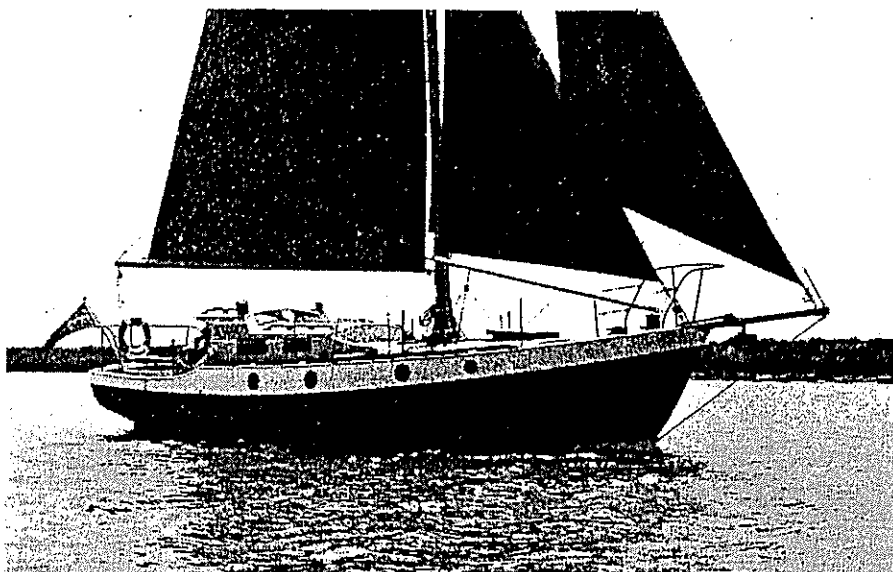


# Kylix

Maurice Griffiths  
designs a boat  
to suit himself



## DATA

LOA	27ft 0in (8.23m)
LWL	23ft 5in (7.14m)
Beam, moulded	8ft 2in (2.49m)
Draught	3ft 0in (0.92m)
(plate down)	6ft 3in (1.90m)
Displacement	9,500lb (4,300kg)
Iron keel and trim	2,700lb (1,220kg)
Thames measurement	7 tons (7,112kg)
Sail area, working	306sq ft (29m <sup>2</sup> )
(with Yankee)	383sq ft (35m <sup>2</sup> )
Builder	G F Smeeth, Dedham, Essex
Designer/owner	Maurice Griffiths, GM

AS the twenty-first boat I have owned in fifty-odd years, *Kylix* was designed to suit an elderly singlehander. Because at low water her moorings below Woodbridge lie in only 5 feet of water with less all round her, and Woodbridge Haven bar at the entrance carries but 4 feet at LWOS, she had to be of shallow draught, and her centreplate has proved highly useful during the two seasons I have sailed her so far.

Her design is an enlargement of the 25ft Cockler class, of which some 30 boats had been built in various parts of the world in something over 20 years. With a fine run aft to a bawley-type transom well above the waterline, they have often shown a clean pair of heels to other cruising boats, while some have shown themselves capable of making lengthy offshore cruises, including transatlantic, across the Indian Ocean east to west, and a voyage around the Pacific islands.

Like her many predecessors, *Kylix* (Greek for a broad shallow drinking vessel) has an outside ballast keel which ensures that she is self-righting if ever bowled over by a sea or a bad squall. With the 4in mild steel L-shaped centreplate fully down and drawing 6ft 3in, *Kylix* is as closewinded as one could wish, but she also handles with assurance even with the plate hauled right up and drawing only three feet.

Apart from making appreciably more leeway (about 8 degrees closehauled in a

Force 3 breeze with the plate up) and being somewhat more leisurely in stays, there is no noticeable difference in the feel of the tiller whether the plate is up or down. Innocent crews have happily turned to windward without realising that the plate was up all the time.

In a twisty river like the Deben with its narrow channels, the centreplate could hardly be bettered as an instant warning device on the one fathom line—'time to go about, skipper'. Even when we have come to a stop on the ebb while coming round in stays, backing the jib and then—not till then—hauling the plate up smartly has got the ship sailing off on several occasions.

