Newsletter of the OGA
Western Australia
The Association for Gaff-Rig
and Traditional Sailing

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www.gaffrigsailinginwa.org






Capsize practice day: *Fala* showing us how it's done.

Octopus sailing — my first solo sail

Ross Hassall

November 2018 saw an opportunity for the family to head to picturesque Denmark, WA. What a great opportunity to take along *Littlego*, my restored 1969 Hartley TS16.

First challenge: pack the car. The Hartley is well suited for a family sail with large deck space to comfortably accommodate the family, 3 adults and an enthusiastic 7 year old. It even has a small cabin to shelter from the elements. So, with sufficient luggage for a 10 day beach/sailing holiday, all the paraphernalia needed to be squeezed into our trusty workhorse Subaru Forester. The throw away comment "Can't we just put the extra stuff in the boat" met with a scowl from the skipper and a few stern words to the 'crew'. We came to an agreement, the luggage was re-packed with the swift addition of a borrowed roof rack pod to accommodate the load. With the car packed to the gunwales, we meandered our way safely south.

Second challenge: rigging solo with a mission aborted: Excited to explore Denmark's Wilson Inlet I decided to launch at the Poddyshot Place boat ramp which was near to where we were staying. Further benefit of the ramp selection, it was closest to the beach and would keep my 'crew' interested. The term 'crew' was inappropriately used on the family as their perspective differed from my expectation of what I like to call 'crew participation'. I eventually managed to rig and launch with little help – took a mere 40 mins, but it was made clear to me that this was a subpar attempt and the skipper was intentionally delaying everyone's fun. The launch ramp was shallow, very weedy and full of sea grass water, but luckily for me the Hartley has clean lines, retractable rudder and a shallow draft. Off we set with quite a few random tacks and multiple times running

aground on sand banks – we abandoned the mission. I think the words Jim Black used when he reviewed the GPS plot was: "Interesting course?" followed by a long pause. With the beach destination abandoned, I pressed the outboard into service and motored to a suitable sand bank to release the enthusiastic 7 year old into the water. At this point the skipper was transferred to dad duty and went swimming while the 'crew' enjoyed a sun bathe on the Hartley's spacious deck. With GPS track as evidence of the failed mission and a less than enthusiastic crew, it was time to consider my options. The sand banks had no part in my non-achievement to reach the objective, it must be the crew.

Third challenge: Keeping the crew interested is not as easy as it sounds. During my introspective debrief of the day's activities I pondered the options. Noting the enjoyment of the crew for all things leisurely, and a higher than normal workload for the skipper managing crew leisure activities and still trying to focus on sailing, a new challenge presented itself. Could I do it solo? Time for Pros and Cons. First the Cons – being brave (read naive and foolhardy), none immediately sprung to mind. Pros: multiple, benefits aplenty. The crew no longer had to wait around for me to rig and launch, the deck would less cluttered and I no longer needed to be reminded that I was taking too much time. After all, who wants to rush a good thing? Quality takes time, I like to think it is being accurate, thorough and/or well prepared. Others might have a much more harsh view on things and may have uttered words like pedantic, faffing and dawdling. It was decided – I needed to do a solo sail.

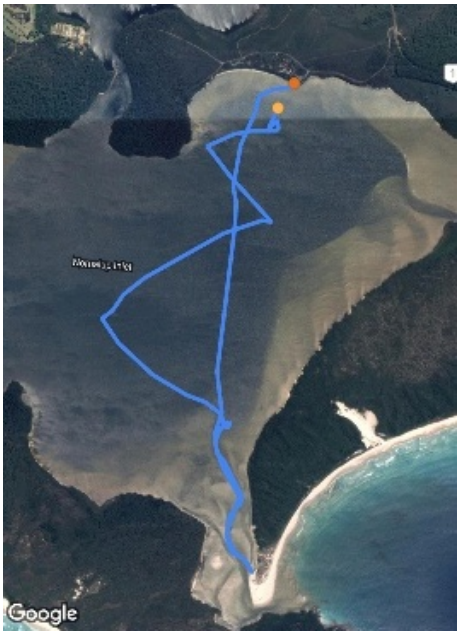
Fourth challenge: Sailing hands free. The day was chosen based on the wind forecast and alternate leisure activities for the crew. They had a long list, so it was left to the weather gods to present a suitable day. Lucky for me, I only had to wait a day. Launch was a doddle – after all I had recently had practice doing it on my own anyway. Setting off on jib only, downwind, was easy, but to hoist the main I needed at least one more hand to hold the tiller. With no volunteers present, I was ever so grateful for a piece of old rope named 'Octopus'. In fact this was meticulously selected and I was very happy to have an extra set of 'hands' on deck. With a lashed tiller, hoisting the main was routine. I even managed to send a few text messages to make a few friends jealous, took some selfies – life was good! That rusty old rope earned its keep and I managed get a good long sail in before a leisurely lunch stop. And then the sea breeze came in.

