

# Historic Shoreham boat that won the Fastnet Race saved from destruction

A 112-year-old classic sailing yacht built in Shoreham is being painstakingly restored, having been bought for £1 to save it from destruction.

**By Elaine Hammond**

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The gaff cutter called Tally Ho was built by Stow & Son in 1909 and launched in 1910. It went on to win the Fastnet Race for Lord Stalbridge, Hugh Grosvenor, in 1927.

The boat was designed by Albert Strange and some years ago, it was saved by the Albert Strange Association but after a decade of trying and failing to find someone to take on the project, Tally Ho was destined to be destroyed.

Leo Goolden, a boatbuilder and sailor from Bristol, stepped in at the 11th hour and bought the boat for £1 in May 2017. He said it was a beautiful boat, a well-known and important historic vessel, but it was overwhelming to see the amount of work to do.



Leo Goolden, a boatbuilder and sailor from Bristol, is on a mission to rebuild Tally Ho, a 112-year-old sailing yacht built in Shoreham. Picture courtesy of Leo Goolden / Sampson Boat Co. on YouTube

He has been charting the story of the boat and its restoration for the past four years on the Sampson Boat Co channel on YouTube, helping to fund parts and the work needed.

Leo said: “Although Tally Ho spent a lot of her life on the Hamble and on the Solent, she was originally built in **Shoreham**.

“She was originally built and launched with the name Betty for a guy called Charles Hellyer, who was the owner of a fishing fleet in Brixham. She was originally drawn with a length of 47ft 6in, a beam of 12ft 6in and a draught of 7in.



Tally Ho is a gaff cutter that won the 1927 Fastnet Race. Picture courtesy of Leo Goolden / Sampson Boat Co. on YouTube

“She was due to be destroyed if not moved out of the yard in Oregon. I had been very generously offered a place to restore the boat but it was 600 miles north of Sequim, Washington, nestled between the Olympic mountains and the ocean.”

Once Tally Ho arrived at the restoration site, the first job was to build a big boatshed around her, which took seven days and cost about 800 dollars. Work then began on removing her keel, demolishing the deck and replacing the keel timber.

Leo learned that Hellyer did not own the boat for long and there were a couple of other owners before she was bought by Lord Stalbridge. He enlarged the rig, adding a top mast and about a 20 per cent increase in sail area, making her far more competitive in racing.

Leo said: “More than the rig, though, it was probably the weather that Tally Ho had to thank for her win because it was so rough that it forced almost every other yacht to retire early and not finish the race. In fact only one other yacht finished the race, La Goleta, but Tally Ho beat her on corrected time.”



Tally Ho was built by Stow and Son in Shoreham in 1909 and launched in 1910. Picture courtesy of Leo Goolden / Sampson Boat Co. on YouTube

In March 2018, Leo returned to England to meet Roy Childs, the grandson of Mark Spinks, the man Lord Stalbridge employed as his skipper. Roy said his grandfather had a great sense of humour and never lost his temper. After he won the Fastnet Race, he continued to run the boat for about 20 years, until Lord Stalbridge retired.

Leo said the race results showed Tally Ho was extremely capable and seaworthy in strong weather, in keeping with her pilot-cutter lines and heavy construction.

He added: “These qualities would also make her really great as a world cruising yacht and that is in fact what she was used as in the 1950s.”

A young family lived on board in the Solent and sailed Tally Ho around the Atlantic. The boat was then bought by a New Zealander, who intended to sail it home. But while he was working on the Pacific island of Rarotonga, local currents swept the boat on to the reef and she was badly damaged, with a big hole on the port side.



The moment Leo Goolden decided he was going to buy the boat. Picture courtesy of Leo Goolden / Sampson Boat Co. on YouTube

Tally Ho was saved and repaired over the next couple of years. She was bought by an American, who sailed her back to Oregon to use as a fishing boat, renamed as Escape to Freedom.

Finally, having spent years fishing salmon and tuna, he stopped using the boat and it sat in Brookings Harbour for many years, awaiting a new owner.

The Albert Strange Association took her on to prevent her being destroyed and spent the next ten years or so trying to find a suitable owner.

Leo said: “Unfortunately, due to her condition and the remote location, no one really came forward to take her on, despite her pedigree. Even though I found that it was in much worse condition than I had expected it to be, for some reason I decided I’d take the boat on and try to bring her back to her former glory.

Visit [sampsonboat.co.uk/support](https://sampsonboat.co.uk/support) for more information and to support the Tally Ho restoration project.



How Tally Ho looked when Leo stepped on board for the first time, in Brookings Harbour, Southern Oregon. Picture courtesy of Leo Goolden / Sampson Boat Co. on YouTube



Tally Ho on the move from Brookings Harbour, Southern Oregon, to Washington State. Picture courtesy of Leo Goolden / Sampson Boat Co. on YouTube



Leo Goolden with Tally Ho when she first arrived in Washington State at the site he was given for the restoration project. Picture courtesy of Leo Goolden / Sampson Boat Co. on YouTube