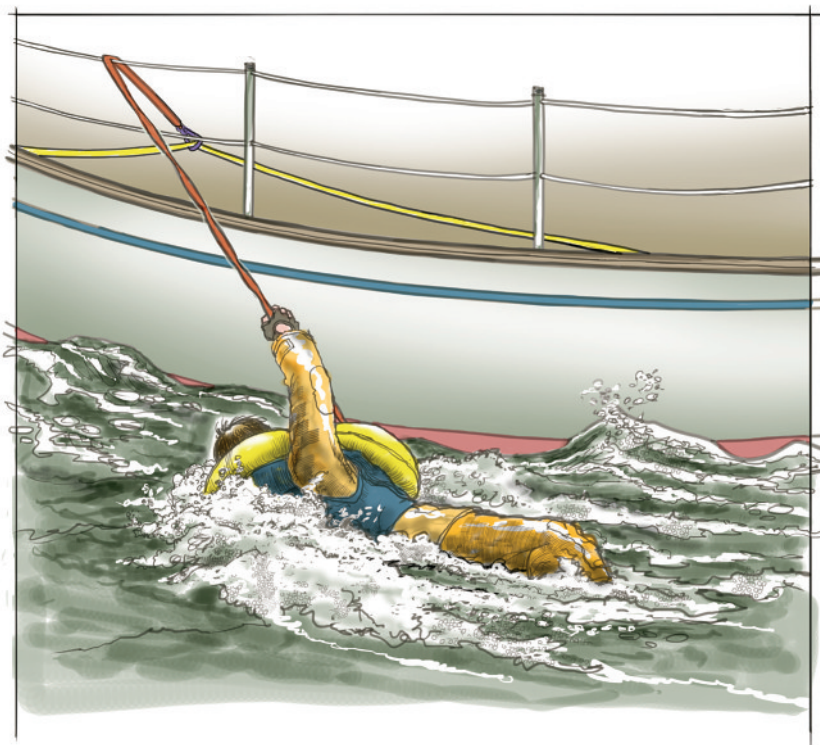
Your PFD probably has a simple plastic snap that closes to bind it over your chest. The double D-rings that mate you to the tethers should never be used singly; always clip through both! A harness vest pulled by one D-ring will overstress the plastic chest clip and can pull the PFD off. Some newer PFDs use "soft" high-strength webbing D-rings instead of metal hardware; the tension tests prove they're reliable, and lighter and less bulky than their metal counterparts.



Commercial tethers customarily have a Y pattern: a tough shackle at your PFD D-rings is bound to a pair of tethers with one-handed terminal shackles. The tethers aren't of equal length. The longer tether is easier to use when traveling fore-and-aft, but when you reach a point that needs your attention, you'll clip into a "local" strong point with the shorter tether. Leaning against the short tether offers stability and both hands free. Long tethers sound convenient, but they can be treacherous: limit your scope.

Your boat is churning along with a good breeze. Iron Otto (the autopilot or wind-rudder) is at the helm and you step forward to check for chafe. Crikey! A capricious wave overcomes your balance and you fall over the lifeline and into your boat's hull wave. Smart you, you're clipped onto the jackline! If you hit the water and discover your tether was too long, you are in jeopardy, being jerked along at 6 or 7 knots with the seaway tearing at your arms and legs, the inflated PFD imposing major water resistance, threatening to drown you. Hoisting yourself up onto the deck by force will be harder than you expect. This isn't a mere wetting; it's a mortal emergency. We've lost shipmates, good sailors, this way. In leisure at the dock, at anchor, with mates, check the play in your jacklines and tethers. Their work is not to get you back aboard the boat; their work is to keep you connected to the boat and out of this killing sluiceway.

Some PFD chest shackles have an escape function to use if you're being dragged beside the boat by your tether, or if your boat is sinking and the jackline is taking you down with it. A single pull will free you. You'll then be floating handsomely via a fully functional PFD with a water-activated light. The alternate release is a sailing knife that will cut through the tether in one motion.



As described in the previous issue (WB No. 310), your PFD-assisted buoyancy is the play between your weight vector downward (N , a force measured in newtons) and the upward vector of the PFD's lifting force (F_B , also measured in newtons). The desired result is $F_B > N$. Review the chart in the previous issue to determine how many newtons your particular body—and waterborne pursuit—require. Choose your PFD accordingly.

Jan Adkins is a regular contributor to WoodenBoat. Visit his blog, Dockwolloping (www.dockwalloping.boats), for more insightful illustrated discussion of all sorts of maritime matters.

Special thanks to Vince Todd for providing insight on current best practices.





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The Reincarnations of WHEN AND IF

Gen. George Patton's ultimate schooner

by Tyler Fields



There is a small, faded photograph tacked to the wall at Ballentine's Boat Shop in Cataumet, Massachusetts, on the Buzzards Bay shore of Cape Cod. It is covered with layers of wood dust, and the edges are a bit torn. The photo—small, grainy, and black-and-white, as if from an old postcard—captured a white-hulled schooner in light air, flying every sail she could without much to show for it. The photo is easy to overlook amid the maybe 75 on the wall. For more than a decade, I walked past the image daily—often more than once. But something about that schooner kept me looking again. Finally, my curiosity grew enough to dig out a magnifying glass with which I could barely make out her nameboard: WHEN AND IF.

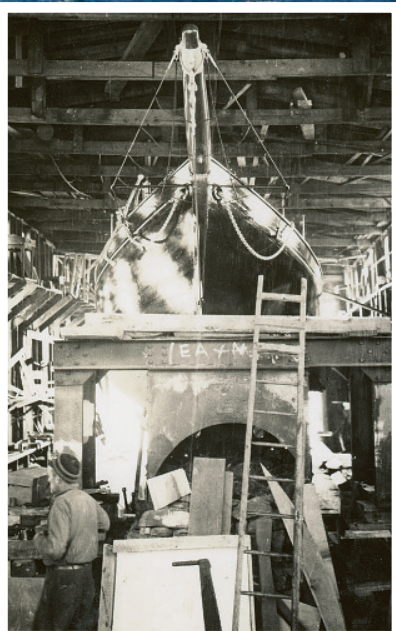
The schooner, commissioned in 1939, had been the pride of George Patton Jr., the career U.S. Army officer who achieved fame as a World War II full general (see sidebar, page 41). He died after a motor-vehicle collision in Germany shortly after the war's end without achieving his longtime dream of sailing around the world with his wife, Beatrice, and family. Before the war, Patton had made clear his wishes for the cherished schooner should he not survive the war: The family could keep her, donate her for educational purposes, or scuttle her. Beatrice chose to keep the schooner and sailed her extensively. After she died in 1953, the yacht passed to her brother, Fred Ayer, and later to his son, Fred Ayer Jr.

By the 1970s, the Ayer family was ready to find a new home for the schooner. Honoring the general's wishes, they donated her in 1973 to Landmark School in Beverly, Massachusetts. The school, founded by Dr. Charles Drake two years earlier, provides students who have dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities an academic approach tailored to their style of learning. The donation was a nod to Patton's own history with the disorder. The school established a seamanship and character-building program built around the schooner. The costs of upkeep for WHEN AND IF and a second schooner acquired later eventually proved too burdensome, so the school ended its so-called Watermark Program in 1989. WHEN AND IF was again looking for a steward.

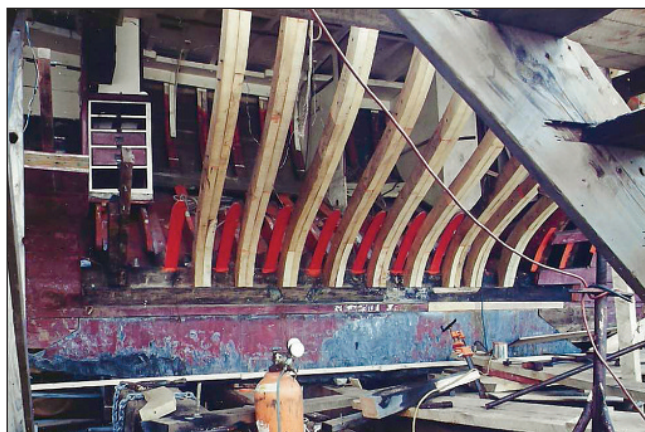
In 1990, Jim Mairs, an editor with W.W. Norton & Company, the New York-based publisher, approached Landmark about buying WHEN AND IF. Just after the school's board approved the idea, the 60-mph gusts of a November gale howled through the harbor at Manchester-by-the-Sea, where WHEN AND IF was lying. Her mooring parted, and she slammed ashore, coming to rest on her port side. For hours, her double-planked hull ground into the rocks, wearing through the two layers of mahogany and cedar. The hull flooded, and it remained on those rocks for more

WHEN AND IF, which takes the breezes of Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound in stride, is a 63'5" LOD schooner designed by John G. Alden for ocean passages envisioned by George Patton before he achieved fame as a four-star general during World War II. She was launched in 1939. *Below left*—WHEN AND IF nears completion in the F.F. Pendleton boatyard in Wiscasset, Maine, where the future general George Patton closely supervised her construction and launching in 1939. *Below right*—George and his wife, Beatrice, cherished their Alden schooner ARCTURUS and sailed her extensively before World War II. Patton died before realizing his dream of ocean voyaging aboard WHEN AND IF.

TYLER FIELDS



WENHAM MUSEUM/PATTON FAMILY ARCHIVES (BOTH)



GANNON & BENJAMIN MARINE RAILWAY (BOTH)

Above left—Once lifted free of the rocky shore on which she grounded in a November gale in 1990, *WHEN AND IF* was set on the hard at the Fred J. Dion Yacht Yard in Salem, Massachusetts. Her port-side's severe damage is clearly evident. **Above right**—Before the frame and planking repairs could begin, damaged bronze floors were restored to shape.

than a week before Bay State Towing could bring in a salvage crane and tugboats. The crews first removed the masts and rigging and then lifted the hull onto a barge for a tow to Fred J. Dion Yacht Yard in the nearby city of Salem..

Landmark School was facing repairs estimated at \$250,000. An insurance company declared her a total loss. With options waning, a chainsaw fate looked likely. But Mairs and his wife, Gina Webster, remained committed to the boat and kept their ownership hopes alive. Even before the gale, Mairs had approached Nat Benjamin and Ross Gannon at Gannon & Benjamin Marine Railway on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, about addressing the schooner's needs. Instead of contemplating a straightforward refit, Nat and Ross traveled to Dion's to see if she could be saved at all.

The damage was extensive but mostly confined to the port side: The hole in her topsides was big enough to drive a small car through. Not only was the damage to the planking extensive but also numerous frames were destroyed. Her rudder was broken, her keel was scarred, and the cast-bronze floors were mangled. However, her starboard side was spared; "The paint was hardly cracked on that side of the boat," Nat said. And nearly everything above the deck was intact. Belowdeck, the boat remained dry forward of the galley, and the head and staterooms aft survived. Her interior amidships had long since been modified to accommodate student

bunks, but the plywood of that refit was waterlogged and unsalvageable.

Nat and Ross were confident she could be saved—and, more important, she should be. They submitted their estimate to Mairs, a number much higher than the repair bill that Landmark had feared. Mairs called Nat with the somber news that the cost was beyond his means; he would be unable to fund the work alone. But minutes after that call ended, Nat heard the boatyard's beachfront phone ring again. Mairs had an idea. The thought, further developed in the call, led to an agreement that Mairs would cover the cost of materials and Nat and Ross would cover the labor, and in exchange, all three would share ownership of *WHEN AND IF*. The boatbuilders immediately jumped at the opportunity.

Nat and Ross had already bought and restored the severely fire-damaged 72' Italian yawl *ZORRA*, the subject of another insurance sale. Even so, they decided that one more project would be well worth the trade. The deal was concluded nearly two years after the storm that damaged *WHEN AND IF*. She was picked up by a Brownell Boat Transport hydraulic trailer, which was then taken aboard an R.M. Packer Company barge on a rising tide in Salem. The crew set 1"-thick steel plates on the breakwater and slowly drove the truck, trailer, and schooner forward. As the weight shifted to the barge, the truck paused for nearly an hour for the tide to rise enough for the truck to pull completely onto the barge. Loaded and secured, the barge was towed from the North Shore down Massachusetts Bay, through the Cape Cod Canal, then across Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound to Vineyard Haven. There, the loading process was repeated in reverse, and after being driven off, the truck offloaded the schooner in a grassy lot adjacent to Gannon & Benjamin's beachfront shop.

For the next year, a crew led by Andy Lyons worked steadily on repairs, but then the rented lot was sold and



GANNON & BENJAMIN MARINE RAILWAY

During the schooner's restoration at Gannon & Benjamin, the crew used the undamaged starboard side of the hull to pattern frame replacements along 20' of her length to port.

A visionary with a dream of world sailing

Gen. George S. Patton's father, George Patton II, was a California attorney and politician who was wealthy enough to be an early landowner on Catalina Island. Summers there afforded the younger Patton opportunities for horseback riding, sailing, and other sports. He excelled in them, in contrast to an academic life hampered by the reading and writing difficulties of dyslexia; he graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1909 only because of his headstrong personality and sheer determination.

It was on Catalina that Patton met Beatrice Ayer, who was vacationing on the island with her family in 1902. Ayer also came from wealth; her father was a prominent Massachusetts businessman. While George's passions started with horsemanship and the cavalry, Beatrice loved sailing. In her youth, she had spent most of her summers on the North Shore of Massachusetts, and newspaper clippings from the time show her to have been a skilled racer in Manchester Class boats, S-boats, and others in regattas from Manchester to Cohasset. Eight years after they met, in 1910, the couple were married at her family's estate in Beverly, Massachusetts.

On leave as a young military officer, Patton would join his wife in New England. They often sailed together, and in August 1923 while sailing their own small boat, they rescued three boys who nearly drowned after capsizing a dinghy. Patton's efforts that day made the newspapers and earned him the Silver Life Saving Medal of Honor from the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Pattons moved from duty station to duty station as Patton gained rank, but they still found time for recreation. While stationed on the East Coast, he commissioned a 22' motorboat that the family used for years on nearby lakes and rivers. (Even during World War II, he was rumored to have commandeered sailboats—Star boats, if the news reports are true—in occupied territories.)

In 1934, by then a major, Patton was stationed at Fort Myer, Virginia, with the Third Cavalry. One day in early March 1935, he arrived home and announced that they were once again on the move. Beatrice recounted that when she calmly asked where and when, he told her it would be Hawaii—"April. In our own boat." A larger boat was plainly necessary, and within two days Patton purchased a schooner in New Bedford, Massachusetts. He also admitted to Beatrice, with uncharacteristic humility, that he knew nothing of offshore navigation. But he said not to worry, for he had "found a fellow who knows all about it." The fellow was J.E. Lawton, a wholesale lumber dealer in Washington, D.C., and a lifelong landsman. "Navigation is just his hobby," Patton quipped. "In fact, he's never been to sea yet."

The schooner was ARCTURUS, a 51' John G. Alden design built in 1930 by Harvey Gamage in Maine. She was loaded onto a steamer bound for California. Patton had 11 short lessons in navigation, and it was May by the time he, Beatrice, and their 12-year-old son boarded ARCTURUS and sailed away with a handful of friends as crew. One of them was Joseph Ekeland, a Swede who was a veteran square-rig sailor who had also crewed the J-class sloop YANKEE during her AMERICA's Cup trials in 1930 and '34. Ekeland was covered in colorful tattoos, including a large Chinese dragon on his back inked by a Japanese artist in Singapore. During the voyage, Ekeland became a trusted family friend and continued as a skipper for Beatrice after the general's death.

ARCTURUS arrived in Honolulu in early June after 15 days without trouble. In 1936, they sailed ARCTURUS farther



WENHAM MUSEUM/PATTON FAMILY ARCHIVES

Adorned in matching sweaters, the crew of ARCTURUS readies for an offshore adventure. In addition to their children, George and Beatrice also had friends and professional sailors aboard for voyages to Hawaii from California, deep into the South Pacific, and back to California from Hawaii in 1937.

into the South Pacific, reaching Palmyra Atoll and Fanning Island (Tabuaeran); the latter had been discovered by a distant relative of Beatrice and named for him, even though it had been inhabited by a Polynesian community for more than 300 years.

In 1937, Patton, by then a colonel, was reassigned from Hawaii back to the U.S. mainland. Patton knew the move was a step toward the widely expected war in Europe, which he was sure the United States would join. It was a future he was very eager to meet.

For the Pattons, it was only natural to return the same way they arrived. Unfortunately for ARCTURUS and her crew, the eastbound crossing was far less tranquil and, at 31 days, more than twice as long, including a six-day gale 1,500 miles off California. Nevertheless, "Someday we'd like to sail around the world," they told reporters upon their arrival in San Diego. With war seeming imminent, they sold the schooner and returned to New England, where they exchanged sou'westers for riding boots. (ARCTURUS is still sailing today, out of Auckland, New Zealand; see WB No. 280.)

Patton, however, was badly injured when kicked by a horse. The long recovery not only sidelined his career as the Army readied for war but also brought on a deep depression. Family lore recalls Beatrice's efforts to lift her husband's spirits by encouraging him to write to Alden about a commission for a new, larger schooner for the Pattons' postwar adventures. Alden said at the time that Patton had become very fond of ARCTURUS and, "he wanted me to design another just like her, only larger, big enough to sail around the world."

Gordon Prince, a Boston-area sailor and longtime friend, said Patton spent his time designing much of the new schooner himself, but exactly how much is uncertain. One thing Patton demanded was a charthouse on deck to be fitted out with all necessary navigation equipment he had learned to use aboard ARCTURUS.

At the time, Alden's name had become synonymous with fast, bluewater racers inspired by the Grand Banks fishing

WHEN AND IF awaits final outfitting in Wiscasset, Maine, after her launching in 1939. Patton and the yacht's designer, John G. Alden, closely supervised her construction and Joseph Ekeland's rigging.

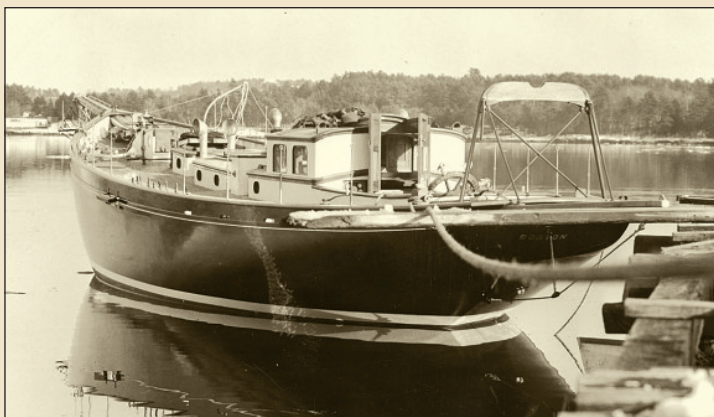
schooners of Gloucester, Massachusetts. By the late 1930s, 11 yachts, all named MALABAR, had been built in succession for Alden's own use, and racing, before being sold to make room for the next one. The same year Patton's new boat was delivered, Alden launched MALABAR XII.

Patton's new schooner would be in line with Alden's designs of the era and was meant to be fast, but for Patton, safety was paramount. The design, No. 669, called for a hull 63'5" LOD with a waterline length of 47'3" and a displacement of 84,640 lbs. Alden relied heavily on Maine boatbuilders for construction, especially Charles Morse in Thomaston and Hodgdon Brothers in East Boothbay, but the contract for the future WHEN AND IF went to the boatyard founded in 1910 by brothers Fred and Emery Pendleton in Wiscasset. The area had been famous for shipbuilding since before the American Revolution and reached its peak in the 1850s. As the demand for large ships receded, Pendletons focused on yacht work, for which they were well respected. Patton's eye for quality would not be overlooked; he was present at the yard when WHEN AND IF's keel was laid.

Alden's call for robust and heavy construction was a departure from the Bermuda Race-era MALABARS. Patton's boat was nearly 25,000 lbs heavier than the 58' MALABAR X; she was built for distance cruising, not winning races. She was double-planked with an outer layer of Honduras mahogany and inner planks of Alaska yellow cedar, bronze-fastened to stout, double-sawn white oak frames reinforced with bronze hull strapping. Sprung decks of thick teak, high bulwarks, and varnished caprails enhanced her graceful hull shape. Her sail area of just over 1,700 sq ft and the choice of a small auxiliary engine implied that the owner intended to sail when at all possible. At the time, some noted that the small engine might have made the schooner undesirable once hundreds of private yachts were commandeered by the Navy and Coast Guard for wartime service, and in fact Patton's boat spent the war years under cover in Solomons Island, Maryland.

No cost was spared, and all materials were of the finest quality. I heard one example when I spoke to the yacht designer and builder Nat Benjamin at Gannon & Benjamin Marine Railway on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, which rebuilt the yacht in the 1990s. He passed along a story he had heard about the chronometer, a vital tool in navigation. Patton wanted the best, and at the yard he insisted the chartroom have a proper one. Alden suggested adding a second chronometer, since no prudent mariner would ever rely on one alone. When a yard representative asked what would happen if the two clocks showed different times, Patton chimed in with a solution: add a third one!

After a thorough inspection by Alden and Patton, WHEN AND IF was launched in 1939. Alden told *The Boston Globe* that Patton's friend Gordon Prince came to the design office in Boston and announced that the name had been chosen after Patton declared that "WHEN this war is over and IF I live through it, Bea and I are going to sail around the world." However, John Chatman, a professional skipper who



worked for the Patton family for decades and also served as the schooner's wartime caretaker, said the name reflected Patton's frustration with boats built for other people: "There was always something wrong with them," as Chatman told the story, so Patton felt that "WHEN AND IF I ever built a boat of my own..." he would get it right. Ekeland, on the other hand, credited the name to Beatrice. Whichever version is true, the name was fitting. Patton hardly sailed her at all before going to war. Documentation is scarce, but a short family movie and a few photographs are evidence of a brief prewar cruise in Maine and a delivery to Maryland.

"For all its fine wood and metal fittings, Gen. Patton wanted no fancy yacht," Ekeland said. "Just a sailor's vessel, plain, but competent. And she's solid, good. One of the best I ever saw."

After the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States officially joined the fighting. Patton had been made a brigadier general in 1940, and during the war he rose through the ranks to become a four-star general by 1945. In a letter to his caretaker, Chatman, Patton wrote, "As you can see, we are in another war and having a very good time. I hope some day we can get back and have a good sail on the When-and-If."

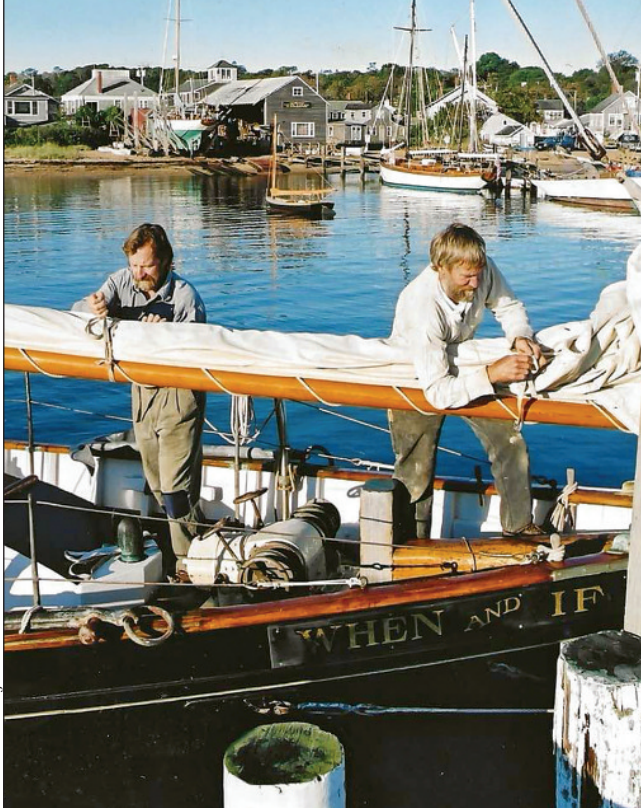
WHEN AND IF waited under cover until the war in Europe came to an end in May 1945. Even then, Patton's often-difficult demeanor led to personal conflicts, and he was relieved of command. In frustration, he set about planning for life outside the military. In late 1945, he met with Ekeland in Stockholm, Sweden, and asked him to return to the United States as soon as he could. He believed the end of his career was inevitable, and he wanted WHEN AND IF ready to set sail.

Three weeks later, Patton's Cadillac collided with an Army truck in Germany. The crash fractured vertebrae in his spine. Beatrice immediately flew to Germany to be at his side; 12 days later, on December 21, he died of his injuries.

Beatrice continued to sail the schooner, with Ekeland's help. Maine was a favorite cruising ground, and photographs show her near Portland in 1947, when Beatrice sailed up from Manchester before a two-week cruise Downeast with her brother, Fred Ayer, and friends. In an interview with the *Portland Press Herald*, Ekeland described Beatrice as an excellent sailor who took the schooner's helm much of her time aboard.

In fall 1953, while hunting on horseback near her home in Hamilton, Massachusetts, Beatrice was thrown from her horse and suffered an internal hemorrhage. She died almost immediately. After her death, the schooner went to Fred Ayer, and later to his son. It remained in the Ayer family until its donation to Landmark School in 1973.

—TF



Nat Benjamin, left, and Ross Gannon, right, not only rebuilt the salvaged schooner but co-owned her and spent many years sailing her from Martha's Vineyard north to Canada and south to the Caribbean.

the boatyard given 30 days to vacate. Over a two-week period, using planks, rollers, and an antique bulldozer loaned by a friend, the yard crew painstakingly jacked up the 42-ton schooner on the sandy soil and built a cradle underneath her. She was carefully rolled away, maneuvered between two buildings, and then taken into the parking lot in front of the marine railway. Space was tight, and the bow overhung the railway's small winch shed. Work resumed, and the project got back on schedule.

The unscathed starboard side was used to develop patterns for the new double-sawn frames of black locust that were shaped and installed for a 20' length of the port side. The twisted bronze floors were heated and coaxed back into shape. New deckbeams, missing portions of the teak deck, and a new worm shoe were also fitted. New port-side tanks were made to replace the ones crushed in the grounding, and the original GM diesel engine was rebuilt.

Gannon & Benjamin's timber merchant in England found a African mahogany tree in Nairobi, Kenya, which was harvested and shipped to London to be milled to order. The wood, enough to replank the entire outer layer of the port side closely matching the original Honduras mahogany, was containerized and shipped to the yard.

Nat and Ross designed a new accommodation with a U-shaped galley aft, a comfortable main saloon, and additional berths above the settees. The plywood bulkheads fitted during the Landmark years were removed and replaced with varnished cypress ones made of wood recycled from a Cape Cod farm's decommissioned water tank, resawn into 1"-thick stock. The same wood was used throughout the interior.

The work continued steadily. On one bitterly cold day, Nat looked out the office window and noticed a gruff man in a long overcoat looking up at the schooner. Walking outside, Nat asked politely if he could help. In a curt response, the man said, "I'm Gen. Patton."

