

REVIEWS

Boat gear and books, tools and technology... our regular series of independent appraisals.
Reviewers in this issue: Jo Moran, Kathy Mansfield, David Burdett & Pete Greenfield



GLOVES IN A BOTTLE

Review by Jo Moran

This is primarily a shielding lotion which the makers say will "keep the good stuff in and keep the bad stuff out" – a phrase almost as irritatingly twee as the product's name. But judging by the testimonials of happy customers on their website, it does seem GIAB – as I'll call it from here on – is a useful aid for anybody who has sensitive skin and uses paints, glues or other products which cause irritation.

The makers stress that GIAB is not a substitute for protective gloves but sometimes it's wearing the gloves themselves can cause skin problems.

There are many different types of protective glove on the market and the most common disposables are latex or vinyl. Allergies to latex or to the powder inside are not uncommon. GIAB prevents sensitivity to latex and so makes the wearing of gloves more comfortable.

I have been using GIAB as a protective cream when working with epoxies and I have found it very good, particularly as it will not wash off yet allows the skin to breathe and perspire naturally. Dermatologists say most skin complaints occur because the thin oil covering is removed from the skin's outer layer through exposure to

chemicals, harsh weather and regular washing with hot water and harsh soap, rubbing the skin clean. When this thin outer layer is damaged, the natural moisture evaporates and the dehydrated skin very quickly becomes dry, rough and cracked. Aggressive substances, like grease, detergents, cleaners, latex powder, solvents and paints may get under the top layer, causing itching and inflammation.

With so many different moisturisers and lotions on the market for all sorts of complaints, everybody seems to have a favourite to recommend. I have been convinced by this product as it gives protection to my skin without

feeling at all greasy. Aside from the medical reasons for using GIAB, it is really pleasant to use. It is not a thick hard-to-spread paste or a greasy lotion but a thin, smooth cream. It feels quite sticky when you rub it in but it dries quickly and leaves your skin feeling smooth and silky. I use it on wrists and arms but you can also use it on the face and lips as it is non-toxic. It is fragrance free and lanolin free and is hypoallergenic. It can be used on children's hands too.

The label suggests reapplying it every four hours but if I have scrubbed my hands clean, I reapply it straightaway. Before using GIAB if I got epoxy on my skin, my hands would still feel sticky even after washing them with soap but I have been pleased to find that with GIAB on my hands, the epoxy washes off easily with soap and water, with no need for anything more potent. I do get the sense that my skin is shielded, as the makers claim. I am looking forward to trying it out as protection from the drying effects of salt water... so I'd better get back to the workshop to finish our dinghy.

GIAB is available from the website which can also help you find a local stockist – though not in Cornwall. It comes in various sizes from a 5ml pouch at 50 pence. The 240ml bottle cost £9.99 which apparently gives around 120 applications. The boys and I have nearly finished our first bottle and I'll be ordering another.

Abbliss Limited, address: Freepost Abbliss. Tel: 08707 455002 www.giab.co.uk



DIVER

by Tony Groom, pub Seafarer Books.
ISBN 978-1-90626-606-6
Softback £9.99

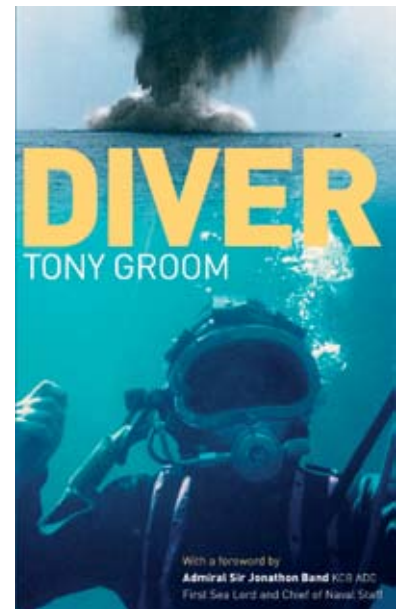
Review by Kathy Mansfield

Here's one of the more extraordinary books I have read due to my interest in things maritime, definitely widening my knowledge – I can almost hear the author chuckling – and increasing my respect for those who spend their working lives diving and working underwater. Give it to sons, students, budding pirates but be sure to read it yourself. It's an account of the life of a Royal Navy diver, chock full of excitement, danger, pranks and friendship and a later on-the-edge commercial career diving in the North Sea. It was hard enough to show the stamina and commitment even to get chosen and Tony was lucky many times over. What better punishment for insubordination than being flown to the paradise island of Tuvalu in the South Pacific, even if their Hercules left foot-deep gauges in the short coral runway, watched by the grass skirted native women waiting to put shell necklaces over their heads? Clearing mines in the seabed and avoiding sharks inaugurated a stock of hair-raising stories. Then the Falklands War began: without these divers clearing unexploded bombs lodged in ships and seabed, British casualties would have been far worse and it was done in the greatest peril and often while under fire, adapting their training to suit these hardest of circumstances.

