

# WIND, TIDE & OAR

encounters with engineless sailing

a film by HUW WAHL  
in collaboration with ROSE RAVETZ



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ENGLAND**

*"Visually Stunning"*

- ITV Anglia

*"A remarkable film"*

- Hannah Cunliffe, National Historic Ships

*"What a timely, timeless film Wind, Tide and Oar is. Like all Wahl's work, it's about breathing, freedom, being in the world. A gorgeously shot tone poem, it reveals life on the water, under shifting skies, as tactile, dream-like, improvisational. Here are old rhythms that feel thrillingly new. Imagination and intoxication. An antidote to skew-whiff modern life."*

- Sukdev Sandhu



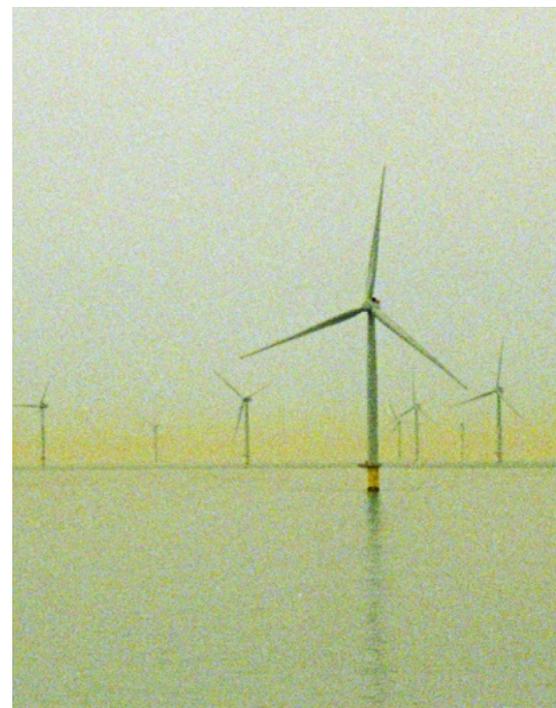
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*To sail without an engine is to work in harmony with nature, to rewild the soul at sea.*

**- Richard Titchener, Sailor**

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*I feel sailing is about so much more than getting from A to B. Every voyage is uncertain and no landfall is the same, and it is that very uncertainty that hones the blade of our alertness.*

**- Jude Brickhill, Sailor**

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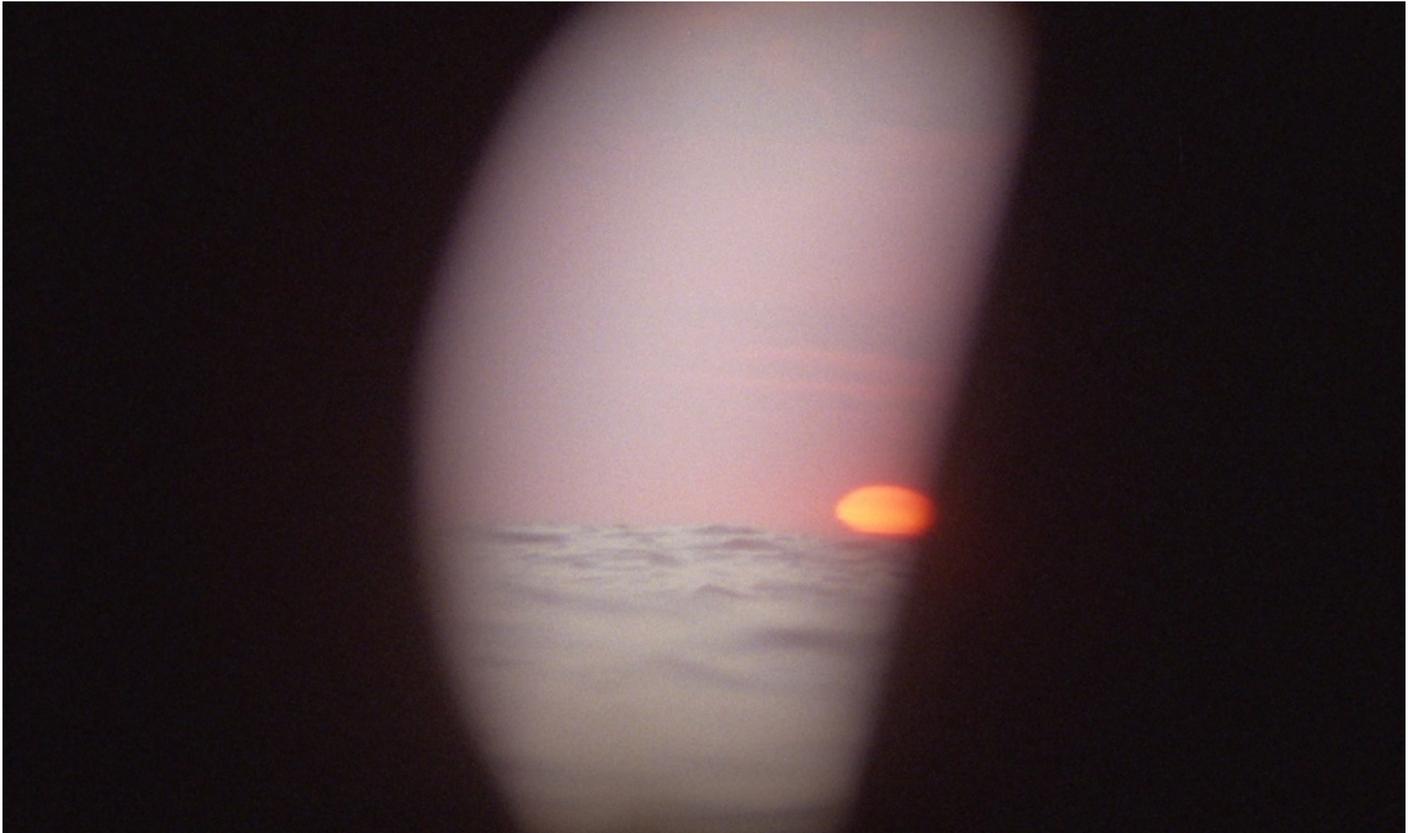
*Sailing engineless is like an orchestration. It's an interaction with the world, a complex and beautiful dance.*