Heeled over in a breeze, WHEN AND IF's crew attempts to stay dry on the high side. Farther aft, sailors can shelter in the doghouse that Patton envisioned and demanded of Alden during their initial design talks.

SETH SALZMANN





TYLER FIELDS

While an experienced sailor can manage the schooner shorthanded, a large crew is handy when racing, as seen here off Martha's Vineyard during the Pat West Gaff and Schooner Regatta.

He was neither a reincarnation—though Patton himself believed in such things—nor a hallucination. He was the retired Maj. Gen. George Patton IV, the son of Patton Jr. of World War II fame (the sequence of numerals in the family is anomalous). Naturally, during their conversation, Nat asked whether Patton had ever sailed with his father aboard the yacht, hoping for a story for the scrapbook. The man's response was as warm as the weather: "Yup. Worst experience of my life."

In June 1994, the prized schooner was back to her former glory and ready for relaunching, with the island's close-knit wooden-boat community gathered to celebrate. The marshal of ceremonies was the legendary network news anchor Walter Cronkite, who as a young war correspondent had covered troops on the front lines, including Patton's advance on German Gen. Erwin Rommel's army in North Africa; Cronkite lived on the island and was an avid sailor.

The years following WHEN AND IF's relaunching were filled with family cruises and opportunities for island children to learn to sail aboard the historic schooner. Jim Lobdell, a close friend of Nat and Ross and a respected figure on the Vineyard Haven waterfront, was hired as a part-time captain. During his tenure, Lobdell served as captain when Mairs and his wife ventured to Maine and Nova Scotia. Both Nat and Ross cruised

WHEN AND IF extensively. When not underway with one of the three partners, Lobdell would share his love of sailing by hosting island nonprofit organizations and taking young sailors offshore.

By 2007, the partners were ready to sell. Nat and Ross had sold ZORRA a few years earlier, and the pair were eager for new adventures. The absence of response to brokerage ads for WHEN AND IF in Europe and the Caribbean was discouraging. More than a year went by. The next summer, Ross was in Maine with his partner, now wife, Kirsten. Nat was back in Vineyard Haven and working on the dock when a visitor asked if the schooner was still available. Nat, a little skeptical, confirmed that it was. In quick order, Paul Ruitenberg agreed to the asking price in late August, and a handshake sealed the deal.

Nat immediately called Ross in Maine with the news. Kirsten had always dreamed of a wedding aboard the schooner, so plans were hatched. Within days, the Benjamin family had hoisted WHEN AND IF's sails and were headed for Maine. Without time to spare, Ross and Kirsten were married aboard on September 21. The next day, they sailed into Boothbay Harbor and traded the schooner for their own car, which Ruitenberg's crew had driven up to meet them.



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The restoration undertaken by Doug Hazlitt was thorough and dealt with areas untouched during Gannon & Benjamin's efforts, namely the stern structure and deck. Cayuga Wooden Boat Works rebuilt the transom (above left) and transom framing (above right). Some frames aft needed to be replaced before her deck was laid anew with sprung teak.

The Ruitenbergs continued the tradition of excellent care and love for the schooner. Between yearly family trips to and from the Caribbean, the schooner remained active with local nonprofits and youth sailing programs under the professional captain Emyl Hattigh. They continued to take the schooner to Gannon & Benjamin for work, including the installation of a new Luger diesel. But sadly, after three years, circumstances forced the Ruitenbergs to place the schooner back on the market.

The next owner was Doug Hazlitt, a vintner from New York. A seasoned veteran of classic-yacht restorations, Hazlitt had earlier bought Alden's MALABAR X in Greenport, New York, after she had been badly damaged in Hurricane Bob in 1991. He had that yacht trucked to Cayuga Wooden Boat Works in Ithaca, New York, for a two-year restoration led by shop owner Dennis Montgomery. Hazlitt, however, soon sold the boat, and her new owners took her to Spain. Now schoonerless, Hazlitt dealt with seller's remorse in the most reasonable way possible; he asked his MALABAR X

hired skipper, Seth Salzmann, to find him a new yacht. None of the prospects suited Hazlitt, and after each showing, Salzmann would boldly state, "Well, it's not WHEN AND IF."

Salzmann had encountered WHEN AND IF in Maine years earlier while captaining the GRACE BAILEY, an 1882, 82' schooner of the Maine Windjammer fleet. It was a brief crossing of tacks, but WHEN AND IF made an enduring impression.

Hazlitt and Salzmann had known the schooner was available but worried that the price was too high for a yacht that would likely soon need another overhaul. But after she had been on the market for two years, Ruitenberg's broker called Hazlitt and encouraged him to make an offer. Even before Ruitenberg replied, Hazlitt called Salzmann to ask whether he would serve as captain. The following day, the offer was accepted. Salzmann caught up with the schooner in Rockport, Maine, in spring 2012 during a brief haulout at Rockport Marine. After she was relaunched, he raised sail, cast off the mooring, and headed into Penobscot Bay, sailing solo. An hour or two later, he sailed back into Rockport Harbor and picked up

Below—While designed and built for strength and safety, the classic Alden schooner still shines with richly oiled and varnished teak, which is no small task in a tropical climate. **Right**—Seth Salzmann has owned the yacht since 2016, but his familiarity with her began much earlier.





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TYLER FIELDS

Each fall, WHEN AND IF ventures to Florida to join owner Seth Salzmann's charter boat fleet out of Key West.

Hazlitt already knew WHEN AND IF's stern needed attention. To guide the work, Armstrong lofted this hull, too. It became clear to him that something was missing. At some point during the Landmark years, issues with the transom were resolved by removing its structure altogether, cutting away compromised planking, and fitting the transom back into place; the procedure shortened the schooner by 6".

The Cayuga team removed all compromised timber and planks, milled and installed a new horn timber, fitted all-new transom framing, and replaced the next three frames forward with copies made of alternating laminates of silverballi and angelique. To return the schooner to her original length, they replaced a total of 56 planks, covering 15' from the main shrouds aft. While work progressed on the hull, the charthouse, cabin trunk, and foredeck hatch scuttle were removed. On deck, shipwright Ted Okie and Salzmann worked together to replace her aging structure and new sprung planks of Burma teak.

Hazlitt had hoped to have the project completed in time to sail to the Caribbean for the winter of 2013–14. While the main structural work was finished, the schooner was not yet ready for blue-water cruising. With time running out before the lake's locks closed for the season, the schooner's shed was taken down and she was relaunched that October so that she could motor through the

Cayuga–Seneca Canal and spend the winter at a dock in Watkins Glen, closer to the Hazlitt family vineyard.

Just as WHEN AND IF's Caribbean travel plans were scrapped, Salzmann took a position as captain of ADVENTURESS, a recently restored 83' William Fife-designed schooner. Hazlitt settled in for a few months of dockside projects, including wiring, finishing up the cockpit coamings and staving, and constructing the helm box.

In 2015, Hazlitt called Salzmann in Spain to tell him that he was putting the schooner back on the market. Still feeling regret at watching MALABAR X's move overseas, Salzmann asked for a favor: "If you have to list the boat, set the price high and let me lease WHEN AND IF in the meantime," with a right of first refusal. He offered to take over the crew costs, get the schooner a U.S. Coast Guard certification to carry passengers, and start chartering. Along with the usual day-sails and sunsets cruises, WHEN AND IF would also join the classic-yacht-regatta circuit. "It will either help you

his mooring, all without thought of starting the Lugger. From that day on, he and the schooner have seemingly shared a mutual trust in each other.

Dennis Montgomery and the crew at Cayuga Wooden Boat Works had so impressed Hazlitt with their work on MALABAR X that Hazlitt also took WHEN AND IF there for her next refit. She sailed on her own bottom to the north end of Cayuga Lake, New York, where the yard had a second facility. She was hauled out and covered by a temporary building.

Hazlitt managed the project himself, along with shipwrights from the yard and a few additional hands. One of those hands was Justin Armstrong. During the restoration of MALABAR X, Justin, then just 16, had wandered into the Cayuga shop and approached Hazlitt and Montgomery for a job. The two older men assumed that sweeping the floors would be a good place to start. Armstrong felt differently and suggested he might be more helpful in lofting the schooner. After that confident introduction, Armstrong proved himself capable.

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TYLER FIELDS

Although Patton never realized his dream of sailing his yacht around the world, WHEN AND IF's capabilities have inspired the ambitions of a succession of owners.

sell it, or I'll realize it would work as a charter business and I'll buy it," he reasoned.

Hazlitt agreed. Salzmann came back to the United States, and he and his wife, Jenny, whom he met while captaining ADVENTURESS, jumped into charter mode. One of their first trips was the June 2015 Tall Ships Festival in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, followed by a summer of cocktail receptions and daysails throughout New England. In 2016, they took WHEN AND IF into the Great Lakes. Then, only 10 months after Salzmann's lease began, Hazlitt received a cash offer for WHEN AND IF's full asking price. By a stroke of luck, during the Great Lakes trip Salzmann had secured financing to make his first-refusal purchase possible. With a handshake between the two, Salzmann was in the schooner business.

During summers since then, WHEN AND IF has been based in Salem, Massachusetts, not far from her original home of Manchester-by-the-Sea. Each fall, Salzmann takes her to Key West, Florida, where she joins his fleet of daysailing charter boats.

Recalling the photograph of WHEN AND IF on Ballentine's wall, I wondered why some boats such as WHEN AND IF manage to survive when other worthy boats rot away on the hard or sink at the dock. I put that question to Nat. "Every boat has its

own destiny," he said. "Some boats are lucky. If they're destined to be around, they will be."

Lucky or not, a boat's survival often comes down to one person taking a gamble at the right time. Without Mairs, Hazlitt, or Salzmann, WHEN AND IF's story could have taken an entirely different turn. Ten years after his gamble, Salzmann's business continues to grow. Building upon that success, he also recently purchased MALABAR X in Spain and added her to his stable of historic yachts. For WHEN AND IF, being open to the public has introduced thousands of visitors to the heroic life of Gen. George S. Patton, the impressive designs of John Alden, and the unmatched joy of sailing a beautiful schooner in a fair breeze, just as shown in one old photograph.

Throughout long days on the water and even longer hours maintaining a large wooden boat, Seth and Jenny Salzmann have never let go of Patton's original dream. As their family has grown, they have set aside WHEN AND IF's earnings for a future adventure of their own.... "When the boys are old enough, and if we can save the money, we are going to sail around the world." 

Tyler Fields grew up in the Pacific Northwest and brought his passion for photography and classic boats to New England. He is a frequent contributor to WoodenBoat and other publications, teaches photography at WoodenBoat School, and co-hosts the maritime podcast "Around the Buoy."

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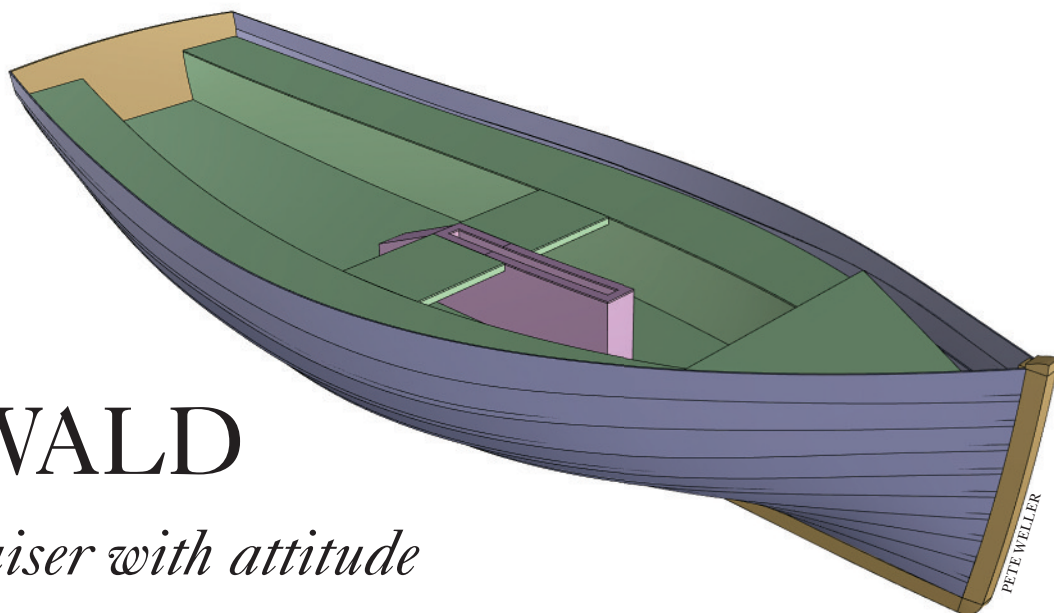


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RÆDWALD

A camp-cruiser with attitude

Text and photographs by Nic Compton

Thirteen point nine knots. That's the top speed Sam Doman has so far recorded on his newly launched 15' dinghy, RÆDWALD. It's surely some kind of record for a gaff-rigged dinghy, if you exclude Australia's 18' Sydney Harbour skiffs, which regularly clock speeds of 15 knots and more. Even the gaff-rigged sandbaggers of New York, with their huge sail areas, only occasionally reached that speed, and they can hardly be described as dinghies.

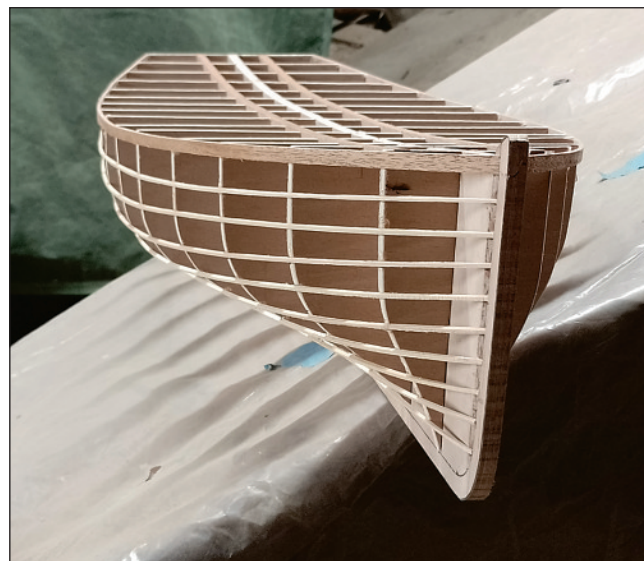
"When I built the boat, I wanted to be able to do 15 knots," Sam says. "My unofficial target was to be the fastest gaff-rigged boat built outside Australia." While he reckons that the Sydney Harbour skiffs are "pretty untouchable," he aspires to "beat the round-Britain record for an open boat, which at the moment is 15 days. That's an average speed of just over 3 knots. It's quick, but I think it's not unbeatable."

If Sam sounds like a young man in a hurry, that's because in many ways he is. Speed was his main focus when designing RÆDWALD. But there was something else: Sam is a keen dinghy-cruiser and wanted a boat he could stick a tent over and sleep on. He wanted a boat that would be strong enough and—crucially—stable enough to sail around Britain, which includes some of the gnarliest coastlines in Europe.

It sounds as if those requirements—speed, seaworthiness, and comfort—should be incompatible and yet, probably because he's young and doesn't always play by the rules, Sam seems to have achieved the impossible. What's more, he's done it while sticking to his preferred genre: a wooden boat with a traditional rig.

When I first saw the videos of RÆDWALD planing along under spinnaker, with Sam's girlfriend, Jess, leaning out on a trapeze (yes, a trapeze on a gaffer!), my first thought was, why not just build a modern planing hull and be done with it? Even when I came face-to-face with the boat and was duly impressed by the quality of Sam's workmanship, I was still thinking maybe he'd mixed up his priorities. Out at sea, the lack of wind and big swell made it hard to get a sense of the boat's real character. It was only when we came into the calmer estuary and I saw her sailing serenely, and at considerable speed, in the evening breeze that I realized that Sam's quest for speed had also resulted in a boat that performs very well in light airs. When I eventually joined him aboard, I saw that his desire for all-weather performance had also produced a boat that is extremely comfortable and pleasant to sail. It's a remarkable achievement for a first design from someone with no formal qualifications in the subject.

Sam has long had his feet in two camps, with a lifelong appreciation of both traditional and modern



Opposite—The 15' dinghy RÆDWALD achieves high performance under a traditional gaff rig. Here she displays her maximum sail area, which includes the jib of a Wayfarer dinghy and the 300-sq-ft spinnaker of a B14 dinghy. **Above**—A slightly simplified version of the design is currently being developed as a CNC-cut kit. **Right**—The designer, Sam Doman, made 12 models before building the prototype.



Sam's background racing modern dinghies is evident in the RÆDWALD's trapeze, which might outrage traditionalists but helps the boat reach its 15-knot target speed.

boat each, and Sam could then build the boats commercially if he wanted to. The result was the 13'10" LONG-SHORE, which Sam built in 2019 and, just for fun, fitted with a rig. He still sails the boat most summer days when he's at home, in any weather, and regularly sleeps aboard while tucked up in some muddy creek on the River Deben or the nearby River Orwell.

Barge boats were built as beasts of burden to carry crews and provisions

to and from barge to shore under oars; they were not designed for sailing or for speed. With their plumb stems, slab-sided topsides, and short ends, they look every bit like the workboats they were intended to be. Which is why Sam was surprised to find that, if the wind was strong enough, his boat could be induced to plane. And that got him thinking.

"I really enjoyed sailing her," he says, "and she kind of did everything I wanted her to do. But I just thought, how could I make her sail better and be more versatile? So, I stretched out her shape and then looked at it and thought, 'I want it a bit flatter here, a bit fuller here, a bit finer here.' At each step I made a few minor adjustments until I was happy with the shape. It didn't all happen in one go. I had the idea of a boat I wanted to build a few years ago, and I suppose I've been designing it in my head ever since. So, I knew what I wanted it to look like."

Although Sam is a confident sailor and boatbuilder, his skills didn't extend to operating a CAD program. Each stage of the boat's evolution was therefore developed by making scale models out of cardboard or modelmaker's plywood. Sam reckons he made a total of 12 models, culminating in a full-sized half model "just to

boats. Brought up in Woodbridge on the East Coast of England, he started sailing when he was eight. While his father raced Merlin Rockets and Flying 15s, Sam started out on Optimists and Mirror dinghies before graduating to high-performance boats such as B14s and 49ers. It was in these that he learned how much fun you could have on a trapeze. Meanwhile, like every boat-mad East Coast boy worth his salt, he was being inculcated into the world of smacks, bawleys, and Thames barges. It was in these that he learned about the beauty of traditional rigs and became a passionate advocate of the gaff rig in particular.

This well-rounded approach to sailing continued into adulthood, with a course in boatbuilding at the International Boatbuilding Training Centre in Lowestoft, 37 miles north of Woodbridge. He then served as crew aboard the three-masted schooner CREOLE—said to be the largest wooden boat in the world, with a sparred length of 214' and LOD of 190'—followed by an adventuresome voyage on a 120' ferro-cement ketch in Papua New Guinea and the Philippines. Smaller boats were, however, always his passion.

"At heart, I'm a dinghy sailor," he says. "I've always enjoyed sailing dinghies and small boats the most. You're closer to the water, and you have more of a connection with the boat. The bigger the boat gets, the less involved you are in the actual sailing."

When the renowned East Coast author Robert Simper approached Sam to take a mold off his 1950s barge tender, Sam jumped at the opportunity. The idea was that they would have a



RÆDWALD's interior is extremely spacious, although quite a lot of string is needed to cater for the five possible rig configurations.

Top—Sam built a full-sized half-model to ensure that the plank runs were smooth. **Second from top**—The box-sectioned keel, which is sheathed with carbon fiber, gives extra rigidity. **Third from top**—The boat's deep forefoot is a distinctive feature partly inspired by barge boats. **Bottom**—The stepped lapstrake planking is probably a first for a gaff-rigged dinghy.



SAM DOMAN (ALL)

make sure everything was fair.” It was a massive amount of work before he’d even cut a single plank, but it allowed him to develop the hull shape in a visual and tactile way, which ultimately saved him time in construction, since he had a full-sized mock-up for reference.

“The new boat is almost 18” longer than LONGSHORE,” Sam explains. “She’s got a much finer bow over a plumb stem, which really helps her, especially sailing upwind. The shape goes from a fine bow and flares to really full shoulders quite quickly, which generates a lot of lift and gets her up on the plane. The midsection’s flatter, which aids with planing and stability.” The result is a “buoyant hull, which carries weight well. The stern is slightly more pinched than the old boat, which reduces drag at displacement speed.”

The boat’s construction was similarly uncompromising. Bearing in mind his stated ambition to set a new round-Britain record in an open boat, Sam wanted to build a boat capable of taking the worst that would be thrown at him by the North Sea; the Pentland Firth, a notoriously dangerous strait between Scotland and the Orkney Islands; the Atlantic Ocean; the Irish Sea; and the English Channel. He decided to reinforce the boat’s hull with carbon fiber, arriving at a composite structure of plywood, carbon fiber, fiberglass, solid wood, and ample epoxy.

It’s certainly an impressive and bullet-proof structure, with a hollow keel made of 12mm plywood, and 6mm plywood planking. The keel and garboards were sheathed with carbon fiber, along with the sheer plank, the transom, and the hull interior from gunwale to gunwale on either side of the maststep. Metal fastenings were eliminated except for the bolts holding the maststeps together. The whole hull exterior was then sheathed with fiberglass set in epoxy. The result is a carbon-fiber-reinforced framework that not only protects against impact collision but also improves the boat’s longevity. Ultimately, it also aids sailing performance because it allows the rig tension to be maximized.

For another level of safety, the bottom of the boat is double-skinned, providing extra buoyancy as well as housing tanks for water ballast—which adds an extra 154 lbs (70kg) of weight when required. Perhaps not surprisingly, given Sam’s style of sailing, he’s barely used the water ballast, but others might find it reassuring in windy weather.

Crucially, the reason for using lightweight materials wasn’t to make a light boat. Rather, it was to add strength and effectively overbuild the structure, while keeping the weight moderate. In this, as in other aspects of the design, the Wayfarer set the benchmark not just as one of the most successful dinghy-cruisers ever designed but also due to the fact that all three records for sailing around Britain in an open boat have been set by Wayfarers. By comparison, RÆDWALD weighs 353 lbs (160kg) all up, just 20 lbs (9kg) lighter than a Wayfarer, which is 10” longer.





There wasn't enough wind to get RÆDWALD on plane during the author's test, but the boat coped well in the nasty swell running across Start Bay.

"I think this shape needs a bit of weight behind it to sail well," Sam says. "If she's too light, she bobs around a lot. I wanted to keep a bit of weight in the boat and have a finer bow, to help her sail upwind."

But it wasn't all about strength and performance. It was also about aesthetics and having a bit of fun. Maybe even ruffling a few feathers along the way.

"I used a special tow-weave carbon fiber around the gunwale because it's a lightweight cloth that doesn't absorb too much epoxy, but it's quite impact-resistant. It's also pretty. It looks like a chessboard. It's an aesthetic thing. I wanted the boat to look quite modern, even though it's a traditional design with a traditional gaff rig."

Elsewhere, for example on the transom, he used a chevron-twill weave, which is heavier but stronger than the tow weave, to provide a solid base for the rudder and, perhaps, an outboard motor. Even the wooden quarter knees are reinforced with carbon fiber, for decorative reasons as much as for strength. And there's something I've never seen before: Sam used filler to create small "steps" on the five bottom planks, filling the gaps created by the lapstrake construction, in the style of a stepped speedboat. The jury is still out on whether this has actually added any extra speed.

Above all, Sam wanted the boat to sail well, to be an ambassador for his beloved gaff rig, which he thinks is often unfairly maligned.

"If you look at a lot of traditional-style dinghies, they don't tend to have great pointing ability," he says. "I think a lot of that comes down to the cut of the jib. Wayfarers go well upwind, and the headsail is the first point of entry, so I knew that was a good starting point. And if you've got a nicely shaped jib, obviously it helps with flow over the mainsail."

Sam duly bought an off-the-shelf Wayfarer jib and roller-furling system and used these as the basis for RÆDWALD's rig. I should say "rigs," because RÆDWALD has five different set-ups. Four of them use the same wooden mast (borrowed from LONGSHORE) combined with spars mostly made from repurposed windsurfer masts, in a variety of configurations:

- **Sloop:** gaff mainsail combined with the Wayfarer jib, using the aft maststep;
- **Catboat:** gaff mainsail without jib, using the forward maststep;
- **Lugger:** the same gaff mainsail rerigged as a balance lug without a jib, using the forward maststep;
- **Yawl:** the balance-lug rig set up with mizzen and optional jib set on a bowsprit;
- **Sporty:** carbon-fiber mast and big mainsail, with the same Wayfarer jib as the sloop but set fractionally instead of from the masthead.

Sam has repurposed a 150-sq-ft RS400 spinnaker, which can be flown from the masthead of the short mast or fractionally from the tall mast. For maximum effect—and to reach that 15-knot target—he has also repurposed a 300-sq-ft B14 spinnaker, which he flies from the top of the carbon-fiber mast. And that's not to mention the topsail. As he puts it: "No wonder this boat has so many bits of string!"

Sam reckons the yawl rig is probably the best all-rounder, especially for dinghy-cruising, because having the sails at either extremity makes the boat very maneuverable, while clearing space between the masts. For camping purposes, he's made a set of carbon-fiber hangers that hook around the deep-set gunwales and will support a canvas sleeping platform. He has also designed a tent that can be either fitted over the boom,

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when in single-mast mode, or slung over a line stretched between the two masts when in yawl mode.

In fact, there isn't much Sam hasn't thought of, and the boat is full of nice little details, such as carbon-fiber tubes that drain any errant water from the forward locker into the bilge; similar tubes serve the side benches, which drain into the self-bailer sumps. The seats themselves are covered with a layer of EVA closed-cell foam, which is comfortable to sit on and feels particularly nice underfoot.

Our test sail didn't quite go as planned. First, we had crossed wires about the meeting place, so Sam arrived two hours late, having had to tow the boat through several miles of narrow lanes and then onto a ferry across the River Dart. No sooner had he arrived than the fresh breeze that had been blowing solidly for three days vanished, leaving a much gentler breeze and, once we got outside, a lumpy swell. Then the halyards got in a tangle (all those bits of string!) and Sam was unable to raise the topsail, which mortified him though it didn't bother me a bit. For a real gaff aficionado, the topsail is the rig's master stroke, whereas to me it's just icing on the cake (and sometimes I prefer my cake without icing).

But it didn't matter at all. The wind wasn't enough for planing, but I had seen videos showing that aspect, so I already knew she was fast. And I could see she coped well with the ugly swell that was throwing us all around.

I was, however, impressed by the boat's buoyancy when Sam deliberately capsized her to sort out the halyards and, once he released her, we discovered she was virtually self-righting.

