

FISHING: a glossary from various sources

The traditional fishing boat before the introduction of nets, was named after the hooked fishing lines used

The hooker was constructed by hand using tarred timbers and was blackened by a kind of emulsion of creosote and coal. Its sails consisted of three brown sails, the main sail, the foresail on either side of the mast and a jib sail extended beyond the bow. The special rust colour of the sails came from being soaked in a solution made from tree bark, a process known as "barking".

There are two books with quite a lot of detail on one particular Plymouth Hooker, (Dayspring)

- 1) The Chatham Directory of Inshore Craft [ISBN 1 86176 029 9], on pages 142-4 has a narrative and lines and photo of PH.339.
- 2) Inshore Craft of Britain, Vol. 2, by Edgar March [ISBN 0 7153 4981 3] has a narrative on pages 191-3 and photos on page 117..
- 3) In addition, the National Maritime Museum Greenwich, has negatives of this/these craft in the Oliver Hill Collection – Neg. Nos. P.74275 to 74309.

The **Polperro Gaffer** is a type of fishing vessel used in Cornwall. The Great Gale of 1891 destroyed the fishing fleets of many of the smaller Cornish villages. The old boats were generally clinker-planked and lug-rigged. The new boats built after the Gale with government intervention and support were to a new design, carvel planked and with the "modern" gaff rig, boats we now know as typically West Country with straight stem and transom sterns though the lines varied from port to port.

The Plymouth Hooker was very similar and the only surviving sailing fishing boats still working, the Falmouth Oyster Boats are almost the same in hull design.

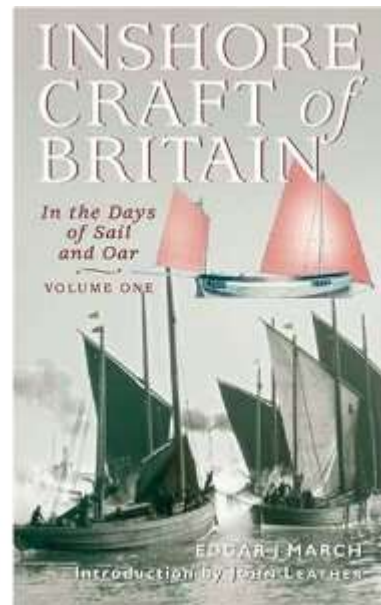
The Polperro Gaffer and the Plymouth Hooker were essentially open boats with a fore deck back to the mast, a small aft deck and narrow side decks or waterways. The "cock-pit" was divided into the fish hold where the catch was carried and the net hold where the long seine nets were carried with a wooden roller athwartships to feed the net in and out. It was not uncommon for the boats to have a couple of berths in the fore peak cabin.

The rig was deliberately low as it had to be handled by a small crew in all weathers and they would lie to the nets with mainsail set. However the sail area could be extended by setting a large topsail on a yard making these boats remarkably fast in races on high days and holidays.

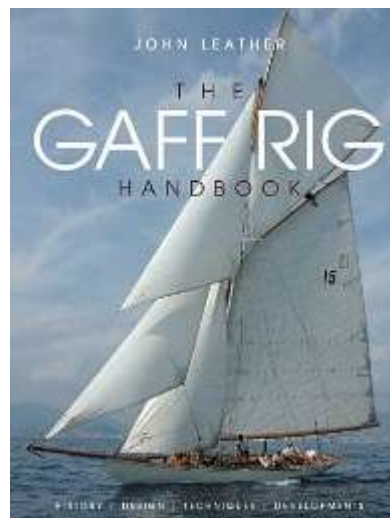
These boats have excellent sea-keeping capability as witnessed by Dr [Peter Pye](#) who with his wife sailed his Polperro Gaffer *Moonraker* round the world in the 1940's.

<http://www.mayqueen1910.com/> a brief history of a polperro gaffer

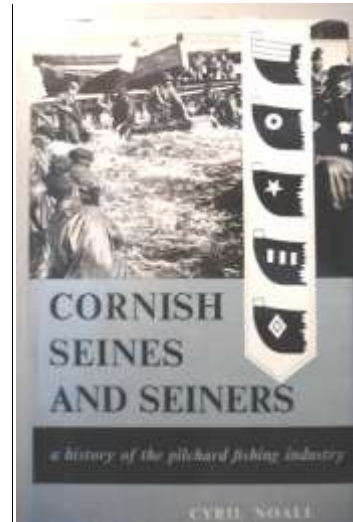
Edgar March *Inshore Craft of Britain in the days of Sail and Oar.*
ISBN-10: 1861762542



The Gaff Rig Handbook: History, Design, Techniques, Developments
John Leather



Noall, Cyril (1972) *Cornish Seines and Seiners: a history of the pilchard fishing industry*.



