

LIVERPOOL SAILING CLUB

QUARTERLY REVIEW

Easter 2024

Hove-to

As the Editor puts this issue to bed we are being treated to a pleasantly warm early Easter weekend; so let us hope that this augurs well for a good season on the water.

The accident of the calendar, giving us Easter when we are still in March, reminds me that the early history of the club documents that in 1962 the sailing season started with a race on Good Friday, and that **“Ted Shaw found that Easter is far too early in the year to enjoy swimming!”** He was my late father; and he was aged only 46 at that time. I confess that, at now something nearer to twice that age, although I did consider sailing on Easter Eve this year (nice warm-ish day, and tempting wind strength, and a possible tide - albeit that I would have needed to come ashore soon after High Water because of another engagement later in the day), I eventually decided to give it a miss - and to finish off this issue instead.

After a summer last year when many of us felt that we had been sold short by the weather in July and August, a new two-part dinghy-cruising series opens in this issue by recounting an idyllic cruise in an Indian Summer that followed a spell of weather even more disappointing than that which we experienced in July and August last year. Swings and roundabouts, but the September cruise was superb (apart, that is, from a problem with the car); I hope you enjoy reading about it.

Also inside this issue is some excellent news about UKHO paper and raster charts, alongside some very disappointing and concerning news about an important boat builder going into liquidation; and sadly the latter is for the second time. And we have then our Colregs Quiz, which is specifically intended to be challenging; see how many you can get right! (And the Editor hopes that he got it right in constructing the quiz!)

Also, we still have a continuing **Situations Vacant** notice; if you can help, we would love to hear from you.

All that remains is to wish you all an enjoyable, and safe, season on the water.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Oliver", with a long horizontal line underneath it.

SOME VERY GOOD NEWS

UKHO PAPER AND RASTER CHARTS

Some excellent news via Tom Cunliffe, and we thank him for permission to quote his text (dated 15th March):

A bit of good news that came our way via the Royal Institute Electronic Navigation seminar last week is that the UKHO's scandalous announcement that paper charts were to be discontinued in 2025, together with their wonderful raster equivalents, has again been postponed. There had been such an outcry over the 2025 date that the Office rapidly backtracked to 2030. At the seminar, they conceded that this date also might well be shoved into the long grass. Meanwhile those champions of reason, Imray, continue to fight the good fight on behalf of paper and raster. The RYA remain reactive to events and rather than joining the general outcry among thinking small-craft navigators, are promoting a 'digital first' philosophy with traditional techniques being taught as secondary. I'm as delighted with my chart plotter as the next sailor, **but it seems to me that while the thoroughly educated navigator knows what questions the plotter should be answering the 'digital first' operator may well ask it the wrong ones.**

The original decision was well publicised at the time, including in this publication, and likewise the postponement; and it is excellent news that it is now further postponed.

Tom also makes the point that the vector charts which are common to many chartplotters do not currently feature the sort of useful land-based features which are common on paper (and raster) charts, and which are useful for taking a position line, which in turn can be used to fix one's position. And it can be very useful, even important, to be able to fix one's position visually, if (for example) the GPS signal is blocked or otherwise fails - as has been known to happen, or if the GPS gives a clearly nonsense position - as has also occasionally been known to happen, for all sorts of reasons.

Obvious examples of such land-based features are churches, chimneys, conspicuous buildings (annotated "Conspic." on charts), and even roads and railways. Yes, yours truly has on one occasion taken a useful fix off a moving train at night; this was off Dawlish (south Devon), and it was valid and useful because because he knew that this was the only point on that line where the railway ran round the outside of the headland ...

The Editor suspects, but has not had a convenient opportunity to check the point, that lighthouses still in service will be still shown on vector charts, but that disused lighthouses will not be shown, although in many cases they still stand and in many cases they are still conspicuous landmarks potentially useful for fixing one's position; and they are certainly still shown on paper and raster charts. Three local examples of such disused lighthouses, still shown on paper and raster charts, are Leasowe, Rock, and Hale Head Lighthouses; while a semi-local example of one still in service is Hilbre, and further afield but still in "our" corner of the Irish Sea there are several on Anglesey still in service (e.g. Trwyn-Du (a.k.a. Penmon), Point Lynas, The Skerries, and several others on the western side of the island).

AND ALSO SOME VERY DISAPPOINTING NEWS

We have just learned - literally as we were going to Press - that major British boat builders **Cornish Crabbers LLP**, builders of the iconic and immensely popular Cornish Shrimper and Cornish Crabber ranges plus a number of other very popular traditional designs of boat, have been forced into liquidation, following a Creditors' Meeting.

This appears to be the second time this builder has faced liquidation. Following the previous occasion, in November 2008, the assets were bought by entrepreneur and former customer Philip Langsdale, and in 2010 the business was reported to have a healthy order book and a 28-strong staff. However Philip Langsdale then left the business in 2012.

Our information comes from a PBO article, which can be found at <https://www.pbo.co.uk/news/cornish-crabbers-appoints-liquidator-85220>.

Let's hope that once again a way can be found to enable the builder of these superb boats to continue trading.



