



Left, a memorable project for Allspars is the three-masted Malcolm Miller, once a sail training ship and now a private yacht. Above, some of the 16 staff at work. Right, white mast on a Hans Christian 42-footer

Rigged for success

Plymouth-based Allspars was founded by Andy Postle just 20 years ago, and thanks to employing riggers who also go sailing, has gone from strength to strength

"A rough day at sea is better than any day in the office (so long as your boat is properly prepared)", is not a bad motto to live by when you run Allspars, a mast and rigging company with two bases on the south coast of England.

In 1997 Andy Postle left his job running a chandlery and rigging loft in Falmouth to launch his own masts and rigging company in Plymouth. Every business has to start somewhere and Allspars was no different. Andy recalls: "I acquired a small workshop at Queen Anne's Battery Marina in Plymouth, where I counted the pennies until I could afford a young apprentice to help with the increasing workload." A key decision when it came to that initial appointment was sailing experience, and it was to form the basis for all future employment at Allspars.

The core of the business was and still is rigging and spar fabrication, supplying yachts and dinghies with masts and rigging, whether cruising or racing. Allspars works with individual boat owners and the marine industry to provide bespoke and custom rigging solutions, masts, booms, furling gear, hydraulics and deck hardware.

Now more than 20 years down the line, the original base at QAB Marina in Plymouth has expanded to become a large head office, and there is also an Allspars Solent branch at Premier Marina Swanwick. These workshops provide equipment and machinery for the teams of riggers and support staff. Today Allspars employs 16 people with core skills in engineering and sailing but all with the same shared passion for high quality work and customer service, which reflects in the continued success of the company. Oh, and for anyone curious about the young apprentice, he is still with Allspars!



"Our riggers and engineers can produce wire, rod and composite rigging, as well as building masts and spars which we then customise to your boat," says Andy. "Allspars offer a full range of services, from a complete rig replacement, to the supply of the smallest part to enable you to repair any item yourself, or custom parts. Not many weeks go by without at least one of the rigging teams jumping on a plane to work on a client's yacht."

Allspars finds its British Marine membership particularly helpful in a sometimes difficult business climate. In 2015 Allspars was awarded the British Marine Retailer of the Year award, and the citation said: "Allspars have become the turn-to experts in their field, but at their heart remain a local retailer that yacht owners can go to for advice and support, especially in their home city of Plymouth."

Relationships with all the major spar, rigging and hardware manufacturers are essential, and Allspars has a particularly strong link with Swedish manufacturers Seldén which has worked with the company from its inception.

"We believe that to produce consistently safe, strong and reliable rigging systems, we have to use the best quality components," says Andy. "All the wire we use in our workshops come direct from the factory of the world's leading stainless steel wire manufacturer, with quality control certificates for every reel, so we can trace back and guarantee the quality of our finished rigging. This is not an industry-wide practice, so be mindful when choosing your next wire suppliers!"

There have been many jobs which stand out, and attention to detail has helped to secure repeat business on boats from dinghies to superyachts and everything in between. Memorable projects include the *Malcolm Miller*, iconic sister ship to the *Sir Winston Churchill*, a restoration on which Allspars' first job was around 2005 with repeat work over the years and more booked for 2018. Another unusual recent commission was a full white-painted mast and rigging package on a Hans Christian 42ft, built in the UK and installed in Spain at the end of 2017.

All of the hard work brings rewards for Andy and his team when they travel either for other rigging jobs or for holidays. "It's really quite a thrill to get to a new job and be able to see our previous work anchored up in marinas around the world," Andy says.