Tony's account is hair raising and impossible to put down, drawing on his diary, the memories of his mates and the tiny details of being under bombardment when every minute could be your last. It's written as if you're sitting on a berth or in a bar with him: frank, no-holds-barred, full of rough humour and close camaraderie which thoroughly deserves to be the runaway best seller that it has become.

MAKITA 4329 JIGSAW

Mrs G avers that if she was ever silly enough to let me wander unsupervised in any large store, I would return with the most upmarket brands in the place. I attribute this discernment



to my innate appreciation of quality; she attributes it to my innate swank. "Buy cheap and you buy twice," I tell her... but I've had to concede lately that, where power tools are concerned, prices have fallen so much you can buy cheap and buy three or more times for the price of the equivalent model from a better brand. Which is why I'm the not-so-proud owner of a whole fleet of jigsaws; despite being attracted by posher products, I've invariably asked myself: what can a good jigsaw do that a dirt-cheap one can't?

Makita, which makes its tools in the UK, is definitely one of those 'better brands' and the new 4329 model retails around £60 which puts it in the 'good jigsaw' price bracket, so is it worth the extra money?

It's a neat, unfussy machine which, with soft-grip rubber pads in the handle, sits easily and comfortably in the hand... which is good, but even the cheapest jigsaw has rubber bits these days, Also good are the large trigger and lock button where you would want them to be. So far, so... well... OK.

I gave it more Brownie points when locking the blade in place. One of my cheapo jigsaws has a rather insecure click-fit arrangement. Another grips the blade better but to do it requires a special skinny screwdriver which I can never find. The Makita holds the blade securely, using a hex key which lives in a plastic clip on the rear of the saw when not needed – I'm sure I would lose the hex key as quickly as I lose the



screwdriver but chez Greenfield houses more spare hex keys than Ikea.

The same hex key is used to tilt the baseplate to make a cut at 45°. Now maybe I just don't mix with the right people but I don't know anyone who has ever used a jigsaw to make a 45° cut – except out of curiosity and then only to find that it's the very devil of a job to get the base back to truly square. However, the hex key did lock the Makita's alloy baseplate firmly in place after I'd played with it.

But the really interesting thing about this jigsaw is that Makita designed it specifically for cutting sheet materials, like, of course, plywood for boatbuilding. So that's what I tried and that's where the biggest difference between it and my other machines became apparent. Cutting ply, especially thinner stuff, my cheap jigsaws seem designed to hammer it into submission first. They chatter angrily, leap about and their

vibrations reach my teeth.

Not so the Makita. The Makita has a 4-position lever with settings for different degrees of orbital action, including straight-line cutting to get the cleanest cut. It also has an adjusting wheel to set the right speed for the material, from 500 to 3,100 strokes per minute. Get the settings right and the smoothness and steadiness of operation is the best I have experienced. It seems that if ever a jigsaw was designed for plywood boatbuilders, the Makita 4329 jigsaw is the one – and well worth the not-so-much-extra money.

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HONDA 4-STROKE OUTBOARD

Review by David Burdett

After giving up dinghy sailing last year, I went afloat in my 9' (2.7m)

dinghy, and the time seemed

right to replace my old 2

hp two-stroke Evinrude

outboard that I power

her with when not

rowing. Seduced by all

those green arguments, a

quieter 2.3hp four-stroke

Honda air cooled engine

was bought for just under

four times the price I paid

for my Evinrude in 1982.

I chose an air-cooled engine

because there are no water-cooling

channels to become choked up with

salt deposits. On one occasion, my

Evinrude had seized up because, on

coming ashore, I was not flushing out

the channels with fresh water: with

the Honda I can forget this chore and

just wash the outside with fresh water.



When my engine arrived – from www.elyboathandlers.co.uk – I was surprised how large it looked compared with the Evinrude, yet their weights felt about equal. I found the difference lay in the nearly all-metal construction of the Evinrude compared to the Honda's lighter but equally durable, plastic parts, most noticeably a nylon propeller. Carrying the Honda is made easy with the provision of a comfortable carrying handle at the front of the engine, though I use a purpose made trolley to store it on.

