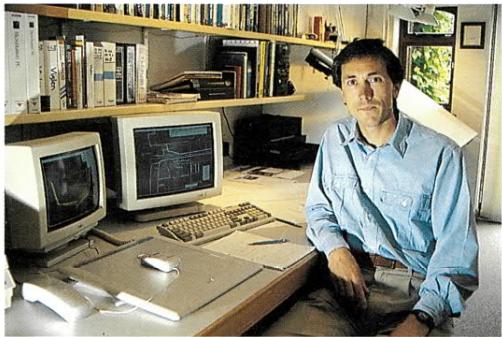


Naval architect John Leather profiles one of today's leading designers of modern motorboats and more traditional craft for sail and oar in

FROM THE *Bay* TO THE *BROADS*

A Portrait of ANDREW WOLSTENHOLME



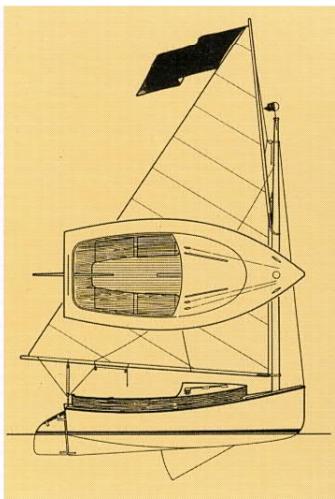
The wide, windy skies and flowing tides of Morecambe Bay in north-west England have inspired many small boat sailors and artists. Its sandy waters, placid under summer sun, can quickly change to turgid short seas when a fresh wind opposes flood or ebb. The Bay is backed by the splendid countryside of counties one still thinks of as Furness and Westmoreland, and to the south by the northern part of Lancashire. Concentrations of population are few except for the seaside town of Morecambe and the shipbuilding town of Barrow.

Andrew Wolstenholme was born amongst this watery environment at the pleasant village of Grange-over-Sands, on the Bay's northern shore. His family had no connection with small boats and sailing but, in 1966, when he was 13 his school built a Graduate sailing dinghy as a project and Andrew became interested. It was several months before he was invited to sail in the boat but a year later he joined the cadet section of the local yacht club and sailing quickly

became a vital part of his life, with regular outings in Graduates, GP14s and the exciting Ospreys. At the same time, he became interested in the fishing boat traditions of Morecambe Bay, particularly in the cutter rigged shrimpers and read what could be found about them and other traditional craft in library books. He also made half-models and his interest in boats and craft began to rival his fascination for aeroplanes.

Thus, though he had applied to study aeronautical engineering at university in 1971, when he noticed an advertisement for a three year course in Yacht and Boat Design at the Southampton College of Technology, he changed tack. Besides theoretical naval architecture, the course required summer periods of practical experience and, for two summers, Andrew joined workers at a small yard at Glasson Dock near Lancaster, working on the repair of wooden, steel and GRP hulled craft. Increasingly interested in multihulls, Andrew chose as his course project the design of a trimaran. A friend working for Derek Kelsall introduced him to the multihull designer and, on conclusion of his course in 1974, with a

Diploma in Yacht and Boat Design, he joined the Kelsall team at Sandwich, Kent, working on the design of *Great Britain III*, a valuable experience.



Above: The 16' (4.9m) Catboat designed for GRP construction and, right, later built in wood by David Moss. Photograph: Andrew Wolstenholme.



A DESIGNER'S GRAND TOUR

At weekends Andrew began to sail in offshore yachts, first from Dover and then with Leslie Landamore, the Norfolk yachtbuilder, sailing from Harwich. Soon after he decided on a trip to Canada and north America and travelled 8,000 miles by Greyhound bus from coast to coast, visiting several notable designers including Robert Harris in Vancouver, Robert Perry in Seattle and Richard Newick on the Massachusetts island of Martha's Vineyard. Travelling up the East Coast, he toured the renowned yards of Concordia in South Dartmouth and Hinkleys at Bar Harbor and, in Camden, stayed with boatbuilders working on the Grand Banks Schooners. Just before setting out, he had visited the Landamore stand at the London Boat Show and was offered a job at their yard which involved, besides draughting, assistance to Leslie Landamore in dealing with designers of craft under construction and supervising building. He found Landamore's to be a very professional business and spent 18 months there before leaving in 1977 to establish his own draughting and design business at the age of 24. His house in Norwich where he worked, was next door to a retired wherryman who added some Broads lore to the Norfolk interest which was beginning to burgeon. Mainstay of Andrew's business at that time was design and draughting work for various Norfolk boatyards which had long been busy with GRP construction. He also did support design work for established designers including R.M. Martins, John Bennett and Derek Kelsall.