The forecast is just a computer model guessing what nature will conjure up and remembering the wise old sailing proverb "If you are thinking of reefing, do it now, before it is too late" (or something like that) – I decided

to put in a reef for the afternoon's sail back. Fortunately I had prepared for that with an easy to reach single reef line – worked a treat. And then the sea breeze came in with gusto. They didn't show 'gusto' on the forecast, did they? It was time to drop the main. Made good progress on the jib only... until the sea breeze came in with all its splendour. I hung on for another hour, then called a truce with the weather gods. Problem was, I was downwind from the launch spot and daylight was running out. It was time to press the outboard into service again. Safely back at the cabin I reflected on the days achievements and celebrated with the crew. What I haven't yet mentioned, but is probably common knowledge, that the Denmark area has numerous good wine estates to choose from. It was during the 'oh so civilised' celebrating I hatched a plan to go for another outing. The subdued celebrations was partly because I didn't want to let on that I had too much fun without my crew and mostly because I was exhausted from a long day on the water!

My excitement was infectious, as it was during the debrief of the day's solo adventure that I managed to convince the crew to endure another outing, this time on the Nornalup Inlet in Walpole. It was not my first time on the inlet with *Littlego* and I wanted to enjoy the splendid wide open sailing space. With little negotiation, we ventured all the way to the inlet, enjoyed a leisurely swim and a picnic on the sand dune. Thank heavens we had fly nets as the flies were starving and almost enjoyed the picnic more than we did. The run home was exhilarating – with the jib and main goose winged, we harnessed the sea breeze.

I recorded a good 6 to 7 knots which took us straight back to the Walpole Yacht Club launch ramp near Coalmine Beach. Again I marvelled at the shallow draft of the Hartley – with a low tide and break neck trailer it was easy to get *Littlego* onto the trailer ready to head back with a heavy heart.



Anyone considering the Regatta in the Trees, or even the social sailing either side of the racing with the OGA, just book it in your calendar – the pros far outweigh the cons. Remember to be prepared, have options for when the forecasters forget to mention 'gusto' sea breeze. For me, it is worth the trip. I would even consider taking my 'crew' again. In all honesty, I say that without batting an eye and with complete sincerity. I have also added my trusty old 'Octopus' rope to my pre-sailing packing checklist.

Self-Steering / Tiller Impeders

Andrew Bochenek

There are times on a yacht, either when single-handed or short-handed, that it will be advantageous to fix the tiller in position while the crew attend to other matters such as putting in a reef, adjusting sail control lines, getting a snack or drink, or just to relax and enjoy your boat sailing itself.

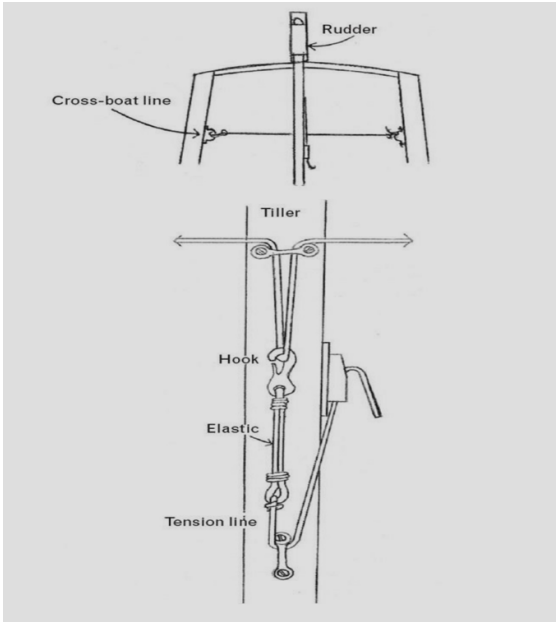
There are a number of devices available that hold the tiller in any position with variable friction.

On my boat *Fala* I use the TillerClutch Made in the USA by WaveFront Marine. Made from anodised aluminium with stainless fastenings, it's designed to be screwed to the handle end of the tiller so that the clutch lever can be operated with one hand while steering normally. A 5mm line is supplied and is designed to be cleated at each end for quick release.