The lubricating oil for my two-stroke Evinrude is added in an oil/petrol mixture; with the four-stroke Honda, the oil is carried in the engine's sump, so I when go afloat I only have the petrol to worry about. Against this there is a need to replace the sump oil from time to time: drain and filler plugs, plus an oil level sight glass are provided to help with these jobs.

When laying the Honda down on its side, there are projecting feet upon which to lay it, which will put the tiller/throttle handle uppermost, as it always must be: otherwise the sump oil may seep into the combustion head which will impede start-ups. The petrol is turned on and off by the throw of a horizontal lever easily reached from within the boat and without upsetting the dinghy's trim.

Under power, the emergency stop chord is long enough to allow me to sit nearly amidships. But to be able to comfortably use the Honda's short tiller/throttle from that position, I slide a plastic tube over the tiller grip. The twist throttle is operated via a rectangular cut out at the end of the tube which locks into a raised rectangular plastic key-way that is clamped around the tiller. The key-way was a part from my vacuum cleaner!

Underway the Honda has a throaty, deeper, less deafening tone than most two strokes and at full throttle, my dinghy really flies!

**Honda Marine, 470 London Road,
Slough SL3 8QY**
Tel: 44 (0)1753 590500
www.honda.co.uk

INSHORE CRAFT Traditional Working Vessels of the British Isles

Edited by Dr Basil Greenhill & Julian Mannering, published by the Seaforth imprint of Pen & Sword ISBN 978-1-84415-718-1 Hardback £35.

Review by Pete Greenfield

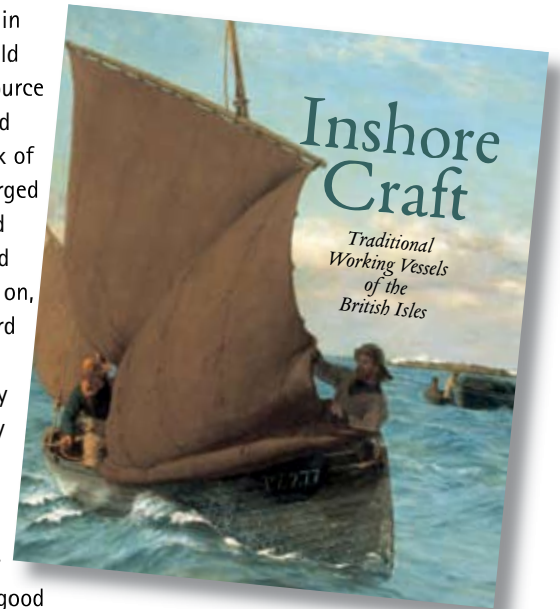
When this book first appeared as *The Chatham Directory of Inshore Craft* in 1998, writing in W9 Kathy Mansfield summed it up as: "An invaluable source book for designers, boatbuilders and modelmakers and a wonderful work of reference for the rest of us." She urged us to get out our cheque books and we must have done as we were told because it soon sold out. Ten years on, the Seaforth imprint of Pen & Sword Publishing has brought it back and – I was delighted to discover – they have not tried to 'improve' it in any way. They have even kept the 1998 price of £35 and it's worth every penny.

What's so special about it? Over the years, there have been several good books about the traditional craft of the UK; Eric McKee's *Working Boats of Britain* and the first 2-volume edition of Basil Greenhill's *Merchant Schooners* are especially worth looking out for in the secondhand bookshops. But these and others tend to be more about the history of the vessels and the hard lives of the men who worked them, not about the 'horses for courses' evolution of hull shapes and rigs which *Inshore Craft's* editors and no less than 12 authoritative contributors cover so comprehensively.

On every page, there are either old photographs of the boats – beautifully reproduced in this edition – or line drawings of their hull shapes or both: in total, over 400 line drawings and pictures over the book's 240 wider-than-A4 pages. Covering the coastlines of Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland, it includes pretty well every type of one-time workboat you can think of – from Scottish sixerns to Beer luggers, Conway nobbies to Galway hookers – and I'll bet, quite a few you can't.... Do you know your Lough Erne cot from your Clovelly long-boomer; your Manx wherry from your Back of

the Wight boat; your mumble-bee from your boulder boat?