The deliberate capsize was a first for me on a photo shoot. But the magic really happened when we gave up all hope of getting the boat on plane and sailed back into Dartmouth Harbour. There, the water was flat calm, and the breeze funneled down the headland, pushing RÆDWALD along on a broad reach. Even without any water ballast, the boat stayed bolt upright, thanks to the considerable form stability. And, of course, Sam sailed her to perfection. I don't think she broke any records at that moment, but she looked as pretty as a picture. For although speed is an important trait in a boat, beauty and character also play important roles.

Stepping aboard RÆDWALD, there's a feeling of generosity in that wide beam and open seating. Sam has been careful to keep the interior uncluttered, and this shows in how easy it is to move around. Sailing her takes a bit of getting used to, because that deep forefoot means she doesn't spin around like a modern dinghy or even a Wayfarer. You have to sail her through each tack with a bit more attention than most of the boats I've sailed recently. The benefit is that she tracks beautifully and is fast off her marks even in the light breeze we had that evening.

Sam's original plan was to take molds off the prototype, which he has done, so he could build the boat in

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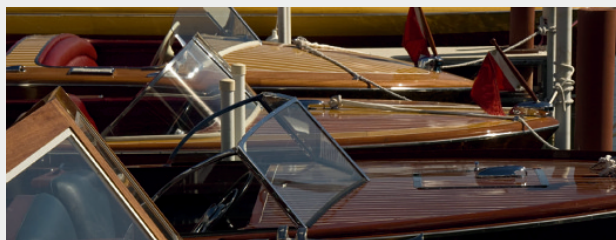
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Is RÆDWALD a new boat with old ideas, or a new spin on an old concept? Regardless, Sam has mixed it up and produced a boat that is exceptionally versatile and user-friendly.

fiberglass, but he has become increasingly enthusiastic about selling plywood kits for home-based builders. A lucky connection with a tutor, Pete Weller, at Falmouth Marine School has made that possible, and Sam was just on his way back from delivering the molds and demonstrating RÆDWALD when he called by to see me.

Pete is now transferring Sam's hand-drawn lines to CAD and developing the design into a kit that can be CNC cut and shipped to clients in the United Kingdom or potentially cut by local CNC facilities anywhere in the world. There will be a few subtle changes to the original: the nicely curved bulkheads will be replaced by flat ones, and the after buoyancy tank will go away completely. But the hull shape will be the same. Sam doesn't, however, expect or even recommend that amateur boatbuilders slap around the carbon fiber the way he has. In nearly all cases, simply sheathing the hull, or even just the bottom panels, with fiberglass set in epoxy will provide ample strength—and make the boat lighter. At which point those ballast tanks might come in useful after all.

RÆDWALD's success hasn't happened by accident. Sam has drawn on years of experience and intense visual study—not necessarily formalized in the form of



a degree in naval architecture, but very knowledgeable nonetheless—to create the best boat he could. And yet, I can't help feeling there's something fortuitous in the way his hunger for speed and adventure has produced a boat that could work equally well for family sailing. It feels almost like a sleight of hand, or some piece of wizardry I can't quite figure out. Regardless, I'm just happy to enjoy the magic. 

Nic Compton is a contributing editor for WoodenBoat.

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Capt. Phil Fessenden

Builder of bluefin tuna boats

by David Jermain

Working from his shop near the Ipswich River in Massachusetts from the early 1940s to the mid-1970s, Capt. Phil Fessenden built 10 large sportfishing boats. Most were for the local bluefin-tuna fishery, and some of them are still going strong, more than 60 years after launching. Several—FLYING SORCERESS and two boats originally named WEJACK—still hail from the Massachusetts North Shore.

The first WEJACK, a 37-footer launched in 1955, was for Phil's own use as a charter-fishing vessel. She was planked in eastern white cedar on white oak frames and fastened with Monel clench nails—a durable fastening system. "I've owned the BLUEFISH (ex-WEJACK) for 35 years now," Capt. Phil Pelletier told me, "so I've had a good amount of time to see how well Phil Fessenden's workmanship and materials stand the test of time."

WEJACK came together in Phil's unassuming boatshop near—but not on—the Ipswich River. A visitor would never suspect that the narrow driveway threading through four Fessenden family-owned homes would lead to a shop where boats of up to 50' were built. The building was a few hundred yards from the launching ramp, and extracting boats from it and moving them up the narrow 50'-long driveway was a job for skilled truck operators. As noted in the June 21, 1974, issue of *The Ipswich Chronicle*, when describing the launch of PEDDLER, a 42' sportfisherman and the last



COURTESY OF THE FESSENDEN FAMILY

boat Phil built, "she was gently eased across the Green Street bridge and down Water Street, followed by the fire chief's car and a fire engine to cover the closed-off street in the event of an emergency."

Phillip L. Fessenden was one of three children—two brothers and a sister—who grew up on Turkey Shore Road, close to the center of Ipswich, not far from the tidal reaches of the Ipswich River. Their father, Walter Fessenden, owned and operated one of the largest construction companies north of Boston; it built both residential and commercial buildings and logged and milled lumber from their land in Nottingham, New Hampshire.

Phil joined the Navy in 1944 and was stationed on the repair ship USS TYPHOON, which spent much of

Above—After recovering from an injury suffered while serving in the U.S. Navy in the mid-1940s, Capt. Phil Fessenden returned home to Ipswich, Massachusetts, where he built boats in the winter months and operated a fishing-charter business in the summer. Several of his boats are still going strong, 60–70 years after they were launched.

its time in the Pacific. In a freak accident, he fell from a ship's ladder, down two levels, and onto the deck, breaking his back. He was sent to Germany for surgery, then to California, and eventually to Boston for recovery. In Boston, doctors told him he would likely be in a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

Before he'd joined the Navy, Phil and his girlfriend, Edna Beck, were engaged. When he returned in a wheelchair, his prospective father-in-law told Phil that he'd better break off the engagement to Edna, because it didn't seem likely he'd be physically capable of supporting a wife and family. Phil complied with the request, but it turned out that her father had greatly underestimated the young man's grit and determination.

For a year, Phil wheeled himself down to the gym of the Chelsea Naval Hospital in Boston, grabbed a climbing rope in each hand, pulled himself up, and eventually walked again. During his recovery, a second-shift supervisor at Chelsea Navy Yard took a liking to Phil and taught him to loft boat lines. Although Phil hadn't finished high school, he was intelligent and learned lofting on the job while absorbing skills and insights of other workers. Upon his discharge from the Navy, Phil went on to work at Robinson's Shipyard in Ipswich and later at Crocker's Boatyard in nearby Manchester, Massachusetts.

The early years of his boatbuilding career were something of a wilderness period for Phil. Although he had eventually married a new sweetheart, Marilyn, and was gaining experience, he told his father that he really didn't know what to do next. Walter asked him, "What do you like to do?" Phil answered, "I like to fish for bluefin tuna, I enjoy working on boats, and I like working with wood."

That conversation with his father focused his career. Phil set up shop and developed a seasonal working pattern of taking parties sportfishing for tuna and groundfish during summers and building boats over winters. Marilyn gave birth to their daughter, Diane, in 1955. At three months old, Diane would be propped up on the engine box on the first of two boats to be named WEJACK, which Phil built for his own use in his charter business.

If a boat Phil was building during winter hadn't been completed by the time the summer charter-fishing season began, he'd work in the shop at night after spending 12 hours on the water. When Marilyn wasn't home, Diane would often be at the shop with her dad, handing him tools and fastenings. Before she was 10, Diane knew virtually all the hand tools in the shop and where each type of fastening was stored. She loved seeing her dad loft a boat on the shop floor, using some 45 buckets of ice picks to lay out the lines.

Beginning in 1955, Phil joined forces with Capt. Jerry Hill to form Rocky Neck Sportfishing and buy the party-fishing boat DOLPHIN. Rocky Neck Sportfishing eventually became Yankee Fleet, when Phil and Jerry moved their charter fishing boats to Cape Ann Marina, just inside the Annisquam River. Phil operated WEJACK for 12 years, fishing for bluefin tuna, cod, haddock, and striped bass. He continued to build boats during winters, and in 1958, in a departure from his signature sportfishing boats, he launched the Sam Crocker-designed gaff-rigged sloop VARUNA (see WB No. 283).

In 1964, Phil launched a 36' x 12'2" sportfisherman named FLYING SORCERESS for S. Tudor Leland, an airline pilot from Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, who had been previously fishing for giant bluefin tuna from a 26' inboard-powered Marbleheader designed by Eldredge-McInnis. The new boat was named in honor of Tudor's mother, Elsa, who traveled the world as a peace activist while living a lifestyle that included yoga and vegetarianism decades before these were common practices. An article in a 1961 issue of *Vogue* magazine described her as "a benevolent sorceress." The oak for FLYING SORCERESS's keel came from Kezar Falls, Maine, as did the wood for many of Phil's boats; the driver helped to unload the heavy timber, accepted a cup of coffee, and then headed back north. She was planked with mahogany on white oak frames, fastened with Everdur screws. The keel was laid in January, and the boat was launched at Crocker's Boatyard on July 22.



Phil prepares to launch the first of two boats named WEJACK that he built for his charter business. This one was built in 1955.

COURTESY OF THE FESSENDEN FAMILY

The first WEJACK, under way near Cape Ann. The name is the Algonquin for fisher cat—an aggressive carnivore native to New England forests.



COURTESY OF THE FESSENDEN FAMILY

For Phil, the project was the beginning of an association with Royal Lowell, a legendary Downeast builder and designer who had drawn FLYING SORCERESS's plans. This was a testament to Phil's skills, because a designer of Lowell's stature would not compromise his reputation by selling his plans to a builder who did not have the ability to produce a high-quality representation of his vision. Lowell gave FLYING SORCERESS a deep forefoot, which Jamie Lowell, his nephew and also a boatbuilder, says is part of the formula for how the Lowell boats go through the water so easily. "You can gain buoyancy from depth or width on the hull of a boat," he says. "Width can cause a boat to slam into a sea. A fine entrance and a deep forefoot can deliver both buoyancy and smooth sailing." The original engine was an Allis Chalmers diesel, but according to her owner's logbook, that engine was troublesome; a few years after the boat was launched it was replaced with a six-cylinder Caterpillar diesel.

FLYING SORCERESS's shape has two distinct features: a powderhorn sheer and a clipper bow. At the cruising speeds for which she was designed, the reverse sheer at the bow improves visibility. The nuanced clipper bow was simply an element that both Royal and Phil enjoyed.

The accommodation included a head in the bow, a storage area and small bunk on the starboard side, then two full-sized bunks on each side, slightly aft. Both Tudor and Phil were about 6'4", so the headroom below allowed both men to stand comfortably.

Tudor kept a photo album documenting FLYING SORCERESS's construction. His notations on each photo are clear and precise, starting with the felling of the oak tree in Maine that would become the keel, to a photo of the boat being carefully moved from the shop to the launching ramp. Tudor had the skills to do finish-work, and for such clients Phil would often launch the boat in operational condition and allow the customer to complete the interior elsewhere.

The youngest of Tudor's three children, Daphne, often accompanied her father on fishing trips starting at a young age. One day, she found her role quickly changed from observer to participant when the crew hooked a bluefin; her father slipped the fighting belt around her waist and handed her the bent rod as line streamed off the reel. After two hours of very strenuous "give and take," she rightfully asked to quit fighting the tuna. Tudor's response was to dump a bucket of cold seawater over his daughter, startling her, but distracting her enough to finish the fight and land the 125-lb fish.

"What I enjoyed most was sitting down below with my dad and the rest of the crew," she recalls of FLYING SORCERESS, "after a long day's fishing, sipping a rum and coke, while listening to my dad describe his experiences as a bush pilot in northern Maine, or the other crew members, such as mate Bob Hall, recount the adventures of prior bluefin tuna fishing trips."

Although Daphne and her sister, Lysa, are justifiably proud of their father's tuna-fishing skills, they are also proud of his willingness to begin tag-and-release fishing, years before it was common, and eventually focus his fish-finding skills on taking people out to watch the whales.

Moored in Manchester, Massachusetts', protected harbor, FLYING SORCERESS was an integral part of the Leland family's life for 31 years, until

Phil sold the first WEJACK to a neighbor in Ipswich, who in turn sold it to Bill Edwards in about 1980. It has been reconfigured as a bassboat, renamed BLUEFISH, and owned by Phil Pelletier since 1990.



COURTESY OF PHIL PELLETIER

Phil Fessenden and Mel Sheppard rabbit the keel of FLYING SORCERESS, a 36' sportfisherman he built for S. Tudor Leland of Beverly Farms, Massachusetts. The keel was laid in January 1964, and the boat launched in July that year.

they donated her to the Mingan Island Cetacean Study in Québec. Since then, she's had several owners. In 2021, she was purchased by current owner Chip Allen, and once again hails from Manchester Harbor, where she has a slip at Crocker's Boatyard.

"I was looking for an easily driven boat, such as a lobsterboat, for day cruising," Chip says, "but once I saw photos of FLYING SORCERESS, I kept coming back to it. I was still working in Texas, and the boat was then located in Texas as well. There is something intangible, but powerful, about FLYING SORCERESS that kept me thinking and inquiring about it, 'til I purchased it some six months later. I didn't think of it this way, but others have suggested there was some amount of destiny involved, that I would find a boat I am captivated by and then move it back to Manchester,



COURTESY OF THE FESSENDEN FAMILY

where we live, only to find that Manchester Harbor had been the boat's home port for 30 years."

Last spring, Chip sold FLYING SORCERESS to Capt. Conti Coluntino, who has had a long career in the merchant marine and tugboat businesses. He credits the boat with his decision to attend Massachusetts Maritime Academy and spend his career working on the water. He grew up in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, just a few blocks away from the Leland family. He recalls that "Joe Simpson, who is nine years my senior and has been a lifelong friend, also grew up in the same neighborhood and worked as a mate for Tudor. He remembers, at age eight, "standing by the mouth of Manchester Harbor, when I saw Joe, up in the tuna tower, steering the FLYING SORCERESS out of the harbor. If there ever was a moment in my life that crystalized my destiny, that was it."

After building FLYING SORCERESS, Phil continued to build boats for others during winters and run his charter-fishing operation from WEJACK every season from late April to mid-October. The 37' WEJACK, however, could legally carry only six passengers, and Phil knew from working with Jerry Hill that a boat capable of carrying more fishermen on more days would be more profitable. That thought sparked a conversation with Royal Lowell about the design of a new 50' sportfisherman, which Phil built and also named WEJACK. Like FLYING SORCERESS she had a clipper bow, but a conventional sheer rather than her predecessor's powderhorn shape.

Phil laid the keel for the new WEJACK in early fall 1967 and launched her on July 9, 1968. She measured 50'6" LOA, with a 15'6" beam and a draft of 3'6". This larger WEJACK served as Phil's charter-fishing platform



COURTESY OF THE FESSENDEN FAMILY

FLYING SORCERESS was planked with mahogany on white oak frames and fastened with Everdur screws.



FLYING SORCERESS en-route to the launching ramp. The project marked the beginning of Phil's association with the legendary lobsterboat builder Royal Lowell.

for 15 years and became the basis for the other sport-fishing boats he built during the rest of his career.

She had a flying bridge amidships and a self-draining cockpit at the stern. Inside the wheelhouse, she had a port helm station and access hatches to the two GM diesels on the bridge deck. Down below there was a V-berth, two berths on each side just aft of this, an enclosed head, a Shipmate stove, and a galley to starboard.

Two 185-hp (at 2,100 rpm) GM 6-71 diesels were installed on oak engine beds sided 3", ahead of their

respective 1.5:1 reduction gears. (In 1979, the boat was repowered with GM 8-71 diesels and Twin Disc reduction gears.)

The construction plan notes that frames were of oak, $1\frac{3}{4}" \times 2\frac{1}{4}"$, on 10" centers and the planking $1\frac{1}{4}"$ -thick mahogany. The floor timbers were sided $1\frac{3}{4}"$, apart from those within the engine beds. The sheer clamps were $1\frac{3}{8}" \times 3"$ and the two lower stringers including the bilge stringers were $1\frac{1}{4}" \times 3"$. Because the new WEJACK was to be an inspected vessel, the U.S. Coast Guard stipulated larger sheer clamps and stringers, a change Phil made during construction. The cabintop, deck, and bulkheads were all built with two layers of $\frac{1}{2}"$ marine plywood that were glued together with resorcinol. The deck and cabintop were sheathed in fiberglass cloth and resin.

It would be perfectly reasonable for Phil to have purchased all of the bronze fittings that he needed to construct a new boat, but he often patterned his own and had them cast at a foundry in nearby Amesbury, Massachusetts.

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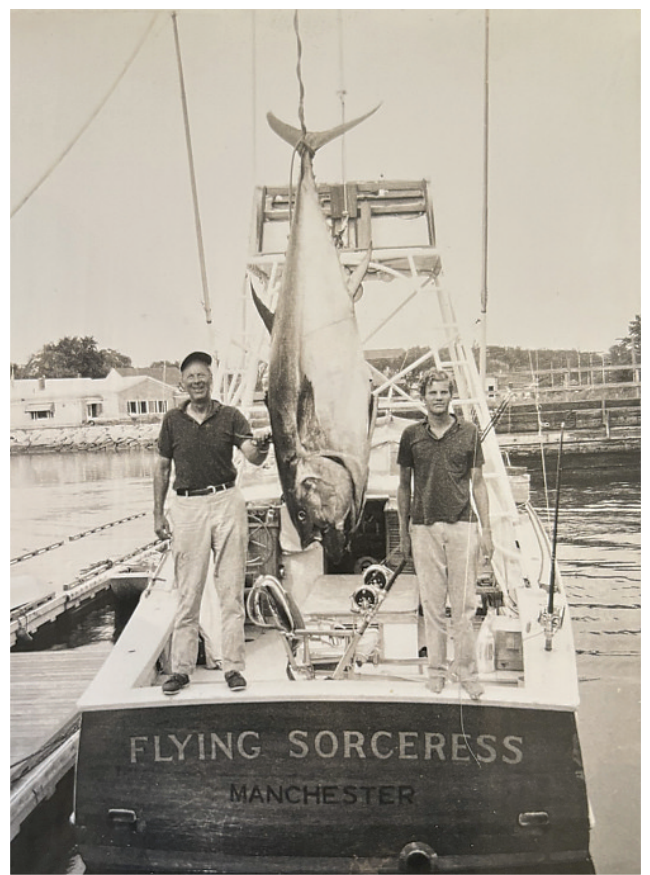
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S. Leland Tudor (left) was a skilled tuna fisherman who became an early practitioner of tag-and-release fishing. He eventually focused his skills on whale-watching.

“Both of the WEJACKs played a huge role in my life,” Diane says. “When I think of the first WEJACK, I think of fond family memories. I was a small child and I can remember many cruises with my parents and my grandparents onboard. The second WEJACK and I grew up together. I was often there in the boatshop while Dad was building it, and I spent a tremendous amount of time with him, on the boat, working as his mate on fishing charters or just riding with him when we went to fuel up.”

One day in the late 1970s, when Phil was in his mid-60s, he was repairing the port rail of WEJACK at the docks of Yankee Fleet on Essex Avenue in Gloucester. A young man, Joe Arsenault of nearby Haverhill, walked by and asked Phil if he could use a hand. Phil looked at Joe, made a quick judge of character, and said yes. The two men, it turned out, had much in common.

Like Phil, there wasn’t much made of wood or metal that Joe couldn’t build or repair. Joe’s day job was working for the National Cash Register Company repairing mechanical cash registers and business machines.



COURTESY OF THE LELAND FAMILY



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FLYING SORCERESS today hails from Manchester, Massachusetts. Her current owner, Conti Coluntino, first saw her when he was 8, and that inspired him to pursue a career on the water.

BARBARA K out of the Salisbury side of the Merrimack River. **BARBARA K** was a 43', cedar-on-oak boat built by Harvey Gamage in Maine and launched in 1940. Joe had spent three years rebuilding her in his family's backyard and getting her recertified by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Phil and Joe grew to be close friends, greatly respecting each other's talents and attention to detail. In early 1983, Phil turned to Joe and said, "You should buy the **WEJACK**." Joe replied that he would love to, but he felt he couldn't afford such a thoroughbred. Phil, evidently concerned about finding an able successor, told Joe they would find a way to make it work. And so they did.

On the day Phil sold **WEJACK** to Joe, Diane was in the Yankee Fleet office. One of the other Yankee Fleet employees began to console her about the fact her family would no longer own the **WEJACK**. Diane was stunned. For the past 15 years, the Fessenden family's

He had the uncanny ability to envision the logic of a cash register's construction such that ferreting out a malfunction after largely disassembling more than a hundred sequential parts, then reassembling them in operating condition, was relatively easy for him. At the time, Joe was also the owner-operator of the charter-fishing boat



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Phil built the second WEJACK, a 50-footer powered by twin GM 6-71 diesels, in order to increase his passenger-carrying capacity.

life had been structured around what Diane and WEJACK each needed to thrive. Diane had grown up on that boat, working with her dad during its construction and often as mate. She, her dad, and WEJACK were a team. In hindsight, it was clear that Phil knew of no way to break the news to Diane. So he hadn't. Diane was hurt and she let Phil know it.

Joe purchased WEJACK from Phil in April 1983. He quit his job at National Cash Register, where he'd worked 22 years, and started running fishing charters on WEJACK; he did this for the next 39 years. His oldest son, Joe Arsenault Jr., was a union electrician based in Boston and often went as mate for his dad or as relief captain when his father needed time off. "I was on WEJACK from April 1983 until my dad sold it to Jeff Brown in September 2022. I never heard WEJACK creak in a seaway as most wooden boats do," he says.

"To give you another example of Phil's workmanship," Joe Jr. says, "Dad and I had to replace one of the



COURTESY OF THE TARR FAMILY

1¼"-thick mahogany planks at the waterline that had suffered ice damage. It was fastened with No. 14 bronze screws on 10" centers. Phil's lining of the planks was so exacting and the planks fit so tightly, that to avoid damaging adjoining planks, we had to remove fastenings



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from the planks above and below, then remove all three planks together, to remove the damaged one.”

Like Diane’s experience growing up on the two WEJACKs, Joe Jr.’s life has also been heavily influenced by the boats his dad owned and operated, particularly WEJACK. Joe Jr. met his future wife, Holly, when she and fellow Melrose Hospital employees chartered WEJACK in August 1993. On an unusually mild day in February 1995, Joe and Holly boarded WEJACK by themselves with a justice of the peace, pulled away from the dock, and were married in Gloucester Harbor. Back at the dock, after shutting the boat down, Joe looked up to see Phil Fessenden standing at the top of the dock. Answering Phil’s question before he asked it, Joe shouted, “I married her where I met her.”

WEJACK’s current owner, Jeff Brown, continues to operate her as a charter vessel out of Gloucester, taking parties for cruises and fishing trips. “I’m not sure I can find the words that properly articulate how proud I am to continue working the vessel that Phil Fessenden launched in 1968,” Jeff says. “I’m constantly meeting people who come up to us as we work and want to tell us about how much they have enjoyed their time on the WEJACK. There seems to be an intangible, but palpable sense that Phil’s character is the boat’s character and WEJACK will get the job done each time we venture out of the harbor.”

Phil was a founding member of the Ipswich Yacht Club, located where the Ipswich and Parker rivers combine just south of Plum Island. He often picked up his charter clients at the club and landed his fish and customers there as well. One club member, Ray Tarr, became interested in acquiring a new tuna-fishing boat and was taken with the new WEJACK. That interest turned into a discussion with Phil. Ray had grown up in Ipswich, and knew the Fessenden family. He had rebuilt a burned-out 42’ boat that he and his wife, Beverly, named KIMBERLY after their daughter, who was born just a day after they first laid eyes on the charred hull. Ray wanted his next boat to be in keeping with the general design of the 50’ WEJACK. The new KIMBERLY was smaller, at 45’ long with a beam of 14’6”. To accommodate the couple and their four children, the new boat would have a V-berth forward, an owner’s stateroom to port opposite, and two stacked berths and a head to starboard. The galley was in the main cabin. The family lived aboard the new KIMBERLY for six summers in a row, even though the boat was berthed not five miles from the family home in Manchester.

Ray and Phil discussed whether the new boat would benefit from a hard chine to limit rolling, but Phil felt strongly that the hull shape should be identical to the round hull of WEJACK. Ray went along with Phil’s view.

Phil laid KIMBERLY’s keel in fall 1969. Phil, often



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Abstract

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The second WEJACK still hails from Gloucester. She is owned by Jeff Brown, who operates her through his company Cape Ann Charters. She is certified to carry 46 passengers.

working with Ray's father, Millard Tarr, a builder of houses and boats in his own right, launched KIMBERLY a year later. With twin Caterpillar inline 6-cylinder diesels, she would make 23 knots, which is somewhat faster than WEJACK.

Ray brought the new boat around Cape Ann to Manchester Harbor, where he and his dad worked through the winter to finish the boat, often while she was gripped in harbor ice. On the following July 4, Ray and his family brought her to her berth in Gloucester Harbor, and took their first tuna trip the next day.

Ray's favorite means to catch bluefin tuna was trolling daisy chains of rigged mackerel along the 30-fathom curve of Ipswich Bay from Halibut Point in Rockport to the Isle of Shoals off Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and back. Ray owned and operated Omni Wave Electronics



JEFF BROWN

Company in Gloucester, a manufacturer of radar components. On a summer or early fall day, if his responsibilities were in order by 3 p.m., you would often find his office door closed and know that he was idling down the Annisquam River on his way to Ipswich Bay.

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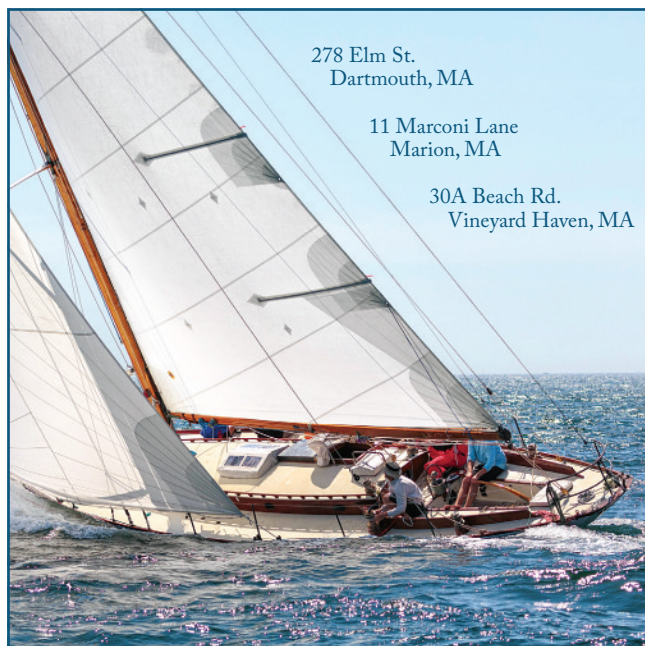
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Phil's shop capacity was maximized in the construction—and extraction—of the second WEJACK. After emerging from the shop, she had to be carefully navigated along a narrow winding driveway to the ramp.

hard chine. He brought KIMBERLY to Carroll Lowell's boatyard in Yarmouth, Maine, and had Carroll build out a chine on either side of the hull. The alteration didn't seem to help KIMBERLY get up on plane faster or increase her 23-knot, wide-open speed, but Ray did find that he preferred how the boat now sat at anchor.

