

A Short History of Kelsall Designs

The following is a selection of a few of the memorable craft and people throughout the history of Kelsall Catamarans.

Toria 42 ft trimaran. First Kelsall design, first foam sandwich and first to win a major open offshore race (1966 RWYC Two-Handed Round Britain Race). Set the style for the racers that followed. Toria was Eric Tabarley's introduction to offshore multihull sailing, when he helped Derek deliver the boat from Cornwall to the London Boat show. This lead directly to the explosion of interest in France. Every young Frenchman and woman wanted to follow in Eric's footsteps. The French are the dominant producers of racing and cruising multihulls and French companies are the major sponsors of most of the craft taking part in the big races. After ten eventful years, including a fifth place in Solo Atlantic Toria caught fire while in the hands of Tony Bullimore, during the 1976 solo Atlantic race.



***Toria 42'** the first multihull to win a major open offshore race 1966 RWYC Two-Handed Round Britain Race.*

Trifle, owned by the Commodore of Britain's premier Yacht club, the Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes, Major-General Ralf Farrant. Trifle dominated S. Coast UK racing for more than ten years. She clocked up no less than 5 wins and 2 seconds in the Round the Island Race plus line honours in Crystal Trophy etc. Last heard of in US. Still sailing with original rotating wing mast, with full battened main and small jib. Winner of Round the Isle of Wight Race, first multihull to finish Round the Isle of Wight Race in '67, '70, '71, '72 and '76, second in '73, '75.

1970 Trumpeter 44' Trimaran. Phil Weld's first multihull, taking second place in the 1970 Round Britain Race. A superb tri to sail. Still sailing in the Pacific, with new crossbeams. This was one of the ventures we made into using alloy cross beams - which underlined the lesson - foam sandwich for everything. Phil went on to tussle with Nick Keig on a couple of occasions later - with honours. even Nick beat Phil into second place in one RBR, where Chay Blyth and Rob James took first place in Kelsall GB 1V. The return match was in the solo Atlantic, where victory went to Phil with Nick following in second.

Trumpeter 44' Trimaran. taking second place in the 1970 Round Britain Race.



Legs of Mann I-II-III-IV

Legs of Mann I, Legs of Mann II, Legs of Mann III, VSD and Legs of Mann 1V were all built by Nick Keig. 37, 53, 53 tris followed by 63 foot race cat and 52 foot fast cruiser. Five multihulls within 14 years. Nick got together a great team of builders to assist him. Typical was 9 month build time. VSD was the only out and out race machine but race successes came readily. The tally included RBR prizes, Azores, Crystal Trophy and solo Atlantic as well as best days run. VSD was one of my all time favourites in terms of effortless sailing experience. 63 x 36 ft. and 4.5 tonnes. She just sliced through the waves. The pity was that she was never able to demonstrate her true potential. The first race saw the mast come down, following the spar makers failure to take heed of our concerns. 20 years later and a new French class is proposed, which is the VSD concept to a "T". This was my first major step into big cat racing - the concept - a tri with larger than usual hulls and the central hull above the water. With the ever taller and more powerful rigs, having a hull in the middle made no sense anymore.

In addition to above 1977 Legs of Mann II 52' Tri, owned by Nick Keig was the first multihull to finish Round the Isle of Wight Race in the same year.

1979 Legs of Mann III 52' Tri, owned by Nick Keig was first in Round the Isle of Wight Race in this year. She is now French owned and one of the Golden Oldies in that effort by a group of these older successful racers to maintain an active fleet. Dick Newick and Derek Kelsall have the most designs represented in this historical group.

Tanga 23 Aadvark

1974 Trimaran first in 1974 Round the Isla of Wight Race corrected time.

Great Britain II-III-IV were all produced for Chay Blyth.

GBII, a 78 ft mono to win the Whitbread round the World race.

An interesting build project. Started full size lofting in November with one man and myself and launched in May with 32 men working round the clock. Half were the crew and there was not one single boat builder amongst them! Since raced seven times round the world, 50 plus Atlantic crossings and a very busy sailing career in between - including RBR in the hands of Robin K-J. Ran into Robin in Tauranga a few months ago. Small world. Could be the most travelled yacht ever.

GB III was a big tri for the time at 80 feet in length. Lots of stories go with this one. From collision and capsize while solo sailing to ending up on a Morocco beach under strange circumstances - all the crew got off thinking she was sinking (all Kelsall multis are unsinkable). The crew made frantic calls to me when they could not find her when they came back the next day.

GB IV was a 53 ft tri, designed for performance. She took first in the Round Britain Race, with Chay and Rob James on board. GB IV 53' trimaran sailed by Chay Blyth and Rob James was second in 1980 in Round the Isle of Wight Race.