Cornish Shrimper

Photo from the builder's website

SHORT COLREGS QUIZ

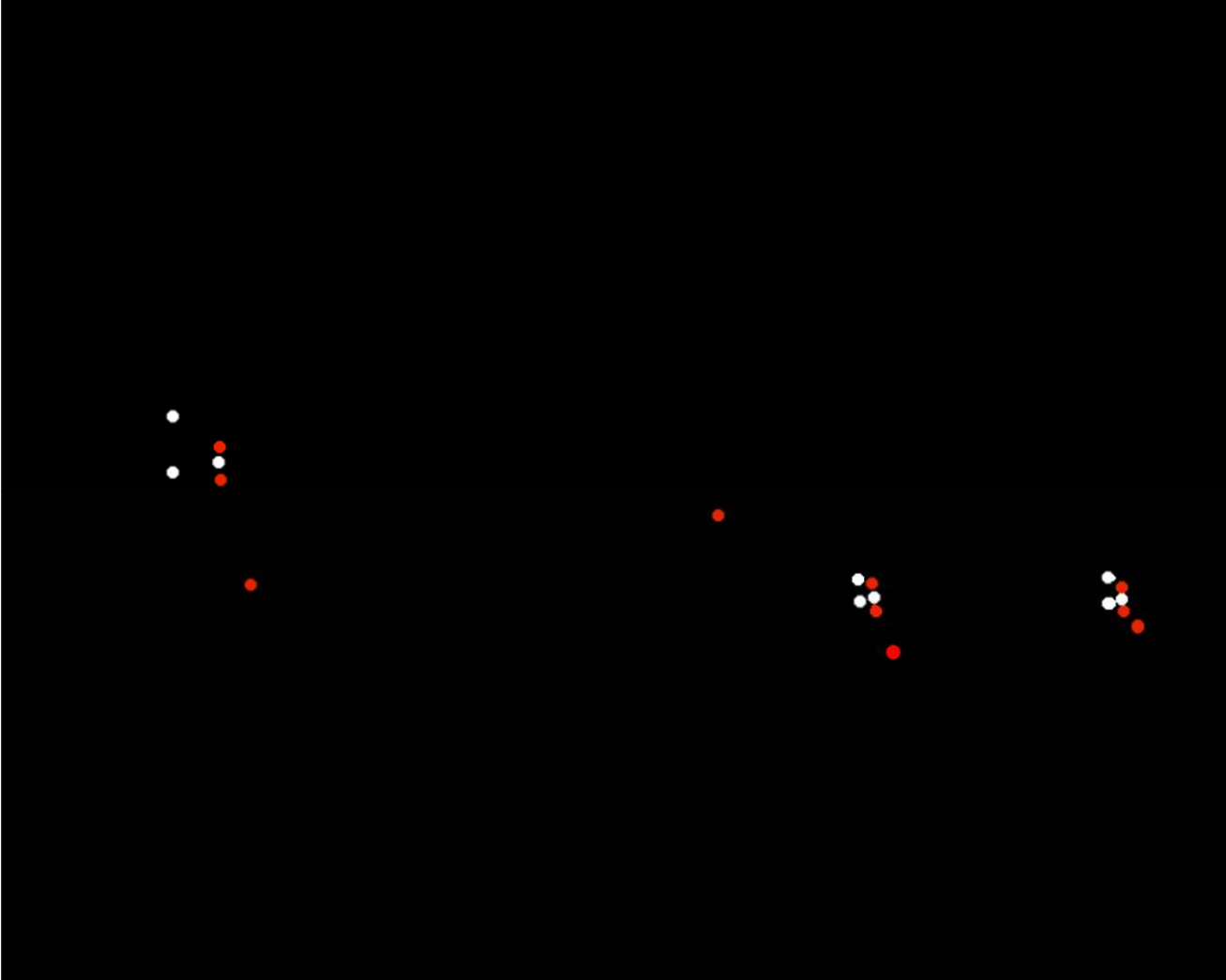
This time the quiz is entirely visual, and concerns light identification. It is also very deliberately unusually challenging.

What do you make of these three situations (answers at end, immediately after the Unusual Boats feature). (HINT: there is more than one vessel in each of these.)

Situation A

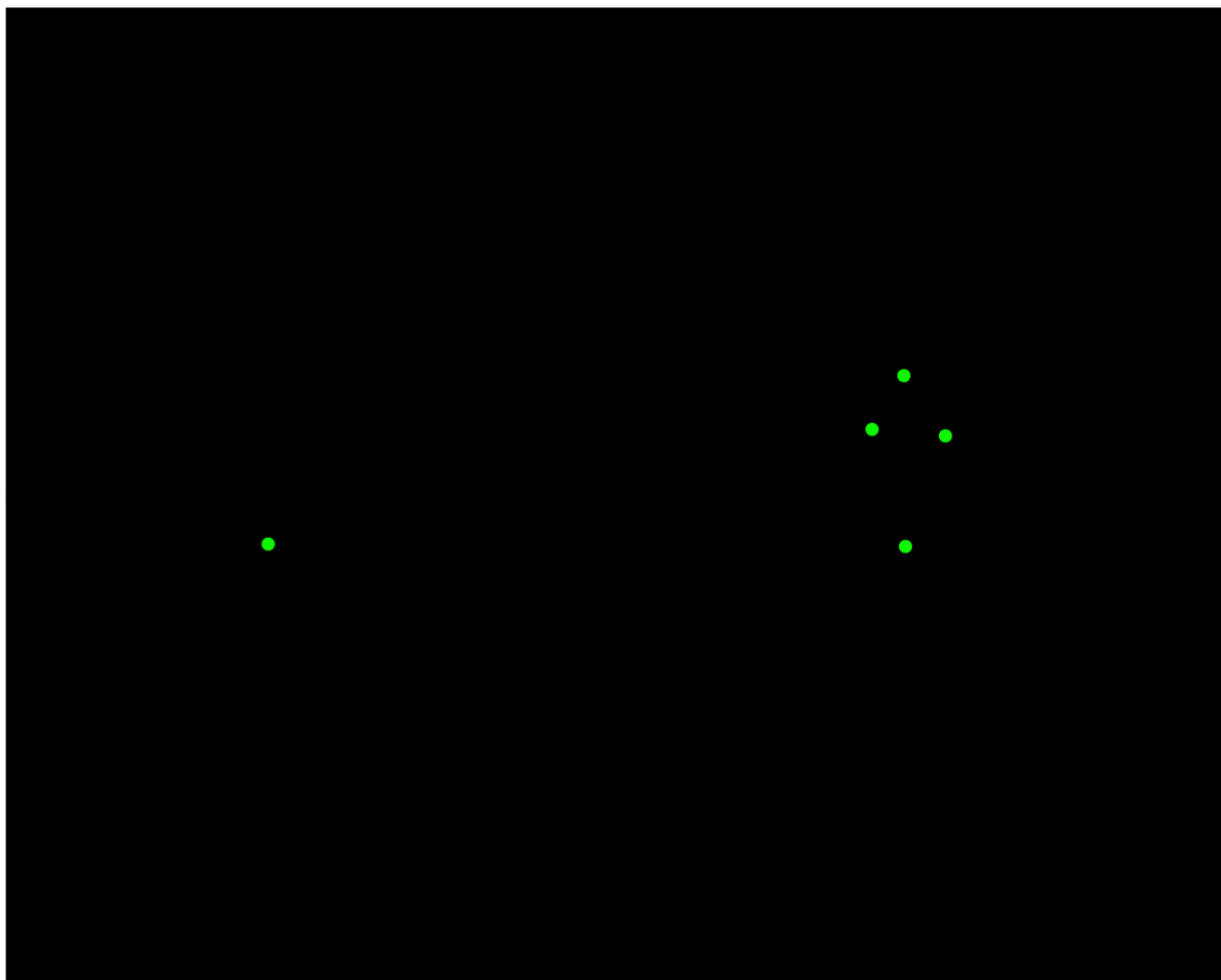


Situation B



Situation C

Clue - think wartime - immediately post-war i.e. navigation lights in use, but otherwise think in terms of military vessels



SITUATION VACANT

We still have a vacancy for a volunteer to format this publication into something that looks visually more professional.