**- Stevie Hunt, Sailor**



*Wind, Tide & Oar* encompasses:

- the first documentary film that explores the art of engineless sailing
- an exclusive premiere at Royal Museums Greenwich, London
- a unique tour by sea: the iconic Thames sailing barge *Blue Mermaid*, crewed by young sail trainees, takes the film on tour around the Southeast coast
- a tour by land from July onwards
- a published book anthology written by engineless seafarers featured in the film and beyond
- a film exhibit on the famous tea clipper ship, *Cutty Sark*, for the duration of the film's tour



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**Duration |** 1h 23 min

**Locations |** UK / Netherlands / France

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**Shot on |** super 16mm  
**Digitased in |** 4K

**Exhibition |** Digital 4K, Colour, Stereo,  
1.66:1

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**Year |** 2024

**Audio language |** English  
**Subtitles language |** English

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**a film by** Huw Wahl  
**in collaboration with** Rose Ravetz  
**sound mix by** Simon Connor



### Watch the Teaser

*Wind, Tide & Oar* is a compelling exploration of engineless sailing, shot on analogue film over three years. The film delves into the experiences of those who travel solely by harnessing the natural elements alone, following a diverse array of traditional boats and uncovering the unique rhythms and motivations of engineless navigation.

Journeying through rivers, coastlines, and open seas, spanning the UK, the Netherlands, and France, *Wind, Tide & Oar* creates a contemplative space, addressing themes of ecology, heritage, traditional skills, and maritime history. Using a 1960s hand-wound camera, Wahl offers a poetic and intimate perspective on a millennia-old craft, upended by the invention of mechanised power.

Through the film's reveries, sailing becomes a means to explore our interaction with and responsibility to the environment. It invites deep reflection on our relationship with nature, our understanding of and commitment to sustainability, and our care for the world around us.

The debut of *Wind, Tide & Oar* will take place at the prestigious Royal Museums Greenwich on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024.

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The Director of National Historic Ships, Hannah Cunliffe, will introduce the film. Following the screening, filmmaker Huw Wahl and sailor Rose Ravetz will engage in a Q&A session, offering insights into the filmmaking journey. Simultaneously, the accompanying *Wind, Tide & Oar* book, published by The New Menard Press, will be unveiled in an exclusive launch event. Following the premiere, guests are invited to a drinks reception beneath the iconic *Cutty Sark* ship, adding an unforgettable maritime ambience to the evening.

Premiere tickets include same-day entrance to the *Cutty Sark* and a tour around the Thames sailing barge *Blue Mermaid*, which will be docked at Greenwich Pier.

More information can be found [here](#).





