

Have you met.....?

An occasional look at a member of our community with an interesting story to tell. To start this off we have a look (very briefly) at the fascinating career, of our very own:

Captain Adrian Small

Adrian has a clear love of all things maritime, but particularly of sailing ships.

He began as a sea cadet, then after the war years he served his apprenticeship with the merchant service on board the 'Passatt', a Finnish sailing vessel where he spent 2 years carrying cargo around the world and learning the basics. Each trip from Australia to England could take as much as 143 days (though rarely quite that long). Yes, it was unusual at this time to be still using sailing ships, since our Navy had stopped using the last of its sailing fleet by around 1924.

There are now only a handful of "Cape Horners" left in the world, and only one in England - our own Captain Small. These are people who have sailed around this roughest part of the world's oceans in a square-rigged cargo ship which does not have any engine on board. With modern ships and yachts taking over the seas, this is an exclusive and diminishing group.

As Adrian explains, if you want to add an engine, this takes up space which cannot be used for cargo; you now need an engineering crew to run the engine and they take up space; you then need to carry fuel which again takes up space. To compensate for this you need to make the ship larger, but this now needs a larger engine and more fuel, so there are always problems. A sailing vessel is basically an empty cargo hold with a basic crew, which can carry about one fifth more cargo than its motorised equivalent; the power source is external. The only disadvantage is that you can't say, with any accuracy, exactly when your cargo will arrive.

After the 'Passatt' Adrian followed a more traditional job in the Merchant Service, but was always drawn toward sailing ships, and eventually found an opportunity upon seeing a small advert seeking a crew for a sailing ship. This turned out to be making of the film "Moby Dick". He also worked on other films including "Damn the Defiant!" and "Hawaii", and worked alongside many great actors including Orson Welles, Gregory Peck, Alec Guinness, Dirk Bogarde and many others, although of course, he gets no credit for his work in these films.

Later he worked on a variety of replica sailing vessels including the Nonsuch, which was his home for 5½ years, the Golden Hinde and the Mayflower, built at Brixham, which he sailed from Plymouth, Devon to Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Adrian Married a Dolton girl, Marion Vincent, and they lived at Brixham. They retired back to the Dolton cottage which has been occupied by about 5 generations of her family.