

The Avery Point Dory Story

by Phil Behney, JGTSCA President 2013

The original club dory was a basket case that Russ Smith had bought from someone in Noank, CT, for not too much money; this was probably around 1999 or 2000. The boat was patched up, put into service right away, and given the name *Beater Boat*. We named her this because she was used hard and showed it; she wasn't pretty but everyone who rowed her fell in love.

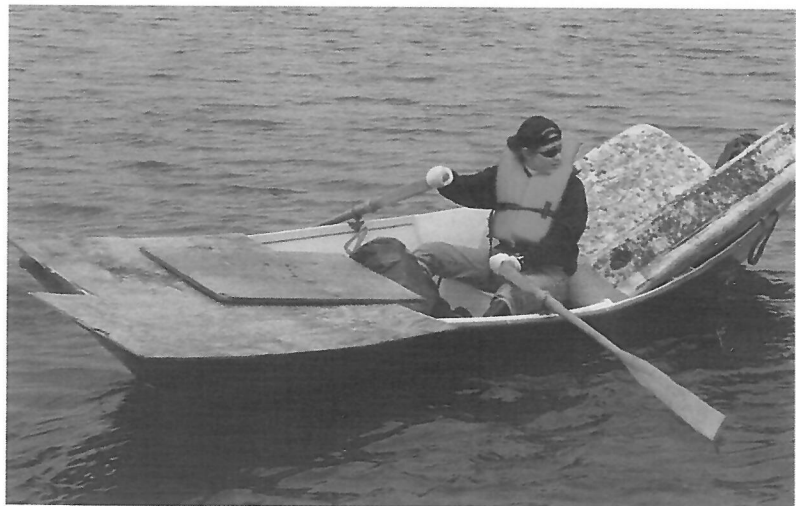
After a few years we decided to copy the boat so we built the first boat using 3/8 ac plywood. We are still using this boat along with three others—two of which were built with money from a John Gardner grant. Bill Armitage applied for and received this grant to build two boats in an after school program at Clark Lane Middle School in Waterford, CT, where Bill continues to teach.

Two other dories were built at our club boat house on the Avery Point campus of the University of Connecticut. These boats were built as practice so Bill could develop a curriculum for his after school program. The "Clark Lane" boats were added to our fleet bringing us up to five dories; one of the prototypes was eventually sold to offset costs bringing us down to four boats.

The JGTSCA continues to maintain and use these four boats. Since these boats are unique we have dubbed them "Avery Point Dories." They are much bulkier than a Gloucester

Gull, and we have not found any other dory that is exactly like ours. These boats continue to be used hard by our members and many other organizations including Groton Girl Scouts, Ship Dragon Sea Scouts, Ledyard Parks and Recreation, Groton Maritime Academy, and the Ledyard High School swim team.

About six or seven years ago one of the dories was badly damaged in a freak wind storm which provided an opportunity to try an experiment that member Larry MaGee



Top: Sea Scouts use the dories for clean up projects on and around Pine Island. Right: Ship Dragon Sea Scout carries a full load of debris with the Avery Point Dory

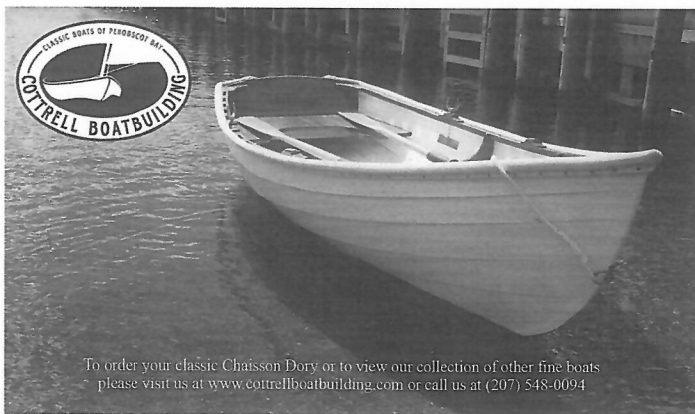


had been pushing for. We decided to convert the damaged boat into a double rower which at fifteen feet six inches was cutting it a little close for an efficient double. The conversion worked out so well that we decided to convert all four boats, the last of which we are just now completing. This gives the club a great deal of versatility with these boats, they can still be rowed as singles or doubles meaning eight people can row in one group.

The other beautiful feature of these boats is their ability to be stacked inside of each other; we can put all four boats on one trailer or in the back of a full size pick-up truck and head out to places far and wide. Our dories have been rowed in the Blackburn Challenge (Cape Ann Rowing Club, Gloucester, MA), Head of the Weir (Hull, MA), Essex River Regatta, Slocum River Regatta, and many others. We believe there have been eight Avery Point dories built to date and the original was refurbished a few years ago by Rob Pittaway and Cameron Taylor. Cameron still has the original and uses it on the Connecticut River near his home in Deep River.



Friday was a full house, and we still managed to get some work done on the dory, along with hot dog eating and discussion. We glued and screwed the new inwales and installed blocking to hold the oarlock keepers.

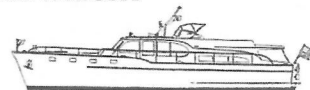


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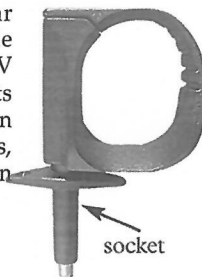
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