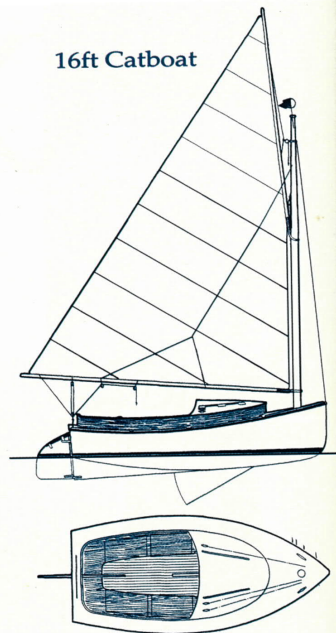
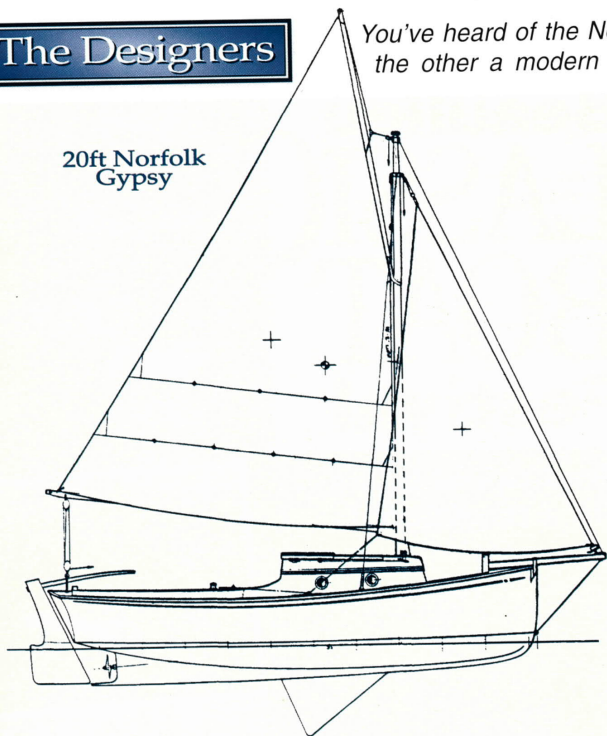


The Designers

You've heard of the Norfolk Gypsy, but what about the other a modern powerboat — both were drawn

20ft Norfolk Gypsy

16ft Catboat



Wolstenholme:

The announcement that the Broom Ocean 38 had won a 1997 boat-of-the-year competition came as no surprise to motorboat enthusiasts, but to *Classic Boat* readers the designer's name might have been something of a shock. For this highly-developed, modern, glassfibre powerboat was created by Andrew Wolstenholme.

Wolstenholme would seem to lead two professional lives: not only is he the man behind some of the most highly regarded of today's motorboats, he is also the creator of such traditional gems as the Norfolk Gypsy, Urchin and Smuggler, the 25ft (7.6m) Kingsley Farrington Broads yacht, the Frolics 21 and 31, the 11ft (3.4m) Coot, the 12ft (3.7m) Mallard and the 16ft (4.9m) Mayfly launch, exhibited on Creative Marine's stand at this year's London Boat Show. He is, in short, the successful designer of diminutive sailing dinghies and impressive motorboats, of sleek Broads yachts and sedate riverboats.



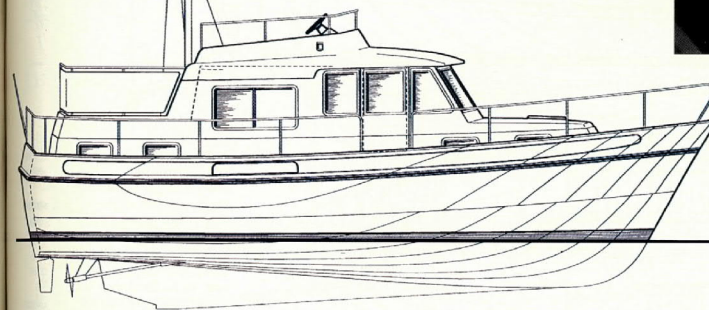
Andrew was raised by the sea in Morecambe, Lancashire, but the family had no boating background, and he was already a teenager when he became "infected" by boats. His school had built a Graduate dinghy but, being only a first-former, Andrew had not been involved in the project. Nevertheless,

come launch day he and two friends joined half the school in witnessing the boat's baptism. He recalls that he and his friends were instantly hooked. "We weren't allowed to sail the Graduate — you had to be in the fourth form for that — but whenever the tide was in we'd go along to the front and just watch people launching their boats. One day, we were asked out ... we couldn't believe it!"