While at Landamore's Andrew had designed, in his own time, a 16' (4.9m) GRP catboat, as he had an affection for the type which was later taken up by David Moss and built in timber. At the same time Andrew started sailing in Broads boats, finding Broadland waters restricted after the wide seas of the coast and beyond. But he became interested and found that the approach to their design is different from those for coastal or sea sailing. The connecting waterways are narrow and the Broads themselves are small areas of inland water, so freeboard may be reduced and sail areas generous. Bows may be fairly full as there is no prospect of beating to windward for hours against a head sea. Draught is restricted: 3' 6" to 3' 9" (1.06-1.14m) is typical for craft 25' to 30' (7.6-9.1m) long. Ability to turn quickly is essential and most boats have spade rudders of an area larger than required in more open waters. Guardrails and pulpits are not fitted and the confined waters do not allow spinnakers in Broads cruiser racing.

The revival of interest in Broads cruiser-racer yachts in the 1980s led to new boats being built. Andrew designed the Strider type as a speculation for Kingsley Farrington - a 25' x 8' x 3' 6" (7.6 x 2.4 x 1.06m) sloop setting 440 square feet (41sq.m) in a high peaked gaff rig which has almost gunter mainsail proportions. The GRP



*The Strider prototype for a modern 25' (7.6m) Broads yacht designed for Kingsley Farrington.
Photograph: Andrew Wolstenholme.*

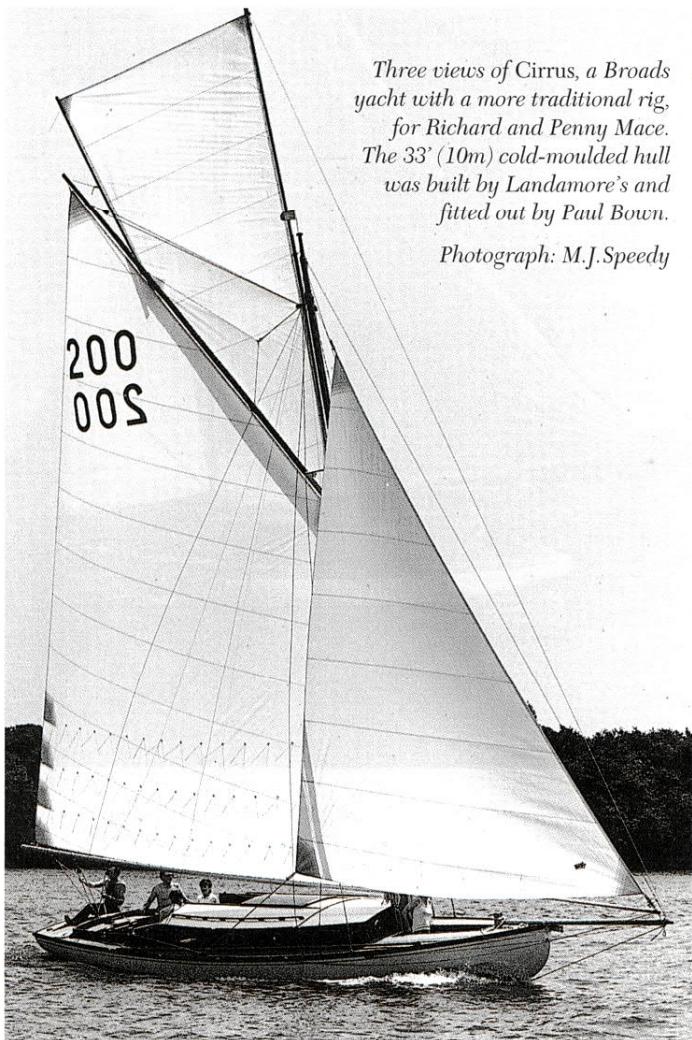
hull was moulded at Acle and finished with a traditional timber superstructure. The completed boat proved fast, leading to further orders and over the years about 25 have been built, including Andrew's own sloop Evergreen.

THE DAY JOB

In 1981, Andrew commenced a fruitful and continuing brief to be responsible for the design of all charter boats by Aquafibre Ltd, the Norfolk moulders of a wide range of craft. So far he has provided 9 complete designs from 21' to 45' (6.4-13.7m), many of which are in use in France and Ireland.