## Cinema meets the next generation of seafarers, all on an engineless Thames sailing barge

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Following the film's premiere at the Royal Museums Greenwich, the iconic Thames sailing barge *Blue Mermaid* will set sail from Greenwich on a unique sea tour, visiting ten ports on the Southeast coast between April and July 2024. At each destination, the hold will be transformed into a floating cinema for intimate screenings of *Wind, Tide & Oar*.

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the *Skippers of the Future* project will see young people crew the sea tour, earning the 'Introductory Certificate in Traditional Seafaring' alongside crucial life skills. Operated by Sea-Change Sailing Trust, the project will inspire youngsters to consider a career in the maritime industry and increase awareness of the Thames barge heritage.

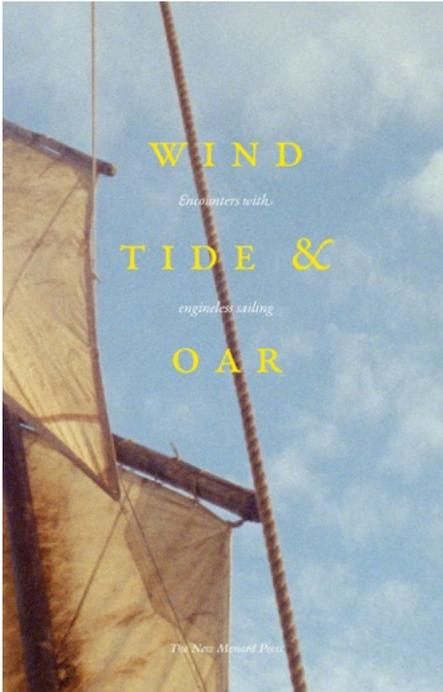
Audiences are welcome aboard *Blue Mermaid* to experience Thames barge heritage, enjoy the film in a unique setting, and ask questions at a Q&A after each show.

Screenings are free, but booking is required.

Screening at the following locations:

GREENWICH | GRAVESEND | MALDON | IPSWICH |  
HARWICH | LOWESTOFT | WOODBRIDGE | GRAVESEND |  
CHATHAM | RAMSGATE | ST KATHERINES DOCK

More information and tickets can be found [here](#)



ISBN: 9789083384122

Price: £11.99

Independent publisher The New Menard Press will release an accompanying book to the film

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*Wind, Tide & Oar* takes us deep into the ever flowing dialogue between sailor, boat and the elements. Exploring what it means to sail 'engineless', this unique anthology accompanies the film of the same title, offering a diverse range of first-hand seafaring narratives. These collected works address such themes as tradition, sustainability and self-knowledge, as well as adventures, dreams and ideals. We are invited to experience what it is to be in harmonious movement with the natural world and gracefully subject to its whims.

Jude Brickhill, Stevie Hunt, Mike Jackson, Artur C. Jaschke, Greg Powlesland, Wiebe Radstake, Emma Rault, Rose May Ravetz, Jessica Taggart Rose, Richard Titchener, Catharina Vergeer and Huw Wahl.

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## BOOK LAUNCH

The book will launch alongside the film's premiere at Royal Museum Greenwich on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024. The founder of The New Menard Press, Elte Rauch, will introduce the book. The audience will then have the chance to hear the poet Jessica Taggart Rose perform her contribution to the anthology at the drinks reception under the famous tea clipper ship *Cutty Sark*.



*Writing, filming and sailing have much in common. Even publishing—at least the way I go about it—may fit into this collection of activities. The preliminary tool is, namely, intuition and a certain intrepidity to improvise. Aside from a few skills and the motivation—or obsession—you have for the task, intuition is the flow, the current, the tide, if you like, omnipresent throughout the process and eternally returning. But should one trust their intuition? Well, you should certainly not ignore it. Especially if you are without an engine.*

*When Huw Wahl, the director of the film *Wind, Tide & Oar*, approached me, I'd never met him before. He found out I was a publisher and author, living on a historic sailing barge, through a mutual friend of ours, who put us in touch with one another. And when at last we met, and Huw told me he was working on an analogue film about engineless sailing, I understood why Gareth, our friend, had seen a link. When Huw revealed that he did not want the film to be a documentary, nor an art film, activist manifesto, or feature film, I understood him even better. I intuitively tuned into his vision, and since my business is books, it only seemed logical there would be a book with the film.*