*1978 **Great Britain III** a 80 feet big trimaran*



Tinkerbelle

Single rudder, single central board and twin 60hp diesels with Sonic drives. Just the boat for exploring with her shallow drives. First sailed by Richard Collier. Won first overall handicap in Round the Isle of Wight Race.

Tinkerbelle. 1990 Kelly 45'



UPHO

Race Cat built of Kevlar. Very light with modest rig. Used existing hull moulds. Experimented with four dagger boards. Has performed well in Round the Island over many years.

*UPHO. 38' sailed by Ron Spells,
won first overall handicap in
Round the Isle of Wight Race.*



Kwa Heri

A 68ft mono. Won Cape to Rio. Built in garden under table mountain in Cape Town. Sunk reportedly due to a collision and leaking keel bots. Derek was able to inform the insurance company that there were no keel bolts. The lead ballast was fully encapsulated in glass.

Tonga 36' – Self righting from capsize.

Built for Gunther Ulrick to try his clever self righting idea. It worked, but did require there to be no built in buoyancy in the front half of the cat. A lot was learnt going through the capsize, righting exercise in a lake. This cat still had positive righting moment at 90° due to the 15° side angle. All panel construction. We had previously designed self righting systems dependent on pumping of which two were fitted to race tris.

Sir Thomas Lipton

This **mono** was a significant milestone in several ways. The largest sailing mono in fibreglass at the time and she was Derek's first mono. Built by Robert Clark design. The hull took the owner, Geoffrey Williams; a 16 year old boy and Derek six weeks to complete. The designer opted for a plywood deck which took about 4 months to put on with a couple of extra hands. By comparison foam would have taken a fraction of the time. She was a beauty. Won the 1968 solo Atlantic. Her success lead to our building several monos for the next few years and to designing some- most of which were built in South Africa. Would love to track her down today.

Azulau

A Small. Low budget trimaran for solo sailing for Nick Clifton. Foils were tried which lifted the lee hull but gave no overall gain. Found that foils need a boat that will get up into the mid teens before there is any significant speed advantage. She was fitted with a self-righting system. She came close to being the first multihull to capsize and sail home. She went over in the 76 solo Atlantic. The system failed when ropes got between the hinges of the door and broke it off in the wave conditions. The door was intended to close the essential compartment from which to operate the self righting pumping system.

Westbank

A joint design with Richard Glanville, 76ft maxi ocean Racer of all carbon – possible the first. Built in Cape Town.

Aqua Blue 40'

1981 Triamaran first with David Bains in Round the Isle of Wight Race at overall handicap.

Triple Fantasy 35'

1982 Trimaran first in Round the Isle of Wight Race at overall handicap.

Source of Lightweight 35'

1983 and 1984 Catamaran first in Round the Isle of Wight Race and corrected time (1983) and first multihull round (1984).

Windswift 54'

Kelsall 54 mono, fitted with a **Freewing rig** in Cape Town. Still sailing and winning races. Owner very satisfied.

Brainwave

38' Ultra light displacement boat. Designed and built by Kelsall Catamarans. Built using **Kelsall Kit Method**. Cornwall is her home.

*Brainwave 38'. Built by
Kelsall Kit Method*



Triana

1969 vintage, 50ft catamaran was the first Lloyds 100A1 foam sandwich classified cruising cat. Still in Martinique.

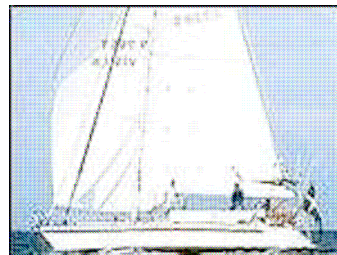
Loner 20

Loner was for an Australian with an ambition to sail a small boat back to Australia from UK. Kelsall Catamarans had previously built a 12ft miniature ocean cruiser designed by Blondie Hasler which we shipped back to UK. Loner disappeared without trace, en route after numerous adventures. Junk rig with everything handled from a rotating hatch, unsinkable and virtually indestructible it seemed. Somewhere there are at least, pieces of this boat on some beach.

Catelaya – Space 55'

Kelsall Catamarans built two in the 1980's. One last seen for sale in Thailand. Other was extended to 62' and then bought by American Scott Petelle. She was reportedly converted into a 93' trimaran in Nelson, NZ. Derek supplied the lines for the main hull which was added between the cat hulls, increasing the overall width by 12 feet. Derek is interested in finding more on her strange story.

Catelaya 55'



Gazelle

This was Mike Goldings introduction to offshore sailing. Tiny and spindly is the only way to describe this little 28' gem, though never conceived as an ocean racer. Taken from a tri outrigger mould for the main hull and two 23ft outer hulls with a very modest rig. Mike competed in the solo Atlantic and then the Round Britain race. The northern most part of the race is 61° and has a headland called Muckle Flugga. She had successfully completed a previous RBR. That is where Mike capsized. Derek met up with Mike again as final preparations were being made at Southern Ocean in Tauranga, NZ on this latest 60.