Familiarity with desktop publishing software would be important, and it would be helpful to have one's own access to software of one's own choice - but if necessary it may be possible to assist there.

As well as providing a welcome service to the Club, and (we hope) being interesting for its own sake, for those members who are at the relevant stage of life this could also be something to put on a CV, and might also be a useful step along the way for anyone looking towards a career in journalism.

For any Member who is interested, the "job specification" could be fairly open-ended; there would be the opportunity to develop the visual presentation largely as you wish, and if you wished to do so there would also be the opportunity to contribute a regular column on specifically club news.

Any expressions of interest to either the Editor or the Hon. Secretary, please.

Meanwhile, we once again apologise that of necessity we are currently able to publish only in a somewhat "raw" state.

A Capella in West Anglesey - Porth Cwyfan

Part 1 of 3

After an absolutely appalling season for weather, the worst that I remember in a lifetime, summer 2008 eventually arrived, three months late, in the second half of September. This was therefore the excuse to grab a further few days holiday, and take one of the boats back to Anglesey. I did briefly consider taking *Snowgoose*, my vintage GP14, having recently commissioned her, but in the end I decided that since *A Capella* was already well set up for cruising that was the boat to take.

Objectively, although the Series 2 is in many ways the better boat, for cruising just as much as for racing, the Series 1 does have two important advantages for cruising. First, the greater clearance between the floorboards and the underside of the thwart is (probably) just sufficient to enable one to sleep aboard on the floorboards in reasonable comfort, whereas in the Series 2 I have previously found that I can stick it for only a few minutes at maximum. Second, in the event of taking in even a small quantity of water, whether through leaking self-bailers or leaking transom flaps or whatever, with a Series 2 this inevitably lies on the floor (once the self-bailer pockets are filled), whereas with the Series 1 it remains below the floorboards, and the floor itself is therefore dry.

I set off with kit for both camping options in the car; the more comfortable option being to find a camp site ashore, with all facilities, and put up the appropriate tent there, but the alternative option which is both cheaper and more flexible is to camp in the boat. I say the latter with some qualification, since my choice there is in fact a sort of half-way house; although I could at a pinch ship everything that I need aboard the boat, it is much more convenient to split camp, sleeping onboard but cooking in or adjacent to the car. All the food, crockery, cooking equipment, etc., stays ashore, while the tent plus inflatable mattress and sleeping bag go aboard only in the evening and come ashore again and are loosely bundled into the car the following morning. Overall, this much reduces the clutter in the boat.

The initial intention was to launch from Traeth Bychan, on the east coast, and have an attempt at getting round Lynas and into Porth Eilian, something which at that time had been a pipedream for a few years, but for which I had never found a suitable combination of tides and weather at time when I have been able to be there - although I have since done the passage once in *A Capella* and a few times in *Tarka II*. I had thought that at long last this might be the opportunity. In the event, however, that was not to be, but this led instead to a delightful discovery on the other side of the island.

On arrival at Traeth Bychan in the early afternoon there was the predicted easterly, force 3-4, which had been blowing for about 24 hours, and I was dismayed at just how lumpy the sea was and how many white horses there were. Alright in a yacht, but not the most enjoyable cruising conditions for singlehanding a GP14. I fell in with a solitary Dart 18 sailor, who was just bringing his craft ashore, and was using the jib to sail her up the beach on her launching trolley, and after giving him a hand to haul her up the difficult bit we discussed the options and agreed that the other side of the island was the more tempting in that weather. Indeed he said that if his own boat were on a road trailer that is where he would be sailing.

So I then set off, heading first for the Malltraeth estuary, where I had sailed just once before, about forty years previously, but on arrival in Malltraeth village at just about half tide I immediately saw the extent to which almost the entire estuary dries out, at least in the area which was accessible for launching. So I then looked at the map, seeking alternative launching sites further along the coast which I might be able to use over a wider tidal range, and preferably ones which were not too heavily inundated with visitors. The first such spot on the map was the twin bays of Porth Cwyfan and Porth China, reached via an unclassified (and at that date unsignposted) single-track road from Aberffraw.

After a little over a mile the first view of the bay opened out, to reveal the remarkable sight of a small church standing on an island in the middle of the bay.



Then at the end of the road the tarmac degenerated into a very rough and steep track down to a boulder-strewn beach. My initial reaction was to rule it out, because there was no way in which I could launch there without taking the car down onto the beach - and even then it was strictly Land Rover country (although that was precisely the vehicle that I was driving) - and there was nothing to indicate that one was permitted to do so. However

while I was attempting to turn round, in very restricted space, a local man working in his field assured me that I could indeed take the car down onto the beach, and that further along there was a sandy part where launching would indeed be possible. So down we went; bottom gear in low ratio; not least, this was in order to be able to go slowly enough to give the boat a reasonable ride.

To get there by water, as I learned from my subsequent sailing there, from the southward one passes Llanddwyn Island with its lighthouse, then the Malltraeth Estuary, then a green starboard hand buoy, and then Aberffraw's Traeth Mawr; in the lower half of the tide the estuary and Traeth Mawr will both present as wide expanses of sand, but I don't know how much of the sand will cover at High Water. There is a reef of drying rocks off the north side of Aberffraw Bay, which will be obvious enough when dry but which should be avoided when just covered.

The twin bays of Porth Cwyfan and Porth China form the next inlet, and the Church-in-the-Sea standing on its island is an easy marker, as also is the motor racing circuit on the far headland, with its slightly ugly buildings of an industrial/military appearance. Although the church stands on an island, I understand that early maps show it on the mainland, but over the centuries the sea has eroded the boulder clay of the surrounding mainland, leaving just this island. Seriously large boulders have since been placed against the seaward wall, as sea defences.