Truro: D. Bradford Barton [ISBN 0851530907](https://www.isbn.org/9780851530907)

Pilchard fishing and processing was a thriving industry in [Cornwall](#) from around 1750 to around 1880, after which it went into an almost terminal decline [wiki](#)

The beginnings of a significant fishery in Cornwall may be traced to the reign of King John and by the time of the Tudors had become of national importance. It was much regulated under the rule of Queen Elizabeth I. In 1582 nearly two thousand mariners are recorded for Cornwall and somewhat more for Devon. In 1602 [Richard Carew](#) describes the fisheries of Cornwall and Devon as much more important than those of eastern England. Two methods were in use at the time: seining and drifting. In the early years of the 17th century the fishermen of Cornwall and Devon were also heavily involved in the Newfoundland fisheries. In the decade 1747-1756 the total number of [pilchards](#) dispatched from the four principal Cornish ports of Falmouth, Fowey, Penzance and St Ives averaged 30,000 hogsheads annually (making a total of 900 million fish). Much greater catches were achieved in 1790 and 1796. The majority of the pilchard catch was exported to Italy. Before the mid 18th century the season generally ran from July till November or December but during the 19th century usually from August to October.

In 1847 the exports of pilchards from Cornwall amounted to 40,883 hogsheads or 122 million fish while the greatest number ever taken in one seine was 5,600 hogsheads at St Ives in 1868.^[2]

Huers (cliff top lookouts) helped locate shoals of fish. The huer would shout 'Hevva!, Hevva!' to alert the boats to the location of the pilchard shoals. Cornish tradition states that Hevva cake was baked by the huers on their return to their homes, the cake being ready by the time the crews returned to land.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia <http://en.wikipedia.org>

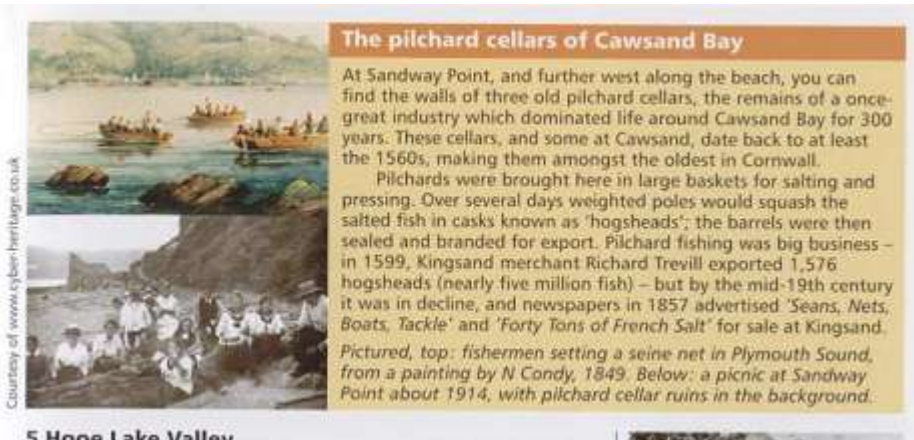
<http://www.swmaritime.org.uk/article.php?articleid=1469&atype=r>

South West Maritime History Society

<http://www.cornishluggers.co.uk/class-b-luggers/>



Seine boat at Coverack



Courtesy of www.cornwall-heritage.co.uk

5 Hooe Lake Valley

Fishing boats on Kingsand beach in the 1920s. The villages' fortunes were founded on pilchards and the fleet also pursued a profitable sideline in smuggling (page 27). When traveller George Liscomb visited in 1798, he complained of the 'fetid and disagreeable odour of stinking pilchards' and was startled by the 'grotesque' waddling women he passed, their gait hindered by the bladders of contraband liquor tied beneath their petticoats.

Richard Trevill Kingsand 1599 exported 1571 hogsheads 5m fish