Although no new boats were under construction after 1974, the boatshed on Turkey Shore Road continued to serve as Phil's home away from home, with its woodstove, his small office, and all his tools. It was also a meeting place for him and his friends who, like him, carved duck decoys for waterfowl hunting. He also built a few low-sided "floats" that were designed to be camouflaged and sculled while lying prone to get within shotgun range of ducks or geese in the marsh. He had a heart pacemaker—which was not unusual for a man of 78—but his request to have it installed so that it didn't impede firing a shotgun probably came as a surprise.

After selling WEJACK to Joe, Phil tried owning smaller outboard skiffs, but they didn't satisfy him and

being pursued by predatory fish is a powerful magnet for bluefin tuna. Some boats "raise fish," which is to say that the combination of sounds that emanate from that boat as it moves through the water attract large pelagic fish such as bluefin tuna or marlin. Until your new boat has been on the water and is fishing, it is impossible to know whether it "raises fish" or not. From that first trip, Ray was pleased to know that KIMBERLY was a "fishy" boat that raised bluefin tuna into her wake.

A few years after KIMBERLY was launched, Ray returned to the idea that the boat would benefit from a

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Phil began building KIMBERLY in autumn 1969 and launched her a year later. Her owner, Ray Tarr, working with his father, Millard, completed the interior over the winter, with the boat in the water.

he ended up having a 38' Harris fiberglass sportfishermen built by Ron Tarr, who owned Harris Boatworks. Not surprisingly, the designer was Royal Lowell. Also, not surprising was the fact that Phil contributed some tweaks to the design, including elevating the headroom in the trunk cabin and wheelhouse, which became part of the design for subsequent Harris boats. Phil enjoyed the boat but told Diane that he couldn't love it the way he loved the wooden boats he built.

Phil was 81 in 1997, when a fall landed him in Salem hospital. Following his doctor's advice, Diane and her husband, Bill, moved in with Phil. Letting go of independence can be hard, particularly when you have supported yourself and your family through your skills, wit, and work ethic. Phil, however, always had pretty good judgement and he agreed to the new living arrangement.



COURTESY OF THE TARR FAMILY

If we are lucky, sometimes we get a second chance in life to realize something that slipped through our fingers at an earlier date. "My dad was a man's man," Diane says. "He was tall, had hands like baseball mitts, and had hazel eyes that would turn gray when he was upset, but he really was a rough tough, cream puff."

Phil and Marilyn had been divorced for some time when Phil learned that his former fiancé, Edna, had lost



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The second WEJACK enters Gloucester's Annisquam River. She has been cruising these waters for nearly 60 years.

her husband and was also living alone. They reconnected by phone and found the spark that had existed some 50 years earlier was still alive. As Diane notes, "my dad and Edna were like giddy 16-year-olds. It made me so happy to see him happy, and Edna was the nicest person you could imagine."

Edna and Phil were together for five happy years, until she fell sick and died in 1995. With Diane and Bill's help, Phil lived six more years, until 2001.

Phil's boatbuilding has enriched the lives of countless people from all walks of life. Some of his boats, such as the first WEJACK (now BLUEFISH), FLYING SORCERESS, and the second WEJACK, are still serving their owners and will likely continue to do so for some time to come. They were built by a master boatbuilder at the peak of his capabilities.

In the novel *The Antiquary*, Sir Walter Scott wrote, "It's no fish ye're buying—it's men's lives," which describes the cost of the human effort in a pound of fresh-landed fish. Phil Fessenden built his character and life's skills into each of his boats. 

David Jermain is a native of Cape Ann, Massachusetts. He spent 40 years in the international seafood business, and in his spare time worked in several local fisheries. He currently owns more boats than might be considered reasonable.



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Aboard: MARISKA

A Fife 15-Meter from 1908

Text and photographs by
Thomas Madsen

Particulars

LOD	77'
LWL	48'7"
Beam	13'7"
Draft	8'9"
Displacement	35 tons
Sparred length	90'5"
Sail area (upwind)	3,767 sq ft
(downwind)	6,458 sq ft



MARISKA was built to race. Launched in 1908, she was designed by William Fife III for the then-new International Rule's 15-Meter class, the second of the type that Fife designed and the first to be built at the William Fife & Son yard in Fairlie, Scotland. She was composite-built, meaning she had wooden planking over steel frames. In her initial three seasons, her first owner, Arthur K. Stothert, raced her no fewer than 133 times, often placing first or second.

MARISKA has reclaimed her competitive heritage in recent classic-yacht-racing events, where she is once again in her element. I joined her during a race in 20 knots of wind at Régates Royales in Cannes, France, where she is a regular competitor. As that afternoon's sail came to an end, Manon Bajart, the yacht's co-captain and caretaker, said, "That was a *great* afternoon!" I could not have agreed more.

As with any long-lived yacht, she has had her ups and downs. During World War I, only eight years after her launching, her keel was melted down to be used for ammunition. In 1923, a Swedish owner, Carl Matthiessen, vice president of the Royal Swedish Yacht Club, bought her and campaigned her intensively for 20 years. Later, Olle Grafström, a jazz musician and painter, bought her, and his restoration altered the

original deck layout by replacing an original skylight with a sliding hatch, which brought in air and light and allowed the installation of a piano in the saloon. She sank twice in the early 2000s due to a lack of maintenance. Over the years, her rig was converted to a gaff yawl, next a marconi yawl, and then a Bermudan ketch before returning to her original gaff-cutter configuration in 2007.

The return of the original rig was part of a massive two-year restoration during which her Swiss owners decided to keep as much of the original fabric as possible. The as-launched deck layout was restored, with the mahogany interior rebuilt. In September 2009, MARISKA made her return to racing at Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez, and in following years she was a constant presence at all classic-yacht-racing events in the Mediterranean.

Her latest adventure began in 2020, when another change of ownership took her to Slovenia, where she underwent her latest refit and was reimagined for charters for the first time in her history. She participated in seven regattas in the 2023 Mediterranean season. Among her honors in 2024 was the Comité International de la Méditerranée Classic Yacht Trophy for her class, marking yet another milestone in her long life of sailing and racing.

Facing page—In ideal conditions at Régates Royales in Cannes, France, MARISKA's crew handled sail the same way her original crew did after her launching in 1908 for the then-new 15-Meter class. Her original deck and rig configurations were restored in a project completed in 2007. *Right*—The skylight in the foreground admits light and air to the owners' cabin; another skylight visible just abaft the mast is over the saloon. The companionway, too, has skylights to port over the galley and to starboard over the head.

Rigging details aboard MARISKA are faithful to her original period of 15-Meter racing; a good example is this fiddle block for the jib-sheet, which gives the trimmers multipart purchase in the absence of modern winches. "MARISKA 1908" is stamped on the bronze cover plates retaining the two sheave pins, and the block's anti-chafe leather is neatly stitched in place in the traditional manner.

Sheet Blocks



On Deck



Hoisting the Mainsail

Raising the mainsail is an all-hands-on-deck experience. All sail-handling aboard MARISKA is done manually, and hoisting the 195-sq-meter (2,099-sq-ft) sail up the 19.8m (65') Douglas-fir lower mast requires a lot of exertion.



Varnished mahogany woodwork and raised-panel construction accentuate the comfortable and accommodating main saloon. Mahogany predominates in the staterooms and the galley as well.

The Saloon





The Galley

The galley is situated on the port side, adjacent to the companionway. Brass hinges and handles complement the varnished mahogany woodwork. The refrigerator, at left, is neatly incorporated into the cupboards. The stove is small but sufficient. The entire space has ample light from the skylight alongside the companionway deckhouse.

A Suite for Owners

The interior restoration was inspired by Fife's original plans. Here, the owners' stateroom has two berths and a settee. Going forward from the cabin are a guest stateroom to starboard, the galley to port, the saloon spanning the width of the hull, and the crew's quarters all the way forward.





A Well-Run Crew

“A *great* afternoon!” Capt. Bajart said after a thrilling day of racing at Régates Royales, with 20 knots of wind. Racing in such conditions with all-manual line handling and crews numbering between 20 and 22 calls for tight coordination and keeping a close eye on mainsail and topsail trim.

Classic Touches



At the end of the boom, a beautiful cast-bronze nameplate harks back to an age of refined racing for classic yachts such as MARISKA.

During a 2007–09 restoration, MARISKA’s rudder profile was altered to make her a little easier to steer, but she retains her original tiller steering. The wooden tiller remains a pure work of art and craftsmanship, with leather details and ropework.

The Tiller



A Knife at Hand

A sailor always has a knife aboard in case of emergency, and on MARISKA a sharp rigger's knife is kept in a leather sheath lashed to the tiller near the rudderstock fitting. Many of the crew carry their own knives for safety and practical reasons, but it is wise to have one in a known location, always at hand. The bronze rudderpost fitting is inscribed with the builder's name and year of launching.



Race Mode

MARISKA was built for racing, and she did so very successfully; however, like all racing yachts, she was superseded by advances in technology. Her changing fate led to two sinkings in the early 2000s, but after restoration she returned to racing in 2009 on the burgeoning Mediterranean classic-yacht-racing circuit. At Régates Royales, she was once again in race mode. 

Thomas Madsen, based in Sweden, is a photographer and writer with a passion for classic yachts.

Building Church Mouse

Part 2

Completing the boat

by Joe Youcha



GREG O'NEIL

In the first installment of this series on building the Church Mouse Skiff (see WB No. 310), we made the construction jig, set up the stem and transom, planked the hull, and removed the boat from the jig. In this, the second and final installment, we complete the hull and build the rig.

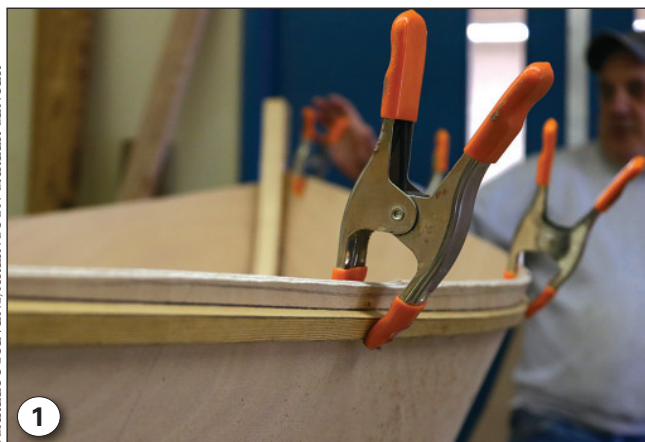
—Eds.

the sheer marks at the bow and stern. Check that the curves are fair on each side of the boat, and that they land at the same stem and transom heights.

When you are happy with the marked sheer curves, cut them with the saw of your choice (we used a Japanese pull saw) as close to the line as you dare, and plane down to it.

Seat Cleats

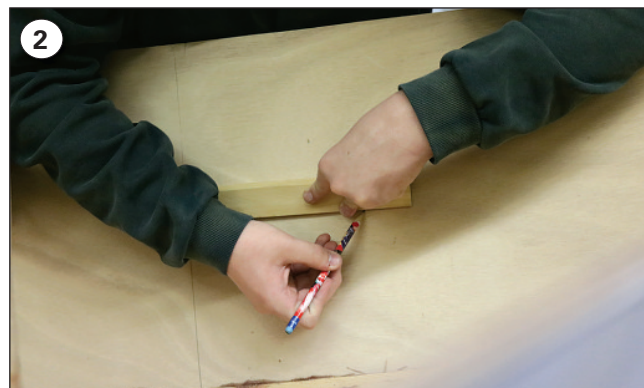
2-3. The seat cleats are made from $\frac{3}{4}$ " $\times$ $1\frac{1}{2}$ " stock, rough-cut to 8" long and then trimmed to length according to their locations. Their tops are beveled to meet the seat; you can lift that bevel from the plans, using your bevel gauge, or determine it on the boat itself. For each cleat, the face that meets the side must be scribed and shaped slightly to fit the slight curvature of the side panel.



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Marking and Cutting the Sheerline

1. The side panels were purposely left a little oversized. Now is the time to trim the sheer to the marks made on the inside of the planking in Part 1 (Step 2). To do this, drill small holes ($\frac{1}{8}$ " or so) from the inside of the planking through the sides at these points. This transfers the sheer marks to the outside of the boat. Clamp a batten through those points, and through



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The cleats' fore-and-aft locations are measured from the mold positions, which were marked before the hull was removed from the jig; their heights are measured down from the sheerline. Each pair of dimensions, for each of the cleats, is indicated on the plans. Draw the outline of each cleat on the side plank, and then drill two evenly spaced small holes ($\frac{1}{8}$ " or so) from the inside that will then locate the countersunk pilot holes to be drilled next, from the outside, through the plank and into the cleat. Then apply adhesive to the mating face of the cleat and fasten it in place.

Pattern, Cut, and Install the Thwarts

4–6. The ideal thwart stock is clear $\frac{3}{4}$ " $\times$ 9" spruce, pine, cedar, or fir. To pattern the thwarts, first make shims the thickness of your thwart stock—these will be used to elevate the pattern stock to match the top surface of the thwart so that its longest dimension can be established first.

The ends of the thwarts are shaped to match the curves of the boat's sides; pattern the thwarts using the same stick-and-hot-melt-glue method used to pattern the cross spalls as shown in Part 1 (Step 26). Mark on the pattern where the forward and after edges of the thwarts will intersect the sides of the boat.

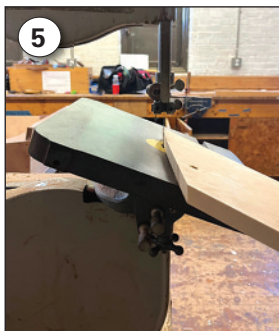
Lay the patterns on the stock and draw the outlines of the thwarts. Set your band-saw to the correct bevel and make the end cuts.

The underside of each thwart is beveled along each edge; this elegant detail reduces the thwarts' apparent thickness.

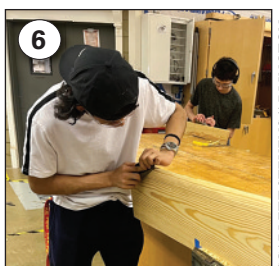
Three $1\frac{1}{2}$ " No. 8 screws set flush to the top on each end will fasten the thwarts in place to the cleats. But don't install them permanently yet; they will be in the way of the framing operation. And don't use adhesive or bungs when you do; the thwarts are meant to be easily removed for painting.



JOE YOUGHIA



JOE YOUGHIA



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Make the Quarter Knees

7–12. Well-placed and -proportioned quarter knees enhance the boat's structure and appearance. Although these knees require compound angles on two surfaces—and one of those surfaces is slightly curved—the process of shaping them is straightforward. Begin by drawing a straight line from sheer to sheer across the inside face of the transom.



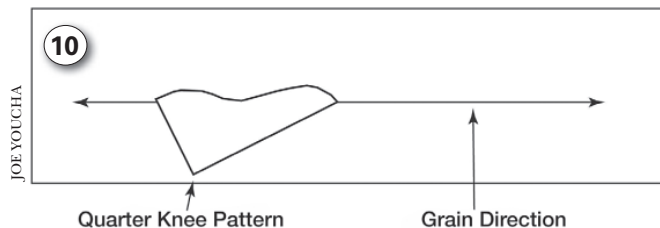
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Next, use a compass set to 6" to swing an arc on the transom and side at the sheer. Make a mark 1" up along this arc from the line you just drew across the transom, and draw a line on the inside face of the transom from this point back to the point from which the 6" arc originated. This line indicates the top surface of a quarter knee; repeat the process on the other side. On the sheerline on each side panel, make a mark 8" forward of the transom face to indicate the forward reach of each quarter knee.



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Now it's time to make a pattern of the knee from stiff cardboard, thin plywood, or Masonite. Place a straight edge of the pattern stock against the inside face of the transom at the correct angle. Trace the inside of the side onto the pattern stock, and transfer the 8" mark onto the pattern. Then transfer the 6" mark from the transom onto the pattern. Cut out the resulting pattern, leaving enough pattern stock for the inside curved face



of the knee—but don't mark this decorative shape until after the outside edges are fit, because a little trimming will still be required. With the pattern back in place, use a bevel gauge to pick up the angles of the edges that bear against the side and transom; mark these angles on the pattern.

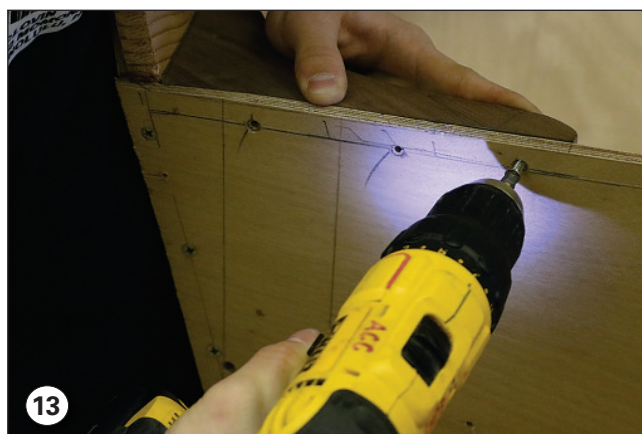


For strength, the grain of the wood should follow the shapes of the quarter knees as best as it can. Crooks, with their curved grain, are ideal, but if you're using straight-grained wood, orient the pieces as shown in the drawing; this gives you a minimum of short grain. Set your bandsaw to the correct angle for each edge and make your cuts. Once you've got the outside edges fine-tuned to fit against the transom and side, lay out the curve of the inner shape of the knee and cut it with the bandsaw set at 90 degrees. Round-over and finish this edge with a rasp, file, and sandpaper.



Install the Quarter Knees

13. Draw the outlines of the quarter knees on the inside face of the transom. Using a small pilot bit, drill two evenly spaced holes from the inside. In order for your screws to not come out the top of the quarter knee, these holes must follow the plane of the quarter knee's surface instead of being perpendicular to the transom face. Next, with the quarter knee in place, lay out and drill three evenly spaced countersunk holes for the screws fastening it to the side. Again drill the holes



parallel to the surface of the quarter knee. Drill the countersunk holes for the two transom screws at this time, too. Bed the quarter knee mating surfaces in polyurethane sealant and drive the screws.

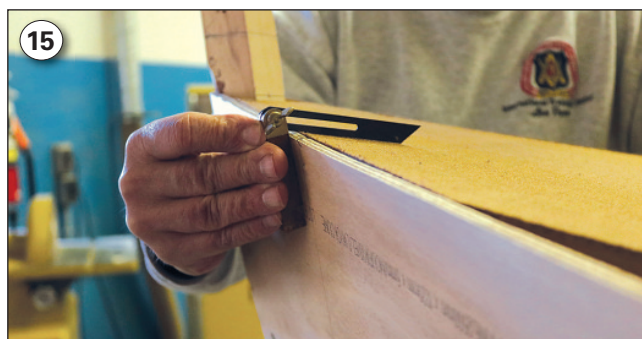
Mark, Make, and Install the Breasthook

14–18. The breasthook holds the bow of the boat together. You can take its shape from the pattern on the plans, or pattern it yourself from the actual boat. The process of making it is similar to that of the quarter knees. Additionally, there's a little jig-making.

To pattern the breasthook, make marks on the sheer edge of both side panels 8" aft of the stem. Carry these marks onto the inside faces of the sides; they indicate the after ends of the breasthook. Cover the area with your pattern stock with a straight edge of the stock up against the inside edge of the stem, and trace the inside edges of the sides. Onto the underside of the pattern, mark the after ends of the breasthook. Cut out the pattern.

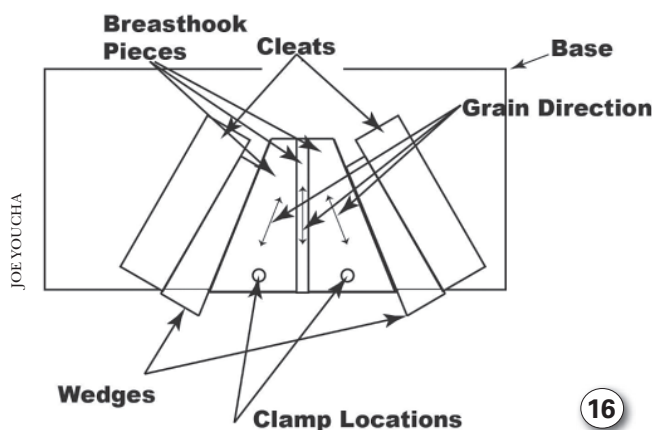


Scan the QR code or click here for a video describing how to fit breasthooks and quarter knees.



Measure the angles between the breasthook and sides, and breasthook and after face of the stem, and mark them on your pattern, just as you did for the quarter knees.

As with the quarter knees, the grain of the breasthook must follow its shape. A grown piece—the crotch of two branches—may be hard to find but is ideal because the grain will wrap around the piece. If you're working with straight-grained wood, you'll need to glue up an assembly of pieces to maximize their grain direction. For this, you'll need a jig. For more than 30 years, I've been using a jig Tom Hill wrote about in his book *Ultralight Boat Building*. As indicated in the drawing, a plywood base, two cleats, two wedges, and two C-clamps are all you need for this jig.



There's a lot going on in this illustration; study it until it becomes clear. The breasthook blank is made from three pieces: a rectangular straight-grained centerpiece, and two trapezoidal wing pieces with their grain running parallel to their long edges. In the photograph below, we made the center piece extra wide with three pieces for an artistic detail. It's fine to use a narrower ($\frac{3}{4}$ ") single piece.



Test-fit your pieces. Once you're comfortable with the edges fitting well against one another, test your jig. Set the breasthook pieces and wedges snugly into the jig. Clamp the "wing pieces" in place, snug but not too tight. Drive wedges. Tighten the clamps. If it all works well, take it apart, spread glue (Titebond III or epoxy) on the mating surfaces, and repeat the assembly process. Use a piece of plastic between the blank and the jig to keep the breasthook from sticking to the jig. Driving the wedges should yield good squeeze-out; clean it up as best you can.



When the glue is dry, remove the blank from the jig and clean up any excess. A plane, paint scraper, or a belt sander will work well for this task. Using the bevels you marked on the pattern, set the bandsaw and make the cuts as you did for the quarter knees. This time you have three angled cuts: the two sides, and the stem. I make the saw cuts a heavy $\frac{1}{16}$ " outside the line to allow the breasthook to stand $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ " proud of the sheerline; the extra material allows me to plane, rasp, or sand a crown into the top of the breasthook, which sheds water and looks better than a flat surface.

If you've patterned and cut well, your cut surfaces should need just a little filing or sanding to remove the saw marks and your piece should fit. Once you're happy with the fit, mark and cut the after portion of the breasthook according to the plans.

Make and Install the Frames

19–20. There are three pairs of frames. The forward two pairs are made wider in the area where they intersect the thwarts to allow for adequate fastening of the frames to the thwart edges. Unlike the aftermost pair of frames, these frames fit into the boat athwartships; they are not set at 90 degrees to the sides, so their outer edges must be beveled to fit the sides. The bevels and frame shapes are indicated on the plans. The forward frames fit against the after edge of the forward thwart. The 'midship frames fit against the forward edge of the center thwart. The after pair of frames are $\frac{3}{4}$ " by $1\frac{1}{2}$ "; they fit 17" aft of the after edge of the center thwart.

For the forward frames, cut the bevels on the full 3"-wide stock first, then cut the frames to the pattern's shape. For all of the frames, angle their bottom ends so that they fit onto the tops of the chine logs (this angle is indicated on the frame patterns). Once the frames are made and located, trace their locations onto the inside of the planking. For each frame, mark the centerline





within this outline. Drill three evenly spaced pilot holes, with no countersink, from the inside along this centerline. Clamp the frame in place and drill countersunk holes from the outside for No. 8, $\frac{3}{4}$ " screws. Disassemble; blow out any dust; apply polyurethane to the frame edge and bottom. Install the frame.

Final Fitting and Installation of Thwarts

21. Now fit the edges of the thwarts to the frames, which may take some minor chisel work. For each forward and 'midship frame, drill pilot holes for two No. 8, $1\frac{1}{2}$ " screws to go through the frame into the edge of the seat. Fasten frames to the thwarts.



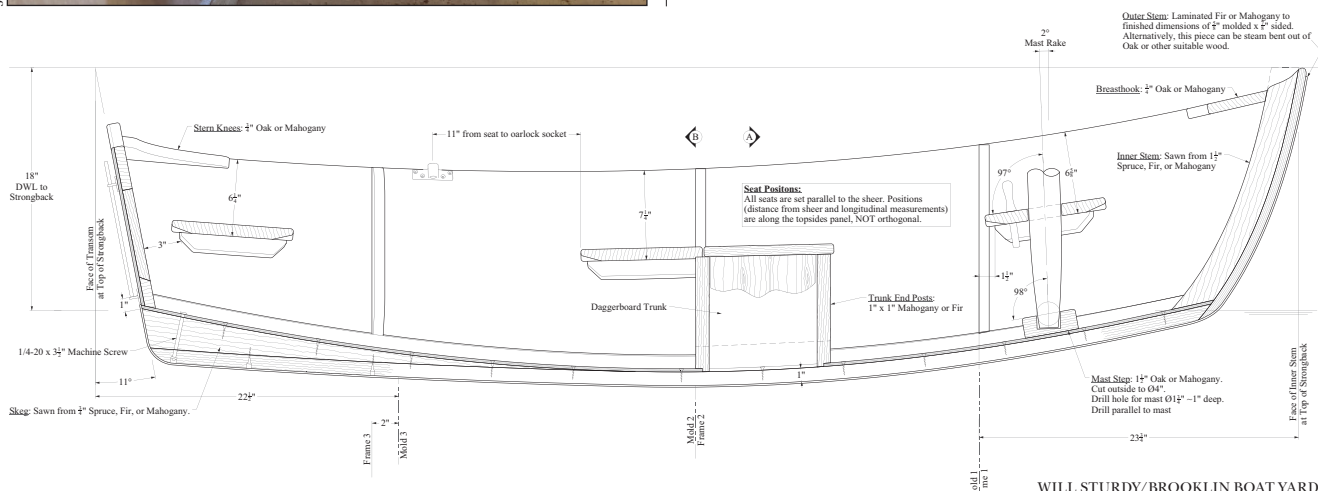
Make and Fasten the Rails

22. The rails are 1" wide by $\frac{5}{8}$ " thick. Taper them to $\frac{3}{4}$ ", starting 18" from their ends, and bend them ahead of time, as you did the chine logs, to the curve shown on the plans. The rails are fastened from both the outside and the inside. From the outside, three $1\frac{1}{4}$ " screws go into the breasthook, one each into the frame heads, and two into the quarter knees. To avoid hitting existing screws, mark the locations of the screws fastening the quarter knees and breasthook to the sides. Use a combination square to draw a line $\frac{1}{2}$ " down from the sheer on the inside of the side panel, and mark for three evenly spaced No. 8, $\frac{3}{4}$ " screws between the frames along this line. Bed the rails in polyurethane; clamp from the middle to the ends; drill pilot holes, and install them.

