

Kippford Rally

By Andrew Bailey

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Gloria and Alan Parsons in Badger's galley

JRSRC Kippford Rally

7th & 8th September, 2013

Driving north on the M6 on Friday, as I topped Shap, the wind howled overhead and was something of a forecast of things to come.

After a six hour drive from Wales, I arrived at the excellent Mariner Hotel and settled in with a fine fish supper and a couple of pints of their home brew. From my room, I could see Peter Manning's new Malliemac and The Parson's trusty Badger, at rest on the Solway Yacht Club's pontoon. A number of old and new friends were already in Kippford, spread around various hotels and B'n Bs, so whatever the weather brought, some good company was assured.

With Kippford being situated at the top of a beautiful estuary, leading into the

Solway Firth, sailing is dependent on tides and this weekend that meant a very leisurely start, an attractive element of a sailing weekend for me. The programme was for the company to assemble in the Mariner's conservatory from 10.30am where the rally organiser, Robin Blain, would welcome one and all, assign those sailing to their boats, issue name tags (some of us more venerable members need to be reminded who we are) and organise the hosting skippers.

In past years we have always been invited by the Solway Yacht Club, to full use of the facilities in the club but on this occasion, they had some intensive racing taking place so we decided to give them space and operate from the hotel.

With over 30 attendees and four junks - one of which was a delightful, but small, Swallow dinghy, it was necessary to have Malliemac and Badger both do two trips out on each day's high tide, with Robin's lovely 'Gigi' carrying any overflow. (Robin had hauled 'Gigi' overland, from Southampton, with support from Tom Wallace, who himself had driven over to Southampton from Gillingham).

Saturday morning had started well but the wind was rising and the first trip out was a rather testing experience for crews and guests, giving anyone who needed it a graphic demonstration of the benefits of junk rig. Even at high water,

a narrow but well marked and winding channel has to be followed to gain reasonably high water where the estuary spills out into the Solway Firth, surrounded by wooded hills, islands and a couple of exclusive hotels.

The boats returned around lunchtime with crews disembarking, to be replaced by the second wave. As we were settling into positions in Badger's cockpit, I looked out, down the estuary, and felt pretty confident that this would be an interesting trip and glad I had had the foresight to slip on a couple of extra layers. Just on the point of casting off, Skipper Alan Parsons scanned the horizon then ducked back into the wheelhouse and informed us that what looked suspiciously like a full gale was now barrelling in from open water and heading towards us, up the estuary. "I think we will have to wait a bit" where his orders. Alan is wise beyond his years - a few moments later his crew were back on the pontoon, rapidly pumping up two industrial sized fenders, probably purchased when Ark Royal decommissioned, to back up the standard ones as the crew heaved against Badger to stop her being hammered against the pontoon. Discretion won over valour and with little prospect of an improvement and limited time left for sailing, we made all safe and beat a hasty retreat to the

comfort of the Mariner.

However, this extra time onshore meant that we were able to indulge in some maritime networking and, in many ways, this is of equal value to club members new to junk who are interested in converting rig or learning more from existing users. This year there were a number of 'new faces' wanting information and, once again, Robin,



Malliemac sailing at the Kippford Rally

© Andrew Bailey



Michael Rogers' Swallow Trouper 12, Cavatina



Alan Parsons, Peter Manning and Shirley

Peter, Alan and other owners, were in demand

In the evening, dinner was taken in the Mariner. And after enjoying a variety of well-proportioned dishes, the Landlady informed us that a member of the Solway Yacht Club, Captain Gordon Daly (RYA council for Scotland), had offered to treat our company to any liqueur as he "Always enjoyed seeing the 'junkies' back at Kippford".

Sunday morning was a different day, from a weather aspect. The strong wind had abated and the prospects were good for some more typical Kippford sailing. Once again, Robin allocated berths, coffee was taken and first crews departed for a very enjoyable start. I went out on Badger later and took her down the channel from which Alan organised a couple of hours of good and comfortable sailing, pointing out the landmarks and then anchoring in 4 mtrs for lunch, comprised of some of Gloria's delicious home - cooked ham helped

along by some local 'Badger Ale'

When sailing conditions are like these in Kippford, there is always a danger that the turn of the tide is not carefully watched and many boats have left returning to their mooring a tad too late and ending up twiddling their fingers, stuck in mud at an uncomfortable angle.

Back at the pontoon, the departing members made their farewells. Some of us staying on until Monday were

invited to dinner on board Badger. In the warm and comfortable saloon, Gloria and Alan, helped by Shirley from Malliemac, produced two excellent hotpots to round off the very successful weekend rally. A number of attendees had travelled a considerable distance for this event which is a real testament to the increasing interest in junk rig.



Historic Junk, Boleh.

A 63-year-old junk-rigged yacht being restored in Portsmouth is to be opened to the public this month. The free-entry workshop will be open from 1pm to 4.30pm on Sunday 27 October and all are welcome.

Boleh (means "can do" in Malay) is the story of two men: artist and naval war hero Commander Robin Kilroy, DSC, who designed and built her 60 years ago in Singapore before sailing her back 15,000 miles to the UK; and Roger Angel, joiner and entrepreneur, who found her as an insurance write-off in 1978 and painstakingly brought her back to life in a Rye harbour mud berth.

This is a rare chance to see the restoration, as it is happening, talk to the project's trustees, shipwrights and apprentices about their experiences and to meet two of the nephews of Robin Kilroy, Boleh's designer and creator.

In 1978 Boleh was just completing a refit in Rye prior to sailing for Germany and the USA when she was severely damaged by arson. The boat was almost totally destroyed as far forward as the mast, in places down to the waterline. Roger Angel, a skilled carpenter and joiner from the area and keen sailor, had often seen Boleh and was mesmerised by her unique lines. He saw the wreck and was determined to restore the vessel to her former glory. Roger bid successfully for the hulk, sold his business, moved with his family into a

caravan, and set about the gigantic task of returning Boleh to her previous condition.

Roger worked from photographs and plans in Robin Kilroy's book and talked to some of those who had known Boleh. He was able to keep very close to the original design, altering only the interior layout. In place of 'chengai' he laminated the frames from plywood, and other hardwoods were used for the planking and deck. In July 1981 the enormous task was complete and Roger and his family set off to pursue their dream.

Boleh and her owner finally came to rest in Mallorca where her lines and rig became a familiar sight; her berth at the Real Club Nautico gave the name Shanghai Quay to one of the jetties in Palma. In 2007 increasing ill health led Roger to to sell Boleh and the timing coincided with Robin Kilroy's family seeking to safeguard the vessel's future. A few weeks before his death in August 2008 Roger was able to witness Boleh's arrival at The Meridian Sailing & Training Trust Limited workshops in Portsmouth. The Boleh Trust has now been established to manage the restoration and ensure Boleh is returned to the water, where she will help people with challenge in their lives.

For further information visit www.bolehproject.com