Porth China, the northern half of the double bay, as I later learned, is a comparatively modern name which is derived from a 19th century china clay industry, some of whose ruined buildings can still be seen.



Photo from <http://www.allaboutanglesey.co.uk/places-p-z/porth-china>



*Access is down this track to the beach;
strictly 4x4s and tractors only*





Very soft sand in the approach track



Then a rough track along the beach between the rocks ...



And eventually some good firm level sand

By the time I had driven over from Traeth Bychan, got the boat and car down to the beach, and rigged the boat and was ready to launch, it was then well into the second half of the afternoon. There was still time for a good sail, provided it was not a long one, before running out of daylight; and I wanted to be back in time to have tent and sleeping arrangements rigged before the light failed, and preferably have dinner cooked by then as well. So it was a short-ish sail, perhaps an hour and a half to two hours, in a nice force 3 and with flat water. The tidal stream at that time was flowing northwards, so I sailed southward (i.e. uptide) along the coast towards Llanddwyn Island before turning round and retracing my course, having the benefit of the favourable tide for the return.

I had no difficulty keeping clear of the rocks either side of the exit channel, nor in spotting anything beneath the surface. Indeed the latter was unusually easy because of the quite exceptional clarity of the water; one could clearly see the bottom even at a considerable depth.

Back at Porth Cwyfan after the sail I then anchored her close inshore while rigging my sleeping platform and air bed etc. plus the tent, and then – with an offshore wind – allowed her to lie seaward to the full extent of the anchor warp while I returned to the car to enjoy a G&T while grilling a garlic chicken Kiev, which subsequently went very well to the accompaniment of some chilled white wine out of the coolbox. Where possible I like to still wine and dine reasonably well when cruising.

Then, with darkness already fallen, I turned in for an unusually early night, in an idyllic anchorage, after having first repositioned the anchor at maximum comfortable wading depth (on a falling tide).



Wednesday evening anchorage



Having enjoyed a peaceful night I awoke in the morning to find not a breath of wind. Such are the vagaries and vicissitudes of sailing ...

To be continued

NAUTICAL DEFINITIONS

The selection this time includes three different two-masted fore-and-aft sailing rigs, as well as a name for a hull form which is often misunderstood. Note that all are fore-and-aft rigs, rather than square rigs, although a well-established hybrid is the topsail schooner (one example of which, Scott Metcalf's *Vilma*, we featured in passing last Autumn).

Schooner

A (usually) two-masted vessel (but more than two masts are possible), often large, in which the mainmast is not the foremost one; so if there are only two masts the mainmast is the after one of the pair, while if there are three masts it will be the central one. The after mast/s must be at least the same height as the foremast, and it is / they are very often of greater height than the foremast.



Although the mainmast is usually the tallest mast, occasional schooners have both masts the same height; but in that case either the mainsail will still have a larger area than the foresail or there will be no foresail (i.e. no sail on the aft side of the foremast), and instead there will be a staysail forward of the mainmast, as per the photo below.



1980 Carter Equal Masted Staysail Schooner sailboat for sale in Florida

<https://www.sailboatlistings.com/view/62055>



PRIDE OF BALTIMORE

A replica “Baltimore Clipper” topsail schooner, with steeply raked masts.

She was built in 1977 in an open-air shipyard in Baltimore’s Inner Harbor.

This Pride was the first Baltimore Clipper to be built in 150 years.

*She sailed more than 150,000 nautical miles in nine years before
she was struck by a freak squall and tragically sunk
off the coast of Puerto Rico in 1986.*

*Her replacement, Pride of Baltimore II, has many similarities,
but is about 15% larger dimensionally (50% larger by volume),
wheel-steered (the original Pride was tiller-steered),
and significantly uprated in many ways,
while still remaining a “Baltimore Clipper” topsail schooner.*

<https://pride2.org/>

But some schooners have had more than two masts. Photo below is of the three-masted De Wadden schooner in her heyday; this is a vessel which for 37 years graced Liverpool's Canning Dock, where she was in dry dock, before being reported as cut up and scrapped in mid-March of this year.



It seems a great pity that she has been cut up and scrapped, having until that point been apparently in the care of the Maritime Museum, and the press report gives no indication of the reasons. One has to hope that it is not just due to short-sighted economies, which one might regard as being akin to wanton vandalism of a historic vessel.



<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/canning-dock-feature-for-the-last-37-years-was-cut-to-pieces-today/ss-BB1jTvMx?rc=1&ocid=winpltaskbar&cvid=d9e48bbfb4514642fd2236cc0af64e6b&ei=5#image=4>

Ketch, and Yawl

These two rigs have one key feature in common, and one very different; so it helps to take them as a pair, and to contrast them.

Both have two masts, with the main mast the forward one of the pair, and a mizzen mast (and corresponding sail) significantly smaller than the main mast (and corresponding sail).

Where they differ, at least in terms of formal definition, is the precise location of the mizzen mast; if it is forward of the rudder post she is a ketch, and if it is abaft the rudder post she is a yawl. A consequence of that is that the mizzen mast on a ketch is normally well forward of the stern of the vessel, whereas on a yawl it is right aft, and so it is usual for the mizzen sail on a ketch to be much larger than on a yawl.

However, informally, many yachtsmen will decide on sight whether a boat is a ketch or a yawl on the basis of the relative size of the mizzen sail, at least as much as its actual position.



*Cutter-headed Gaff Ketch, seen at
Peel Traditional Boat Weekend 2013.
Editor's own photo.*



*Yawl; with mainsail heavily reefed.
<https://www.classicboat.co.uk/articles/albert-strange-canoe-yawl-charmina/>*

However there are occasional anomalies, where a boat has a transom-hung rudder. Nowhere is that better illustrated than by the racing dinghy class known as the Salcombe Yawl, which well illustrates the difference between the official definition and the unofficial one. This class vies with the Herreschoff 12½ on the other side of the Atlantic for the accolade of “The world’s most expensive sailing dinghy”, and also for arguably “The world’s most beautiful sailing dinghy”; but the interesting thing for our present purposes is that these boats, officially known as yawls, have transom-hung rudders; so the mizzen mast is (just) in front of the rudder post, so they are in fact ketches despite their name! But their mizzen sails are small, and right aft, so the term yawl does seem more appropriate, even though it is technically incorrect.



Salcombe Yawl.

Note that the rudder is abaft the mizzen mast, so technically she is a ketch;
but with a mizzen that far aft and that small she looks like a yawl -
until you realise where the rudder is.