This book is indeed invaluable. To give you a taste of the material – and as a nice counterpoint to Kathy's pictures of the Moray fleet – by kind permission of the book's publishers, we end this issue's Reviews with extracts from just 3 of 30 pages about Scottish craft, written by Adrian Osler.



Edited extract

DECKED SCAFFIE (Skaffie)

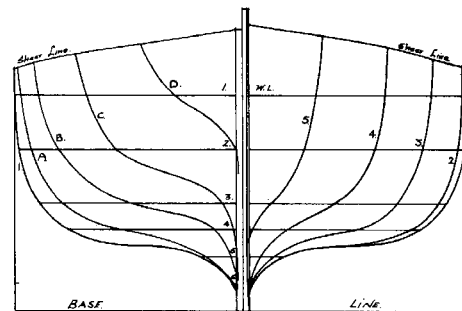
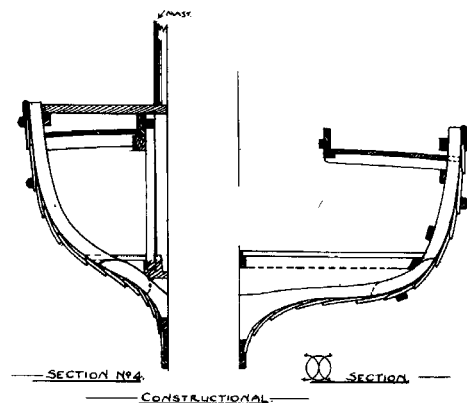
A decked (or part decked) double-ender, with heavily raked afterstem and characteristically curved forestem, which became the preferred boat of many of the Moray harbour crews who prosecuted the British herring fishery. Though directly evolved from the mid-century open boats of Moray, scaffies built in the 1870s and 1880s showed three significant modifications: a re-shaped bow, the introduction of decking, and the adoption of a distinctive foresail-with-mizzen rig. The replacement of the long, raked forestem by a snubbier one (having a rounded forefoot and upright stem above) made for bluffer bows but importantly, it constrained overall length on the same length of keel and also helped if boats overrode floating nets. The decking of scaffies (as with fifies (qv)) remained a controversial issue until the 1870s, and is uneven introduction owed at least as much to factors involving personal investment and potential gain as to perceptions of safety.

A literal shift of the sails – with enlargement of the dipping lug foresail, elimination of the mainsail, and a new role for the mizzen – saw the evolution of a distinctively high-peaked profile in which both masts were fore-raked and the relatively small, standing lug mizzen's luff paralleled the big foresail's leech; a short running bowsprit with jib generally came to complete the sail plan. The scaffie's cutaway forefoot, allied to a relatively short keel with slight drag, made it ... especially handy when turning to windward. However, though reckoned to 'stand up' well overall, they lacked directional stability in running or quartering conditions.

More conservatively, and perhaps more economically, scaffie builders

retained clench build with inserted frames until the end of the boat's era, when size had risen to as much as 60' Overall on a 36' keel, with 17'6" of beam, and 7' depth of hold, this last reflecting ongoing improvements in harbourage. Scaffies of more modest size were perhaps more typical, less than 50' overall on keels of around 32'. The few recorded builders reflect the scaffies' unique provenance, and include McIntosh of Buckie, Gardiner of Cullen and Slater of Portessie.

As with their other Scottish contemporaries and competitors – the fifies and zulus (qv) – the scallifes ranged far and wide, with their crews benefiting from the greatly increased catching power conferred by cotton nets.



The lines and construction plan, together with sections, of the small scaffie yawl Gratitude. The original can now be visualised through the medium of a recently built replica, as well as through these plans and photographs. (NMM, Oke, Coastal Craft Collection.)