In 1983 came the opportunity to design a 22' (6.7m) GRP hulled fast power boat for Falcon Sports Boats. Power is provided by an inboard/outboard drive with the engine mounted just forward of the transom. A maximum speed of 35-40 knots was desired and is not easy to achieve in so short a boat. The success of the Falcon 22 has resulted in around 150 boats being built to date and the work led Andrew further into the design of powered craft. A 27' (8.2m) Falcon was commissioned and about 70 have been built. Meanwhile, the prolific motor cruiser builders C.J. Broom & Sons of Brundall, on the river Yare near Norwich, commissioned the design of coastal and seagoing 33' (10m) and 36' (11m) motor cruisers

The Boatman



Three views of Cirrus, a Broads yacht with a more traditional rig, for Richard and Penny Mace. The 33' (10m) cold-moulded hull was built by Landamore's and fitted out by Paul Bown.

Photograph: M.J. Speedy



A. Wolstenholme.



M.J. Speedy

both with speeds up to 28 knots. Many have been built. For Hardy Marine of North Walsham, Andrew has designed the 25', 27' and 30' (7.6, 8.2 & 9.1m) Seawings range of coastal and seagoing motor cruisers and again many have been built, making fast motor craft the principal segment of Andrew's business, a situation which allows him to also design small boats of traditional flavour which usually do not sell in such numbers and are, therefore, less commercially viable.

MORE FOR THE FUN OF IT

In 1983, Andrew did not own a boat and was deeply involved in establishing his business which left little spare time. He had been reading my own book *Sail and Oar* which contained many plans and details of rowing boats and small sailing craft. It inspired him to design a light rowing boat for his own use, capable of being lifted on to the roof of a car by one person and, above all, she had to be interesting to row. The result was the Sprite, a sliding seat, plywood hulled rowboat which gave tremendous pleasure as she could be launched and used at odd times

when work allowed. Developed in conjunction with Jack Chippendale, many admired the Sprite with her shapely double chine hull and, before long, the boat was in production as a kit which sells well in many countries including America.

But sailing yachts continued to attract and Andrew designed the 33' (10m) cold moulded gaff topsail sloop *Cirrus* for Richard and Penny Mace with hull built by Landamore and completed by Paul Bown to a high standard. Another Broads yacht commission followed: this time to be moulded in GRP by Kingsley Farrington and with principal dimensions of 30' x 9' 2" x 3' 9" (9.1 x 2.8 x 1.1m) and a gaff topsail sloop rig of 694sq.ft (64.5sq.m) As a boat for use at sea, this size is not spectacular, but on the Broads, she is at the lower end of the large class. The most unusual of Andrew's various



The prototype of the Sprite, a double chine plywood rowing skiff, now produced as a kit by Chippendale Craft.

Photograph: Andrew Wolstenholme.



Left & above: The 35' (10.6m) Storm, built by Chippendale Craft, evolved as a Broads version of a fast, light offshore racer.

Broads sailing yachts is the 35' (10.6m) overall length racing cruiser *Storm* designed for E.H. Clarke as the fastest sloop possible. A Bermudan sloop rig was required and the round bilged, cold moulded hull was designed to get the utmost from a sail area of 814 sq ft. (76 s.m.). Beam is 9' 6" (2.9m) and draught 4' (1.2m). The design evolved as a Broads version of a fast, light offshore racer and soon after launch from Jack Chippendale's Hoveton yard, she was acknowledged to be the fastest yacht on the Broads.

The racing of Norfolk sailing punts has long provided some of the keenest sailing on the Broads and when, in 1985, John Findlay commissioned the design of a new Norfolk punt, Andrew felt a further step in his Broads career had begun. He approached the design with an open mind and, after study of

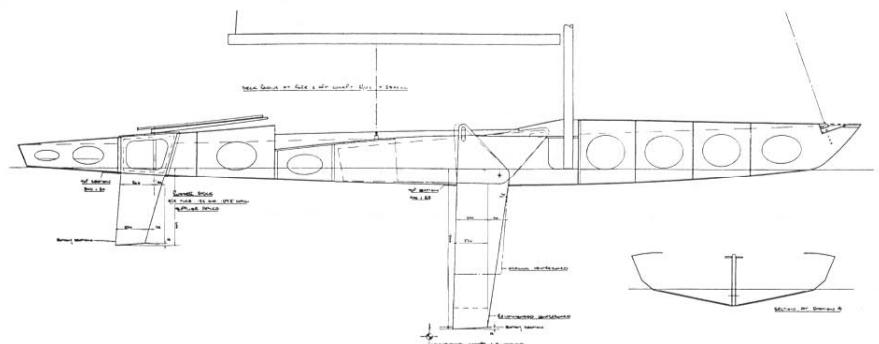
Razorbill, a 22' (6.7m) Norfolk sailing punt designed for John Findlay.

