

Sailing to success in Cornwall

When the only sailmaker in Fowey ceased training, Andy Mitchell saw it as an opportunity to start his own sail-making company. In 1983 he opened Mitchell Sails, which now designs, manufactures and repairs sails and covers for boats ranging from 10 ft dinghies to 60 ft yachts.

The company has seen a steady rise in business as tourism has grown in the area, with their annual turnover increasing year on year. As a result, they have plans to extend their sail loft in the near future to expand capacity even further.

Workforce

Mitchell Sails employs three people who are all from the local area. All trained with Andy on the job, while studying for NVQ qualifications through Cornwall College, one under the Modern Apprentice scheme.



Clients

The company finds most of its business locally, from boats moored in the area or passing through. More recently they have been involved in making covers and signs for the Eden Project, Imerys and the National Maritime Museum Cornwall.

Technology

Keeping up to date with technology is an important part of the business, and over the past 20 years, Mitchell Sails has continued to invest in the latest sewing machinery.

The company uses computer aided design programmes and laser cutting technology to design and manufacture the sails.

For Andy it all adds up to the ideal business environment. "With the leisure industry growing fast, more and more people are buying boats and mooring them here. It makes Cornwall a great place to start any marine business and find suitable employees, from sailmaking to engineering," says Andy.