Once the thwarts, quarter knees, breasthook, frames, and rails are installed, you can safely remove the spreaders installed in Part 1 to hold the shape of the hull.

Cut and Install the Keel and Skeg

23. This boat has a two-part keel with a skeg and a batten. Use the pattern and dimensions from the plan to make the triangular skeg from $\frac{3}{4}$ " stock. Rip a $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $\frac{3}{4}$ " batten that's a little longer than the bottom. With helpers, turn the boat upside down. Mark the centerline on the bottom by finding the centers of the transom, mid frame, and stem and drawing a straight line through those. Then draw lines $\frac{3}{8}$ " to each side of the centerline to indicate the edges of the keel. From the outside, mark and drill pilot holes, with no countersink, through the bottom, along the centerline, about 4" apart.



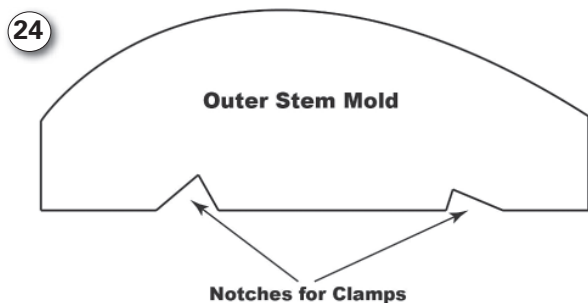
Test-fit the keel batten on top of the skeg. If the fit is good, apply polyurethane adhesive to the mating surfaces—to the skeg where it meets the bottom, and to the bottom of the keel. Clamp or hold it in place and drill countersunk pilot holes from the inside through the pilot holes you drilled from the outside. Then, fasten the keel with No. 8, $\frac{3}{4}$ " screws. (You can use a couple of $1\frac{1}{2}$ " screws for the aftermost ones that go into the skeg.) This is one of the few times I don't recommend blowing out any dust in the joint, because it's too hard to clamp and relocate the keel. Once the assembly is fastened from the inside, from the outside drill for and drive a No. 8, $1\frac{1}{2}$ " screw through the keel into the heel of the stem.

The after end of the skeg and keel assembly is fastened by a $\frac{1}{4}$ " machine screw, whose location and angle are indicated in the drawings. The screw's head is countersunk below the surface of the skeg's edge and plugged. Using a long $\frac{1}{4}$ " drill bit, drill the hole through the skeg and the bottom of the boat. It helps to have someone sight your drill bit from the side of the boat to make sure you're drilling at the correct angle.

The Outer Stem

24–26. If you didn't make the outer stem when you made the inner stem, use pointer sticks hot-melt-glued to a reference board to pattern its shape, as shown in photo 25.

The outer stem, which is $\frac{5}{8}$ " thick and $\frac{7}{8}$ " wide, can either be steam-bent or laminated. If you laminate, as shown, use epoxy or Titebond III to glue up at least five layers. If you steam-bend, choose a straight-grained piece of wood with the grain running parallel to the wide surface. Use the pattern to make a bending mold out of 2x6 lumber; mark the points of the curve, and use finish nails and a batten to draw the curve. If steam-bending, shave $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{3}{8}$ " off the ends of the bending jig



JOE YOUGH



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to allow for springback. For easy clamping, cut notches on the back side of the mold to create surfaces parallel to the curve. The completed outer stem is glued to the inner stem and plank ends as shown; it is also fastened with six No. 8, $1\frac{1}{2}$ " wood screws whose countersunk holes should be plugged or filled.

A nice ogee pattern, as shown on the plans, completes the stemhead. Rough-cut it with an appropriate saw; fine-tune it with a rasp and file.

The Daggerboard Trunk

27–28. Lay out the daggerboard trunk sides according to the dimensions and layout on the plans.

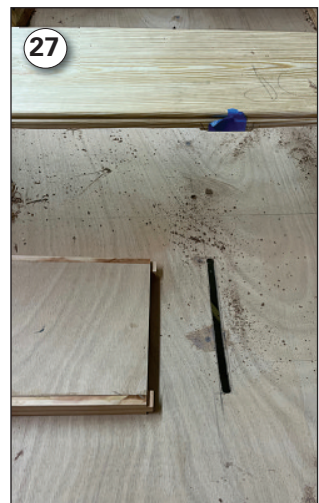
Cut the posts and rabbeted bedlogs according to the dimensions on the plans. Label all pieces to ensure proper orientation—mark their inside and outside. The bottom of each bedlog has a slight curve to match the curve of the boat's bottom panel; the tops are beveled to shed water.

Attach a bedlog to each trunk side. The bedlogs are rabbeted to receive the plywood trunk sides. Apply polyurethane liberally to their mating surfaces, clamp the pieces together, and fasten with three No. 8, 1" screws through the trunk sides and into the bedlogs.

While the trunk is still in two pieces, coat its inside faces with unthickened epoxy. When the epoxy has cured, assemble the two trunk sides together onto the end posts. Make sure that the end posts protrude $\frac{1}{2}$ " below the bedlogs. Again, hold the assembly with clamps while you fasten each end with three No. 8, $\frac{3}{4}$ " screws from the outside. The posts fit through the daggerboard slot and extend through the bottom of the boat; you'll trim them flush to the bottom later.

To clear the keel, the daggerboard trunk is positioned just off-center on the port side of the skiff; its starboard edge aligns with the edge of the keel and is fastened through the keel. The port bedlog is fastened through the bottom panel.

To cut the daggerboard slot, use a straightedge to draw a 2' line through the centers of several screws fastening the bottom to the keel in the daggerboard area, on the inside of the bottom. This is the centerline of the bottom. Using a framing square held vertically, with the long tongue resting on the bottom and facing forward, mark the forward edge of the center thwart on the centerline of the bottom. This locates the after end of the daggerboard slot. Measure forward 10" along the boat's centerline to locate the forward end of the slot. Measure $\frac{3}{8}$ " to port of the centerline to establish the starboard edge of the slot. Next, measure from this line 1" farther to port to establish the other edge. You now have the outline of the slot. Drill holes at each end of the slot that are large enough for you to insert a jigsaw blade, cut close to the line, and finish



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the slot by working down to the line with a rasp or file or both. The underside of the forward edge of the center thwart must have a shallow dado cut into it to secure the trunk's top edge, as shown in the drawing. Mark this dado by dry-fitting the trunk, carefully cut it with a chisel and mallet, and make any adjustments needed to the slot at the same time.

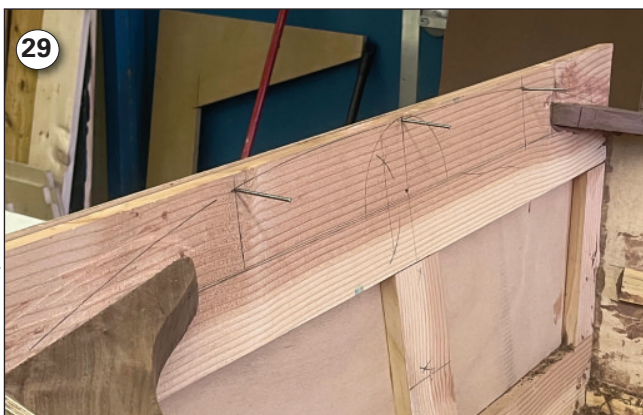
With the boat upside-down, draw fastening lines on the bottom and keel, half the bedlog's width away from the slot edge. Have someone hold the trunk in position. Drill countersunk pilot holes from the outside of the boat into the bedlogs. Use No. 8, 2" screws through the keel and No. 8, 1" screws through the bottom. Disassemble, blow out the dust, bed with polyurethane, reassemble, and fasten.

Shape the Transom Top and Sculling Notch

29. The layout of the sweet curve across the top edge of the transom starts on the inside transom face with the intersection of its centerline and a horizontal baseline connecting the points where the sheerlines on either side intersect the transom. Along the centerline, use dividers to pick up the distance between the sheerline and the top of the transom, and swing a semicircle arc of that radius. We're going to "expand" that circle to make the curve.

Halfway between the semicircle's center and its circumference, draw a vertical line from the baseline. Record the height of this line from the base to where it crosses the circumference of the semicircle. Call this "Height A."

Next, divide the baseline you drew along the transom into quarters. From the one-quarter and three-quarter points, draw perpendiculars. (You already have the "two quarter" line; it's the centerline of the transom.)



Along these perpendiculars from the baseline, measure up the distance of "Height A." Put finish nails at the one-, two-, and three-quarter points; then spring a batten along these nails, and use it to draw the curve along those points and the outer edge of the sides at the sheer. Cut slightly above the line with a jigsaw and plane down to the line.

The sculling notch is a $3\frac{1}{4}$ "-diameter section of a circle, slightly more than half of which is in the transom. To lay it out, measure 1" down the transom's centerline from its crown. Set your compass to $1\frac{7}{8}$ ", and draw the arc. Make stop cuts to the circle's circumference, then cut the final shape with a jigsaw. Stay inside the line and finish with a file.

The Mast Hole

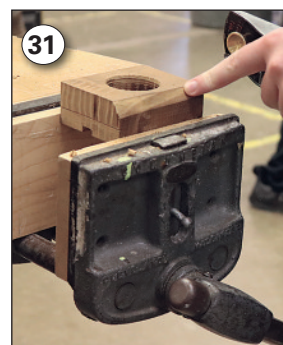
30. The $2\frac{1}{2}$ "-diameter mast hole is located in the center of the forward thwart according to the plans. You can cut it as shown in the photo—with stop cuts and a jigsaw, like the sculling notch—or you can use a holesaw. Note that the mast is raked 2 degrees; the mast hole must be cut 97 degrees to the thwart's top surface to accommodate this. Now is also a good time to drill the hole for the halyard's belaying pin.



Make the Maststep

31. The maststep is made from a piece of $1\frac{1}{2}$ "-thick oak or mahogany. The plans show it with a circular outside shape of 4" in diameter; we made ours rectangular. The circular shape may be cut cleanly with a holesaw, or more laboriously with a bandsaw; the square shape may be cut with any of a variety of saws. The round mortise that receives the mast heel is $1\frac{3}{4}$ " in diameter; cut it to a depth of 1", then drill a $\frac{1}{2}$ " limber hole and connect it to a drain slot cut into the bottom of the step.

Locate the mast step relative to the hole in the partners—that is, such that it gives the mast a 2-degree rake.



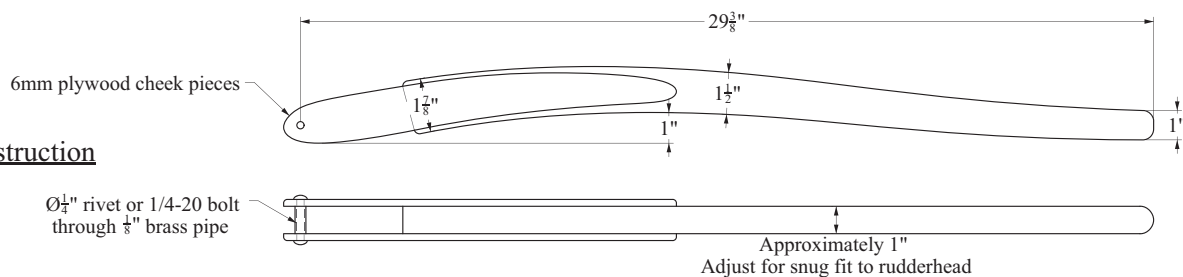
The Rudder, Tiller, and Daggerboard

32–34. The rudder and daggerboard are made of multiple layers of 6mm plywood—two for the rudder (plus cheek pieces); three for the daggerboard. In the drawings, their shapes are laid out on a 3" grid. Create that grid on a piece of paper or pattern stock and re-create the enlarged shapes. The rudder has beveled edges; be sure to mark those on your patterns.

Line up everything without glue, then sink a few 6d finish nails through the assembly. Pull the nails. Spread

Tiller Construction

Scale: 3" = 1'



32

WILL STURDY/BROOKLIN BOAT YARD



Titebond III or thickened epoxy on the mating, or "faying," surfaces, and reassemble them. Drive the 6d finish nails through their existing holes; they serve as alignment pins. Clamp liberally. Once the glue dries, clean up the edges with a plane and files.

The three layers of the daggerboard are assembled the same way. The only additional parts are two 3/4" x 3/4" cleats aligned with the top edge of the daggerboard to prevent it from dropping through the slot. I usually put these on after I shape the daggerboard.

With a hand plane or belt sander, cut the beveled edges of the blades to the reference lines you drew earlier. Don't work the bevel down to a knife edge; leave about 3/16" of thickness. The laminations, or glue lines, of the plywood will appear as you work, they are a handy guide to creating straight and symmetrical cuts.

Gather up the rudder pintles and gudgeons of your choice; they're to be installed after painting. Making the pintles slightly different in length makes it vastly easier to hang the rudder because you can align them with the gudgeons one hole at a time.

The plans show how to mark out a 1" x 3" piece of hardwood for the tiller. Cut the tiller and round its corners until they are smooth enough for you to hold comfortably.

The tiller cheeks are cut from 6mm marine plywood. Hold the two cheeks in alignment and drill a 1/4" hole for the carriage bolt, as shown in the plans. With a bolt through the holes of the cheeks to keep them aligned,



clamp the cheeks to the tiller. Test that the tiller will operate correctly. When the fit is right, screw and glue the tiller cheeks to the tiller with four No. 8, 3/4" flat-head wood screws on each side.

Paint and Details

35. And now it's time to fill in any holes, sand, prep, and paint your boat. The filler we used was a mix of epoxy thickened with wood flour and enough micro balloons to smooth out the mix. We sanded to 220 grit, then wiped the boat down with a tack cloth. The color scheme and level of finish are personal preferences, and there are numerous books and articles covering the finer points of this process. For a boat such as this, a simple color scheme and one-part marine enamel is appropriate. Manufacturers generally offer good, basic instructions for their paint systems; the usual protocol for such paint is one or two coats of primer followed by two coats of finish paint. Quarter knees and the breast-hook may be painted or varnished; if you varnish, do so before painting adjacent surfaces.

Mount the oarlocks in the locations indicated on the plans. A second set can be added 10" aft of the after edge of the forward thwart; while the rowing geometry isn't ideal in this location, this will help balance the boat with a passenger aboard. Install the painter—the piece of line that allows you to tow the boat or secure it to a dock—by drilling two holes in the planking just below the rails so that the line can be wrapped around the back of the stem and tied off with a bowline. One-

half-inch diameter line is best; this requires 5/8"-diameter holes located 3/4" below the rails and 1" back from the inner stem and planking joint.



Scan the QR code or click here to watch a video describing the process of painting the Church Mouse.



Spars for the Church Mouse

Selecting the Wood

1. The solid mast finishes at 8'3" long and 2 3/8" thick at its widest; the blanks from which it's built must reflect these dimensions. We started with a 2x10 x 10' piece of SPF (which stands for spruce, pine, or fir) from the lumberyard. Straight-grained and clear wood is ideal, but small, tight knots are okay. Search for the lightest boards; they will usually be spruce.



JOE YOUNG (BOTH)



Glue-Up, Clean, and Dress the Mast Blank

2. The process begins with a square-sectioned blank that will be rounded to a circular-sectioned shape. Glue up the blank with epoxy or Titebond III; I used the latter. Clamp every 6" to 8" or wrap elastic strapping tightly around the boards; I used strips cut from old inner tubes paired with a couple of conventional clamps. When the glue has cured, remove the clamps and clean away the excess.



R. DAVID WELSH

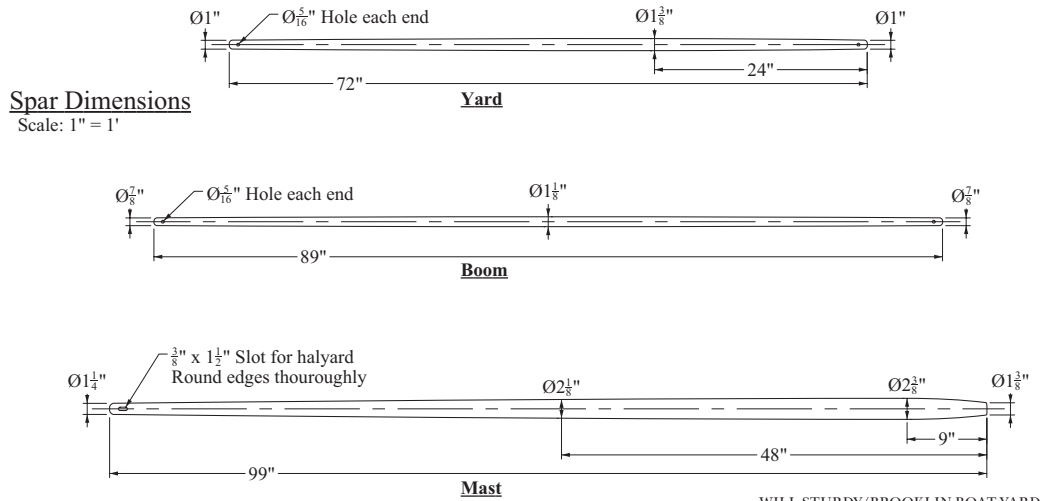
Once the big drips are gone, switch to a hand plane—or, better, a thickness planer if you have one. Bring the blank down to its finished square-sectioned dimension of 2 3/8". Cut the blank to its length of 8'3" with clean, square ends.

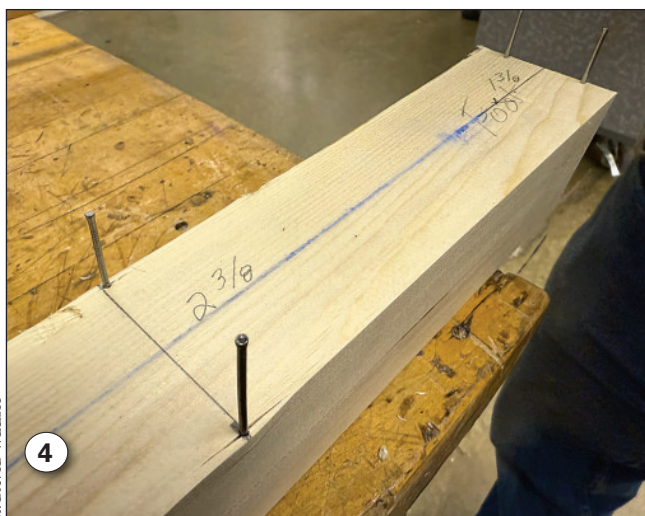
Mark the Centerline

3. On the cleanest face, mark the middle of each end and snap a chalkline between these marks for the spar's centerline. Then use a tape measure to mark all the locations of controlling dimensions of the mast taper shown in the plans. Measuring from the mast heel, and using a square, draw a line across the mast at each reference point. Don't forget to mark the width of the heel. Also mark a center point on the butt end of the mast by drawing diagonals from opposing corners.



R. DAVID WELSH





Lay Out Widths and Mark with Finish Nails

4. Mark the mast widths at each reference, as indicated on the plans. Next, drive small finish nails into the mast to mark the width at each reference. Use a long batten to draw a fair curve between the nails; this represents the tapered shape of the mast on that face. It is a straight line from where the mast passes through the forward thwart (partners) to the heel.

Taper the Mast

5. Cut out the tapered curve of the mast along the two marked edges. A bandsaw is the best tool for this job. The cuts must be square to the marked face; cut very slightly outside the line and plane down to it after sawing.

On the face you just planed down, square down the reference lines, lay off dimensions, drive finish nails, connect the dots with a batten, and make the cuts. You now have a tapered mast blank.

If your cuts are ragged, refine them with a hand plane, being sure to keep the mast square in section.



Eight-Siding

6. You'll need to make a spar gauge for the next step, which is transforming your four-sided blank to eight sides. The gauge consists of two dowels set into a wooden body, and two holes for pencils. You will draw this tool along all four faces of the mast to mark the edges of the eight sides.

The dowel pins can be any distance apart that will fit over the mast stock; 4" is convenient. The centers of each of the two pencil holes must be located inward a distance from the inside edge of the closest dowel pin precisely $\frac{7}{24}$ of the distance between the inside faces of the two dowel pins. For regular wooden pencils (not flat shop pencils) drill $\frac{5}{16}$ " holes precisely vertically to hold the pencils; a wrap of tape around the pencils might be needed for a snug fit.

To use the gauge, hold it at an angle so that the dowel pins touch the sides of the mast while the pencils touch and mark the mast. Draw the tool along the mast from one end to the other, marking as you go, making sure that the tool stays perpendicular to the surface and that the two dowels stay in contact with the sides of the mast. With one face marked, turn the mast to the next face; repeat the process for all four faces of the mast blank.

Plane off all four corners of the mast, creating flat surfaces that run between the lines you've just drawn. This will yield an eight-sided spar. A set of support blocks with a 45-degree angle cut in their top faces eases the job of planing the faces.

Plane to 16 Sides

7-8. To create a 16-sided spar takes just a few light strokes with a plane. On small spars such as this, I've found it accurate to do this by eye. Likewise, use your eye to plane the mast to 32 sides. Then, sand it round with a long strip of sandpaper made of taped-together shorter sheets. Or, if you have a spar plane with a concave sole, use it.





GREG O'NEIL

The first Church Mouse Skiff, built by students at the Arlington Career Center in Arlington, Virginia, makes her debut outing under sail. For rowing, a pair of 6'6" oars is ideal. This being a shakedown cruise, the mainsheet bridle spanning the distance between the quarter knees was not yet installed.

Completing the Job, and the other Spars

Finish-sanding is done along the length of the spar, not across the grain. Progress from 80-grit to 220-grit.

If you can make the mast, you can make the other spars according to the dimensions on the drawings. They'll likely be of one piece of wood, so pick your stock carefully.

When finishing, I like to start with a coat of sanding sealer, and then apply either paint or varnish. Putting finish nails into the ends of the spar allows you to apply finish and then safely lean the spar up against a wall or suspend it between sawhorses.

Rigging the Boat

Drill a hole for the bridle in each quarter knee. (You'll note that this is missing from the boat in the above photo, which was launched for trials before this detail was added.) Put a smooth ring on the bridle to accommodate tying off the mainsheet, and tie stopper knots on the undersides of the quarter knees to secure the

arrangement to the boat. Run the sheet from this ring through the rings, or small blocks, you'll lash to the boom as in the drawing. The downhaul runs from the grommet at the sail's tack, through a hole near the forward end of the boom, and ties off on the same belaying pin as the halyard. 

Joe Youcha is a lifelong educator and boatbuilder. He is the former executive director of The Alexandria Seaport Foundation (www.alexandriaseaport.org), co-founder of the Teaching With Small Boats Alliance (www.twsba.org), and founder of Building To Teach (www.buildingtoteach.com), which trains teachers in hands-on math instruction.

For WoodenBoat School's Family Boatbuilding Week, July 19–25, 2026, Joe Youcha will teach five families how to build Church Mouse. For more details, visit www.thewoodenboatschool.com.

Plans for Church Mouse are available from The WoodenBoat Store, www.woodenboatstore.com.

MAGAZINE



Text by Randall Peffer • Photographs by Steve Jost

[illegible]

The aft Tugway houseboat MAURETANIA was built for cruising the intracoastal waterway on the East Coast. For the charter trade.

... name for the elegant yacht and changed it to

Trumpy houseboats have been celebrated for their refined, spacious interiors. MAURETANIA has a large main saloon, three staterooms for guests, and an expansive galley and pantry. Accessed by a staircase off the butler's pantry, the crew's quarters include a dining space, berths, and a head. As configured today,

Secretary

A secretary aft in the main saloon is comfortably lit by silver sconces, only one of which is visible in this photograph. It is adjacent to a roll-up window with a Pullman-style scissor lift. A distinctive bronze scallop shell centered under the lift window covers the lift mechanism and is a recognized Trumpy trademark. Mahogany paneling and accents give MAURETANIA



MAURETANIA is not only a backdrop for television and film shoots but also a vehicle for private celebrity escapes to quiet coves at Santa Catalina Island, 29 miles off the coast of Southern California, and Paradise Cove, north of Malibu. The yacht is a U.S. Coast Guard-inspected charter vessel that can host up to 66 guests. She cruises at a steady 10 knots, keeping fuel consumption at 100 gallons per hour.



Autopilot Control

The 1950s-era Bendix Marine Autopilot still makes navigation comfortable while under way. Owners Jack and Ann Boyd have made a point of keeping MAURETANIA as original as possible with the help of their "sidekick" Mary Berumen, master carpenter Mark Schoettlin, and Ryan Richards and his team at Wilmington Iron Works. The ground tackle, J.L. Mott plumbing fixtures, and H.S. Getty cabinet and door hardware are all original. MAURETANIA was built in an era when equipment was maintained and repaired, not replaced.

Helm Sta

MAURETANIA's classic wheel, binnacle (with its original Danforth-White Constellation compass), and Sperry Hydraulics manual hydraulic transmission and throttle controls are the centerpieces of the pilothouse. The clutch mechanism lever at the bottom engages the autopilot system. The 60° steering cable can give the helmsman a workout

THE RESEARCHER'S

SCHOOL • BRILLIANT • MAKE A TOOL TOTE • TRUMPY HOUSEBOAT

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THE MAGAZINE

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Decay Resistance—a Matter of Degree?

Sourcing timber from faraway forests has a lengthy history. More than 4,000 years ago, Lebanon exported cedar (*Cedrus libani*) to Egypt, nearly extirpating the tree that still adorns the Lebanese national flag. The Roman Empire transported silver fir (*Abies alba*) from Central Europe across the Alps to Rome, and beginning in the 13th century the Hanseatic League shipped Baltic timber to Central European ports.

Transatlantic trade in timber ramped up in the 1600s and 1700s as British forests became ravaged by years of wars. Great Britain then targeted the woods of its far-flung colonies, including white pine (*Pinus strobus*) in North America and mahoganies in West Africa (*Khaya*) and the Caribbean (*Swietenia* species). By the 19th century, Norway's shipping fleet added the East Indies to the international timber trade, targeting teak (*Tectona grandis*) forests.

But a truly global timber trade that included multitudes of tree species began in earnest just after World War II and continues to expand. Boatbuilders are now faced with a bewildering list of imported woods to choose from.