previous punts, he consulted with the Norfolk Punt Club as this was the first punt to be built for several years. A single chine hull was recommended as the only acceptable form but the owner had thought of a cold

moulded bottom and clinker side planking. What emerged was a double chine hull 22' long x 5' 6" beam (6.7 x 1.7m), with a sail area of 221sq.ft (20.5sq.m) in a Bermudan sloop rig. Named *Razorbill*, the punt was fast and was well received in the Club. She was exhibited at the National Dinghy Exhibition. One of the subtle aspects of sailing punt design is the form of the after hull body which affects planing ability. Soon after this punt was built, club rules were altered to allow a stern shape in plan which would fit within a 90 degree angle, a ruling which could have improved Andrew's punt's speed.

The *Little Stint* was another, very different pointed stern design; a 22' 6" x 7' 6" (6.8 x 2.3m) centreboard cat ketch with a clinker planked hull and 154sq.ft (14.3 sq.m) of sail area in the two Bermudan sails. Unfortunately only one was built.

A resurgence of interest in steam launches during the 1980s led several owners and builders to Andrew's door including Charles Fairbrother from Horning, who, in 1984, arrived with a sketch for a 20 footer (6m) to be driven by a 1 1/2 shaft horse power reciprocating engine. Andrew designed a chine hull to suit and with a raking



The Boatman



stern and *Harlequin* was built close to her owner's windmill home. She achieved about 6 miles per hour, the common measure of speed for launches on inland waters.

In 1981, the Steam and Electric Launch Company of Wroxham commissioned design of a 21' (6.4m) launch for either type of propulsive machinery and to have a GRP hull. Speed was to be about 6 1/2 knots with a motor of one kilowatt. In excess of 100 of these *Frolic* 21 launches have been built for use on the Broads, the upper Thames and elsewhere. In 1989 the same builder asked for a design for a 31' launch with 8' 1" beam and 2' 1" draught (9.4 x 2.5 x 0.06m), capable of speeds up to 8 knots with an engine of 2 or 3 kilowatt power. About a dozen have been built to date. The Deltic and Mystic types of electrically propelled launches have also been produced.

TRADITION MEETS TECHNOLOGY

His training well fitted Andrew for his career and, though attracted to craft with traditional backgrounds, he has his business firmly established in modern craft and on

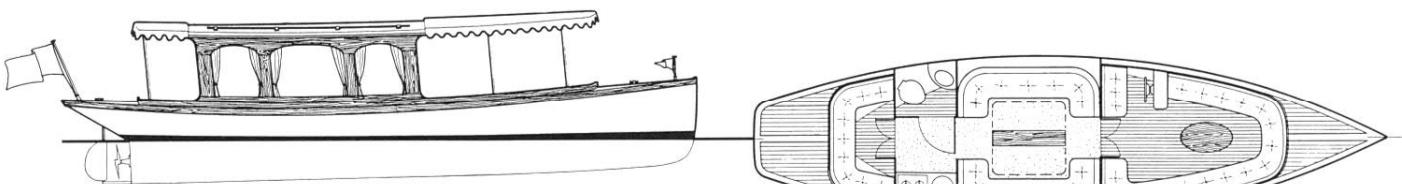
*Two for either steam or electric propulsion. Right, the *Frolic* 21 and below her big sister; both built by the Steam & Electric Launch Co.*

*The 20' (6m) steam launch *Harlequin* designed for Charles Fairbrother of Horning.*

modern methods. Two years ago he invested in a computer aided design system which is now normal practice in all design offices large or small and he has found it of great benefit in speeding work, particularly the vital but tedious tasks of examining stability, centres of gravity, buoyancy, trim and similar aspects of the design process.

