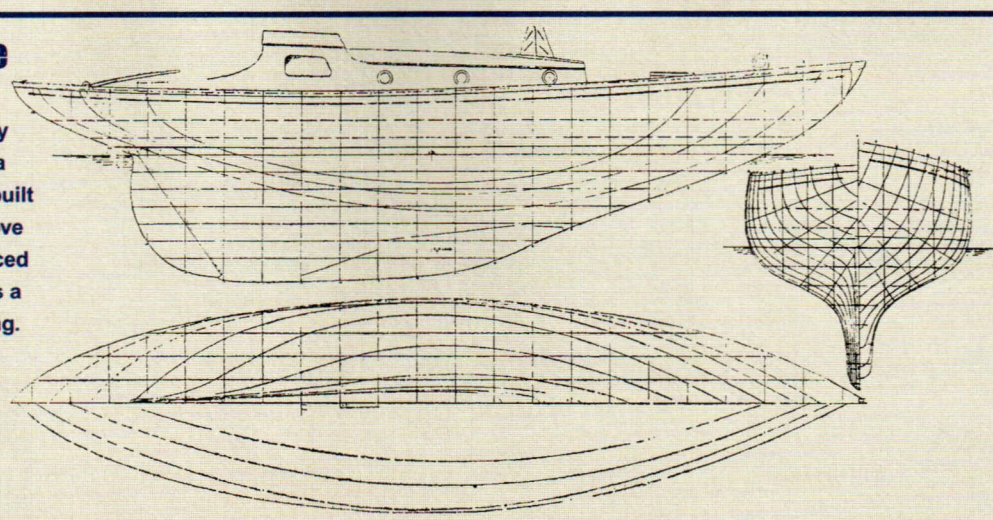
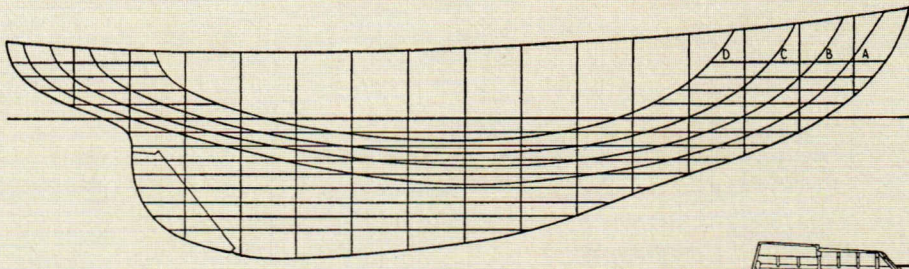
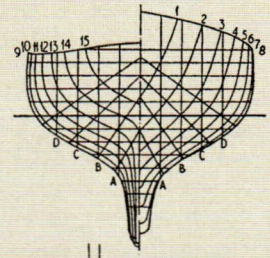
Cruising and offshore racing sloop

The lines of *Matawa* designed by Morgan Giles in 1946. She was a very handsome and fast yacht built for WE Mason. He set out to prove that plywood, which had advanced technically during the wars, was a suitable material for boatbuilding.
LOA: 37ft 4in (11.4m)
WLL: 27ft 7ins (8.4m)
Beam: 8ft 11ins (2.7m)
Draught 5ft 6ins (1.7m)
Sail area: 667sqft (62m²)

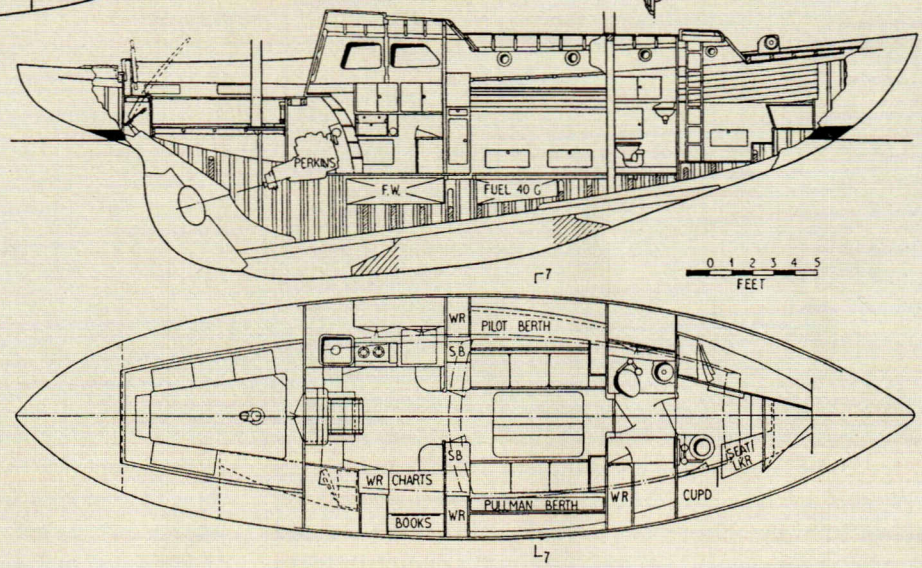






Cruising ketch

The lines of *Fern Mary III* designed and built by Morgan Giles in 1963. One of his last and most attractive designs that performed well under sail and under power. Arranged for cruising in comfort by three people and one professional hand.
LOA: 40ft (12.2m)
WLL: 32ft (9.8m)
Beam: 11ft (3.4m)
Draught 6ft 4ins (1.9m)
Sail area: 700sqft (65m²)



inspired these successful Monaco-type motor cruisers. In a departure from the normal Giles practice, these craft, which by 1964 were offered in lengths of 27, 36, 38, 42, 43 and 52ft (8.2, 11.0, 11.6, 12.8, 13.1 and 15.9m), were sold through an experienced motor craft agent, Arthur Bray Ltd.

The best of many cruising yachts that Giles designed during his career is, I think, his last: the beautifully proportioned ketch *Fern Mary III*, built by the firm in 1963 shortly before Giles' death. She was designed purely for cruising for an elderly owner and his wife, sailing with one friend and one professional hand. Accommodation was arranged to suit only those four people. Seaworthiness and ease of sail handling were paramount and the yacht's appearance was to be pleasing.

Dimensions of 40ft (12.2m) LOA, 32ft (9.8m) WLL, 11ft (3.4m) beam and 6ft 4in (1.9m) draught were chosen. Sail area was 700sqft (65m²). As with many other of his cruising yacht designs, a canoe stern was incorporated, though by then this was unfashionable. The proportions and form were masterly and the yacht proved reasonably dry at sea, although the freeboard was lower than many contemporary cruisers. The bermudan ketch rig was carefully designed to provide balance under many combinations of sails and reefing, and she proved remarkably close winded and fast for a ketch. The large cockpit provided space for four and the ample size of the galley with standing headroom made for comfortable cruising. Her handsome appearance and good performance made the *Fern Mary III* a most desirable type of cruising yacht, of which more should be built using modern materials.

Francis Morgan Giles has an honoured place in the history of yacht design and construction, but in recent years has been overlooked. He was personally almost totally responsible for producing the large array of designs, from dinghies to the 12-Metre *Devonia* and for motor launches and cruisers, both power and sail. He was also well regarded by his employees. My old friend, the late Douglas Brixton, was apprenticed at Morgan Giles Ltd and worked there as a boatbuilder for some time afterwards. He often sailed with Giles and had the greatest of admiration not only for "the old man's" design achievements and knowledge of the construction of small wooden craft, but also for his helmsmanship and determination when sailing; this sort of tribute, I feel, Giles would have genuinely appreciated more than any historical critique.