In use, Practical Boat Owner magazine found the TillerClutch to be the easiest and quickest to flick on and off thanks to its mounting location and the design of the lever. It gripped the line well and the captive line was in no danger of falling out.

In my gunter yawl I am able to lock the tiller amidships, centre my mizzen sheeted on hard, and with the jib and main let fly, I find the boat stays head to wind, drifting backwards slowly. It enables me to roam the boat carrying out whatever is needed, with the boat in a safe head-to-wind position.

Very popular amongst Dinghy Cruising Association members in the UK and described in Roger Barnes' book "The Dinghy Cruising Companion" is the Huntingford's Helm Impeder. It is extremely simple to make, and it allows the locking pressure to be varied on the tiller but still allows instant movement of the tiller. The following is reproduced from Roger Barnes' book.



A cross-boat line is secured (usually below) the tiller. It is quite loose, but it can be varied according to the securing method (ends tied or hooked to fittings etc). Once at the correct length it can be left in place permanently.

Form the centre of this line into an open hoop and pass it through a deckloop fitted on the tiller, where it is secured with a hook.

This hook is attached to elastic that then connects to a tensioning line running to a cleat on the tiller, placed for easy access.

In use, pulling on the tension line increases the frictional grip of the cross-boat-line where it passes through the loop on the tiller. Friction is variable from "nothing" (when actively sailing the boat) to "locked" (when going forward to pick up a mooring) or any degree in between. The tiller can be placed at any angle and will stay in place. The tiller can be totally released from the device by unhooking the tension line.

Having such a device on your boat can greatly increase the safety aspect of your sailing as it controls the boats position or course reliably.

There are a number of devices available commercially, but a cheap budget tiller tamer can be a simple shock cord device. A piece of 8mm shock cord, secured at either end, and looped twice around the tiller. This gained PBOs best Budget Buy award.

So, give them a try on your boat. You won't regret it.

Mairet at Dumbleyung

Carry a Life Jacket but Wear Your Buoyancy Vest?

Peter Kovesi and Jim Black

A couple of recent incidents and a subsequent review of our safety procedures has highlighted an issue with inflatable life jackets that many of us had not appreciated.

Most of us have been wearing inflatable life jackets as a matter of routine. However, James and Belinda Bennett on *Kailani* have long had a policy of wearing buoyancy vests, rather than life jackets. Their reasoning is that in the event of a capsize a buoyancy vest will be assisting you as you swim around the boat to recover it whereas an uninflated life jacket will be weighing you down by between 0.65 to 0.8kg[1]. Also, if you are wearing an inflatable life jacket and you decide to inflate it then the ballooned jacket makes it hard to actively swim and recover the boat from a capsize.

The validity of this reasoning was made clear to us during *Fala's* capsize just prior to a recent retro race. In the process Andrew Brostek, who was crewing, had his life jacket inadvertently inflated. The inflated life jacket immediately rendered Andrew helpless in that he was basically unable to swim and he soon became separated from the drifting boat while skipper Andrew Bochenek was righting it. Fortunately *Wee Birlinn* was on hand and Andrew was quickly recovered. The event dramatically illustrated to us the extent to which an inflatable life jacket incapacitates the wearer's swimming ability. This was not something we had appreciated, though in retrospect it is obvious.

In C Fleet many of our craft lie somewhere between a full sized yacht and an off the beach boat. With a full size yacht you typically end up in the water because you have fallen off or, in the worst case, because the yacht has sunk. Either way the possibility of self rescue is negligible so the priority of any buoyancy aid is to support you in the water, not to allow you to swim efficiently. In this situation it is clear you should wear a life jacket. On the other hand with an off the beach boat it is implicitly expected that a capsize is a possibility and that you should be able to self rescue, thus the ability to swim efficiently is important. In the light of this one can understand why the Australian Sailing Special Regulations for off the beach boats, small open ballasted yachts, and small trailerable yachts specifically state that inflatable life jackets should *not* be worn. However, bear in mind that these regulations are for racing events where it is expected that a rescue boat will be available.

Ultimately the choice must be a personal one that will depend on your type of boat, your fitness and swimming ability, the conditions you are sailing in, whether you are sailing single-handed or not, whether you are sailing in company or not, and the location that you are operating in.

To summarise

- Consider wearing a buoyancy vest (Type 2 life jacket) if you have reasonable fitness and swimming ability and your boat is such that self rescue is expected. Note, however, you will still need to carry Type 1 life jackets on your boat to satisfy DoT regulations.
- Consider wearing a life jacket (Type 1 life jacket) if your fitness and swimming ability is low and/or you have a large boat where, in the event of a capsize or that you fall off, self rescue is not an option.
- Your life jacket will work better with a crotch strap.