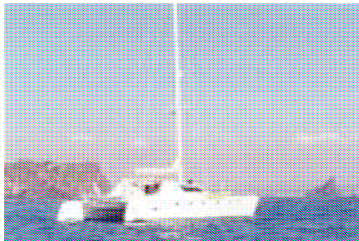
Suncat 40'. This is a well-proven model with many happy owners, including Round the World cruisers. Lightweight and simple layout and equipment, preferably with twin 9.9 O/Bs has been the typical. Performance has always been a feature of this design. Regular 200 mile days were reported on one of the Round the World cruises. The original design goes back to pre-CAD days. The flared hull was chosen to give good in hull width for in hull berths, which is the simplest fit out. We have put the design onto CAD and have added to our standard range. An ideal candidate for the Freewing twins rig.

Suncat 40'. This is a well-proven model



Manta – Space 55

Notable particularly for the achievement of her Californian owner/builder. Went afloat without the rig in four ½ years of almost entirely solo, spare time effort – estimated at 6,400 hours. Jerry was a full time teacher at the same time. For a very attractive fully fitted out 55 footer this has to be something of a record.



Manta 55'

Proas

Sidewinder was inspired from sketches by a New Zealander named Taylor in the Amateur Yacht societies magazine. Low budget, very light, twin F and A masts – which did not work well. The same idea seemed to be OK on Dick Newick's cheers. Sold and rebuilt a couple of times. The main hull is still sailing as the main hull of a tri. Derek has a picture of two men carrying the 51 foot hull, with half decks, out of the workshop. Derek's stories include taking her sailing solo in the North Sea. Capsizing a proa and having been rescued by a proa in the North Sea.

Runaround 37'

1976 Trimaran first in Round the Isle of Wight Race at handicap.

Brigand – Space 55. This is an example of what can be achieved by the skilled owner builder. A quality of finish and decoration that any professional would be proud of. For 5 or 6 years she was making two Trans Atlantic crossings each year - to charter in W. Indies and in Europe. **KSS** Space-56 wins ARC2007 in 9 days, 13.5 hours from Canaries to W. Indies. "Sailing beautifully, surfing at 23, 24, 25 kts".



Brigand – Space 55. "Brigand has been almost perfect"

William Saurin

The largest of the Kelsall race tris for Eugene Riguidel. At 93x50 ft and 11 tonnes she was the first big, wide race trimaran. She held the 24 hour record for a couple of years. Sailing was a feeling of sheer power, particularly when I was on board for the Brest \speed week timed at 25.5 kts. Now on charter as Saphir with large accommodation pod added.

Saphir



Mannanan

76 foot fast cruise cat, with power to close to 20 kts. Built in the Isle of Mann. Twin 330 hp gave 18.5 kts on first trials. Crew have since reported as sailing at more than 20. Currently in US.



Mannanan 76'

Island Dancer

A family owned and built catamaran who spent three years cruising the Atlantic. She was the first owner built KSS. Jeff coined the term KSS.



Island Dancer

Islander 39'

In 1974, we built the first all panel catamaran at 39ft. The hulls were the basic 'flower pot' shape from three panels. By shaping a radius into the 4 inch thick foam of the bottom panel we achieved a generous chine radius. She was recently damaged beyond repair in a Florida hurricane after more than 20 years sailing on both sides of the Atlantic.



Islander 39'

2003 My Way is not the largest Kelsall and she is not the fastest. She is the most luxuriously appointed and she promises to be the easiest and least effort to handle for the small crew planned.

She is designed for comfort and for safety. A yacht to take family and friends anywhere in the world. As with all designs, performance is a consideration but in this case it was never a very high priority. Standard of finish is excellent throughout. The specification is comprehensive and best quality all the way. The first impression is of luxurious space.

Typically sailing at 3-4 kts in 6-8 kts of wind speed. With a little more wind but with reefed main, while sorting the in-boom furler, we saw 9-10 kts. in 16-18 kts of wind. The control under power is as expected with twin 240 hp., with their four bladed folding props. A single engine gives 9 kts, at a comfortable 2,400 revs. Both engines at 2,400 revs gives just short of 12 kts. The range under power is about 1,500 nautical miles. Latest report: 16.18kts average between San Francisco and Los Angeles, with bursts of 23kts in waves.

KSS70 My Way. *Designed for comfort
and for safety.*



KELSALL CATAMARANS

VSD 60' Race Cat

VSD 52' trimaran. Riguidel and Gahinet wins against Eric Tabarly in a famous Transat En Double Race, (L'Orient around Bermuda to L'Orient).

VSD – the catamaran



VSD – the trimaran

William Saurin