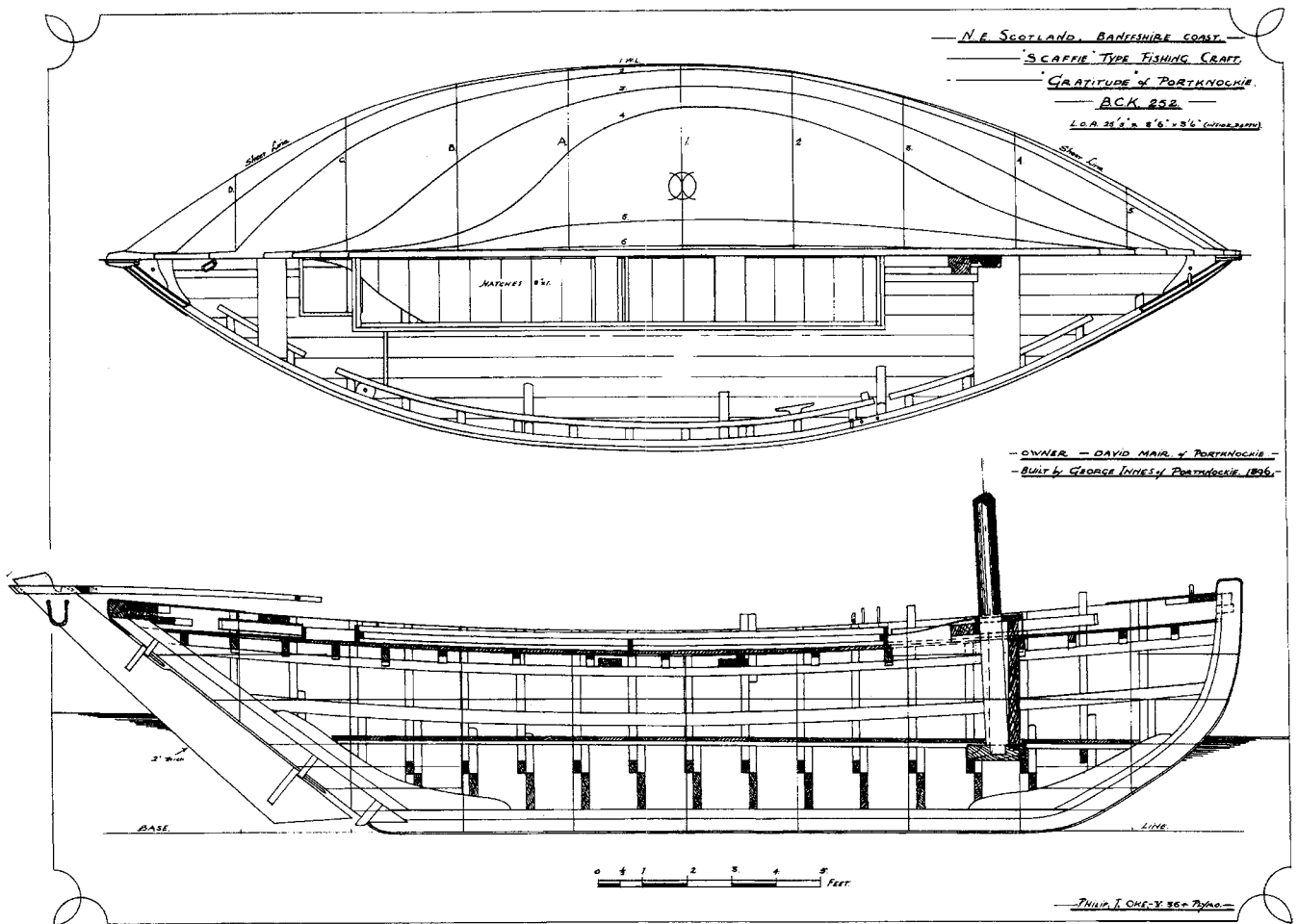
This photograph shows so clearly the hollow floors and the sharp turn to the bilges of the now well-known scaffie yawl Gratitude BCK252. She is photographed at Portnockie on the Moray coast c1936. (NMM, Oliver Hill Collection, neg no P75448)

SCAFFIE YAWL (Yawl)

A small commonplace boat of scaffie hull form, decked but with a long central hatch, rigged with a single dipping lug sail (with jib) placed forward, and employed in the inshore fisheries of the Moray coast.

Known principally through records of the Gratitude BCK252, built around 1896, such boats seem to have been around 25' overall, 16' on the keel, a proportion close to that of the large contemporary scaffies (ie the keel equal to two-thirds overall length. Beam approximated to one-third boat length, whilst the fir mast's length equalled it, an inside depth of only 3'6" assured easy draft and beaching.

Clench built of around a dozen 3/4" larch planks, the shell was well-stiffened by oak frames and stringers, with the regular floors and their overlapping frames bolstered by intermediate floors.



A fife and two zulus (right) being towed out of Great Yarmouth from where some of these vessels worked the great autumn North Sea herring fishery. These massively built vessels employed steam to haul their heavier gear. In the background is a steam drifter, a vessel which was eventually to spell their demise. (NMM neg no P39536).

CAN YOU WRITE A REVIEW?

Whether it's boat gear or boat gadget, a tool or a book, if you have bought it and it does the job, other readers would like to read your impartial assessment.