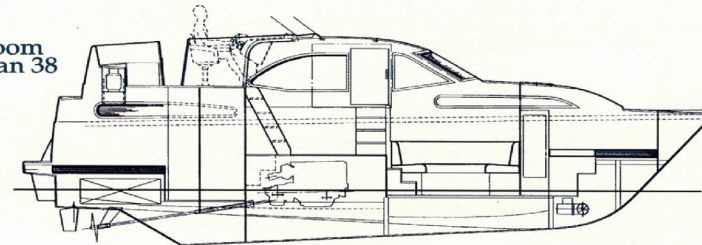
And so it began. As soon as he was 14 Andrew became a Cadet member of the local yacht club and learned to sail Graduates, GP14s and Ospreys. His mother, working in his father's picture-framing and fancy-goods shop on Morecambe's seafront, kept a pair of binoculars under the counter so that

Broom Ocean 38? One is a traditional little sailing yacht, by Andrew Wolstenholme. Jenny Bennett reports

Hardy 36



Broom Ocean 38



Above: Andrew Wolstenholme used to carve half-models of his designs, but is now adept at CAD, which he regards as an invaluable tool, in the right hands. His output encompasses little dayboats, such as the Norfolk Gypsy and Mallard (photo, opposite), Broom 38 and the Hardy 36 (photo, below).

Power and Sail

she could keep an eye on the boys' movements. When they weren't on the water they were reading maritime books and yachting magazines, building models and racing home-built orange-box land yachts along the seafront.

In 1971 Andrew began a three-year sandwich course in yacht and boat design at the Southampton College of Technology. The course was in its infancy (Andrew's year was only the second intake) and while it may not have been perfect and was undoubtedly a long way from the sophistication of some of today's courses, it did allow Andrew and his fellow students to "get our foot in the door".

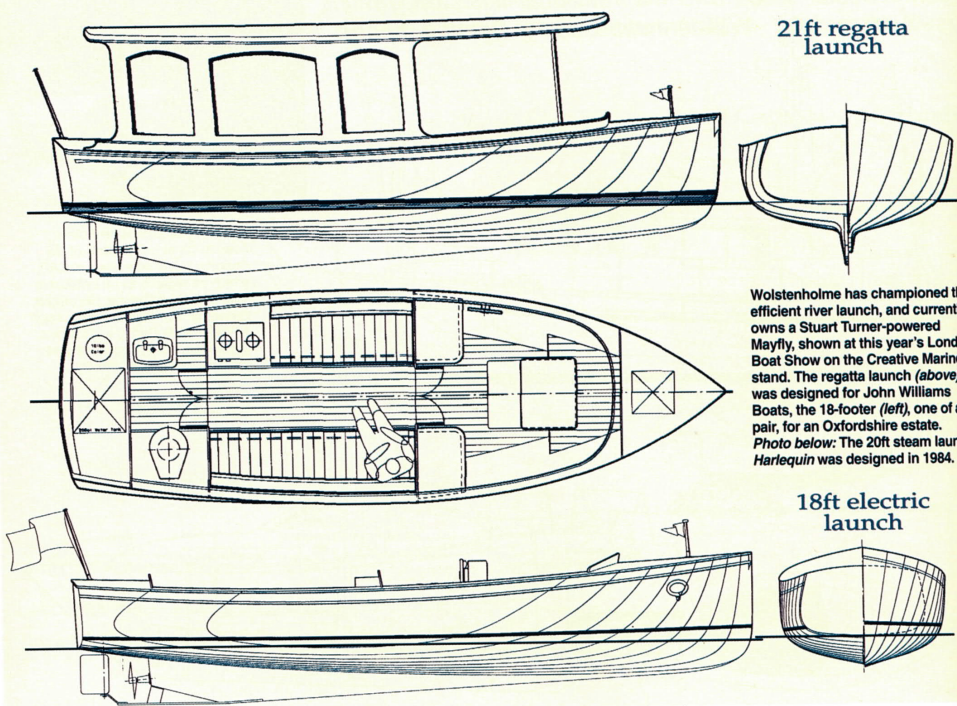
Among his college contemporaries were Ed Dubois, designer of some of today's most impressive superyachts, and Paul Gartside, the Oysterman designer who is now working in Canada and is the chief designer on the *Robertson 11 Grand Banks*

