WILLIAM FIFE GAFF 63 FT STAYSAIL SCHOONER 1911 - SOLD



Specification

ELISE

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Designer	William Fife III	Length waterline	45 ft 11 in / 14 m	Engine	
Builder	William Fife III	Beam	12 ft 6 in / 3.8 m	Location	United Kingdom
Date	1911	Draft	7 ft 9 in / 2.36 m	Price	Sold
Length overall	72 ft 2 in / 22 m	Displacement	20.64 Tonnes		
Length deck	62 ft 4 in / 19 m	Construction	Carvel pine, mahogany planking on oak frames		

These details are provisional and may be amended

Specification

BROKER'S COMMENTS

A schooner of this size, from the board of William Fife III, is something of a rarity. In the early 1990s ELISE OF LONDON was rescued from neglect by her current owners, lovingly and generously rebuilt over a four year period, to be rewarded by their successfully cruising, Scotland, Northern France and the Caribbean as well as generating the interest that seems to go hand in hand with a Fife design. As history relates however she sank at her moorings in 2010 and it is her condition today that provides the template for her future. The structural rebuilding work of the 1990s appears to stand well as does the knowledge that just a couple of years ago she was operating as a successful and respected charter yacht. The way ahead appears to come down to options, probably at a couple of different levels. One could make good her condition in a properly workmanlike manner - to render her fit once more – and to a new owner's taste for use as a family yacht and the pleasure that could bring – and or for charter. At another level however an opportunity presents itself to restore this Fife schooner completely to the level of her original plans both externally and internally, once achieved to make her among the finest of her or any classic genre in the World today. While estimates are available detailing tasks and approximate costs, these can only be a rough guide and we would counsel any prospective buyer to have her assessed by a preferred surveyor or shipwright - to whatever level of restoration may be desired. In addition to the existing estimates, all the documentation and research generated by her 1992 rebuild are available for scrutiny - as are the original yard drawings. ELISE OF LONDON has been down but she is not out. Now into her second century this historic and much loved family yacht needs a new home and perhaps a new family looking for adventure. She is without doubt a most worthy candidate for the role.

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CONSTRUCTION

The hull is carvel construction of pitch pine and mahogany planking on steam bent and grown oak frames with copper and bronze fastenings.

Decks are 1 inch marine plywood sheathed with glass cloth and epoxy resin. The doghouse (which is not to the original design) and cockpit coamings are varnished teak.

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ACCOMMODATION

Any plans for accommodation should take into account her 12 ft 6 in beam relative to her long ends (63 ft on deck, 45 ft on the waterline), though her box-like mid-section, augmented by Fife's ample skylights and deck piercings, allows for 7 ft plus headroom and light throughout the accommodation section.

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DECK LAYOUT, EQUIPMENT AND GROUND TACKLE

Elise is wheel steered from a position for'ard of a teak steering box in the cockpit aft. From this teak coaming enclosed deep cockpit, the doghouse (not original)gives way forward to a trunk cabin elevated in varnished teak, amidships.

Two original Fife glazed teak skylights over provide copious light and ventilation to the guest cabins, galley and main saloon cabin lying beneath. The trunk cabin elevations are further lit with original bronze framed fixed ports. Three access ways on deck lead to the accommodation below. A fine varnished bowsprit extends beyond.

Along each side of the deck five prism deadlights have been inserted. The covering boards and toe rail capping are of varnished teak.

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RIG SPARS AND SAILS

Gaff staysail schooner rigged, full complement of wooden cheeked blocks and a sail inventory consisting of:

- Gaff mainsail
- Main staysail new at refit
- Fore staysail
- Working jib
- Light weather jib
- Fisherman staysail
- Large head sail new at refit

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HISTORY

Elise was built on the Clyde in 1912 by William Fife III to his own design No 601 as an auxiliary gaff schooner with a Gardner two cylinder paraffin engine. She was commissioned by a Mr WA Young of Paisley a member of the Royal Clyde and Royal Northern YC. Although her war history is unknown, Young was her owner until 1919. At this time she was sold to a Carl Ruben of Copenhagen who kept her in Baltic waters. In 1922 she was repatriated by Sir Alfred L Goodson Bart of Brixham. He was succeeded by numerous different owners, bestowing a variety of different names including MIMA, SPINA and ELISE OF LONDON. While she seems to have considered most major Mediterranean ports her home at one time or another; around 1979 she was to return to the United Kingdom.

Following her re-launch in 1996, Elise's charter career proved successful; the Merediths providing for enough paying custom on cruises out of Salcombe to France, Scotland, the Med and the Caribbean, to make her pay for herself while they got to enjoy much time aboard for themselves and all the family. All the major festivals were attended, weddings were held aboard and many miles put under her keel by a continuous stream of happy guests. The growing family would fly out to meet the yacht wherever she might be, taking time aboard for themselves. That their entire extended family was able to enjoy a life at sea in some of the world's premier destinations aboard Elise must surely be one of the greatest perks of the charter business.