A handy ten-foot boathook, marked with black and white bands at foot intervals, is carried as a sounding pole for ditchcrawling, while for greater depths the trusty leadline is kept in readiness in the cockpit. For my kind of modest cruising I have had no yearning for status symbols like echo sounders, wind vane steering gears, or glittering electronic devices, but find the ancient basic aids to the man who has learnt to hand, reef and steer sufficient for the enjoyment of home waters cruising.

With her large rudder, which is partly balanced, *Kylix* can be spun round in stays, turning on her plate, if called upon in a tight corner. But if left alone she is of a traditional type that will stay on course while you go forward, or get something from the cabin; while with her tiller pegged (it has a rack for belaying pins) or slip-knotted she will sail herself, or lie-to, for hours on end unattended.

I still have vivid recollections of a sail I had on a breezy day in a brand new GRP sloop. She was a smart craft in entirely contemporary fashion with a fat round body like a plastic bath, attached to a very short fin keel with a spade rudder working on its own under her stern. She went like a bomb under a strip of a mainsail and a genoa jib, but whether she had the wind on the beam, or right aft, or was closehauled, you couldn't let go of the tiller for more than a second.

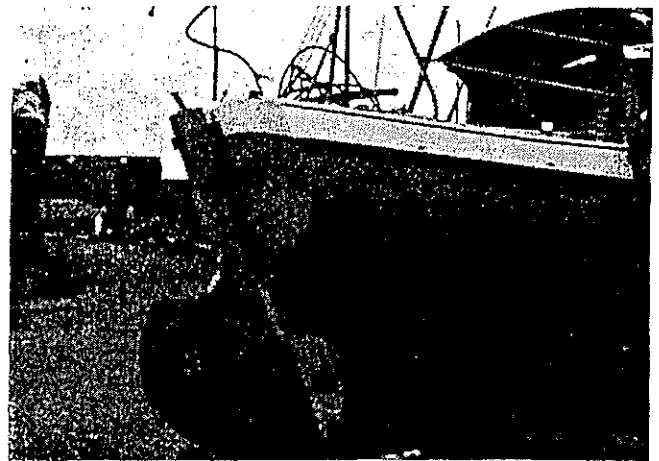
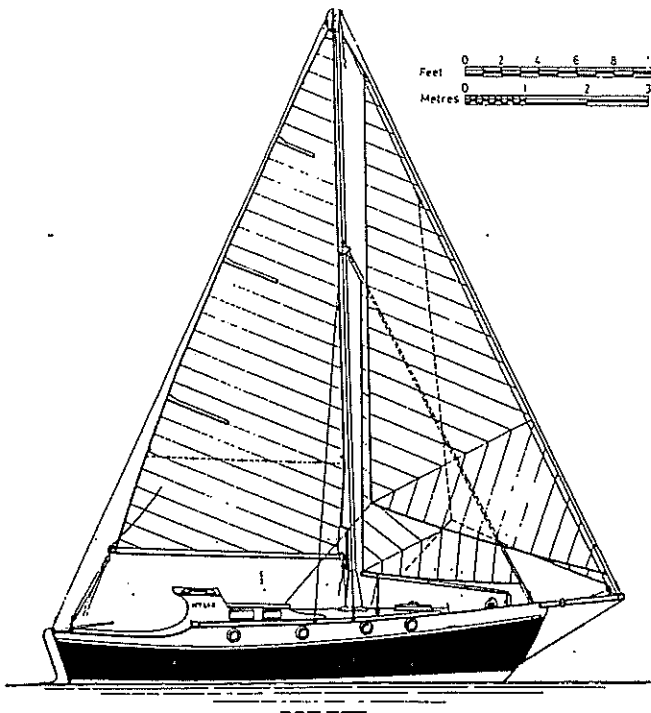
She was so flighty she had to be steered with care over every yard of the way, and it made me think how a boat of this type must exhaust her crew on any long passage, especially in blowy weather. Yet I have seen yachts of this fashionable production type publicised as the answer to the family man's prayer. But if instead of comfortable cruising your ambition is to win places, whether in handicap or offshore racing, then you won't have a chance these days with any traditional type.

Having sweated on other people's foredecks to manhandle a heavy anchor through the pulpit and then lash it down to deck chocks, I have an inborn dislike of lifting the full weight of a yacht's bower anchor at all. In days gone by, before Sir Geoffrey Taylor invented the plough-type CQR anchor in the 1930s, we used to winch our fisherman anchor up to the stemhead, and then with a line to the crown pull the upper fluke to the rail and lash it there. The anchor was thus firmly stowed 'Brittlesea fashion', like the smacks, yet always ready to let go at once.