Recently, Scott Gifford, the director of the Henry B. DuPont Preservation Shipyard at Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut, wrote to ask about some issues he was encountering while working on the replica ship SUSAN CONSTANT from the Jamestown Settlement historic site in Virginia. "The vessel," he reported, "was built in 1991 and the bottom was framed with purpleheart, planked with *Hymenaea courbaril*, and fastened with HD [hot-dipped] galvanized square spikes. We are finding rot directly behind the fastening heads and inboard of the traditional cotton and oakum seam caulking, along the plank edges. Rot is also prevalent at the end-grain of the butt joints, inboard of the seam caulking and below the heads of the fastenings. The fastenings, for the most part, are still holding the galvanizing. The degradation around the fastenings looks a lot like iron sickness...but is very localized. These findings imply that the rot is potentially initiating from inside the vessel. After mapping out the affected areas, it is apparent that the planking is mostly compromised from the waterline down to the turn of the bilge. At this point, the planking below the turn of the bilge shows little to no signs of decay. The vessel is docked far enough up the James River that she sits in fresh water that can get quite warm in the summertime. The hold of the vessel is treated regularly with a borate-salt solution. Individually, these findings do not seem out of normal, given the age of the vessel. But I am just curious if the warm, fresh water should be a consideration in deciding what species of wood to replace the bottom planking with. I don't have a lot of experience with vessels this size that live year-round in fresh water. I would



COURTESY OF MYSTIC SEAPORT MUSEUM (BOTH)

This segment of courbaril planking displays a sound exterior surface. Pale colored end-grain, with a slight pinkish cast, is indicative of sapwood.

like to use white oak, with durability, availability, and bending capabilities being the driving variables."

Where the decay got its start is not possible to know. Fungal spores are everywhere. The reason the decay appears to originate from the inside of the vessel is because that is where the right balance of low light, sufficient moisture, and oxygen exist. The outer portion of the planking is oxygen-starved due to moisture saturation and is exposed to bright sunlight. If I had to hazard a guess, I would say the decay began at the caulking seams; the photos that Scott sent support this contention.

A Tale of Two Trees

Purpleheart (*Peltogyne* spp.) has a considerable history as a boatbuilding wood, in part due to its high resistance to decay fungi and marine borers. A dense, strong wood, it excels as a framing timber. It grows naturally in Central and South American rain forests with the center of its range in the Brazilian Amazon.

Courbaril (*Hymenaea courbaril*), also known by the common names of algarrobo, jatoba, locust, and more recently Brazilian cherry, grows on a variety of sites from tropical wet to subtropical moist—and even, occasionally, in dry forest zones—at a range of altitudes. Since at least the 1990s, it has been grown as a plantation species in Puerto Rico, Trinidad, Tobago, and more recently Brazil. Large quantities of Brazilian cherry are exported as flooring lumber. Many references say that courbaril is decay-resistant, but one source adds the caveat that the wood is resistant to the attack of white-rot fungi but less resistant to fungi that cause brown rot.

White-rot fungi attack the lignin in wood, exposing stringy white cellulose, while brown-rot fungi digest cellulose, leaving a brown, crumbly, lignin-rich residue.

In boats, brown rot is by far the prevalent form of decay, and this is what we see in the two photos.

The variance in reported decay-resistance for courbaril may be linked to the variety of sites that this species can occupy, both in natural forests and plantations. Climate and soil differences can affect the development of wood durability. In past columns, I have cited examples, such as teak that is planted in Central America and lacks the durability properties of its Southeast Asian indigenous cousins. When soil and climate favor more rapid growth, and this is goaded by wide plantation spacing, heartwood production can be starved of the precursors needed to synthesize fungal-inhibiting chemicals.

So, while purpleheart and courbaril at first glance appear to be similarly adaptable for boat construction, a deeper dive reveals some significant differences. Knowing the source of a wood and whether it grew in a natural forest or a plantation might not mean the difference between “the best of woods” and “the worst of woods,” but it should improve one’s chances of finding an appropriate species, keeping in mind that any previously untried exotic wood carries risks.

Finally, no matter what wood species is chosen, a thorough examination of the delivered timber can avoid later problems. Courbaril heartwood is known to have a color that ranges from bright orange to reddish brown when fresh, darkening to deep reddish brown over time. The sapwood is whitish to pale gray with, sometimes, a pinkish hue. At least some of the wood in the photos appears, to me, to be sapwood—which for any species lacks decay resistance.

Testing Conundrums

About 154,500 species of fungi have been identified, globally, and of these approximately 6,300 decay wood. In North America, around 1,700 species have been associated with wood rot. Yet standardized methods for determining heartwood durability in laboratory



Extensive brown rot, initiating from the upper plank edge, can be seen in this inner surface of courbaril planking.

tests normally expose wood to only two to six wood-rotting fungal species in a petri-dish culture. In field tests, wooden stakes are exposed to only the soil fungi present at a particular site. I know of no tests designed to determine species of decay fungi regularly infesting boats. The closest approximation can be found with wooden poles set in marine environments to test for marine borer activity but usually not fungal decay. Furthermore, decay tests are often performed in the country of origin not in export localities.

To this paucity of useful data, we need to add the many situations that boats encounter, from cold marine to warm fresh waters. It is well-known that marine salts inhibit the growth of many decay fungi, and these fungi display maximum growth at temperatures between 60°F (15°C) and 104°F (40°C). James River freshwater temperatures can range from 70°F to 80°F in the summer; and air temperatures often reach 90°F or above. These are ideal conditions for active fungal growth, especially near the waterline where moisture, oxygen, and temperature reach a convergence that provides ideal wood-decay conditions. Local woods with known reputations for rot-resistance in boats would be the conservative option for replanking this vessel.

Global CO₂ Balance

On the subject of wood decay, it is worth noting how wood-rotting fungi affect global carbon emissions, a topic receiving close scrutiny these days. While living trees capture CO₂ and store carbon in wood, once a tree dies, that stored carbon will remain in storage in protected structures, furniture, or boats for lengthy periods of time; but it may be degraded rapidly by brown or white rot fungi when conditions are ideal—like the forest floor in the wet tropics. But here the story gets a bit more complicated. Brown-rot fungi, by degrading cellulose and leaving lignin intact, often release less than 2 percent of stored carbon to the atmosphere while white-rot fungi, by degrading lignin to get to the cellulose, can release 20 percent to 25 percent of stored carbon.

We know that brown-rot fungi are the dominant source of decay in softwood conifer forests, while both brown- and white-rot fungi attack and decay hardwoods. Any shift in the management of the world’s forests that reduces conifer forests in favor of tropical hardwood forests could enhance the release of greenhouse emissions. Recent research has revealed that some tropical hardwood forests may even now be releasing more CO₂ than they are capturing and storing. As wooden boat owners, I guess we can pat ourselves on the back for mostly storing carbon, and even when rot attacks only releasing about 2 percent of that storage pool. 🐼

Dr. Richard Jagels is an emeritus professor of forest biology at the University of Maine, Orono. Please send correspondence to Dr. Jagels by mail to the care of WoodenBoat, or via e-mail to Senior Editor Tom Jackson, tom@woodenboat.com.

LAUNCHINGS

Edited by Christopher Cunningham

These pages, along with the Boat Launchings section of www.woodenboat.com, are dedicated to sharing recently launched wooden boats built or restored by our readers. If you've launched a boat within the past year, please email us at launchings@woodenboat.com, or write us at Launchings, WoodenBoat, P.O. Box 78, Brooklin, ME 04616.

Please include the following information: (1) your boat's name; (2) its length and beam; (3) the name of its design, class, or type; (4) the names of the designer, builder, and owner; (5) your email address, mailing address, and phone number; (6) the port or place of intended use; (7) the approximate date work began; (8) the date of launching; and (9) a brief description of your experience of the construction or restoration. Send no more than five high-resolution photographs, each with a file size between 700kb and 16mb, and the name of the photographer for each photo.



JERRY ELLEFSON (BOTH)

After 35 years as a commercial fisherman, Jerry Ellefson of Tacoma, Washington, retired and found himself boatless and missing the water. He decided to build a boat and after studying many designs, settled on Iain Oughtred's Caledonia Yawl II, which has seven strakes rather than the four in the original version. The 19'6" double ender carries a balance-lug main and a leg-o'-mutton mizzen. Jerry got a jump start on construction by ordering a kit from Hewes & Company of Blue Hill, Maine. It included CNC-cut planks, molds, centerboard, and parts for the kick-up rudder. Jerry made the mainmast from spruce in bird's-mouth fashion; the resulting hollow spar is lighter and easier to step than a solid-wood one. He spent 18 months on the project and launched SUMMER WIND in June 2025. He sails her mainly on Puget Sound.



Few people would have the patience and persistence to spend 18 years building a boat and then have to haul it 1,200 miles overland to get it afloat. PJ Marchyshyn and Risa Olekshy of Dauphin, Manitoba, Canada, did just that to launch PERSEA, their 49' x 12' sharpie schooner. PJ, who is 6'8", couldn't find plans for a boat that would fit him, so he

designed one himself with accommodations that Risa, at 5'4", would find "palatial." PJ picked up woodworking skills from his carpenter father and had several other boats before PERSEA. He built her hull with strip-planked spruce sheathed with carbon fiber and fiberglass. Risa helped with the boat when she could and kept the household running. What they had envisaged in 2008 as a five-year endeavor concluded with the launching in Richmond, British Columbia, in the spring of 2026.

RISA OLEKSHY



RON DUNLAP

In early 2025, Coulson Bayne and his father, Mark, doing business as Sons of Bayne Boatworks in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, were commissioned by a film production company to build two boats as props for a movie. The short film, titled *Bateau*, is a period piece set in the waters near Charleston in the 1870s. The 15'6" flat-bottomed skiffs were not built to a documented type but are generic representations of the local bateaux that were built and used by the region's subsistence fishermen. Rather than replicate traditional construction, the Baynes built the boats with okoume plywood, clenched nailed. A dark mottled finish and thole pins give the boats the look of the 19th century. The film is to be released late in 2026; one of the boats will be exhibited in a maritime culture center at the University of South Carolina in Beaufort, and the other in a small museum in Charleston.

KEN MORINE



BLAIR LANDRY

Ken Morine, retired after a 36-year career as a mechanical designer, lives on the southwest end of Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia, Canada. Some 15 or 20 years ago, with Eric Dow's *How to Build the Shellback Dinghy* as a guide, Ken built his first Shellback in the workshop over his garage. The finished boat, FIRST ONE, spent many summers at Ken's lakeside cottage on Gully Lake in central Nova Scotia before being sold. In 2022, he decided to get back into boatbuilding with a strip-built rowboat and not long afterward he decided to build another Shellback, like FIRST ONE, with mahogany and mahogany plywood, but lighter, with a $\frac{3}{8}$ " instead of $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood bottom. Progress on the boat was delayed for a year by a surgery and recovery, but Ken finished the boat in the summer of 2025 and christened it SECOND ONE.



DOUGLAS BROOKS

Douglas Brooks began building boats in 1980 as a college student enrolled in the Mystic-Williams Ocean and Coastal Studies Program at Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut. Ten years later, he moved to Japan, where he met several boatbuilders and in 1996 began a series of apprenticeships with master builders. Most recently, in February 2026, Douglas worked with Tenkyou Hirofumi, the last traditional-boat builder in Miyoshi in the Hiroshima prefecture, to build an *ukaibune*. The 30' boat is made of cedar, carries a crew of three, and is propelled by paddle and pole. It is unique to the region and used for cormorant fishing. The ancient technique uses tethered cormorants to dive and catch fish. Cords tied around their necks keep the cormorants from swallowing large fish while allowing them to feed on the smallest. The *ukaibune* was launched on the Basen River in February 2026.



TOM JACKSON

Although Sean Koomen was born in California and grew up on a farm in Minnesota, a visit to Maine was all it took for him to fall in love with lobsterboats. He moved to Maine and worked at Brooklin Boat Yard for a few years. He got to know lobsterboats well. Then, 10 years ago, inspired by Doug Hylan's D'Anna, a blend of working lobsterboat style and amenities for comfortable cruising, Sean lofted his own take on a lobsterboat. But it wasn't until he was coming to the end of a stint as an instructor at the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding in Port Hadlock, Washington, that work on the boat began. The 30' x 8'6" LOBSTAH was commissioned by Sean and his father and was built at the school, providing students with a wide array of skill-building projects. She was launched in April 2026 at the Point Hudson Marina in Port Townsend.

LAUNCHINGS



CHRIS MOREJOHN

Nathan Shawl and Chris Morejohn bring a wealth of experience to boat design and construction. In 2016, Nathan suggested they join forces to design a seaworthy 38' motor cruiser to carry two in comfort for months-long outings. Chris does his design work with pencil on vellum; Nathan's expertise is in putting drawings into CAD files. They produced plans and CNC cutting files for the Anomura 20, borrowing the scientific name for hermit crabs. The boat, built of fir plywood, fir, and spruce, and sheathed with 'glass and polyester resin, is 20' long, has a beam of 8', and draws 12". A 9.9-hp outboard pushes the boat at a top speed of 6.3 knots. She was christened TOADFISH at her December 2025 launching, and Nathan and Chris did winter sea trials on the Salish Sea. They then kept the boat near Chris's house on Hornby Island, British Columbia. In April 2026, they embarked on a five-month cruise to the Great Bear Rainforest on British Columbia's north coast.



CHRIS SPRING

Chris Spring of Osgoode, Ontario, Canada, has always been fascinated by early 20th-century marine engines and among those he has collected is a 2½-hp Kingfisher two-stroke. It hadn't run in 50 years and was showing its age, but its copper jacket and brass name plate impressed Chris. The

engine deserved not only a restoration but also to be put to use somewhere it could be seen and appreciated. It needed a boat. His research led him to plans for a 1905 12' Lawley tender. Chris had long been fascinated by boats too, but he had never built one. As he began work in 2023, he had to teach himself to loft, splice, steam-bend, bevel carvel planks, and rivet. In June 2025, he finished the boat, trailered it to the Rideau Canal, and christened it JOYCE after his mother.



JACK WISNICKI



Built in 1898, the gaff-rigged trading cutter KATE is among the oldest active sailing vessels in New Zealand. She has had a series of owners and most recently was purchased by the Waiheke Working Sail Charitable Trust, restored by naval architect Bernard Rhodes, and put back into service as a youth training vessel. She needed a new tender that could carry her full crew yet be light enough to carry on her cabin top. Bernard designed and, with a bit of help from two youngsters, built a 10' lapstrake plywood skiff. Christened TUBBY, she was launched in December 2025 at Surfdale on Waiheke Island, just inshore from KATE at her mooring. Shortly after the launching, in 3' of water with abundant supervision and life-jacket requirements suspended by local authorities, TUBBY underwent a load test to see how many young crew members she could carry.



ALEX STONE (BOTH)



In 1920, on Man O' War Cay in the Bahamas, Maurice Albury began building sailing dinghies for sponge harvesters. During the 1900s he was just one of more than three dozen boatbuilders on the island who were, like him, descendants of Benjamin Albury, a sailor shipwrecked there in 1820. In 1952, Maurice's sons Willard and Ben took over the business and established Albury Brothers Boats. In 1958, they built a 28' powerboat originally named SEA BELL, then DOWNWIND, and now CARIBE and owned by Scott Tinney of Rocky Point, North Carolina. With the occasional help from skilled friends, Scott undertook a year-long overhaul and replaced many frames and all of the planking below the waterline. He would store boat on a trailer, so 'glass sheathing added to the bottom would prevent leaks caused by dried and contracted planking. The motor, a 240-hp Yanmar diesel, was pulled and reconditioned and all the wiring and electronics were replaced. CARIBE was relaunched in July 2025 on the Northeast Cape Fear River.



WASP, a Herreshoff 12½, was built in 1941 and purchased by Nick Voulgaris III in 2004. He had grown up on the north coast of Long Island in Huntington, New York, and had often sailed on old boats, developing an appreciation for them, which later grew into an impulse to preserve them. While in college, Nick apprenticed at the Herreshoff Marine Museum, cementing his love of classic boats. He is the author of several books, including

three about classic yachts and a cookbook featuring farm-to-table recipes from a Huntington-area farm that was founded the same year his 12½ was built. Nick sailed WASP for almost 20 years and kept her seaworthy by making repairs and upgrades as the need arose. During that time, he put in about 20 new steam-bent frames and replaced floor timbers, garboards, and the after deck. In 2023, WASP was in her 80s and due for a complete restoration. Nick commissioned the IYRS School of Technology and Trades in Newport, Rhode Island, to do the work, and she was relaunched in May 2025 as part of the school's graduation celebration.

NICK VOULGARIS III



In winter 2020, John Leyde of Arlington, Washington, and his two grandsons, then 11 and 9, built a Sam Devlin-designed Bella 12. The project was an educational experience for the boys and a rationale for John, a serial boatbuilder, to build another boat. They launched FORTNITE, named after a popular video game, in April 2020 on the lake near John's home. After five years of being exposed to elements, the boat needed restoration. With a bit of help from his grandsons, John hauled her back into the shop and then, to get rid of the worst of the damage, cut about 2' off the stern. He rearranged the interior, in effect converting the boat into a Devlin Bella 10. With the boat smaller and the boys bigger, they can't row together as they once did, but John finds FORTNITE much handier for his own solo outings.

JOHN LEYDE

Hints for taking good photos of your boat

1. Set your camera for high-resolution images. We prefer jpg format, with a file size between 700kb and 16mb.
2. Stow fenders and extraneous gear out of the camera's view. Ensure the deck is clean and uncluttered.
3. Take your photographs in mid-angle sunlight for best results. Mid-morning or mid-afternoon usually work well.
4. Keep the horizon level and the background simple and scenic so your boat stands out from its surroundings.

5. Take some pictures of the boat underway and some at rest. Horizontal framing is preferred, but a vertical format works well for sailboats. Shoot a lot of images, then send us your five favorites.

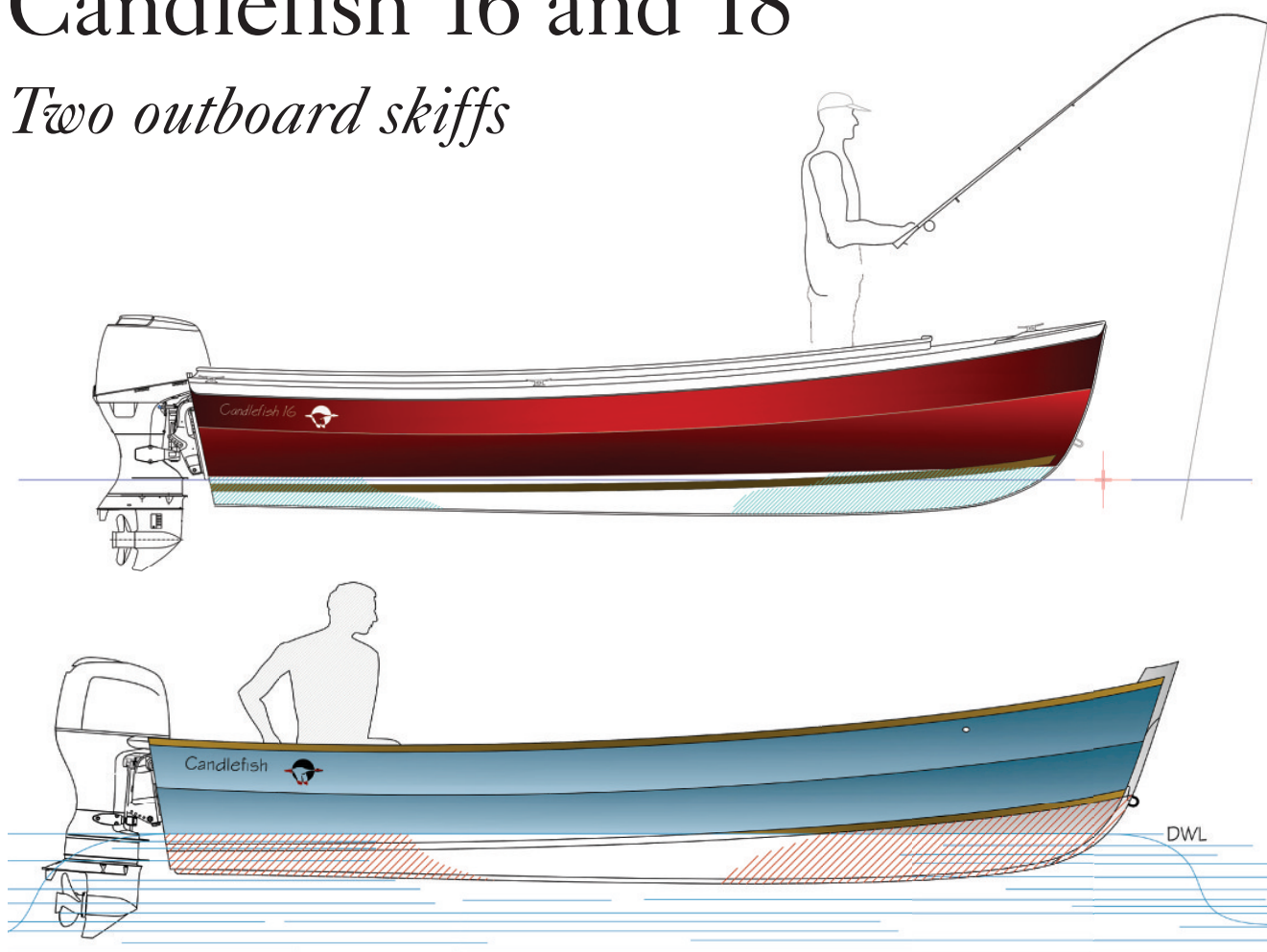
We enjoy learning of your work—it affirms the vitality of the wooden boat community. We receive so many submissions that there is not room in the magazine for all of them to be published. Additional launchings can be seen at www.woodenboat.com/boat-launchings.





Candlefish 16 and 18

Two outboard skiffs



Designs by Sam Devlin

Review by Tad Roberts

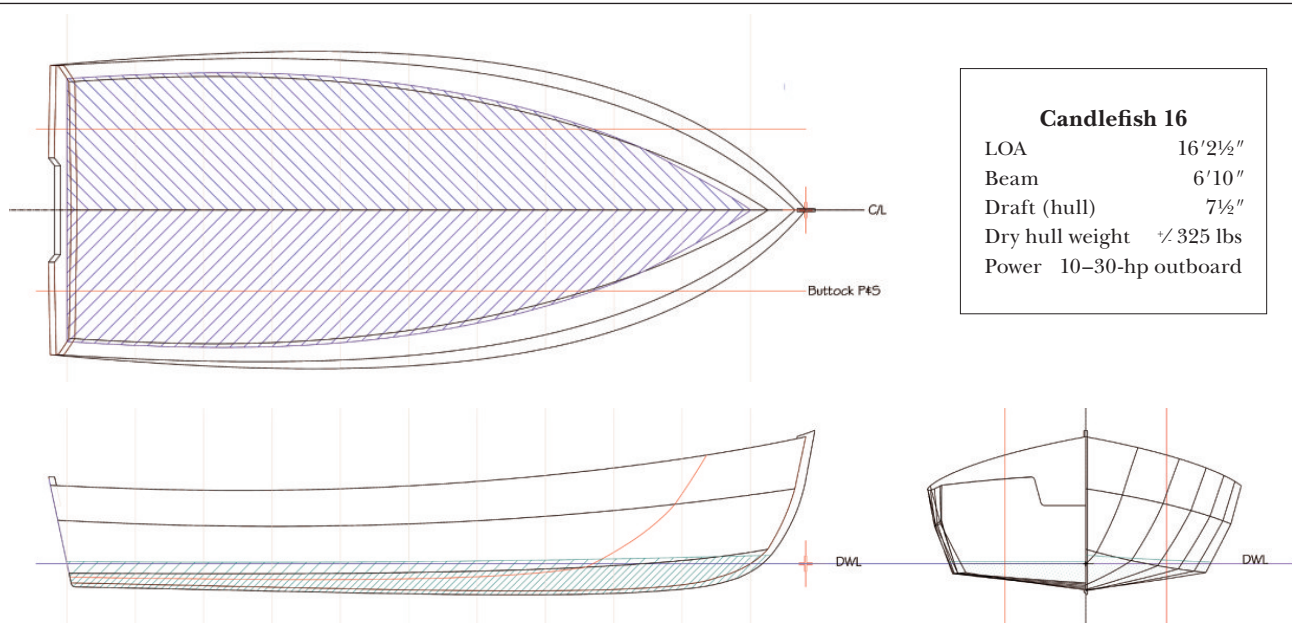
Capable open skiffs are just the thing for so many activities on the water: fishing, pulling crab traps or shrimp pots, commuting, tent camping, and just exploring the edges of salt or fresh water. Here are two open outboard boats from Sam Devlin, who has been designing boats for stitch-and-glue construction for a long time. These designs display his experience in building small plywood boats and his enthusiasm for logical solutions that work for builders and users.

These hulls are notably beamy, and there's a story behind that. The original concept was to create a series of simply built, low-deadrise boats that would operate efficiently with limited horsepower, of a shape like the pangas of Central America. But today's fishermen want to get to "the spot" fast, and real speed is easy with big modern four-stroke motors. These motors are heavy, and the best way to handle weight is to increase waterplane area. Coincidentally, that wide low-deadrise bottom aids easy

planing if the overall weight can be kept in check, and open boats can be kept light with some care.

Both of these Candlefish designs are intended for relatively large tiller-steered outboards, maximum 30 hp on the 16-footer and 70 hp on the 18-footer. Those looking for best efficiency from a 9.9-hp outboard should consider a narrower hull form. On the other hand, if you want high speed in semi-protected water, a Candlefish will be worth looking at.

Sam Devlin's two Candlefish designs measure 16' and 18'. They are big, burdensome boats that can carry large outboard motors—up to 50 hp for the 16-footer and up to 90 hp for the 18-footer.



Candlefish 16

LOA	16'2½"
Beam	6'10"
Draft (hull)	7½"
Dry hull weight	¼ 325 lbs
Power	10–30-hp outboard

Above and below—High sides, while costing a slight penalty in windage, contribute to the seakeeping ability of both Candlefish designs. A knuckle runs the length of the topsides, echoing the sheerline and reinforcing the salty character and good looks of both boats.