schooner currently building in Victoria, BC, in Canada.

After Southampton he joined the design team at Derek Kelsall's yard, working on a big trimaran for Chay Blyth. Eighteen months later he moved to Landamore's yacht builders in Wroxham, Norfolk, where he worked as a management assistant, liaising with designers on new builds and supervising production building. He is, he says, indebted to the late Leslie Landamore for bringing him to Norfolk and remembers his time at the yard as "most valuable". Nevertheless, in 1977 he leapt into the unknown and precarious world of self-employment.

Through the 20 years that have followed Andrew has completed 57 commissioned designs, all of which have been built, has contributed to and modified countless other projects, and currently has six new designs under way. It would be easy to assume





Wolstenholme has championed the efficient river launch, and currently owns a Stuart Turner-powered Mayfly, shown at this year's London Boat Show on the Creative Marine stand. The regatta launch (above), was designed for John Williams Boats, the 18-footer (left), one of a pair, for an Oxfordshire estate. Photo below: The 20ft steam launch Harlequin was designed in 1984.

that his career has been smooth and without anxiety. The truth, however, is not quite so simple. "In the beginning," he says, "I did a lot of knocking on doors, and whenever something good came along I'd think, 'This is it.' It never was. My first design was a 16ft (4.9m) catboat developed for Eric Bergqvist to build in glassfibre, but actually it was built by David Moss in cold-moulded timber. Then there was the 25ft (7.6m) glass-hulled Broads sailing cruiser for Kingsley Farrington which led to other Broads yachts for Farrington.

"At the same time I was doing drafting work and superstructure designs for Aquafibre and Broom. Then in 1983 I drew a 22-footer for Falcon Sports Boats; it was my first complete powerboat production job — I thought I was away. But it was five years before I did a complete project for Broom."

When he first started Andrew would build a model or half-model from his lines ("I wanted it to be absolutely right"). Today his workspace is dominated by the traditional drafting board and two computer screens on which he runs the CAD software packages, MultiSurf and MicroStation. For the past five years his days have become increasingly computerised and, though he misses the act of drawing, he enjoys the enhanced efficiency.