Photo credit; the Editor, in the course of his 2015 Summer Cruise

Another example of the same anomaly is the utterly beautiful Sea Otter, built in a range of sizes by David Moss, of Skippool Creek, near Fleetwood. Many members will remember the late Eddie Sabino's superb example, his last boat, named *Doris* if I remember correctly, with a standing lug ketch rig. This again looks like, and is described as, a canoe yawl, but because the rudder is hung on the sternpost the mizzen mast is actually just forward of the rudder post. So despite looking like a yawl, and being described by her builder as a yawl, and we would all agree that this is a reasonably name for the rig, she is nonetheless technically a ketch.



A Sea Otter

Photo from the builder's website

<https://www.davidmossboatbuilders.co.uk/our-seaotter-range/sea-otter-15ft-review/>

Praam (alternatively spelled Pram)

Unlike the foregoing, this term has nothing to do with the type of rig; this is a hull form. And it has nothing to do with perambulators, either. Praam is the Scandinavian spelling, and this may be where the hull form originates and/or where it is most frequently seen in traditional boats.

It seems that it originally referred to a flat-bottomed shallow hull form, but it has (perhaps unofficially) come to refer to a boat with a bow transom - i.e. a blunt bow - instead of a stem (i.e. a pointed bow). Amongst well-known sailing dinghies of this type the headline classes are the Cadet, the Mirror 10, and the Optimist; plus also one which was very popular in the early postwar years (post-WW2), the Yachting World Utility Praam.



Yachting World Utility Praam

https://www.duckworksmagazine.com/04/s/gatherings/beale_park/index.htm

One of the primary reasons for some boats being designed with this shape is that for a given length it maximises the amount of space inside the boat, and therefore also maximises the carrying capacity.

The Editor rather likes the story of the Mirror dinghy named *Oblio* by its owner; the name was taken from a modern fable, and animated cartoon film, where in a land of pointed-headed people the eponymous character was the only person whose head was not pointed. Very apt for a sailing dinghy of that particular shape. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Point!

BAR CHAT

Full marks to those volunteers who turned up for the February work party to fill in the pot holes on our access track, using the recently delivered several tonnes of road planings. Your Editor did turn up to participate, but at age 81 he has to confess that after just 15 minutes he realised that the level of physical exertion required was now beyond him, so he was readily excused by those around him, and went home again. Sorry about that.

-o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o-

Ouch!!

Sailing Yacht Ripped Apart after Running Aground in Hawaii

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmxW66raGJ0>

-o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o-

Windfarm Notices: This will be of interest to those of our cruising members who cruise in “our” corner of the Irish Sea. A reminder that, in addition to the usual Notices to Mariners, regular bulletins about work on windfarms in the area are issued by Tom Watson, based in Fleetwood. Although these are primarily produced for the fishing boats of the region they are also sometimes useful to ourselves. The service is free, and seems very comprehensive and thorough.

Amongst the current set are some concerning a moderately long-term survey in the area off the Fylde coast and Morecambe Bay, likely to continue for around four months; so this may impact any of our cruising members intending to sail that patch, even if (like your Editor) you intend doing so only in the summer.

Contact Tom by email if you would like him to add you to the circulation list; but then expect a moderately frequent influx of emails.

tomwatsonfleetwood@btinternet.com

-o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o-

Wearing a different hat, after I had given an Organ Recital last October a small group of us, my godson and I plus a close friend and his partner, adjourned to The Philharmonic Dining Rooms for a convivial dinner. One part of the conversation raised a quotation which I discovered many years ago on the menu of my then favourite eatery, the Dinorben Arms at Bodfari, Denbighshire.

You might similarly enjoy it:

Quotation from The Daily Mail, 17th October 1961

I asked Madame Lily Bollinger, head of the Champagne House, how she enjoyed her own product. Madame Bollinger replied thus:-

“I drink it when I’m happy and when I’m sad. Sometimes I drink it when I’m alone. When I have company I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it if I’m not hungry and drink it when I am. Otherwise I never touch it - unless I am thirsty.”

-o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o-

From David Platten, on Openboat, many years ago:

P.S. And the Norfolk boat builder who taught me the craft (he was the one who said **“Boat buildin’s like life, boy: nail what you can, screw where you should, an’ bolt when you must”**) was also fond of saying: **“There, boy: that’s roughly accurate.”**

-o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o-

There is a story, attributed to Joseph Conrad, which readers might enjoy.

In the days of commercial sailing ships a candidate was taking his exams for his Master’s ticket. In the *viva voce* part of the exam the Examiner set him a question: “You are captain of a ship bearing down on the coast of Germany in storm conditions. What are you going to do?”

The candidate answered, and the Examiner then removed one piece of essential equipment, and asked him what he was going to do now.

The candidate then answered; and step by step each time the candidate offered a sensible and competent and appropriate solution to his predicament the Examiner removed some essential feature of the solution, and asked the candidate for a solution to the incrementally worsening problem.

In the end the candidate gave up and said “I’m sorry, sir, but I have done all that I can do. The situation is impossible.”

“Well dammit, man” said the Examiner, “can’t you at least pray!”

-o0o-

-o0o-

-o0o-

-o0o-

-o0o-

-o0o-

There is an “urban legend” - and I suspect it is no more than that - that when the Tudor queen, Elizabeth I, was asked what she attributed her long life she ascribed it to her habit of taking a bath once a year, **whether she needed it or not!**

(Digressing, there are said to be those who make a point of taking a bath or shower annually at Pentecost each year, in order to attain the (misquoted) Biblical standard of being “clean every Whit”)

Changing the subject, but we will later come back to it, many of us nowadays have long since ceased carrying pyrotechnic distress signals (flares), in favour of electronic alternatives. Although the two alternatives are not exactly equivalent, many owners feel that for private vessels the size of ours the advantages of electronic alternatives far outweigh their limitations. The one exception to that is that Coded Vessels (including our own *Safety I*) are still legally obliged to carry pyrotechnic flares; in this respect it seems that the law hasn't yet caught up with the technology.