*Pretty much from the first conversation we had, we talked about this sense of intuition, and when and how to use it while you are working on a creation with people, which is subsequently shared with an audience. Lots of conversations were to follow, most of these recorded and collected, shared and sent across the Channel via voice notes. For I live, work and write between countries; I live on the water between the UK and mainland Europe.*

*If the film were to display the visual narrative of how and why people today go sailing without an engine, then I would work on a book containing the written story—the two complement each other. Thus, here within are accounts of some of the sailors featured in the film, and others who have experience sailing, poets and practitioners, authors and amateurs.*

**- Elte Rauch, Publisher**

adapted extract from the *Wind, Tide & Oar* anthology

*To sail is to partake in the dance of life. A grand statement, perhaps, but when the sails lift and the boat gains momentum, the sailor knows this to be true. Releasing the mooring line, pulling the halyard, trimming the sheets; by setting sail, we humans see the tangible interaction between ourselves and nature. We enter into a dialogue with that which surrounds us. We can shape the dialogue, perhaps, but we cannot control it. If we are lucky, we are equals to these elemental forces. As much as we talk, in this conversation, we are obliged to listen.*

*Sailing on board a vessel fitted with an auxiliary engine is incredibly convenient. We can go further, worry less, fit into tight spaces, and travel against wind and tide—to name a few of the many benefits. In essence, we overcome nature. We dominate the dialogue, talking over the elements and imposing our will. We believe this is pragmatic—we wish to have a certain experience, and we believe it is acceptable to force our way through to reach this experience. We think we are entitled to enjoy ourselves, and because we believe we are separate from nature, it feels permissible to take what we want from her.*

*To sail engineless is to learn how to listen. Without the possibility of domination, the engineless sailor relies upon their skill and their ability to tune in. Feel the brush of wind upon the cheek not just once, but constantly, quietly tracking its variance. The gentle sweep of the current, always lessening, growing or slack, different in every corner, every turn of the shore. The hull, its depth in the water, how clean or barnacled it is, and the distribution of weight—details are important. Power lies in the subtle. To sail like this is to orchestrate within the scope of the earth's offerings. To sail like this is to belong to our planet.*

- Rose Ravetz, Sailor  
adapted extract from the *Wind, Tide & Oar* anthology



Huw Wahl | Director

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Huw Wahl is a filmmaker and artist who has earned international recognition and showcased his award-winning work globally. With funding grants from organisations like The Henry Moore Foundation, Arts Council England and the RPS, he uses analogue film to explore the transformative potential of creative action. Huw is driven by his belief in film's power to open experiences and ideas for communal change. His last film **The Republics** (2020), made in collaboration with the poet Stephen Watts, premiered at CPH:DOX and went on to screen internationally. He was introduced to sailing by his sister Rose Ravetz on her boat, Defiance, where he was struck by the poetic and filmic potential of going engineless. This experience produced the first shoots of the project, which grew into a sibling collaboration of multiple proportions.

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*Making this film has taught me so much about what it means to sail engineless, but also a huge amount about filmmaking. Both are deeply rooted - during their best moments - in feeling. Whether that's intuiting the right time to tack or the right time to press the shutter, each requires the practitioner to enter a trance-like state of concentration, deeply connected to their surroundings, almost instinctive in their reactions. If we can learn something from the sailor, it's that response is the key to our navigation in the broadest sense.*

- Huw Wahl, Director

Rose Ravetz | Sailor & Co-Producer

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Rose's first sailing experience was crossing the Atlantic Ocean at age nineteen, having left home with a dream to travel. She spent four years on various ocean crossings and adventures, eventually reaching New Zealand, from where she then sailed back to Europe as a professional crew on the famous classic schooner, Atlantic. Since her return, she has worked professionally for sail-cargo initiatives and sail-training charities and as a traditional rigger on museum ships, including the Cutty Sark and HMS Gannet. She owns her 23ft engineless boat, Defiance, which she restored. Rose is now studying for a BA in Philosophy and Sustainability, continuing her explorations into how humanity can redeem its relationship with the natural world. *Wind, Tide & Oar* came about when Rose shared her sailing knowledge with her landlocked brother, Huw.