In 1980 as SPINA and found in a dilapidated state, she was bought by retired baker, one Mr Appleyard, who sailed her to Salcombe harbour with the intention of rebuilding her there. He was to die however before he could complete the task and the boat was willed to his son and daughter, who sold the boat to Ted and Bridget Meredith in 1992.

The Merediths pretty ambitiously aimed to complete her restoration in short order before running her for charter. Even more adventurously, the couple decided the best way to guarantee the rebuild would progress at the required pace, was to buy a half share in the local boat yard, Penwill Boatbuilders.

The first step: to remove and replace the interior, led to the discovery and removal of suspect deck beams, which in turn led to the replacement of the entire deck. Working forward, it was then found that the stem was rotted and a whole new section was re-constructed from a grown oak baulk of timber, while at the same time many of the hood-ends were also replaced.

The work undertaken was admittedly major but not mind-blowing for shipwright Dave Penwill, who commented then, with wonderful nonchalance: “Wooden boats are basically just a big kit. You take them apart and fix them”.

As for the interior; the solution achieved by the Merediths suited perfectly their own requirements as well as allowing the vessel to be rated at the highest category, Cat Zero, by the MCA. Berths were for six guests and two crew persons. Most of the remaining interior contained a large, near commercial specification galley and the capacious saloon that allowed a full complement to be entertained in a manner befitting life aboard a distinguished Edwardian yacht. Given what was then to befall the yacht, the feasibility of creating an impressive and useful interior from scratch is most instructive.

Sadly this happy continuum was brought to an abrupt end in January 2010. In short Elise had sunk on her moorings in Douarnenez harbour.

Raising her would require careful planning - and in due course a local diving contractor under appropriate supervision brought her to the surface, the shipyard representative immediately identifying failure of a cockpit drain cock as the cause of the sinking.

Although the cause might have been rectified at a cost of a few pounds, the damage throughout the boat was then severe. The electronics and soft furnishings were ruined. The wooden panelling of the interior would need much work to restore its former glory, not to mention replacement of the engine, ancillaries and much else – in insurance terms she was a write-off and future charters would have to be indefinitely postponed.

Once the insurance aspect was sorted out, the yacht was repatriated to the UK where she has been installed within a purpose-built shed at the family business premises ever since. Today she sits; her hull stabilised and partially stripped, safely cosseted in her own dedicated shed surrounded by the trappings of her working past.

Disclaimer

These particulars have been prepared from information provided by the vendors and are intended as a general guide. The purchaser should confirm details of concern to them by survey or engineers inspection. The purchaser should also ensure that the purchase contract properly reflects their concerns and specifies details on which they wish to rely.

