



JUST HOW DID I END UP DOING THAT?

Asked amateur boatbuilder Chris Perkins as the St Ayles Skiff introduced him to the Law of Unexpected Consequences

With photographs by the author

Following my build of Iain Oughtred's Stickleback canoe design which is just 10'8" x 2'3" (3.25m x 0.69m) – see W73 Et W74 – I was looking for an even smaller boat for my next project. I should perhaps explain that although I have become an obsessive boatbuilder I really do not like water; as a non swimmer who survived an unexpected assisted entry into the deep end of the local pool in my younger years, I am frankly terrified of the wet stuff.

I digress. Back at the end of August, Gavin Atkin posted some pictures on his website *intheboatshed.net* of the proving model built by Alec Jordan of Jordan boats for the St Ayles Skiff, an Iain Oughtred design for the Scottish Coastal Rowing Project. I was very taken by those images and had a road to Damascus moment. Obviously building large scale models was my way forward in boatbuilding. I could indulge myself in challenging joinery, finish them to as high a level as my ability allowed and most importantly, not have to take them on a proving voyage. Side benefits anticipated were reduced

material bills, less storage space and easy transportation; no trailers or special roof racks required in the future. No sooner the thought than the deed: a quick email dashed off to Alec enquiring about the model kit's availability and price and I relaxed, contemplating a cosy future in which I sat at the kitchen table beavering away.

The Fates must have been having a good laugh at my downsizing intentions. Alec phoned me, we chatted and the outcome was an invitation to go down to Fife to give a hand with the prototype build. Since my wife was away baby-sitting the grandchildren in the South of England for the next month and I had been curious to know more about kitted boats for some time I accepted with alacrity.

MAKING IT EASY

A few days later I arrived in Fife to find Dave from Lancashire, another volunteer, who had been helping put the building frame together, putting the final moulds in place. I noticed