

Dynamite Don and his rowing problems.

I had read that Don was building boats with dynamite in the nineties. He was out in Woop Woop welding the hulls into the approximate shape and then blowing them into a perfectly moulded shape with gelignite. This was achieved by placing the welded hull in a mould filling it with water and blowing it into shape*. For a few milliseconds the aluminium became fluid under the shock and it flowed into the mould. He still sails it 20 years later. It is a wonderful concept as unlike fibreglass the hulls are totally recyclable.

<https://youtu.be/Cmo9MQ3pPF0>

Don and I played in the same rugby club many years ago so I made contact with him. He complained his tender was awkward to row as the plastic rowlocks continually broke and the oars were terribly inefficient. I was able to solve this problem for another customer who had a similar problem. The rowlock sockets were 3/4" so I turned up some sleeves to fit.



The Gaco oarlock adapted to fit a 3/4" socket.

I suppose these plastic tenders are designed for out boards but many customers prefer to row and need decent rowing equipment. Turbo oars were made the right length for the boat.



Don rowing out to his beloved aluminium alloy boat "Gelignite".

Don has been using the oars for a time now and writes:

"Just wanted to let you know that your new oars are very good for my BIC dinghy - makes a huge difference in ease of rowing it. The oars are super efficient and extra light weight - a real pleasure to use. Just thought I should let you know I also wrapped some thin leather around oars, at the oarlock point, and that works well - quiet, they stay in place - the lock also works a treat!"

Is this praise any wonder when you compare the new equipment with the old. The old oars have spare rowlocks taped to the handle to cope with regular breakages:



The Bic supplied oars to the left and Turbo oars with Gaco rowlocks to the right.

The old oars were flimsy, inefficient, unsafe, and cheap. Building down to a price should not mean neglecting safety.

Since there may be many others in a similar position to Don we are now making available sleeves to fit the 3/4" socket as well as 3/8", 7/16" and 1/2". They are available on the sales/contact page of the website.

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Hi John,

Can confirm yacht name is Galignite - Ben Lexcen insisted - he killed himself on his tragic skateboard/accident before we finished boat, and did the explosive metal forming with US Engineer - Wayne Schroeder - ex Foster Wheeler Inc. - who did much industrial explosive forming - but, at 35 feet we were, likely still are, the largest 'form' - 26 years ago, and still as 'stiff' as day we blew her.

Not sure with today's terrorist climate I would have much 'investor' support, for such production activity! - but, the metal just behaves like plastic when hit hard/quick! - we had 6000 frames/second photography of explosions!

Don

Hi John,

Gaco absolutely brilliant!!!

We successfully completed our "Row a Round Ireland" on 26th September last year and managed to raise €110,000 and awareness for Cystic Fibrosis.

Around 1000 nautical miles with a team of 20 rowers-it was a fantastic success and a marvelous adventure!

The same Gaco rowlocks are on the boat to this day as I row about 15/20 miles a week during the winter and they proved themselves absolutely invaluable, especially in some of the North Atlantic swells and the short chop of the Irish Sea.

The only worry I had was a capsize with the oars stuck in the out position-but thankfully we avoided that!

I want to purchase another 8 rowlocks (ie. 4 pairs) with sockets and pins and if you'd let me know how much I'll forward you my credit card details.

We also made a scale model of the boat complete with the Gaco rowlocks and I'll forward you a copy of some photos under separate cover.

Will hopefully talk to you shortly.

Kind regards,

Ger Crowley

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