In 1989 Charlie Ward of the North Norfolk Boatbuilding Company discussed the design of a small, two berth cruiser for sea sailing, which could be trailed. The Norfolk Gypsy is 19' 10" long overall, 7' 4" beam and the hull draws 1' 8" (6 x 2.2 x 0.5m). A centreplate extends draught to 3' 10" (1.2m) and sail area is 212 sq ft (20 s.m) in a gaff sloop rig. More than 55 of these GRP hulled cruisers have been built and are sailed in many waters.

A current project which, if built, would be one of the largest Broads river cruisers, has been designed for an owner who, like Andrew, admires the Herbert Bunn built Broads racing yacht *Luna* which was designed by American yacht designer Charles D Mower at the





Following the successful *Gypsy* (see also pp38-45), the 30' (9.1m) *Smuggler* is Andrew's latest design for Charlie Ward's Norfolk Boatyard.

beginning of the century. Tom Moore had tried unsuccessfully to buy the *Luna* to restore her and concluded that the only way forward was to build a new boat using modern techniques but retaining the aesthetic feel of the original. Based on overall dimensions taken from *Luna* Andrew has produced the *Fawn*, a 36' 7" overall length x 10' beam x 3' 10" draught (11.2 x 3 x 1.2m) cruiser-racer displacing 3.7 tons but with a gaff yawl rig (as the original) totalling 1016sq.ft (94sq.m) including the main topsail. This rig allows a slightly lower centre of area and a shorter boom than the usual sloop. The hull will be strip planked and finished to a high standard. A spade rudder will provide the control so vital in a craft of this size racing in such confined waters, which is comparable to sailing a 23 Metre in Harwich harbour!

Another design which Andrew is at present completing is the 30' (9.1m) seagoing centreboard cruising cutter Norfolk Smuggler for Charlie Ward's reconstituted Norfolk Boatyard. With 10' 4" (3.1m) beam and draughts of 3' 9" (1.1m) and 5' (1.5m) with the centreboard lowered and a sail area of 607sq.ft (56.4sq.m), this is the most important seagoing sailing cruiser Andrew has so far produced.

With his business firmly established, Andrew, his wife Rosemary and baby daughter Joanna now share a delightful home/office in the village of Coltishall, at the navigable head of the River Bure. For the future, Andrew hopes to continue with the design of power craft which are such a major part of his business but also would like to produce more designs of traditional craft, sail and power. The Norfolk *Gypsy* has proved a very successful production boat and he would like to

encourage more commissions of this nature, plus individual yachts and boats. He is also keen to design a range of launches and motor cruisers with a period flavour, from day launches to 'commuter' style fast cruisers with a high length to beam ratio and with their reduced resistance achieve high designed speeds without excessive power.

Andrew Wolstenholme's progress in the design of a sail and motor craft looks set to continue the path he has followed so steadily since the day they launched the Graduate at Morecambe Grammar School. Besides power craft we can expect a flow of interesting individual boats and yachts from his design office, of which *The Boatman's* specially commissioned Mallard dinghy is the most recent example. 

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Current builders of Andrew Wolstenholme's traditional designs.

SPRITE
Chippendale Craft Ltd, Wroxham Barns, Tunstead Road,
Hoveton, Norwich NR12 8QU.

Tel: +44 (0)603 783003.

CATBOAT
David Moss Boatbuilders, Skippool Creek, Wyre Road,
Thornton, Cleveleys, Lancs FY5 5LF.

Tel: +44 (0)253 893830.

COOT
The Boatyard Upstairs, 3 Wood St, Hoylake, Wirral,
Merseyside L47 2DU. Tel: +44 (0)51 632 5617.

John Kerr, High Street, Llandysul, Dyfed, West Wales.
Tel: +44 (0)559 363201

FROLIC SERIES
The Steam & Electric Launch Company, Church Road,
Wroxham, Norwich NR12 8VG.
Tel: +44 (0)603 784848. Fax: +44 (0)603 784840

MALLARD
Best Boatbuilders, Glendower House, Deveral Road,
Fraddam, Hayle, Cornwall. Tel: +44 (0)736 850234.

GYPSY & SMUGGLER
The Norfolk Boatyard, Tides Reach, Morston, Nr Holt,
Norfolk NR25 7AA. Tel: +44 (0)263 740377.

OTHER DESIGNS
Kingsley Farrington, The Boatyard, Whitlingham Lane,
Trowse, Norwich NR14 8TR. Tel: +44 (0)603 666545.
John Williams Boats, The Willows Boatyard, The Staithes,
Stalham, Norfolk NR12 9DA.
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