Amongst these electronic devices are EVDSs (Electronic Visual Distress Signals), such as the popular ODEO LED flare, or its shorter-lived immediate predecessor the ODEO laser flare. There are also a small handful of other devices from other manufacturers, plus - and we cannot recommend them - some much cheaper non-marine units intended for marker strobe use ashore. They don't emit as much light as a pyrotechnic flare; but they are not primarily intended for raising the initial alarm - you use your VHF for that, backed up by your PLB or EPIRB. Instead, these are primarily intended to locate your position for the “final mile” approach, when the rescue asset is on scene and in sight and is actively looking for you; and they are amply bright enough for that task. They pose no risk of fire, or explosion, or accidentally shooting or otherwise injuring the operator or other personnel - all of which have happened with pyrotechnic flares, even when operated by professionals and other experts; they have no end of life disposal problems; and they have a continuous operating time of several hours, as compared with just the two to three minutes of a pyrotechnic flare.

Oh, and except in the short term, they are also cheaper; around £100 for an LED Flare - and as I write this I see that **some retailers are selling them as low as £75** - which can last indefinitely, at least many years, with only the batteries needing to be replaced. This compares with a set of 3 hand-held red flares at about **£33** (for the set of 3) **every three years, and with potential costs of disposal at end of life as well.** Approximate break-even point is at perhaps just over six years; less if disposal involves costs.



However if you have one of these it is worth replacing the battery as a matter of routine at the start of the season, rather than waiting for some sign that the battery is dying! **And just switching it on every now and again is not sufficient to check the health of the battery, as I discovered last season.**

I have two of these devices, both of them a very few years old, and both until recently were still on the original batteries. Neither has ever been used in anger, and I had been in the habit of briefly switching them on a few times per season just to check. They had always operated flawlessly when I tested them, until one day last autumn when one of them failed to operate on test; and there had been no previous warning of any problems. A fresh set of batteries immediately sorted it out; but from now on I shall aim to replace the batteries annually. If I am feeling parsimonious the old ones can be used up in something that is not safety-critical, like torches, etc.

My experience suggests that it is not sufficient just to check them two or three times per season; by way of playing safe it may be a good idea to replace the batteries annually, **“whether they need it or not”!** (to hark back to Elizabeth I). These devices take a pack of either three or four A4 cells (depending on just which model you have), which are cheap enough, and especially so for something which in a disaster scenario may help to save your life.

-o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o-

A disagreement some considerable time ago, with a connection to this club - and I am deliberately not being drawn on when it was or what the club connection might have been - prompted a somewhat wry sideways take on an old saying: “We have disagreed like gentlemen”. **Does that mean when they disagreed they resorted to duelling pistols?**

Thankfully the instance that I have in mind did not quite reach that stage!

-o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o-

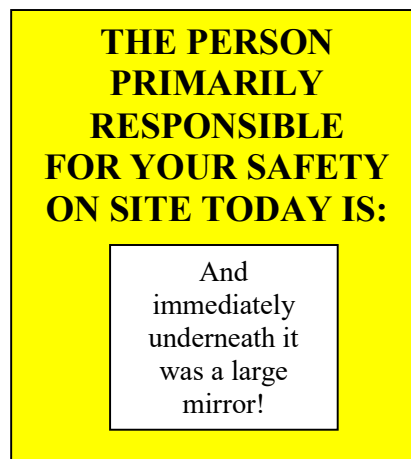
I am sure that we have all heard the expression **“The law is an ass”**. That came home to me in a conversation some months ago, with a fellow erstwhile Flag Office of this club, in the context of the boat lifting operation that we used to have. For those who are not familiar with this, Mike Hall and I jointly own some lifting tackle, which until a very few years ago we regularly used to our lift boats between two of our containers; and we also allowed other members to borrow the kit to lift their boats, provided either Mike or Andy or I was supervising. All three of us were suitably experienced, and had indeed been appropriately trained; but in at least Mike’s case and mine that was 50 or 60 years ago, and it seems that the law has moved on since then, so our training is now out of date.

Our methods were entirely safe in any reasonable scenario, and were fully acceptable in their day, but it seems that that is no longer the case. Specifically, **they are not proof against potential legal claims arising from damn-fool intruders meddling with the installation, and then suffering an accident as a result of their own intrusion and (bloody) stupidity!!”**

Never mind the damage that they might potentially do to our valuable boats!

Whatever happened to the fundamental concept of an earlier age, and indeed still ingrained into all of us sailing and boating people, that one has a personal responsibility for one's own safety, **and that accidents arising from one's own crass stupidity (or just bad luck) are not always and automatically someone else's fault?**

By the same token, I did like the warning notice seen at the perimeter of some site works when I had a pre-op hospital visit a couple of years ago. As well as the obvious warnings to wear hard hats, and to be observant on site, there was a large notice:



However I am now told that the defining case (in case law) is that of a firm who were doing some work on a site, which they had duly fenced off, and they employed a nightwatchman. They burned some scrap materials in a fire. A child, trespassing, found a means of breaching the fence - it doesn't seem to matter how, but he/she may have actually pierced the fence, and trespassed onto the site, and then fell into the fire. The firm were found negligent in **their failure to prevent** the accident!!!

I repeat; whatever happened to the concept that one is personally responsible for one's own safety, that accidents occasionally happen, and that they are **not** always the fault of someone else - **indeed they may even on occasion be one's own fault?**

One outcome of this bizarre, and ridiculous, legal situation is that those of us who from time to time need to lift our boats are now prevented from doing so.



An analogy, for those members who do not need to lift boats from time to time, is in your own homes. If you do a DIY repair on your car, and because evening has fallen before you finish the job you leave it jacked up in the driveway, and some local yobbo - or, for that matter, some pre-school child - trespasses onto your driveway and starts meddling, and as a result has an accident, it seems that you could be held personally liable.

Of course such accident is a tragedy for the young person concerned, and we can all empathise with that; **but is it really YOUR fault?** Morally, and logically, I think not; however it seems that in law it possibly is!!

This reminds me of the rather splendid humorous obituary to the late departed **Common Sense!**

I am thankful, for once, that I have reached an age where I no longer jack up cars to repair them, or whatever; although I certainly used to do so throughout most of my motoring career. But I dread to think what the wholly unnecessary cost will be if I have to employ a professional contractor next I need my boat lifted. **And in the meantime I may well be tempted to potentially dangerous short cuts, which will also give much less full access, by just jacking her up on a car jack.**

And whose fault is that?

-o0o-

-o0o-

-o0o-

-o0o-

-o0o-

-o0o-

Darwin 2

Following on from that, I was mildly amused by a not entirely serious suggestion I heard recently, that we should simply remove all warning notices, everywhere.