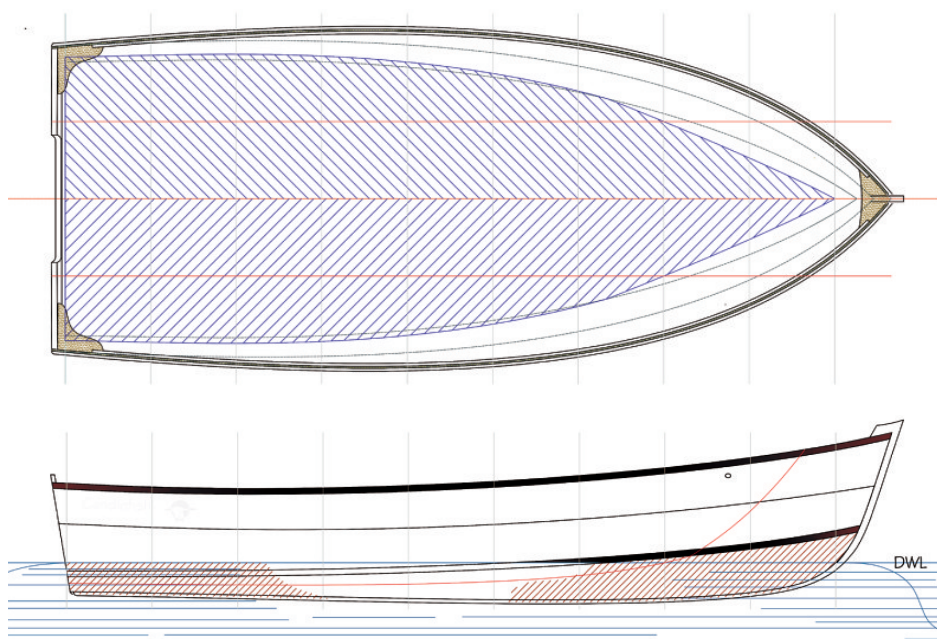
The strong traditional sheerline, real purpleheart external stem, and hardwood rubrails with quarter knees let everyone know this is a substantial wooden boat. A subtle full-length topside knuckle echoing the sheer reinforces the seaworthy character while breaking up any tendency toward a slab-sided box.

These are good-looking boats.

Depth, or height of side, is always a trade-off in open boats. High sides will keep you drier than low ones but are heavier to push and have more windage at speed. I'm with Sam in favor of paying the penalty for slightly higher sides to gain a more capable boat. The high bow

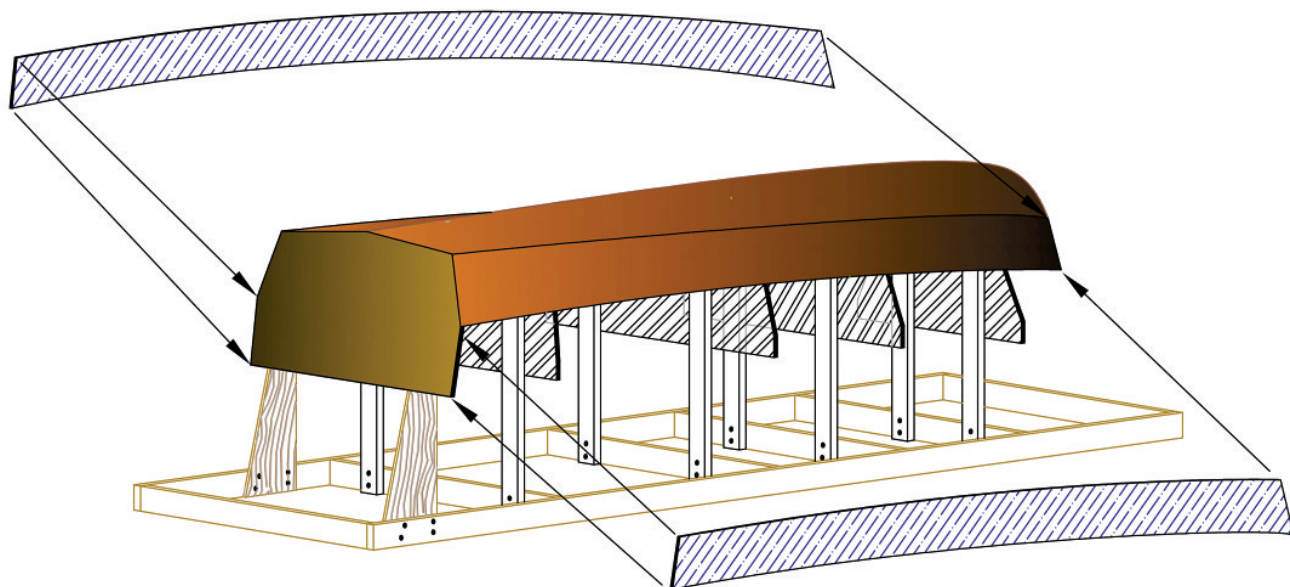
will be especially appreciated when running home at dusk into a sharp chop.

In keeping with modern practice, both designs incorporate positive flotation above that of the wooden structure. Sensibly, that positive flotation is fixed just below the sheerline so that the swamped



Candlefish 18

LOA	18'5"
Beam	7'
Draft	10⅞"
Dry hull weight	825 lbs
Power	40–70-hp outboard



Both Candlefish designs call for stitch-and-glue construction; plywood panels are stitched together over bulkheads while their edge curves, along with the bulkheads, control the hull form. The hulls are entirely sheathed in fiberglass set in epoxy.

boat will float upright. In the Candlefish 16 drawings, Sam outlines a flotation scheme utilizing a dozen inexpensive PFDs strapped under the stern seats and in the top of the bow locker. The 18 requires two dozen in the same scheme. This idea has considerable merit; the strapped-in PFDs are easy to install, don't create any water traps, and can be quickly removed to clean and dry the lockers.

Extra beam and a wide waterplane are necessary to safely carry heavy outboards. This beam also creates the dynamic stability to keep crew safe at high speeds. The waterline beam-to-length ratio for the Candlefish 16 is about 2.5:1, while that of the 18 is 2.75:1. So these hulls have greater wetted surface than a slimmer hull, and a fatter entrance angle at the waterline. Neither of these factors matter at high speed but will make a big difference at displacement or semi-displacement speeds. Again, this argues against chasing efficiency with smaller motors. Efficiency with the Candlefish hulls will mean installing adequate power to overcome the resistance hump at about 14 to 15 knots.

A shallow hull with wide beam will also be quick to follow the water's surface, reacting quickly to any passing wave. This can be both comforting and tiring, but the greater stability means someone can stand right out at the rail without fear of water coming aboard.

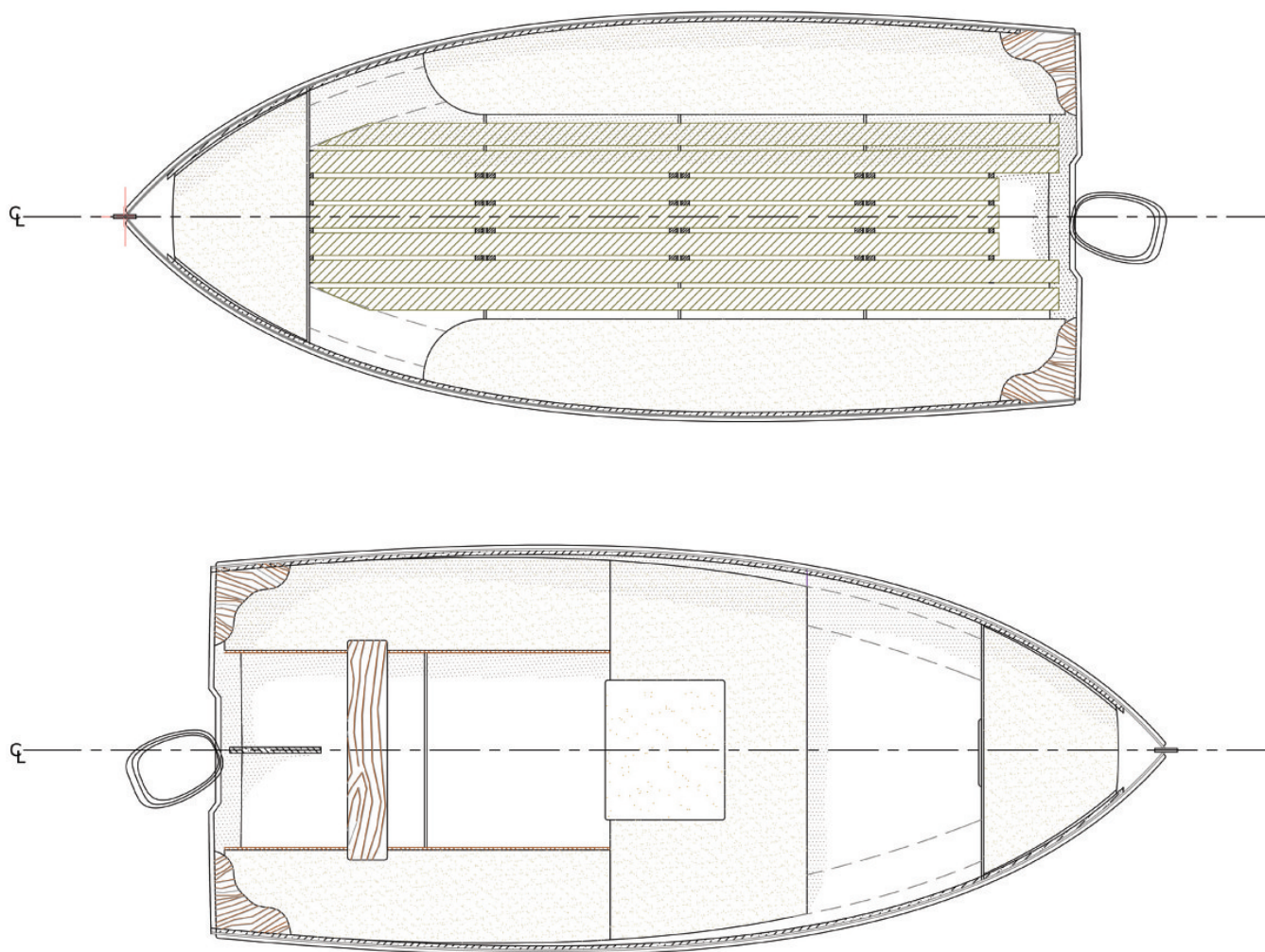
The Candlefish hulls have no chine flat; in a boat with a transom deadrise angle of 4 to 6 degrees, eliminating this extra part makes sense. In place of a chine flat the drawings outline installation of a $\frac{3}{4}$ "-wide hardwood spray rail, installed after sheathing the hull in fiberglass. With an aggressive reverse angle, these spray rails will have a big influence on the amount of water blowing aboard at speed, as long as that lower outboard edge is kept sharp.

Actual performance of amateur-built boats is highly variable, because finished weight and loading can vary a great deal. A carefully built Candlefish 16 has been reported to top out at 19 mph with a 25-hp outboard. With a 60-hp motor, speeds could approach 40 mph. For the 18, again carefully built and not overloaded, speeds over 30 mph will be routinely expected from the largest motors.

The Candlefish boats, like all Devlin designs, are built using the stitch-and-glue method, in which plywood panels are scarfed to length and cut to shape before being stitched together over a few bulkheads. The edge curves, along with the bulkheads, control the final hull form. The 16 uses mainly $\frac{3}{8}$ " plywood while the 18 requires $\frac{1}{2}$ "; both require $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood for the bulkheads, frames, longitudinals, and transom. The entire hull exterior is sheathed in fiberglass set in epoxy. If the boat is to live on a trailer under cover, just sealing the interior with epoxy would be adequate protection. If the boat is to be exposed to weather tied to a dock or out on a mooring, I would highly recommend light (2-oz) fiberglass sheathing of the interior.

With size and material differences, the 18 will cost twice that of the 16 in materials, not including the motor. The building time will also be close to double. Only slightly less capability for half the investment of time and dollars really explains the popularity of 16' open boats.

The 18 has a watertight $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood sole just above the at-rest waterline, ensuring self-bailing while moored. My current thinking on this



The Candlefish 16 plans offer three arrangements: the open version (*top*), the bridge-deck model (*above*), and the casting-deck layout (shown in profile on page 98).

is that it's better to accept the non-self-bailing arrangement, because in a tough situation the lower seating height and lower overall center of gravity will ultimately keep more water out of the boat. The below-waterline sole in the 16 means it will need an electric bilge pump with battery and solar panel if left on a mooring.

The Candlefish 16 is offered in three arrangements: the standard open configuration, the bridge-deck model, and the casting-deck layout. The open version offers long side benches port and starboard, a large bow locker, and an after

thwart to sit on while running the tiller motor with either left or right hand. The bridge deck breaks the footwell into forward and after sections, with a large watertight storage locker between them; this locker also offers additional seating. For fishing, the casting deck version's interior is completely open fore-and-aft, with the side decks and foredeck at sheer height providing the seating. A raised casting area occupies about two-thirds of the cockpit's length.

The Candlefish 18 drawings outline just the bridge-deck arrangement, though obviously the boat

could be built with an open configuration. I'm in favor of the bridge deck, because you get not only massive dry storage but also the arrangement limits the interior volume available to be filled with water in a swamping.

I find very little to criticize in the two Candlefish designs. They are both boats I'd be happy to own and use. With good looks and versatility, small open boats really can be the best. 

Tad Roberts is WoodenBoat's boat design editor.

For more information visit www.devlinboat.com.

WoodenBoat REVIEW

PRODUCTS • BOOKS • VIDEOS • STUFF

The Wreck of the Mentor

The Wreck of the Mentor: A Story of Death, Despair and Deliverance in the Age of Sail, by Eric Jay Dolin. W.W. Norton, www.wwnorton.com. 272 pp., illus., \$27.99.

Reviewed by Michael Dyer

Eric Jay Dolin's newest book, *The Wreck of the Mentor, A True Story of Death, Despair, and Deliverance in the Age of Sail*, is a richly illustrated adventure story telling the tale of a New Bedford whaleship cast away on the islands of Palau in the western Pacific in 1832, and the crew's harrowing ordeal that followed. It covers the long and complex history of Western mariners' encounters with the people of Palau dating back to the late-18th century; he summarizes those encounters and their aftermath in 23 chapters ranging from Palauan geographical and cultural history to the intricacies of American whaling, British commercial voyages in the region, and ultimately the role of the U.S. Navy in the rescue of some of MENTOR's crew. Dolin outlines the biographies of most of the people involved, including Palauan individuals as were best recorded at the time.

The story is very well documented with primary sources, including the published narrative of two of the American survivors, an unpublished manuscript by MENTOR's captain, Edward C. Barnard, a long account of the wreck of the East India Company ship ANTELOPE at Palau in 1783, and other related sources such as Capt. Amasa Delano's *Narrative of Voyages and Travels* (Boston, 1817). Dolin consolidates it all into one inclusive narrative delving into the complex cross-cultural relations in the Pacific, particularly the trade in firearms, during an important time in world maritime history.

MENTOR was one of more than 130 vessels that made up the American whaling fleet sailing from 17 ports that



FROM THE WRECK OF THE MENTOR

MENTOR, in the storm that wrecked her.

year. William Rotch Rodman (1811–50) a Quaker whaling merchant specializing in sperm whaling, with a controlling interest in more than 50 voyages during his career, owned MENTOR. On this particular voyage, Edward C. Barnard (1799–1844), an experienced whaleman and navigator, was master. Ostensibly on a voyage to the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans, Barnard crossed into the East Indies intending to hunt around the rich sperm-whaling grounds of the Celebes Sea. He lost his reckoning in a storm, and while he knew of the general whereabouts of the Palau islands, the treacherous currents surrounding them drew MENTOR onto a reef. Eleven men drowned trying to escape the wreck when their whaleboat capsized. The remainder of the crew, in desperate circumstances, then dwelt with the native islanders for over a year in Palau, where they witnessed firsthand the upheavals caused by conflict with Westerners.

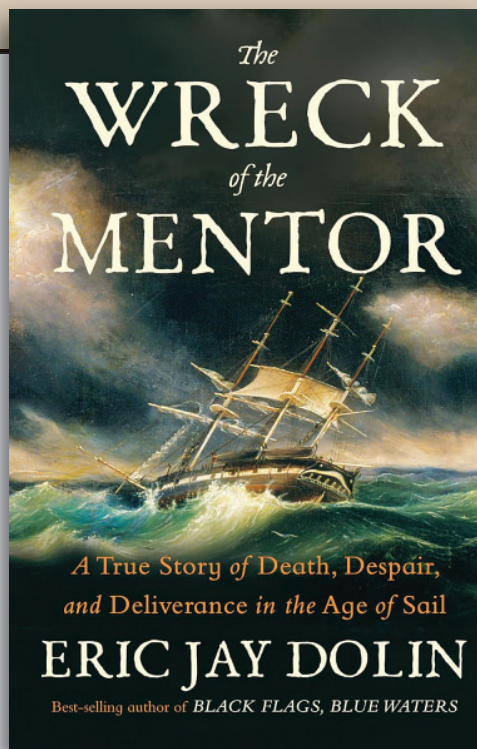
A survivor of the wreck, Horace Holden, famously told his story in a little book titled *A narrative of the shipwreck, captivity and sufferings of Horace Holden and Benj. H. Nute; who were cast away in the American ship Mentor, on the Pelew Islands, in the year 1832; and for two years afterwards were subjected to unheard of sufferings among the barbarous inhabitants of Lord North's Island* (Boston, 1836). Holden and his

companion, both young New Hampshire men, were forcibly tattooed during their captivity.

In re-examining this classic story of seafarer's tribulations, Dolin makes it clear that the introduction of firearms into Palauan culture caused great turmoil and internecine conflict. It is not simply the story of a shipwreck. It's a story of 22 souls, many of them young whalers from the New England countryside, finding themselves 9,000 miles from home, thrown violently onto a coral reef, with those few who escaped drowning becoming enmeshed in the conflicts of a culture itself in the throes of assimilation into a burgeoning Western influence. Once Capt. Barnard had made it off the island and back to the United States, he raised the alarm; in response, in 1835 the sloop-of-war U.S.S. VINCENNES was dispatched under the command of John H. Aulick to negotiate the return of the surviving crew members, who remained in captivity. Of MENTOR's crew, seven men survived. Some took advantage of passing British merchant ships to seek rescue, and some were deliberately rescued by the U.S. Navy.

Dolin's storytelling is smooth, easy, and instantly engaging, and he includes the essential reference of a nice map. A "Cast of Characters" lists the names of crew members aboard MENTOR and ANTELOPE, plus other people and voyages of importance. This matters greatly as the story gets complicated with many tribal actors and places. Events, especially 19th-century encounter events in the Pacific, rarely stand alone. There's often a precursor event that sets the stage for the next hapless Western navigators venturing in range of people and places they don't understand. This story is no exception, so the name list is very helpful.

At the outset, Dolin is careful to explain the fragility of such cross-cultural historical storytelling, which often relies upon documents compiled by Westerners to the exclusion of Native voices. Even so, he takes pains, especially in Chapter 2, "Palau," to accurately identify and spell the placenames, individuals' names, and other facets of this western Pacific culture with integrity. Such care is essential to this and any other such narratives describing the complex interactions of Western mariners with Pacific cultures. Indeed, it's central to the narrative, as by the time Barnard, Holden, Nute, and the rest were cast away, they had become unwitting pawns in a generations-long cultural disturbance starting in



the late 1700s involving firearms, gunpowder, bits of iron, and the power struggles of Palauans wanting these things.

As Dolin consolidates this into one cohesive narrative, he outlines a pattern of interactions involving accidents and the resulting rough-hewn and off-kilter diplomacy. The pattern essentially ends when the U.S. Navy gets involved, firmly beginning the envelopment of the peoples of Palau under the umbrella of Western influence. The MENTOR affair would figure largely in the U.S. Congress eventually agreeing to fund the 1838 U.S. Exploring Expedition to chart the Pacific Islands once and for all and to provide naval protection to American navigators.

For readers of *WoodenBoat* magazine, of particular interest are the many passages describing the efforts of the castaways (both English and American) to repair their existing whaleboats, build boats using whatever tools and bits and pieces of wreckage they could salvage, or adopt Native boatbuilding to their needs. These boatbuilding efforts led Holden and Nute to attempt escape from Palau, but they instead wound up held as prisoners 300 miles away on Tobi Island, which Holden knew as "Lord North Island," as it had been named after a British merchant ship some decades earlier. It was there that their greatest physical torments, including the tattooing, took place.

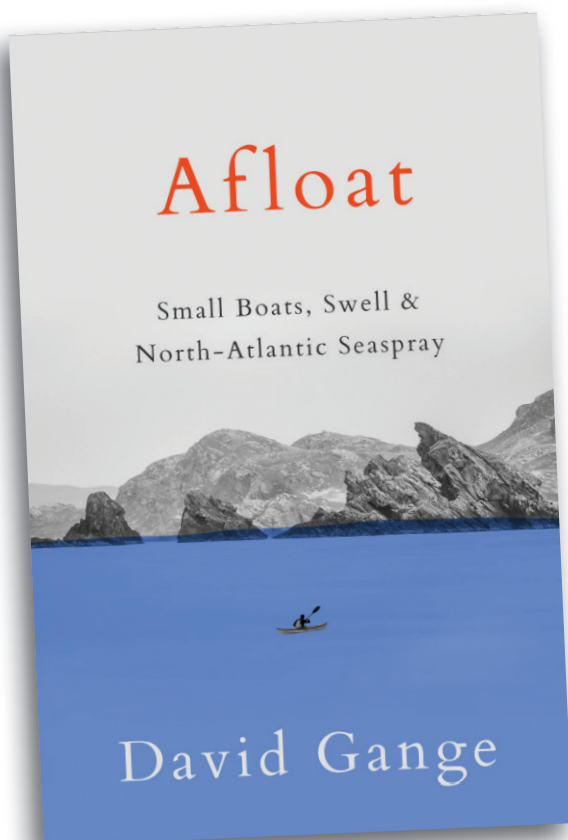
The Wreck of the Mentor is a good overview of an important time in world history, when Western commercial fleets were sailing the world, spreading attitudes and technology and injecting elements of political economy into realms such as Palau, whether it was wanted there or not. It opens the door to a further reading list of published primary sources fundamental to understanding the development of Western influences in the Pacific and the results of that influence.

Michael Dyer is curator of maritime history at the New Bedford Whaling Museum.



FROM THE WRECK OF THE MENTOR

Horace Holden escapes to the ship BRITANNIA.



Afloat

Afloat: Small Boats, Swell and Seaspray, by David Gange. William Collins (An imprint of Harper Collins), www.harpercollins.com. 304 pp., illus, \$30.

Reviewed by Matthew P. Murphy

For more than a century, the literature of small wooden boats has been continually enriched by book-length studies documenting shapes, construction details, and uses of specific local and indigenous watercraft. These tomes include Edwin Tappan Adney and Howard I. Chapelle's *Bark and Skin Boats of North America*; George Dyson's *Baidarka*; a series of books by Bernard and Christian Faeroyvik and, later, Arne Emil Christensen on Nordic watercraft; C.R.G. Worcester's *The Junks and Sampans of the Yangtze*; and, more recently, Douglas Brooks's studies of Japanese watercraft and Nova Scotia dories. And, of course, Chapelle's *American Small Sailing Craft* is the seminal documentary study of historic American types, while John Gardner's books on building classic small craft continued this effort, with an emphasis on guiding amateur construction. All of these works relied on field work and painstaking measurement to record ingenious but ephemeral small wooden boats.



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Right—The local boat that author David Gange used to explore the Sapmi region.

Far right—A Bay punt in Newfoundland.

David Gange's new book, *Afloat: Small Boats, Swell & North Atlantic Seaspray*, offers something different: It is a lyrical and deeply human perspective on the role and lasting impact of overlooked small boats in several remote coastal communities—and, by inference, the role of small craft in all coastal communities. Gange writes of his subject boats: "Where decked, sailed vessels were often commercially owned ... tiny undecked boats were possessed by individual families. This is part of the reason they evade historical attention. History books tell the tale of sail and steam. They tend to centre on ships that moved between big ports and towns. This makes it a surprise to some that, wherever we have statistics, small rowed and paddled boats vastly outnumber sailboats."



ALL IMAGES FROM *Afloat*, BY DAVID GANGE

Gange's original mission was to travel for 12 continuous months over the year 2020. Equipped with a small folding boat, he would visit eight communities ringing the North Atlantic basin, absorbing, through conversation and hands-on experience, the historical and ongoing significance of local boat types. His aim was not the precise documentation of watercraft, with measured drawings and tight technical description, but rather ethnography recorded through oral tradition. The Covid-19 pandemic, with its travel restrictions, altered that original plan; the project

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ultimately became a series of discrete trips between January 2022 and October 2024.

The places visited were: Connemara in Western Ireland; Scotland's Isle of Lewis; the Sápmi region spanning the very northernmost portions of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia; the Faroe Islands; Greenland; Newfoundland; Maine and Massachusetts; and Barbados. The resulting book is molded around cultural immersion, outings in local watercraft, and long, ambitious passages in Gange's own boat.

"I don't for a moment," Gange writes, "believe in the assessments that inland writers, from the eighteenth century to the present, have made of these regions. Visitors from cities depicted them as backward, naturally prone to poverty and famine, and in need of outside intervention to 'catch up' and modernise." He writes in his introductory chapter, "The Lives and Love of Little Boats," that in fact "every place featured in this book experienced a revival of interest in its traditions since the 1970s.... Boatbuilding is now a feature of indigenous activism around the world, at a time when the resurgence of indigenous knowledge and practice is the most important intellectual movement of our era." He goes on to describe festivals built around small boats in each of his topic destinations. Culture, indeed, is at the heart of this study, with just a brief interlude chapter describing the various boatbuilding methods encountered.

Everywhere around North America, he writes, it is

poets more than historians or archaeologists who have reclaimed marginalized histories. Everywhere, understanding of the world of the maritime north means reconceptualizing voids as creative spaces and feeling our way to what might have been and what still could be. To this point, Gange recollects his visit to Mount Desert Island, Maine, and his encounter with the legacy of Ralph Stanley, the noted builder of lobsterboats and Friendship sloops. "Stanley's," he writes, "was the name that cropped up everywhere." He then relays a widely held notion that the first boat Stanley built was a motorized lobsterboat. But this overlooked the fact that, as a 1940s-era schoolboy, he had built a 15' rowing dory. "This tendency to forget the rowing boats was something I came across frequently: it was possible to find records of the sailboats a builder had made—the sloops and ketches—but it was only in conversation with local people that lists of the smaller, rowed boats poured forth." The oral tradition, it seems, is alive and well in Downeast Maine.

Gange's path after his visit to Mount Desert led him to WoodenBoat School, which shares its campus with this magazine. I didn't meet him during his visit, but while here he did accurately absorb the magazine and school's combined origin story under the hand of founder Jon Wilson. He recounts these in a glowingly flattering impression of the place that was not unlike mine after my first few days here. I am convinced that



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such surface-level views of a community, while lacking the nuance of true knowing, offer powerful glimpses of character that are often buried by the routines of decades of residency. (I'm reminded of friends in Washington, D.C., who never make time to visit the Smithsonian.)

After his visit to the WoodenBoat campus, Gange proceeded, over two days, to Belfast via Eggemoggin Reach and across the top of Penobscot Bay—an arduous journey under oar or paddle. “To the Penobscot Nation,” he writes, “these tidal headwaters are sacred. Fresh water gathered from vast swathes of forest flows into salt tides and brings burgeoning life from both directions.” The native bark canoes, he writes, “permitted an intensely mobile way of life within the river’s vast watershed.” Such canoes, he notes, were abundant when European explorers and fishermen first arrived on these shores. However, the secrecy and illiteracy of the Europeans masked the sophistication and location of the Penobscot Nation—and the vital role of small boats, once again.