The short wide bowsprit on *Kylix* carries the double roller chain lead fitting a foot forward of the stem, so that no ugly bow fender is needed, and the starboard roller is boxed over. For stowing, the shank of the CQR anchor is hauled firmly into this box, where no sea can shift the anchor, yet it can be let go at a moment's notice. This same arrangement was adopted by the Hiscocks for the CQR bower anchor on their 48ft steel ketch *Wanderer IV*.

On *Kylix* the heel of the bowsprit fits between two stout oak bits which stand 1ft 3in above the deck with an oak cross-tree in trad fashion; and when making fast other boats' warps, what a joy they have been compared with the inadequate little samson post or worse, the small mooring cleat, found on so many production boats' foredecks today.

For day sailing, when I am virtually singlehanded, the Wykeham Martin furling gear jib and the forestaysail working on a boom have proved a sound and easily



Partly balanced rudder with step

handled trad rig which I have used for many years. In squally weather, or when working up to a mooring, being able to roll up or unroll the jib from the cockpit has many times been a blessing. If occasion arises this little ship will also go about and do all she is asked under her mainsail alone.

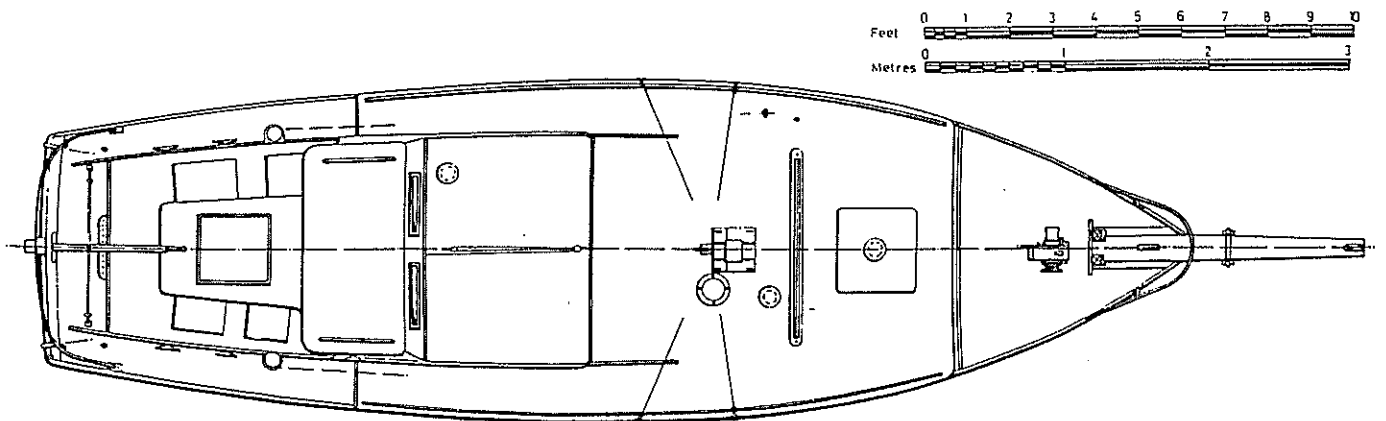
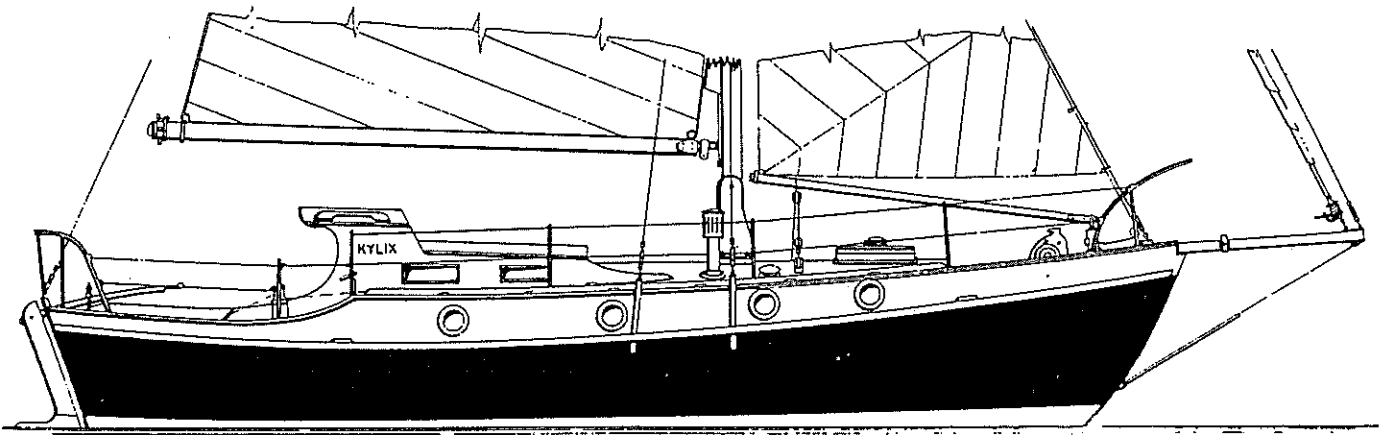
The layout below decks with a two-berth cabin forward, a lobby with heads and clothes hanging locker, and in the saloon