Then sit back and wait, while the gene pool re-populates, and progressively improves itself!

-o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o-

Wearing one of his other hats, a few months ago the Editor came across a delightful quip which he thinks others might enjoy, despite having nothing to do with sailing:

“What is the difference between an Organist and God?

“God knows that he’s not an Organist.”

-o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o-

In the course of reading one of the many books about The Battle of the Atlantic, a brief account of the manning of the convoy escort vessels reminds the Editor of the old saying:

“The British Navy is comprised of three divisions:

- The RNVR consists of gentlemen trying to be sailors,
- The RNR consists of sailors trying to be gentlemen,
- The RN consists of neither, trying to be both.”

Actually, in WW2, the RNVR seems to have comprised a large number of “hostilities only” volunteers, while I have the impression that the RNR included many retired RN personnel, amongst others, returning to service for the emergency (plus perhaps some Merchant Navy personnel who had “joined up”); and, in all seriousness, all praise to all to both of them; they both did a first class job.

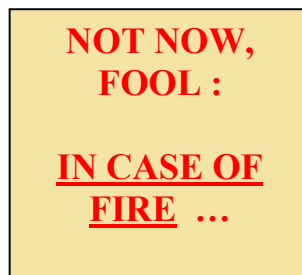
-o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o- -o0o-

In a brief visit to North Devon in January, centred around *pro bono* professional reasons, my accommodation for three nights was at a local inn. They (of course) had beer mats in the bar, and I was reminded of one detail from my mid to late twenties; I moved to Exeter in September 1969 to take up my second teaching post, and that was when I set up my first independent home. Once a week, as an alternative to school lunches, I had lunch at *The Royal Oak* in Heavitree, a local pub which did a very good cooked lunch on weekdays, and they were clearly aiming at local business and professional people; one might typically be sharing a table with a bank manager, a solicitor, and a doctor, etc. I also patronised them for the occasional evening, and quite by chance it was there that in April 1970 I watched on their TV the unfolding Appollo 13 emergency, and the successful rescue.

They, like all pubs, had beer mats; and one set of theirs was emblazoned with the words



Of course, for those who did not already know the result, curiosity inevitably won the day sooner or later, and the mat was duly turned over, to reveal:



-o0o-

-o0o-

-o0o-

-o0o-

-o0o-

-o0o-

UNUSUAL BOATS - 34

Essex Smacks and Bawleys

These are, once again, east coast erstwhile working boats from the days of commercial sail, with most of the survivors used today for recreational purposes, although owners and other enthusiasts are very much interested in still keeping their history alive. (We have already previously published an article on another class of east coast vessel, arguably their larger siblings, the Thames Barges, this time last year.)

With so much already in this issue elsewhere, considerations of space lead to the decision to be content with little more than some photos and some links to web pages for this section. We invite readers to look up the links for yourselves.



<https://www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/page/colne-smack-preservation-society-essex>

COLNE SMACK PRESERVATION SOCIETY, ESSEX

The Society was set up in 1971 by a few like-minded individuals to try to preserve what was left of the once large fleet of sailing smacks from the River Colne. From this small beginning the future of the smacks is now assured with the fleet that is sailing and increasing every year as more smacks are being conserved and rebuilt.

PIONEER SAILING TRUST

Pioneer is the very last of the larger size Essex smacks to survive, and even then this is only as the result of a major rebuild and restoration. She is now used for sail training, primarily for young people, but it appears from the website that there may also be opportunities for adults to sail aboard her.

She dates from 1864, and was used commercially for fishing until 1939, when she was decommissioned and turned into a houseboat at East Mersea. In 1942 she was towed to West Mersea, where she broke her mooring and sank.

In November 1998 digging started, in order to unearth her, and the following month she came ashore on Wyatts Hard at West Mersea. Then she was transported by road to Great Totham for restoration, and four years later, on 17th May 2003, she was launched with great ceremony at Brightlingsea. Over the next two years the hull was ballasted, spars were made and fitted, and she was fully fitted out for sail training. She sailed again for the first time on 1st September 2004, and 2005 was her first full season.

<http://www.pioneerck18.org/page5/page6/index.html>





Bawleys

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bawley>

Colne Smack and Barge Match and the Mersea Dredging Match

These are two large-scale annual events for these craft.

Featured in *Classic Boat*, March 2019.