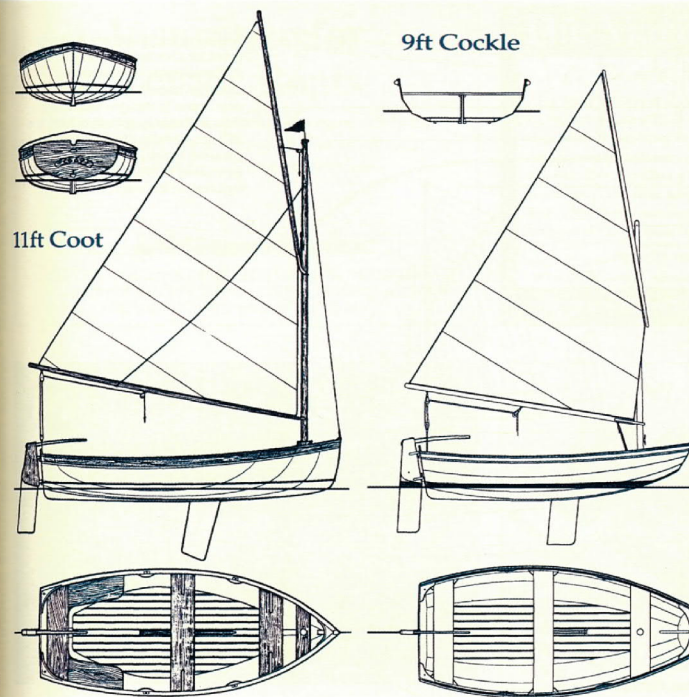
"I still start off at the drawing



board. I put my key lines down on paper and work religiously to those. But it's easier to develop the cross-section, hull lines and working drawings on screen. In a way these programmes can be dangerous: they allow you to create too fast — they take away the thinking time that's inherent in hand-drawing a set of lines. You can race ahead developing the working drawings for a design and realise, days later, that there's something not quite right. Also, there's a tendency to believe that these programmes can create a boat for you. But you still have to know what you're doing. It's a tool, no more. It's like a word processor: just because you can key in words doesn't mean you can write."

Despite his embrace of the high-tech tool, Andrew's work is, as it has ever been, a blend of the traditional and the modern. In 1978, when he was working on the 16ft (4.9m) catboat, he was also designing Aquafibre superstructures; 1983 saw the creation of the Falcon 22 and the 35ft (10.7m) Broads racing yacht *Storm*; the Norfolk Gypsy of 1989 preceded the Seawings 285 of the following year. His personal boats, however, have all been traditional: a Sprite, a Coot, the 25ft (7.6m) Broads yacht *Evergreen*, a Cockle, and now the Mayfly launch *Mascot*.

I wondered, therefore, if the modern designs are perhaps a means to an end? "Far from it," came the



The Coot (left and photo below), designed in 1986, is a proper little boatbuilding project, and has sold in numbers. The pretty little Cockle, a 9ft pram (left and photo above), has not taken off in quite the same way, though she is child's play to build — perhaps too easy, Wolstenholme thinks.

designer's swift reply. "Living here, in the heart of the Norfolk Broads, has given me an outlet for traditional design. I've always liked traditional boats and I think that, wherever I'd ended up, I would have designed for that market. But I really enjoy the mix of modern and traditional. I wouldn't want to lose it. In my mind the two extremes feed each other and learn from each other."

In all his work, he says, he finds the same challenge: the blend of practicality and aesthetic. No matter how small or large the craft, there exists the thrill of creating excellence through the combination of "elegance and functionality". Andrew: "Whichever field I'm working in the most fundamental aspect of the design is the aesthetics — it goes beyond style and fashion. The really attractive boats, the ones that will survive and be looked upon as boats of their time, are the ones whose proportions are right, the ones that don't just do the job, but do it with class. Striving for that, working to achieve the best from a brief — that's what makes it interesting. So I get as much from a modern estuary motorboat as I do from a 1920s-derived Broads yacht, just as I find as much challenge designing a 9ft plywood pram as a fibreglass 40-footer."

Several of Andrew's designs have been for the amateur builder. Sprite, a double-chine plywood sliding-seat rowing skiff, produced as a kit with Jack Chippendale, and Coot, designed in 1984 and 1986 respectively, have both proved popular. And yet one of his prettiest small-boat designs, and certainly one of the most simple for a new builder, has not enjoyed such success: Cockle, a 9ft (2.7m) pram dinghy with a single lugsail, was designed in 1995 to be built stitch-and-tape.

"We wanted a boat for our four-year-old daughter Joanna and needed a tender for the Broads yacht. I didn't want to go out and buy someone else's design — and anyway, when you start looking around, you see too many things you don't like: this one's too heavy, that one's bow transom is too big, I don't like that sail plan, this one won't row. So I drew Cockle

and developed detailed plans for home builders. But they haven't sold. We took a boat to Bristol '96 and she drew many compliments, but really I don't think there's a market."

Since the 1960s, the boating scene and market have changed, he says. "Back then, you built a boat because you had to. You couldn't afford to buy a new wooden dinghy like a Graduate or a GP14 and glassfibre hadn't arrived.