[1] I have weighed two inflatable life jackets. My Marlin brand jacket weighs 650g and my Crewsaver brand jacket (which includes a safety harness) weighs 800g.

Another possible option to explore is partially inflating your jacket via the oral inflation tube. Sailing with your jacket in this state means that it will, at least, support itself in the water and not weigh you down prior to full inflation. Not all jackets lend themselves to doing this and some experimentation in trying this would be advised.

Some additional points on automatically inflating jackets

Inflatable jackets can be manual, where you pull a toggle to inflate it, or automatic. If you are considering an automatically inflating lifejacket (perhaps because you are planning some singlehanded sailing in remote areas or away from other boats or rescue facilities) then there are some points you should consider.

There are two types of automatic lifejackets. The first type auto inflates when the trigger gets wet. These are readily available from chandlers and are reasonably priced but have been known to inflate when the wearer is doused by a large wave. The second type, known as an automatic hydrostatic jacket, only inflates when the trigger is at least 200mm below the water surface. These are the better jacket to have but are very expensive.

You should know how to deflate your auto jacket and practice this in the water. Typically this is done by removing the cap at the end of the oral inflation tube, inverting it, and then reinserting it into the inflation tube. You should also have the backup of a sharp knife in your pocket which, as a last resort, can be used to puncture the jacket.

With either type, be careful how you wash them down after use. The hydrostatic type will withstand a good hose down (the others most likely will not), but don't dunk it in a deep bin full of water!

DoT regulations can be found at www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/life-jackets.asp

Type 1 Life Jackets

Approved for use in unprotected waters.
Standard: AS 4758 or ISO 12402: level 275, level 150, level 100 or AS 1512.
Level 100 and higher lifejackets provide a high level of buoyancy and are:

Approved for use in unprotected waters.
Fitted with head and neck support.
Designed to keep you in a face up floating position.
Manufactured using high-visibility colours.
Suitable for offshore and general boating in all waters.

Type 2 Life Jackets (Buoyancy Vests)

Not approved for general use in unprotected waters.
Standard: AS 4758 or ISO 12402 - level 50 or AS 1499.
Level 50 lifejackets have a lower level of buoyancy than the Level 100 and higher lifejackets and are:

Not approved for general use in unprotected waters.
Not fitted with head and neck support.
Not designed to keep you in a face up floating position.
Manufactured using high-visibility colours.
Normally used for sailing, kayaking, and on personal water craft.

The Coblinine River: Found!

Peter Kovesi

On our trip to Dumbleyung in October 2018 Dave Cliff and I were determined to pick up from where we left off in 2017 in our unsuccessful search for the Coblinine River.

Where we left off in 2017...

This time we were slightly better prepared in that I had studied the Google Earth imagery and saved a GPS waypoint for what I believed was the entry to the channel. On Sunday morning we set off from the Ski Club and made our way to the designated point. However when we got there it was not at all clear in which direction we should head. There were trees everywhere and no obvious channel! Fortunately Dave had his phone on him and brought up the Google Earth imagery that we needed to pick our way in.

We had no outboard and were relying on sail and oars to make our way in. We were pleased to find that the wind was favouring us, albeit we did have to hold a fairly close hauled course. Keeping ourselves to the windward side of the channel for safety we cautiously made our way in. Every now and then we would have to hold a short debate as to which side of a tree we should pass. Amazingly each debate seemed to come up with the correct answer and we avoided running aground or catching on any snags.

After a few hundred metres the channel became easy to see and proved to be wide and deep. Once in the river proper the shoreline has shady trees and sandy beaches in places. An attractive destination to consider for future trips to Dumbleyung should the water level hold up.

Our return trip was not quite as easy as the inbound one. The wind dropped off and swung so that it was blowing up the river. We had to tack and row our way out. Once we had finally got out of the river the wind deserted us completely we had to row much of the distance back to the ramp. A very satisfying day and we got some rowing training in for Sail Caledonia!

Rigging with Dyneema – The End of the Iron Age!

Peter Kovesi

Last year at one of our OGA meetings John Longley led a discussion on the use of Dyneema rigging on our boats. This was prompted by a talk he had attended at the Hobart Wooden Boat Festival on the use of Dyneema as a replacement for wire on traditional vessels.

Basically there is little reason to use wire anymore. Dyneema will not rust, is easy on your hands, will not scratch the varnish off your timber mast, and does not need specialised tools. The use of wire will be a 150-year anomaly in the history of boat rigging.