<https://www.colnesmack.co.uk/colne-smack-barge-match/>

<https://www.mersearegatta.org.uk/dredgingmatch/>

COLREGS QUIZ - ANSWERS

Situation A

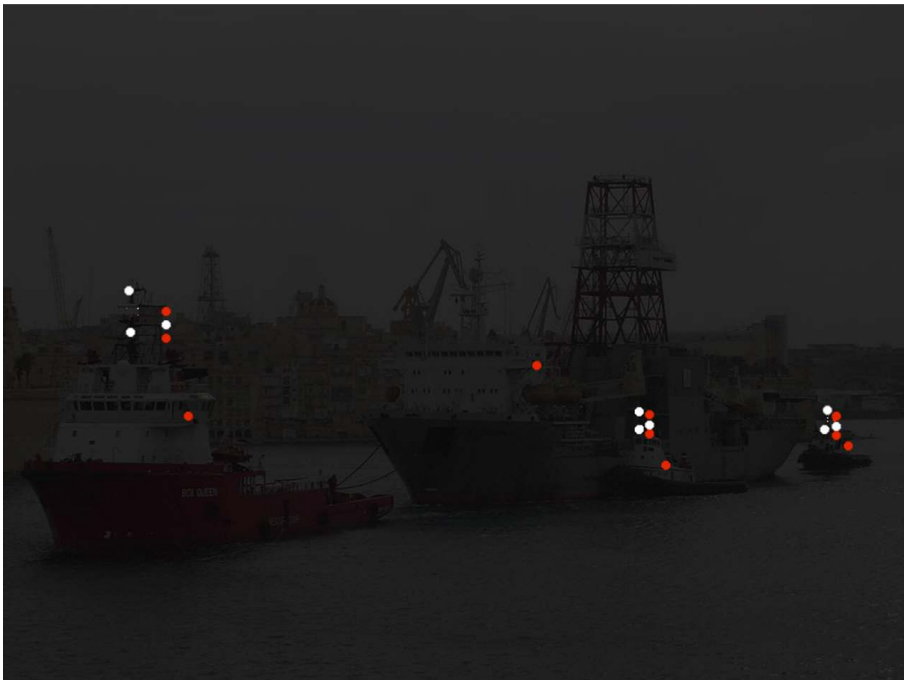
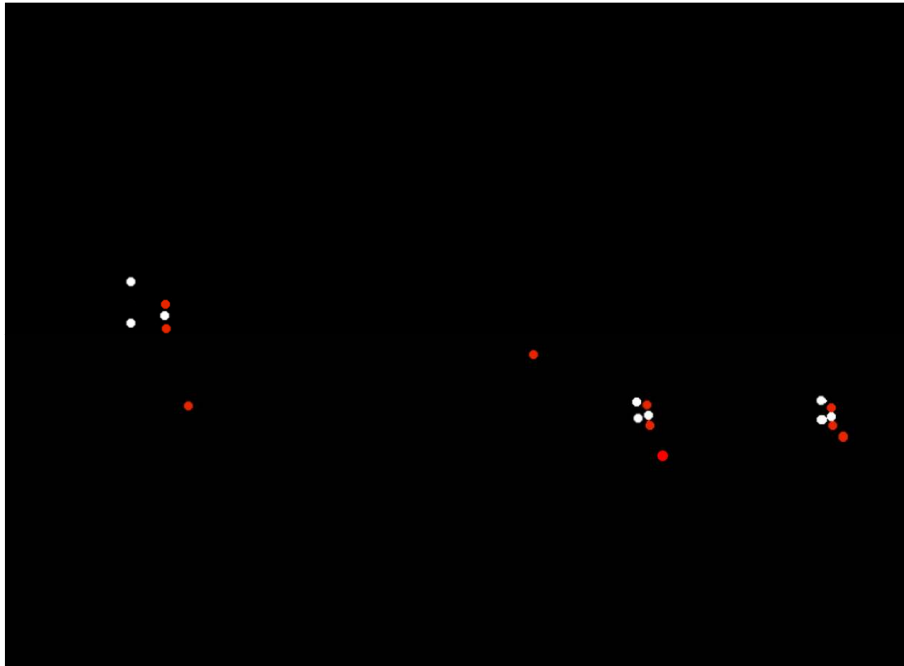
Trawling, and probably pair-trawling: there are three vessels, which appear to be keeping station with each other (although one cannot positively confirm that from a single photo), and each of them is displaying trawling lights (“red over white - frying tonight”) plus port sidelight.





Situation B

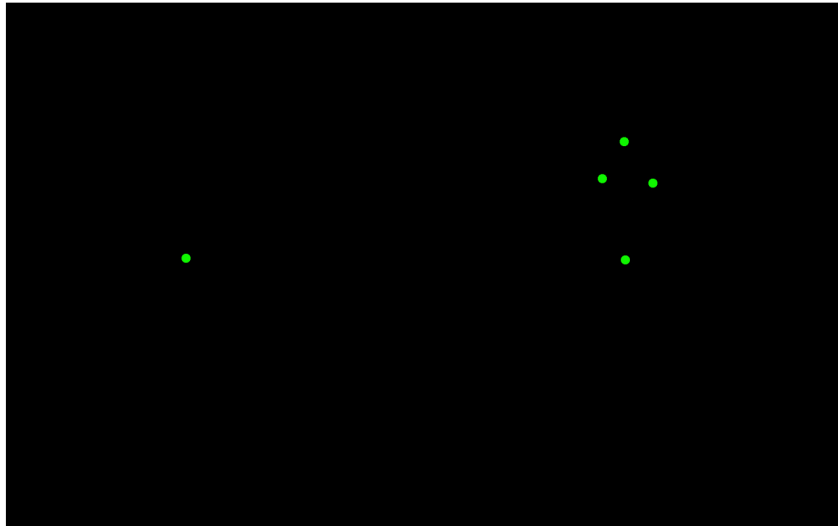
Three tugs engaged in towing an unwieldy tow, displaying towing lights (two white, vertical) plus RAM (“Restricted in Ability to Manoeuvre”) lights (red-white-red, vertical), and with port sidelights on all three tugs and port sidelight on the tow also visible.

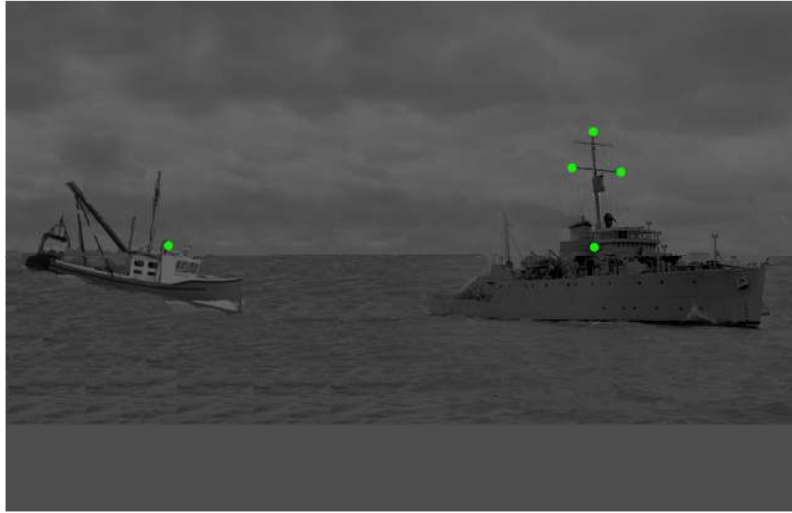




Situation C

I hope you realised that this involves minesweeping! And she is towing a (disabled?) fishing boat - possibly broken-down, which had perhaps drifted into the minefield. Minesweeping lights (triangle of green lights), plus starboard sidelight of minesweeper, plus starboard sidelight of boat under tow.





And, yes, I accept that this one was somewhat clumsily photoshopped when I added the towed vessel.

I did say that this Quiz set out to be challenging!!

I did not ask what action you should take, as skipper of a small vessel, but a good answer would be “Keep well clear” for each of them!

Although seeing (and recognising) a vessel actively minesweeping in waters where you are actively sailing at the time might perhaps give you pause for thought, and perhaps also a fairly urgent VHF call to the Coastguard to clarify the situation!

And the concept of a minesweeper towing another vessel while actually minesweeping is perhaps a little far-fetched!

NEXT ISSUE

Press Date will be 15th June, please