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*Rather than overpowering the elements by mechanical force, the engineless sailor is asked to engage in a conversation with the natural world. For these sailors to be successful, they must listen more than they speak; they cannot impose their will on the elements. This exceptional situation offers an interesting perspective from which to view our relationship with nature: one that differs from domination and control and instead invites connection and collaboration.*

**- Rose Ravetz, Sailor**



*I was introduced to the world of sailing by my sister, who aged nineteen and with no prior experience set off to work her way around the world's oceans on various vessels, from shabby 34ft schooners to super yachts owned by millionaires. It's not a cliché to say that she returned four years later changed by this rite of passage. What's intriguing, though, is her conversion to the philosophy of engineless sailing and all the real-world, ecological and mystical practices surrounding it. For her, removing the engine on her boat was not only removing the weight of reliance on fossil fuel to travel but also helped her to commune more closely with nature, in intimate ways that she had savoured on her sea crossing adventures.*

*Through her, I have grasped the important link between sailing and filmmaking. Seafarers who sail without engines must closely attune themselves to their environment; improvising and responding in awareness to the intimate contact they have with its materiality. Their actions are those of care and responsibility. Filmmakers in relation to their subject must respond in improvisation to the materiality of the world; recording, representing or revealing the reality of its objects. Their actions are those of care and responsibility. Both are in the deepest sense, matters of ecology.*

*The philosopher Bruno Latour posits that "we don't have the right imagination nor the psychological makeup to metabolise the flood of terrifying news pouring in everyday", and in that sense the arts must cultivate our emotional resources, encouraging changes in representation. What we now know about the climate crisis affects how we make and consume art, but it does not mean we can only respond by making art about the crisis. With this in mind, the film embodies the poetry of sailing, a chance to explore and develop ecology in the broadest sense; as a practice and a subject.*

**- Huw Wahl, Director**

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**Q&A with film participant and co-producer Rose Ravetz**

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**What inspired the film?**

My brother, Huw, joined me on my 23' boat for a week of sailing around the Suffolk and Essex coast. Though my boat had an engine, I tried not to use it even in difficult or complex manoeuvres. Instead, I wanted to use the wind and tide and various traditional seafaring skills to persuade the boat to do what I needed her to do. My brother, who had never previously sailed, was taken by this commitment. As an analogue filmmaker using 16mm film stock, he could see the cinematic potential in this philosophy of "engineless sailing".

**What first inspired you to sail engineless?**

I learned to sail on boats that had engines. They seemed crucial to any manoeuvre that would be difficult, such as coming in and out of port. I started to wonder how seafarers in the past managed without an engine. After some research and meeting some devoted sailors, I discovered that the ways and means of traditional sailing were numerous; sailors relied on rich and diverse skills and impressive proficiency in what they did. Initially, I wanted to learn these traditional skills to become a better sailor. Eventually, it was the philosophy of engineless sailing that captivated my attention.

**What is special about engineless sailing?**

Many different forces are at play on a sailing vessel at any one time. Getting a boat to do what you want often requires a lot of skill, and circumstances can limit what is possible. The modern convenience is to turn the key, fire up the engine, and produce a force that overpowers the natural elements. Something very unique occurs when this option is not available. The sailor must deepen into the intricacies of the environment, to use all their senses to feel the ever-changing variations in the natural world and these interactions with the boat. What follows is a conversation between the sailor, the boat, and nature. For the sailor to be successful in their endeavours, they must listen more than they speak; they cannot just impose their will. The engineless sailor can't accurately predict or completely control what will happen. Instead, they rely on their skill and, more importantly, an intimate connection to their environment.

**What do you want people to take/learn from the film?**

The exceptional situation of the engineless sailor, that of an intimacy with the world around them, can offer us a vital perspective from which to view our relationship with nature. We live in a society where the anthropogenic voice is valued more than the natural world's. We are effectively attempting to force our ship into great headwinds, and a strong current, with the dominance of our roaring engine. The problem is that we are running out of fuel, whilst causing great strain on our ship. Not only that, but we often feel disconnected, untethered, and separated in the process. The engineless sailor's success relies on allowing nature's voice to be heard. We would like to offer a perspective that differs from domination and control, and for the audience to think about their own relationship with nature.















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**Blue Mermaid** | 2019 (replica of original built 1930)Sea-Change Sailing Trust

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*Blue Mermaid* is a steel-hulled, 87' Thames sailing barge built in 2019. She is a replica of an older vessel of the same name, built in 1930 and sunk by enemy action during the Second World War. *Blue Mermaid* was built specifically to operate under sail alone and does not carry an engine. She is owned by the Sea-Change Sailing Trust, who commissioned her for the purpose of sail-training voyages with young people, as well as to operate sail cargo. In 2023, she received permission from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to carry cargo of up to 110 tonnes. In 1900, there were around 4,000 such barges, each with a crew of two carrying cargo under sail, but *Blue Mermaid* is the first since 1970 to be authorised as a commercial cargo carrier.

