



Boats, Boffins and Bowlines: The Stories of Sailing Inventors and Innovations

George Drower

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Which woman made the first solo transatlantic crossing? Who saved thousands of lives with the invention of navigation lights? What is the story behind the invention of the compass? Who was Francis Beaufort and how did he come to devise the Beaufort wind scale, still used to this day? Why did William Petty invent the catamaran (in 1662)? Many of us know the story of modern sailing pioneers -- Dame Ellen MacArthur and Francis Chichester, Claire Francis and the challengers of the Americas Cup -- but what about those unsung heroes who invented the mechanisms and technology which enabled sailors to speed across the oceans and navigate more safely? This fascinating book reveals the extraordinary stories behind the apparatus which many take for granted. Learn how the Frenchman Boulanger produced the first binoculars in 1859, enabling sailors to spy landmarks more effectively; or how William Armstrong earned sailors' gratitude by devising the yacht winch. From cloud classification and screw propellers to radio telephones and the measurement of tides, from the sextant to the first fibreglass boat, this collection of stories, with a foreword by Ben Ainslie, Olympic gold medal winner, will inspire and intrigue sailors everywhere.

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