The Bark and Skin Boats of North America—the Adney and Chapelle book—enjoys special mention. Gange calls it out as a seminal ethnographic work that gave rise to the concept of cultural reconnection through boats, as mentioned above. He also cites the sequel to that book, *The Bark and Skin Boats of Northern Eurasia*, calling it “fiercely ambitious,” and a work “that took in

the canoe histories of every Arctic region from Scandinavia via Siberia to the Bering Strait: 10,000 kilometers of tundra and boreal forest that were once opened up to human access by technologies of birchbark and sealskin.” The text drives home the fact that, in the Arctic more even than elsewhere, distinctions between Europe, Asia, and the Americas make no sense: “The ceaseless traffic of little boats bound all the north’s cold-water worlds together long before Columbus,” he writes—a connection now eclipsed by political division, preserved only through oral tradition, and especially vibrant as it relates to small boats.

Gange notes a resonant methodology in the works of the English cartographer-historian-writer Tim Robinson, whose artistic efforts over the course of a half century brought the past to light in Connemara. Robinson, Gange writes, argued “that recovering the past of Connemara wasn’t compatible with the enlightenment idea of illuminating the past or constructing an authoritative narrative.” Instead, he said, his tales “mark some points of attachment of the historical web from which one can grope back along the strands into the darkness. The long memory of oral culture, which doesn’t work in narratives of cause and effect, and doesn’t always think with linear time, is where the meanings of the sea reside.” The small boats we experience in this book pierce the darkness. 

Matthew P. Murphy is editor of WoodenBoat.

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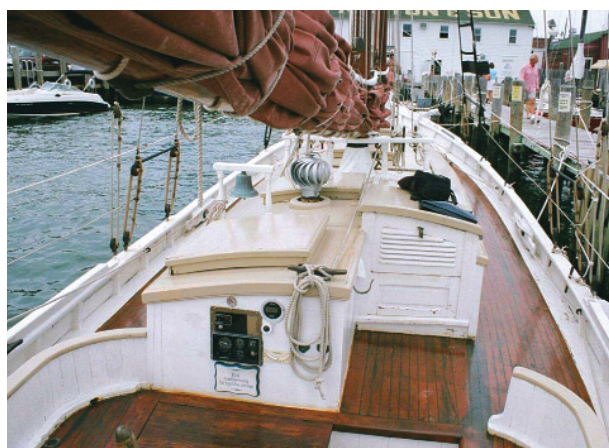
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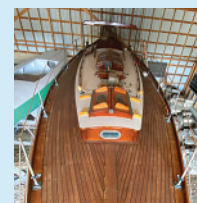


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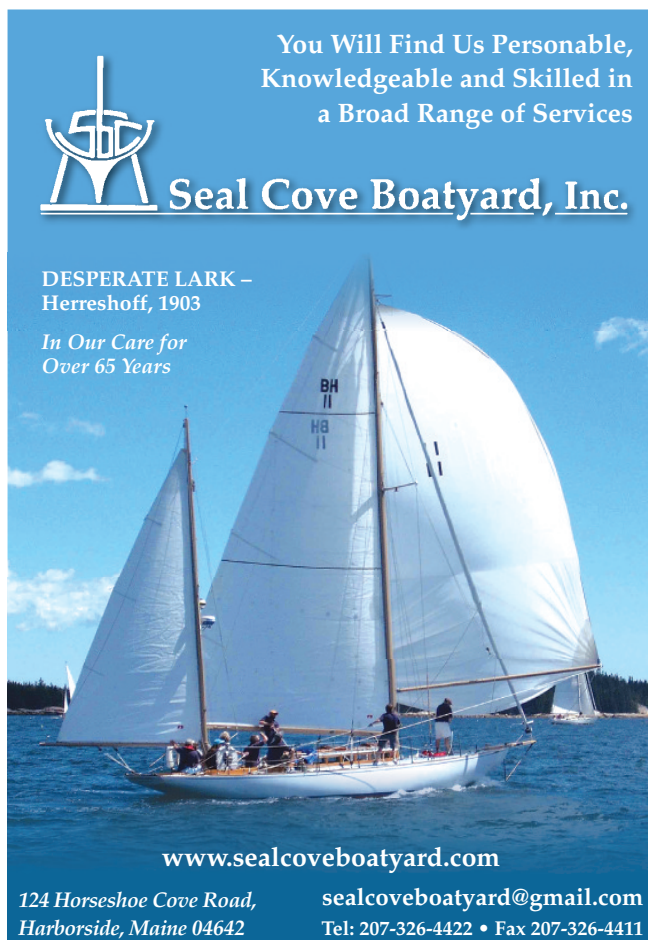



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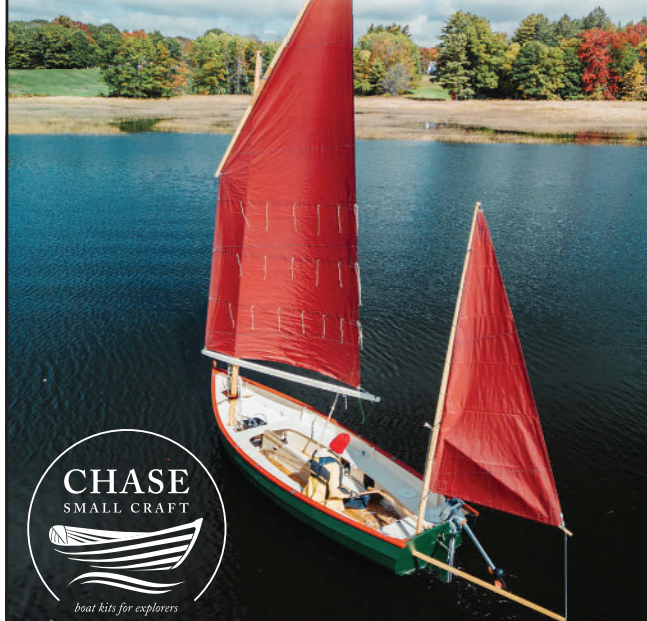
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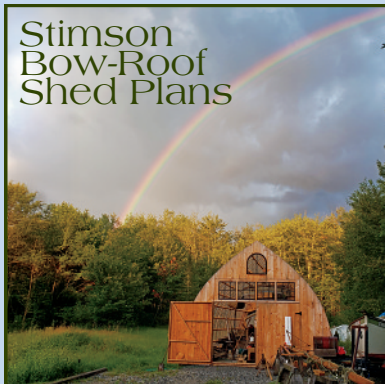


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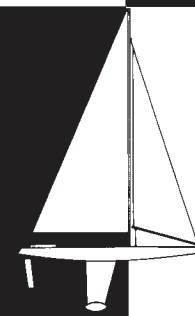
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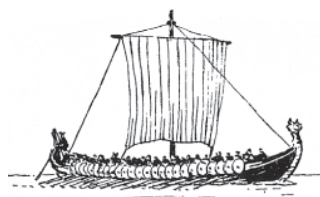
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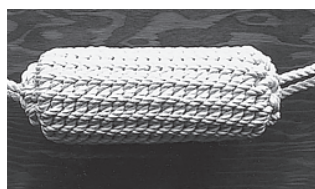
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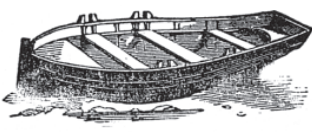
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1935 22 SQUARE METER SLOOP. Designed by Knud Reimers and built by Motala in Stockholm. 36' overall, 6' beam, 4.5' draft. Honduras mahogany hull. New mainsail, Torqeedo electric motor. Located in Ithaca, NY. More info at www.acbs.org/the-emperors-boat/David, 607-262-0443, dematth@gmail.com.



12'9" LOA, 6" BEAM. Gaff-rigged catboat. Custom designed and built in Nantucket. Cedar on white oak. Photo taken on launch day, 2011. Includes spars, sails, trailer, 2-hp electric outboard, battery, bilge pump. Well-built. Sound condition. Needs cosmetic refresh. Located central Ohio. \$6,500. Phone 801-652-7334. Email: cliff@cliffordhurst.com.



MATTHEWS 45' TRIPLE CABIN 1968. Mystic, Connecticut. 8V53 diesels, cruising speed 12-14 knots. 7.5 kW Onan diesel, bottom recently refastened 4000+ silicon bronze, new keel bolts, 8' inflatable-engine, two 100-watt solar panels for refrigerator, Nathan air horns, sleeps 8, 2 heads. Original equipment manuals and paperwork from the Matthews Co. Digital picture album, YouTube videos upon request. Lovingly maintained by owner 38 years. Motivated. \$50,000. Contact: Debschoman3@gmail.com. 516-805-6991 text/call.



21' BEACHCOMBER ALPHA DORY. Built by Thames Boatworks (Cyril Thames) in 1986 on Vancouver Island from the plans in John Gardner's *The Dory Book*. Classic construction: Copper fastened, Yellow Cedar on Oak. Yellow Cedar spars. Oak rudder and yoke. The boat has had one owner, has been well maintained and is in excellent condition, commensurate with its age and use. Available with King Trailer. All necessary equipment is included. It is a gem. Currently in Santa Barbara, California. \$11,500. Contact Tuck, 206-300-1376 or tuckdonnelly@gmail.com.

Boats For Sale continued



66' 1966 CUSTOM 66 FOR SALE. Welcome aboard "THE IMPOSSIBLE MACHINE." Originally launched in 1966, this classic wooden sailing vessel was designed by Kurt Oehlman built by the at the Louw & Halvorsen shipyard in Cape Town SA to be used as a training vessel for the South African Navy. In 2020, her current owner commissioned a major refit, transforming her into the proud ocean voyager she is today. Upgrades included the installation of a brand-new 225-hp John Deere diesel engine with a new turbo and gearbox oil cooler, all-new through hull fittings, a fully replaced rudder and hydraulic system, and the removal and servicing of both masts with a new stainless-steel rod rigging. In 2022, her topsides and antifoul were renewed, completing her rejuvenation. This extensive refit prepared her for the adventure of a lifetime—sailing from South Africa to Brazil to compete in the 2023 Cape to Rio Race. At the helm was her owner, Ard Matthews—renowned South African musician, songwriter, and lead vocalist of the band Just Jinjer—who then continued his voyage north to the Caribbean. In recent years, "THE IMPOSSIBLE MACHINE" has also served as a sailing and yacht-training platform for the Paper Boat Academy, offering aspiring mariners the skills and experience to launch careers in the yachting industry. Measuring 66' LOA with a 19'5" beam, this custom sailing yacht has a draft of 9'7" and a displacement of approximately 54 tonnes. BVI Yacht Sales, marketing@bvityachtsales.com Located Samana, Dominican Republic. \$49,500. More photos and website listing on *WoodenBoat's* Boats for Sale Online.



1956 18' CHRIS CRAFT SEA SKIFF. 60-hp Gray Marine, 12-volt conversion, Pertronix Electronic ignition. Mooring cover, Sunbrella top and side curtains, Iva-light, EZ-Inn boarding ladder, life jackets, paddles, Northlander trailer. Fresh varnish and paint. \$12,500 USD or best offer. Contact Doug 207-754-1036, dwbreunig@aol.com. More photos on *WoodenBoat's* Boats for Sale Online.



19' WOOD LIGHTNING SAILBOAT. Lightning Sailboat, Hull #4444. Cedar wood hull and deck restored and epoxied. Several sets of main and jib plus trailer included. val.zalaiskalns@gmail.com. More photos available online: www.woodenboat.com/boats-for-sale/lightening-sailboat-hull-4444.



36' DEVLIN TRAWLER, 2012. "ROCKLADY" Sam Devlin design for builder/owner John Calogero, Sr. Stitch-and-glue okoume plywood/fiberglass/epoxy. V-berth, settee/pull out double. Twin 30-hp Yanmar diesels with sail drives. Located Groton, CT. calogero@rockisland.com, 360-472-1697. Photos and details online www.woodenboat.com/boats-for-sale/36-devlin-trawler-2012.



46' CENTERBOARD KETCH. Montreal 1947. Cypress on white-oak over live-oak. Iron keel, steel CB. Sitka masts in tabernacles—lower for bridges. glass/epoxy decks. Standing backstays. 46' LOA, 40' LOD, 10' beam. Draft 40" (board up) 72" (down). 23-hp Farymann diesel. Sleeps 6 friendly. Georgian Bay. Continuously maintained. www.hadfield.ca/contact/.



TRAILERABLE FAMILY CRUISER. Trailable cutter-rigged gaff sloop. Awarded "Best Owner Restored Sailboat"—WoodenBoat Show 2024. Asking \$22,000 for boat, motor, trailer, dinghy and 2026 mooring reservation. Text 603-501-9719.



HISTORIC OLIN STEPHENS 6-metre racing sloop. Located Champlain. Same owner 55 years. Very well maintained. \$52,000 USD firm. More information and contact: www.olinstephens6metre.com.



2006, 33' TAHITI KETCH II. Western red cedar on white oak, two layers 10-oz fiberglass with epoxy, Westerbeke 42-hp, tanbark sails, monitor, stored indoors, survey at Mexico Point, NY. \$24,900. Email 2006tahitiketch@gmail.com.



R-CLASS SLOOP 1924. Burgess Swasey Paine design. Fully restored, in racing trim. Aluminum spars, North 3Di sails. Harken winches and hardware. Yanmar 1GM10 with Max-prop. Fresh water sailed Lake Ontario. \$60,000 USD. Contact Meimann1@rogers.com. 647-401-6502.

14' T&T RUNABOUT PROJECT BOAT. White hull. Varnished inside. Hole in hull. Broken windshield frame. On trailer, bad tires. Southwest Iowa. Can send photos. Asking \$2,000 cash. Call Chuck 712-215-3846.



1929 HERRESHOFF FISHERS ISLAND 31. Beautifully preserved by Ballentine's Boat Shop focusing on integrity of its heritage. In museum condition, original teak deck, sails in excellent condition. Great cruiser with many amenities. Active and successful racing. \$90,000. Located Pocasset, Mass. bruce.bradley@live.com. 313-910-9226.



33' FRIENDSHIP SLOOP, #64, "AMICITIA," LOA 42', designed by John Alden, built by Lash Bros. in 1965, cedar/oak; major refit by Jim Elk in 2016 included new mast; continued upgrades by Triad Boatworks; Yanmar 24-hp. Full headroom, well found. In my ownership for the past 50 yrs. Located Mattapoisett, MA. Asking \$32,500; JPontiff65@gmail.com, 508-269-5815.



"ELEANOR" IS FOR SALE. Howard Hughes' personal yacht. 71', built to Trumpy's exacting standards in 1939. Full professional restoration underway including new frames, stem, transom, bottom and topside planking, caprail and roof. Factory rebuilt pair of Cummins diesels await installation. Cummins model #6 BTA 330-hp. A unique opportunity to own this important piece of American marine history awaits. Finish to your own specifications. Contact Steven, skingurbanna@gmail.com, 757-387-9066, Reedville, VA. See more photos online: www.woodenboat.com/boats-for-sale/howard-hughes-personal-yacht-71-built-trumpys-exacting-standards-1939.



33' RALPH WILEY TANCOOK Whaler (1934) Fully restored by Cutts and Case (2021) "COUNTRY GIRL" 33' LOA 8' Beam 4'6" Draft. NEW cabinetry, cushions, Quantum Sails, running rigging, electric, plumbing, exhaust, bilge, head, plus more! \$38,000 Call 410-226-5416 or email Meghan@cuttsandcase.com.



"BRIGADOON" A UNIQUE GRAND BANKS 36 trawler yacht. One of the rare twin engine wooden GB-36'. Beautifully restored and upgraded to a vintage classic yacht. Now available to be seen at her private dock on Little Deer Isle, Maine. For a detailed emailed brochure and more pictures and drawings contact owner at jeromekir@gmail.com. Call for appointment, 207-348-5253. More photos and information on *WoodenBoat's* Boats for Sale Online.



1962 TED HOOD LITTLE HARBOR 40'. Centerboard yawl, double planked, bronze fastened, indoor winter storage, maintained by wooden boat professional. 40-hp Yanmar engine 1990 hours; autopilot, refrigeration, Raymarine electronics. Sails in good condition including spinnaker and mizzen staysail. Asking \$43,500. For more information and photos call 603-502-9178 or www.grayandgrayyachts.com.



30' CUSTOM-BUILT GENTLEMAN'S Runabout. Please call: Ryan Gessel 415-505-9172.



ORIGINAL HERRESHOFF 12½, hull no. 1287 built by Herreshoff Manufacturing Company. "POLLYWOG" has been professionally refurbished and maintained, and is in excellent condition. Located in Maine, asking \$26,000. Call 207-266-2316.



39' SLOOP NOW AVAILABLE at Cutts and Case in Oxford, MD. "SPIRIT" was built by Harold Follett and his son and then finished by Cutts and Case and launched in 1979. She is in excellent condition and is currently awaiting her new owner. More information please contact Meghan@cuttsandcase.com.



12'1" MORBIC 12 By Francois Vivier And Clint Chase. Mystic show stopper. WL 11', beam 5'11", centerboard down 2'6", up 6". Balance lug and sloop aluminum trailer 2021. Barely used, garaged. Swampscot, MA. Many extras not listed. \$14,000 USD. Cell 617-799-1461.



"ECHO", HISTORIC and gorgeous 1965 Friendship Sloop, FSS #54. Built for artist William Thon of Port Clyde at Lie-Nielsen's Lee's Boat Shop, Rockland, ME. Bronze fastened cedar on oak with original spruce spars., WC and Merriman bronze fittings and blocks, traditional deadeyes. Bald-headed gaff rig with Oceanus sails: club-footed stays'l, roller-reefed jib and vertical-seamed main with three reef lines. All NE Ropes traditional 3-strand lines. Sunbrella sail covers. L.O.D. 22', Beam 8', Draft 4', Displacement 5,200. Sail Area 326 square feet. Berths two. Torqeedo, Yamaha outboards, pair of sweeps, lots of spares, gear. Asking \$10,000 or best offer. Lying: Wickford, RI. 781-856-2635.

Boats For Free

FREE 1960 42' STEVENS. Needs a new good home! It's a great opportunity for the right person. Currently dry docked in a DIY yard ready to be restored. Interior is in beautiful original condition. Most planking and framing appear to be in okay condition. Cockpit deck needs to be rebuilt. Status of Crusader gas engines is unknown. Exterior needs work, all hardware is intact. Located at Sunset Aquatic Shipyard in Huntington Beach, CA. 562-592-2841. ron@sunsetaquatic.com.

VINTAGE SNIPE RACING BOAT 15' 7" with rigging and sail. Hull is marine plywood and needs some attention. Deck needs replacement for sure. Mast in good shape, boom is newly made of Sitka spruce. Centerboard is new as well, as is rudder (made from Bruynzeel plywood) and tiller. Sail is tired but I suppose it could be used. cmooreny@earthlink.net, 917-734-3659.

16' TOWN CLASS #1078. All rigging, sails, trailer. NEEDS RESTORATION. Contact Jeff, jlsizotte@gmail.com.

1959 23' LYMAN RUNABOUT. Popular model. Needing transom and spray rail repair, paint and varnish. Engine needs overhaul. Other engine options available. Includes good upholstery and mooring cover. Nice complete boat that needs a good home. Located Maine. 207-685-9502. View photos on *WoodenBoat's* Boats for Sale Online.

NORDIC FOLKBOAT BUILT IN DENMARK 1952. A classic that we have cared for the last 25 years. A great boat needs new caretakers. Good trailer and propane outboard. New mainsail. Chicago. 773-968-8423. jhard454@gmail.com.

22' 1903 FANTAIL LAUNCH "ALERT" depicted on Dodson Boatyard logo, originally purchased from Dodson's in 1980. Completely restored in mid 1990's. 50-hp gray marine engine. Has not been in the water for three years. Covered, on a non-roadable yard trailer. Needs a few new planks and a soft spot on keel addressed. Located in southeastern Connecticut. Free to the right custodian, preferably in the northeast. Pictures or inquiries contact Toby Doyle 860-388-7708, tdsailfast@yahoo.com.

FREE AUTHENTIC HERRESHOFF S-boat sail #64 built 1925 by George Lawley & Sons one of seven ordered by Pequot Yacht Club Southport, CT. Sold 1928 to Quissett Yacht Club, last sailed there 2015, under cover Falmouth, MA gravel driveway, includes mast, sails, rigging. Contact Eric, 508-457-4556 or ekarplus@sciencewares.com.

FREE TO THE RIGHT HOME. 18' Runabout. Built in 1960. Plywood runabout over sawn frames with 88-hp Evinrude engine on a two axle trailer of the same vintage. Trailer has had some restoration. Boat length 18', beam 7'5". Boat has been stored inside but will need some work to return to the water. Located in central Virginia. Pictures or inquiries: Dennis Cronin, 804-350-2866, cronindj2@gmail.com.

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◆ One boat per ad. Limit: One photo per ad.

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MYSTIC SEAPORT MUSEUM/RICHARDS, EAST GREENWICH, RI

The Cutter DAYBREAK

A 1950 Mystic Islander by Post

DAYBREAK is the ninth of the standardized cutters called Mystic Islanders built in Mystic, Connecticut, by Post & Son on speculation in the optimistic years following World War II. Back then, you could buy one fully outfitted, including sails for \$6,700 and, at the builder's urging, "Make the Post-war Era a Post-boat Era."

Its design was a stretched and improved version of REALITY, which her designer, Robert Townsend, had owned and sailed extensively. Unfortunately, all I know of Townsend is that he lived in the same town as the builder and demonstrated great skill in conceiving and drafting the Mystic Islanders.

These are robust, short-ended sailing craft with generous freeboard. For their 27' length, they were mighty roomy, with full headroom for occupants no taller than 5'9" and configured for either three or four berths. As Post's advertisements claimed, they look "Seagoin'" with their plumb bows, snug rigs, long and well-proportioned trunk cabins, footwell cockpits, outboard rudders, and low bulwarks.

This version sleeps four on two settee berths in the main cabin and a V-berth for two more forward. The galley (complete with a woodstove) is amidships. The toilet is underneath the port V-berth, and a slim pipe supports the deck-stepped mast. The engine lies entirely under the self-bailing cockpit.

Mystic Islanders were well-built, with white-oak backbones and frames, cedar planking fastened with bronze screws, and

Above left—DAYBREAK's status is little changed from 2014, when this photograph was taken. The boat is now sheltered in a custom bow shed. Above right—The boat carries 386 sq ft of sail in her cutter rig.

Particulars

LOA	27'
LWL	23'6"
Beam	8'2"
Draft	4'9"
Sail area	386 sq ft
Power	18-hp Yanmar diesel
Official No.	590503
Designed by	Robert Townsend
Built by	Franklin G. Post & Son Inc., Mystic, Connecticut, 1950

plywood decks. But their 3,800-lb cast-iron ballast keels were attached to the hull with galvanized steel bolts, and that's this boat's Achilles' heel. Her keelbolts need replacing, which can become a formidable project and has discouraged her recent owners from even attempting it. Renewing rusty keelbolts can be really tough or only plain tough, but it's never easy. The good news, however, is that the rest of the boat looks good and appears perfectly usable, assuming that the checks in the oak deadwood close up when the timber swells.

So, with luck regarding the keelbolt replacements, cleaning and painting should get a new owner a usable boat. The engine and sails are nearly new, and she's otherwise complete.

Mystic Seaport Museum is just upriver from DAYBREAK's birthplace, so it's not surprising that the museum has the builder's archives in its collections. Copies of all the builder's paperwork relating to this boat would be included in the sale. The slogan imprinted on the yard's stationery, "Buy Health and Happiness with a Post Boat," could apply just as much now as it did 75 years ago.

It's been 25 years since DAYBREAK was afloat, but during her time ashore she's been well sheltered. She's now under a custom-built bow shed in Castine, Maine.

Maynard Bray is WoodenBoat's technical editor.

To inspect DAYBREAK or obtain more information, contact owner Drew Scott at drew@hylanandbrown.com.

The interior, set up for four berths, is large for a 27' hull, with reasonable headroom.



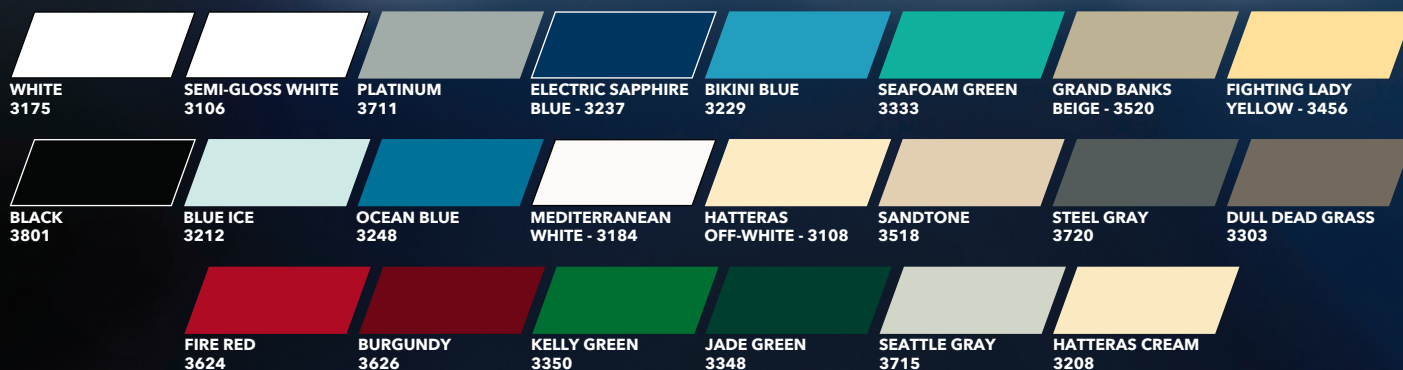
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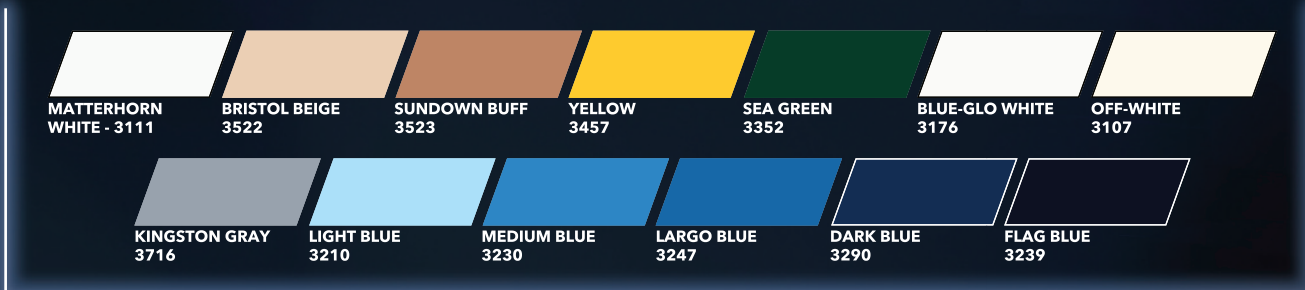


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