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**Birubi** | 1967Stevie Hunt

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*Birubi* is a 42' steel, Bermudan ketch. She was built in the church hall in Reedham, Norfolk, and launched in 1967 to a unique design by Bill Beeson. Stevie bought *Birubi* in 2013. After sailing and living aboard for two years, he undertook a full-scale restoration. Being an experienced Thames barge-skipper and sailor, Stevie already had a passion for sailing engineless. While sailing *Birubi*, he had challenged himself to never use the engine; he was successful in this endeavour. So it was that during the restoration, Stevie removed the engine and filled the aperture where the propellor once was. She was relaunched in 2020, and Stevie is now planning long-distance sailing with *Birubi*, particularly to the higher latitudes.

## Defiance | 1975

Rose Ravetz



An unusual vessel, *Defiance* is a Falmouth Quay punt built with ferro-cement. She is 23', not including her topping bowsprit, and word-of-mouth has it that she was built in a boatyard in Hull around 1975. Her previous owner sailed her twice across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and back via the Azores. Rose bought her in 2018 and lived on board for almost a year, while sailing her around the East Coast. Director Huw Wahl, who is Rose's brother, visited for a week's sailing, which is when the idea for the film was born. Rose then took *Defiance* out of the water for a restoration, which she undertook herself. After four years, *Defiance* was ready to sail again, this time without an engine. This first sail is captured in *Wind, Tide & Oar*.

## Dorothy | 2021

Giles Gilbert



*Dorothy* is based on the lines of an original St Micheals Mount post boat, which were rowing punts commissioned by the Post Office to deliver post to and from the island. Built by her current owner Giles, *Dorothy* now performs a different task: used to catch fish in and around Falmouth Harbour. Some aspects of her design have been modified to suit her new work, but she retains the traditional style and clinker planking. Giles owns and runs a fish shop in Falmouth called Pysk, where he sells locally caught fish and, on occasion, sells a catch from *Dorothy*.

## Guide Me | 1911

Jude and Jonno Brickhill



*Guide Me* was originally built as a fishing vessel, a Mackerel drifter, in Looe in 1911. She is 40 ft long on deck, 72 ft including the bowsprit and outrigger, and was built without an engine, though she had one fitted soon after. In 1977, she was bought by Jonno and Judy Brickhill, who restored her, removed the engine, and proceeded to sail her to South Africa via Brazil, returning to Cornwall in 1992. The Brickhills lived onboard for many years. They still own *Guide Me* and regularly take her to regattas and festivals in Cornwall and Brittany.

## Katrina | 1913

Jonathan Bailey



Jonathan has been fishing on the unique Fal Estuary Oyster Fishery, which only permits rowing and sailing boats to fish, since 1975. He bought *Katrina*, a 23' gaff-rigged cutter built in 1913, in 1976 and has used her to fish for oysters in the Falmouth harbour since.

## Tres Hombres | 1943

Fairtransport



*Tres Hombres* was built in 1943 and is a 100' brigantine-rigged vessel with two masts. In 2007 she was found in a wreck-like condition in the Netherlands by three friends, who decided to buy and restore her. After much work and volunteer help, she was made seaworthy again in just over two years. She now carries cargo, sailing Northern European seas and crossing the Atlantic once a year. She is engineless, covering these long distances exclusively with the power of the wind.

**Huw Wahl** | Filmmaker, Producer, Editor & Sound Designer

**Rose Ravetz** | Sailor & Co-Producer

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**Simon Connor** | Sound Mix & Additional Sound Design

**Gareth Evans** | Creative Consultant

**Amanda Ravetz** | Mentor & Project Evaluator

**Gina Nadal** | Graphic Designer

**Judy Harrison** | Sea Tour Manager, Sea-Change Sailing Trust

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**Arts Council England** | who awarded funding to the project

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**Heritage Lottery Fund** | who awarded funding for the *Skippers of the Future* Sea Tour

**National Historic Ships** | who kindly gave advice and mentoring

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**Sailors** | in order of appearance

The Brickhill Family, Rose Ravetz, Stevie Hunt, Richard Titchener, Hilary Halajko, Oliver Evans, Sea-Change Youth Trainees, Jonathon Bailey, Giles Gilbert, Elte Rauch, Jorne Langelaan, Andreas Lackener and Tres Hombres Crew



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