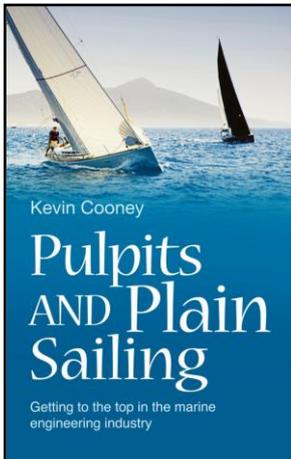


MEREO NEW BOOK: PRESS RELEASE

An insider's view of the connected worlds of yachting and marine engineering – this entertaining memoir will appeal to sailing enthusiasts, those interested in engineering and anyone who wants to know what it's really like to set up and run a successful company

PUBLICATION DATE: MONDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2016



PULPITS AND PLAIN SAILING

Getting to the top in the marine engineering industry

by Kevin Cooney

"We had practically no money and not a lot of knowledge. All we had was the confidence in ourselves and the determination to make it work."



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(Also available as an ebook)

Based on the diaries of a passionate yachtsman (and spanning almost 50 years), here's the true-life story of how an internationally-successful business was built from scratch. This entertaining memoir is liberally sprinkled with tales of adventures at sea and anecdotes that will be appreciated by all sailing enthusiasts.

At the start of his engineering career, Kevin Cooney had no idea that *pulpits* would be the making of him, or that they'd spark a lifelong passion for sailing. Don't be fooled by the title: this story has nothing to do with religion. The pulpits in question are bow rails for yachts and Kevin's facility for designing and making them and other yacht fittings led him to build a company that is now the largest independent supplier of stainless steel fittings in the UK.

Kevin's own journey was far from plain sailing. A humble childhood, an engineering apprenticeship and youthful adventures in the Merchant Navy were followed by years of hard graft and overdrafts. His first metalwork business started in a pub stables then moved to a back-garden workshop. Struggling to make ends meet and with a young family to support, the turning point came when he met a boat builder who was looking for quality metal deck fittings. One order led to another until soon he was making stainless steel railings and fittings for yacht companies whose names will be familiar to any reader of magazines for sailing enthusiasts and boat owners.

The growth of the business brought its own worries: finding larger premises and better machinery, trouble with tenants and trying to run a business through the seventies, a time of union power, strikes and the three-day week. In 1975 a massive fire destroyed his Kettering factory and could have destroyed the business. A slump in 1980 brought redundancies and near closure. But Kevin's a man who won't be beaten and Cooney Marine was soon back on its feet.

Kevin has always had a yen for adventure. He soon took up sailing, and the book is detailed about the different yachts he bought and hair-raising trips around the English coast, across to Europe and the Med. Kevin also learnt to fly, tried sky-diving and took up shooting and karate.



The author at the helm

This is a story of boom and bust, hard graft and luck – plus many years of fun in sailboats and planes. This book will appeal to sailing and flying enthusiasts, engineers, business people and to any budding entrepreneur who wants to know what it *really* takes to set up and run a successful company.

Please see over for media opportunities and further information about the author >>>>



To request a review copy or to be put in touch with the author, please contact

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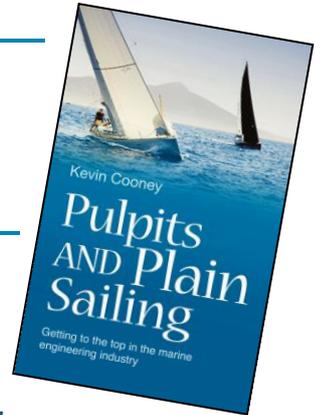
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MEREO NEW BOOK: PRESS RELEASE *continued*

PULPITS AND PLAIN SAILING

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“The business was in good shape and we were making money, the kids were settled into their new routine, we were living in a nice house with a good address. I was 38 years old and it seemed everything in the garden was rosy. Looking back to where I’d started from with a lot of self-belief and determination to succeed, no money and no knowledge of running a business, I had come a long way, but I realised that I still had a long way to go.”



About the author: Kevin Cooney: When Kevin Cooney left the Merchant Navy he set up his own back-garden engineering shop. A chance encounter led him to specialise in manufacturing stainless steel components for yachts. From humble beginnings Kevin piloted Cooney Marine successfully through the difficult decades of British industrial strife and built it into the largest independent supplier of stainless steel rails and fittings in the UK.

Thanks to ingenuity, determination and a great deal of hard work, Kevin managed to pilot Cooney Marine successfully through the difficult decades of British industrial strife and build it into the largest independent supplier of stainless steel rails and fittings in the UK.

Along the way he caught the sailing bug and now, semi-retired and with his son at the helm of the business, Kevin is free to indulge his passion by sailing the oceans of Europe and even crossing the Atlantic.

Kevin Cooney lives in Kettering, Northamptonshire. *‘Pulpits and Plain Sailing’* is his first book and it is based on the diaries that he has been keeping for nearly 50 years. Kevin Cooney hopes that his story will help others to believe that they too can change their circumstances through hard work and a determination to succeed.

“I used to dream of having a big car and a yacht and now I have three yachts and a big motor car. I am not more content or happy just because of this, nothing ever changes. I am still the same person.”

Media opportunities:

Extracts/serialisation. Review copies and photos available on request. The author is available for interviews.

Feature suggestions:

- The joys and perils of building a business from scratch
- What can SMEs (small & Medium sized enterprises) do to improve their chances of making it through times of recession?
- Are family-run businesses likely to die out in the future?
- Turning a passion into a business: in today’s tough economic climate, is it still possible to turn a hobby into a lucrative business?
- Facing business disasters: what does it take to carry-on and survive?
- Learning to sail: does it have to cost a lot of money?
- Top recommendations for sailing holidays
- Are boat shows just for rich people?

(The London Boat Show is being held at ExCel, 6-15 January 2017)



Local UK interest: The author was born and educated in **Bedford**. He has lived in **Northamptonshire** for most of his adult life. He founded his marine engineering business in **Kettering** (Northants) in 1969 and the firm (Cooney Marine) is still based in the town. Many UK coastal towns and sailing centres are featured in the book, most notably those in **Norfolk and East Anglia, The Channel Islands and Hampshire**.



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