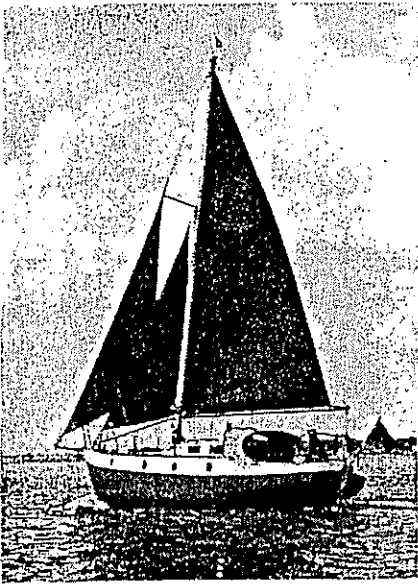
two berths stretching under clothes lockers at the fore end, together with galley aft and oilskin locker by the entrance, is similar to that of my last boat, *Lone Gull II*, 8 tons. There is 6ft 1in headroom under the coachroof beams over the after half of the cabin, and the entrance from the cockpit leads down three half steps to starboard of the engine.

The centreplate case forms a bulkhead

for the heads compartment, while the after part supports the dropleaf table. In the alcove formed to starboard between the centreplate case and the clothes-locker-bookshelf is the slow combustion anthracite stove.

With the 3ft wide floor (sole) and the raised deck carried out to the ship's sides, the cabin gives a great sense of space, as in a much larger boat. Over the years I





became so revolted against the contemporary clinical interiors of yachts seen at successive Boat Shows that I enjoy a return to the rich varnished mahogany in this boat's cabin in the soft light of brass oil lamps, together with the comforting warmth of the fire. 'A proper little home' was one crew's comment, but we use the electric strip lighting over the galley and bunkhead lights for reading at night.

The Lister SW2MG 2-cylinder water-cooled diesel of 15bhp rating goes neatly abaft the thwartship galley working top. It has reverse but no reduction gear and is powerful enough to give a useful cruising speed, with a maximum of 6.7 knots. When under power all yachts tend to draw down aft, especially when approaching shallow water, and this extra draught must be allowed for when, say, crossing a bar. At full speed *Kylix* is drawn down ten inches at the stern.

Having endured half a century of dollops of rain and spray down one's neck when

thrashing to windward, I decided to incorporate in this boat a short shelter which reaches over the forward cockpit seat. The cambered roof is at a height that allows the helmsman to see over it whether he is standing in the cockpit or sitting on the sailing seats. Everyone who has sailed aboard has fallen for the loco-cab, as we call it, especially when lying at anchor head to wind on a cold day.

*Kylix* was built for me with loving care by Fred Smeeth many miles from salt water. The iroko used for her planking, keel and many other parts of her hull had been twelve years seasoning, and after two years in commission the seams of her topsides are still not easy to see.

Although she took over a year building, I did not grudge any of the time, for I learnt much in watching good craftsmen at work in a traditional way. Her hull, centreplate case and decks have proved bottle tight over two years. What more could one ask of a trad wooden yacht?