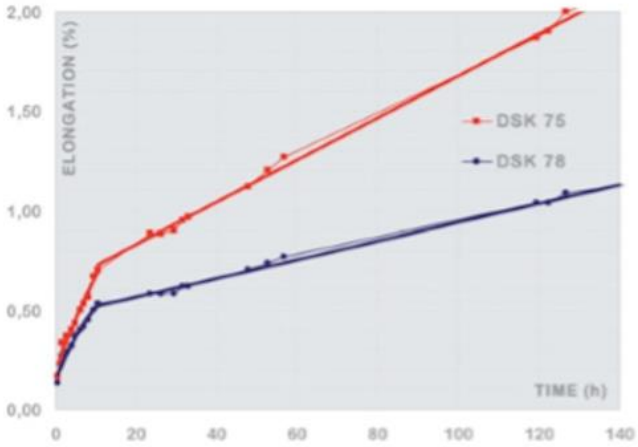
There are three main grades of Dyneema available

- SK75 - for many years this has been the standard grade of Dyneema available. It is now generally being supersceeded by SK78.
- SK78 - this is now becoming the standard grade used in most ropes. SK78 has the same strength as SK75 but has less stretch.
- SK99 - this is the latest grade of Dyneema, it has about 20% more strength than SK78 but is more expensive

For our applications strength is never going to be an issue. A high quality 3mm SK78 rope has a breaking strain of about 1400kg. (The Ronstan catalogue quotes 3mm 1x19 stainless wire as having a breaking strain of about 700kg). A standard grade 4mm rope will have a breaking strain of about 2000kg

However if you are wanting to replace your shrouds with Dyneema then you will be concerned with trying to keep stretch and creep to a minimum. In this case you probably want to ensure that you use a SK78 grade pre-stretched and heat treated Dyneema.

Below is a graph[2] showing the comparison of creep properties between Dyneema SK75 and SK78 at 25C and an average static load equal to 25% of break strength.



Apart from seeing that SK78 (the blue line) has significantly less creep over time than SK75 you will also notice that the curves have an initial steep rate of elongation at the beginning.

[2]Graph taken from https://www.sail-world.com/news/211892/Introduction-to-Core-Fibres-in-Modern-Ropes

When the rope is loaded it immediately results in an initial elastic extension. If the load is released the rope will fairly quickly recover its initial length. However if the load is maintained then the rope will start to undergo viscoelastic extension which will also recover when the load is released but much more slowly. If the load is maintained beyond this point then the rope will then start to creep. This is a gradual and permanent extension of the rope that is load and time dependant.

Most of the literature on using Dyneema for shrouds is generally for larger yachts where the rig is kept permanently under constant load. In this situation creep is obviously the main concern. However for dinghies which are rigged and de-rigged we are probably more concerned with the initial elastic and viscoelastic stretching component of the elongation graph. I have not found much information about this and how to manage it. I suspect that if you want to maintain shroud tension some form of purchase system that can be used while sailing is essential. It is probably also useful to employ a slightly larger rope diameter than you might otherwise use so that the normal working load is kept at a relatively low fraction of the total breaking strain.

Some of the OGA fleet are starting to use Dyneema for their stays and, no doubt, we will gain some useful experience on how best to set them up and use them.

Splicing Dyneema

A great resource for knots and splicing information is Grog's Knots at www.animatedknots.com

Splicing is simple and does not require expensive tools. If you wish you can buy dedicated splicing fids but you can pretty well do everything you want with a piece of bent wire.

Here are a few images stolen from Grog's site showing how to perform a Long Bury Splice using a piece of bent wire. Note the pictures show a very short bury. You should visit the site at www.animatedknots.com/longbury/index.php for details on setting the tail length to ensure proper strength.

The splice should also be sewn to ensure it cannot be picked loose when it is not loaded. Sewing even fairly thick rope by machine (or by hand) is generally no problem because Dyneema is so smooth and slippery, the needle has no difficulty going through it.

While the Long Bury Splice is very simple you may want to use the Brummel Locked Splice instead which you should also look up on Grog's site. These require the formation of holes in the rope and passing the rope through itself. A simple fid for doing this can be made

from double ended hollow aluminium knitting needles cut in half. You will find these at any drapery or craft shop. They are inexpensive and come in a range of sizes. Cut them in the middle at an angle, this makes it easier to insert the rope.

Then, of course, you should also be making some soft shackles for yourself. These are very satisfying to make – enjoy!

Dawesville Raid: December 2018

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One day this young lad will make a fine C Fleet Captain!