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GALLERY

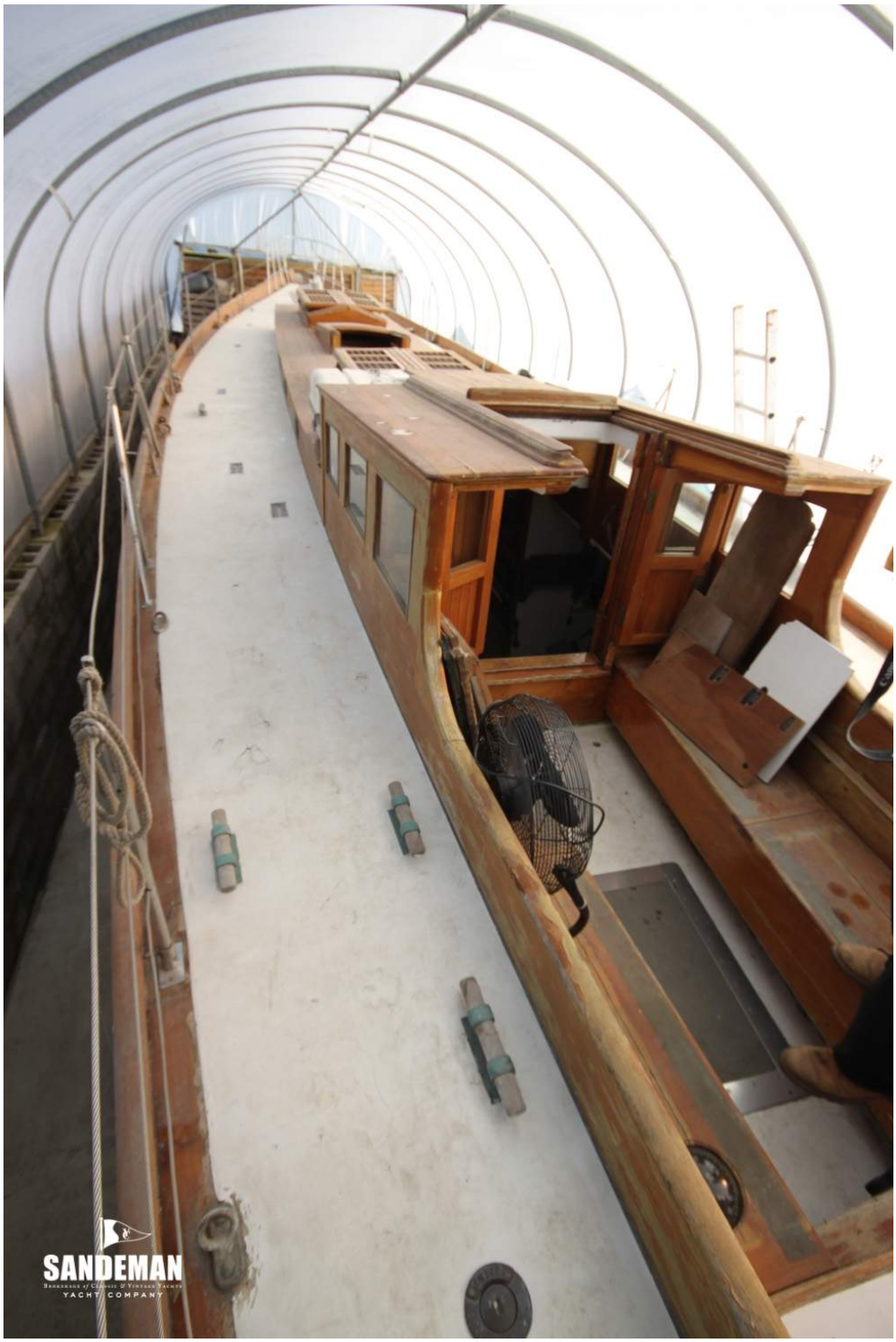



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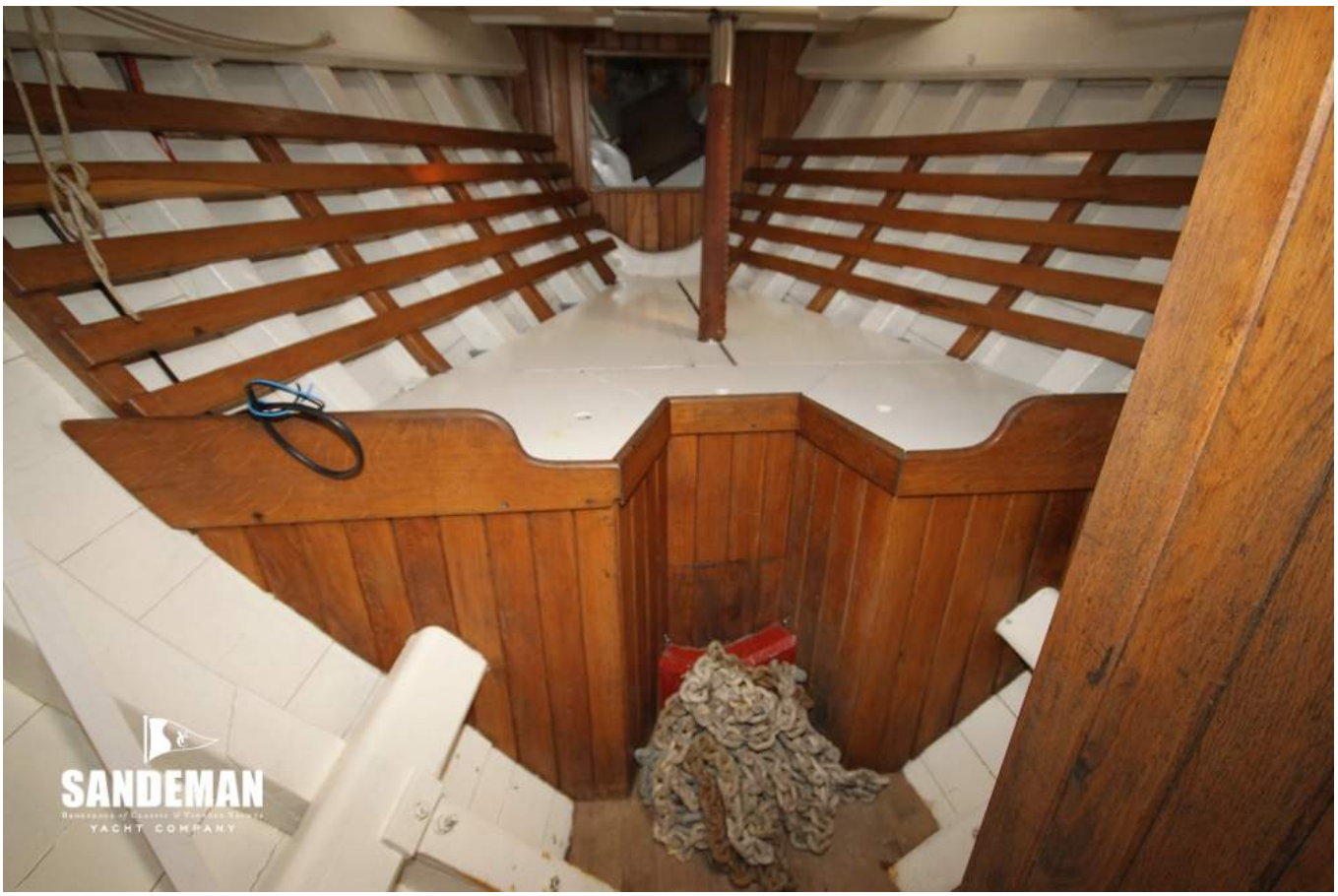

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